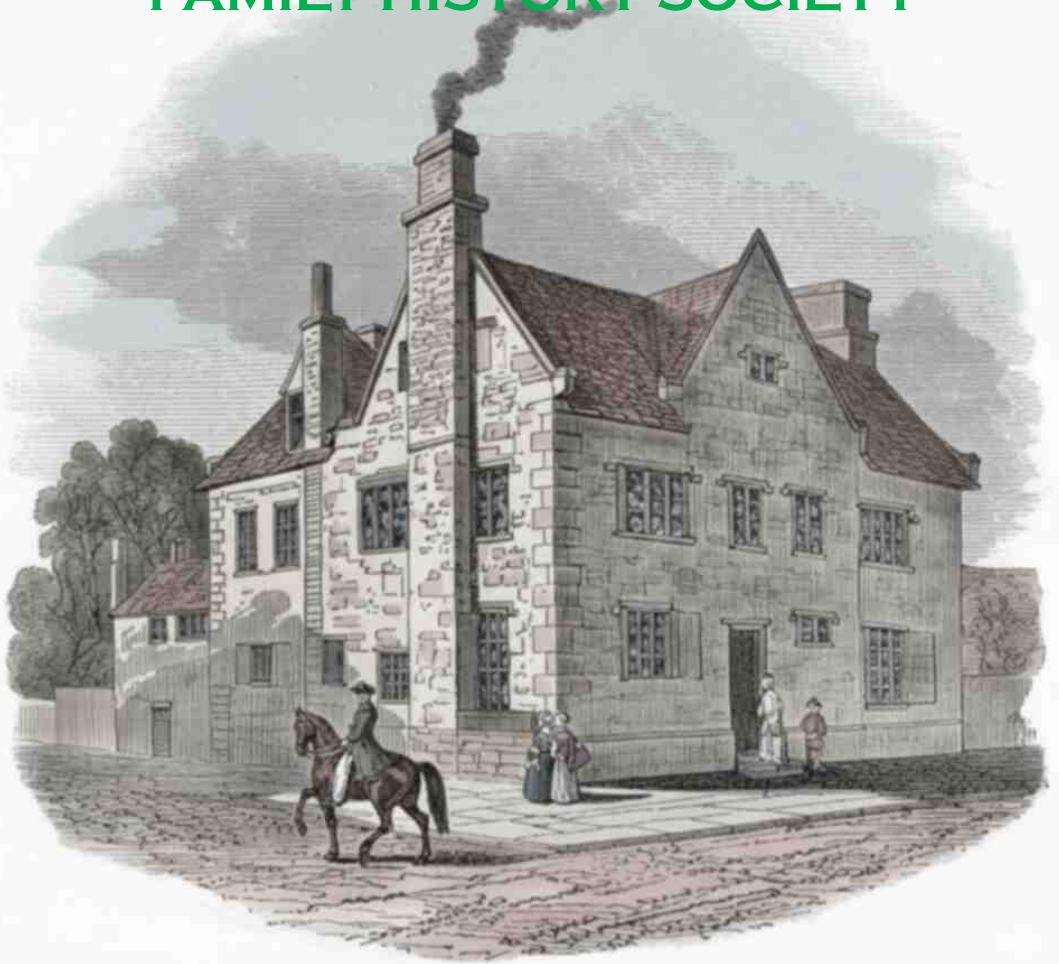




ISLE OF WIGHT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY



May 2026

Number 161

**The Society's AGM will be held on
Monday 1st June 2026 at 1:30pm
in the Arreton Community Hall.
(Doors open at 1pm)**



The official notice with the agenda and nomination forms for officers and committee members was published in the February Journal.

Voting forms are included in the yellow pages of this Journal together with information about the candidates.

Following the AGM, Hilary Lloyd will tell us 'The Story of Isle of Wight Post Offices' (1851 to 1951) with extracts from her recently-published book.



PRESIDENT**Richard SMOUT****VICE-PRESIDENTS****Chris BRAUND****Janet FEW****Peter SPENCER****Jon MATTHEWS****COMMITTEE**

Chairman	Geoff ALLAN	Apartment 3, Sandbanks, Esplanade, Sandown, Isle of Wight PO36 8DW chairman.iowfhs@gmail.com
Vice Chairman	Vacant	
Secretary	Gill GLASBEY	secretary.iowfhs@gmail.com
Treasurer	Claire WILLIS	treasurer.iowfhs@gmail.com
Friends of Northwood Cemetery Liaison Officer	John PULLEN	Email: via Librarian
Heritage Resource Centre Education Officer	Sharon BEDDARD	research.iowfhs@gmail.com
Journal Editor	Steve NEWBERRY	Mulberry House, Coastguard Lane, Brook, Isle of Wight PO30 4HQ journal.editor.iowfhs@gmail.com
Librarian	Hazel PULLEN	librarian.iowfhs@gmail.com
Membership Secretary and Journal Distributor	Gerry NEWBERRY	Mulberry House, Coastguard Lane, Brook, Isle of Wight PO30 4HQ membership.secretary.iowfhs@gmail.com
Programme Secretary	Vacant	
Systems Development	Mike HOAR	Email: via Webmaster
Webmaster and War Memorial Project Coordinator	Geoff ALLAN	chairman.iowfhs@gmail.com

Contents

Programme of Events Spring/Summer 2026.....	2
Editorial	3
Heritage Resource Centre.....	4
Annual Report – 2025-26	5
Financial Report 2025	12
Membership Secretary's Report.....	14
From the Desk in Westward Ho!.....	15
Obituary – Simon CLEMENTS (1944-2026)	17
Schools.....	18
Obituary - Maria TUCK (17 Oct 1942 – 5 Jan 2026)	21
Obituary - Betty DHILLON (nee SYMES) 1932 - 2025.....	22
The Preservation of Digital Assets	23
1921 Census Transcription Corrections	23
My Family Autograph Album.....	24
Census Counting by Electricity – Machine to help the Registrar General	32
A Personal Timeline.....	33
Isle of Wight Railway Staff in the World Wars of the 20th Century.....	34
Road Passenger Transport and The Isle of Wight Bus and Coach Museum	37
Records Office Update	42
Crematorium Open Day	43
New Members	44

Programme of Events Spring/Summer 2026

Date	Subject	Speaker
11th May	Isle of Wight small ships at Dunkirk	Michael MILLS
1st June	AGM + Post Offices of the Isle of Wight	Hilary LLOYD
29th June	A Celebration of Island History (at Quarr Abbey)	Hazel PULLEN and Geoff ALLAN
6th July	Bembridge Fort	Tim WANDER
5th September	One Day Conference (ODC)	See inside back cover

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

2026 Calendar Year Subscriptions

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

This Journal is the official publication of the Isle of Wight Family History Society. The contents may not be reproduced without the written permission of the Editor.

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 in September (see [inside back cover](#)) is 'Education on the Isle of Wight'. Research into the Island's schools and teachers is already well under way.

The AGM will take place at Arreton on the 1st June (see [inside front cover](#)). 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 short presentation from Hilary Lloyd on the 'The Story of Isle of Wight Post Offices'.

Why not share your personal research journey with us—from the breakthroughs to the roadblocks—it will not only preserve your family's legacy but also provides invaluable guidance and inspiration to fellow members tracing their own ancestral paths. Please send your ideas for Journal articles to me at the address below. All input welcome!

Steve NEWBERRY (IWFHS Member 2189)

Journal Editor

journal.editor.iowfhs@gmail.com

Cover Picture

Dating from 1614, the Free Grammar School on the corner of Lugley Street and Lower St James' Street, is one of the oldest surviving buildings in Newport. Charles I lodged in the building for 10 weeks in 1648 while the Treaty of Newport was being negotiated. These unsuccessful negotiations between Parliament and King Charles I of England were an attempt to end the hostilities of the English Civil War. On the failure of the treaty, preparations for the King's trial went ahead. (Wightpedia)
The original print appeared in the Illustrated London News 1844 Vol 1 Artist Unknown

Non-Committee Officers

BMD Index Coordinator	Jon MATTHEWS	bmd.iowfhs@gmail.com
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 2026

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 – 2025-26

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 2025 to March 2026. The Constitution requires that our Annual General Meeting is held in May, but due to other commitments the AGM last year and also this year, will be held in June 2026.

Overall Governance and Responsibilities

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

Honorary President 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 2026

No proposals have been received.

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, Steve Newberry

Hazel Pullen decided to stand 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 seven 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, continues as our printer and distributor 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 provides 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)

John Arnold, Anne Claridge, Simon Clements, Martin James Cosh, Betty Dhillon, Ronald Roe, Maria Tuck

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 has re-branded itself as The Family History Federation (FHF) to better represent its membership profile.

Attendance at other Societies' events

We have not attended any other events.

Talks to other groups

Hazel Pullen gave a talk to a group at Brighstone.

Geoff Allan gave two talks in Shanklin and Sandown to 'Living Well' groups.

Preserving the Assets of the Society – Physical and Digital

We have been reviewing our holdings in all categories, particularly any held on digital media as there is a danger that some media types will become unreadable – we have found that some older CD-ROMs have deteriorated and some of our older laptop PCs have failed. Where appropriate we have stored material in the 'cloud' and replaced PCs as required.

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	354	401
eJournal	447	455
Rest of World	26	33
TOTAL	827	889

This total does not include honorary, exchange or administrative categories.

During the 2025 membership year 88 subscriptions were taken out by new members. Overall membership figures for 2025 have decreased slightly 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.

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 2025 the summary position was as follows (to nearest £)

Lloyds 1	£927
Lloyds 2	£10,642
Lloyds 3	£15,525
Paypal	£15,525
Cash in hand	£140
Total	£28,136

Overall we show a surplus of £1,515 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 2025-6**

Apr	Carisbrooke Priory – Bob WHITE
May	<i>this meeting was postponed to accommodate a funeral wake</i>
Jun	AGM / Members' Show and Tell session
Jul	The Thoroughly Rotten Unreformed House of Commons - Janice HEPPESTALL
Sep	One Day Conference 'Licensed Premises and Licensees' 40th Anniversary Lunch at the Lakeside Hotel
Oct	William Schaw Lindsay, Victorian Entrepreneur – Bill LINDSAY
Nov	The National Coastwatch Institution – Jeremy THOMAS
Dec	The Isle of Wight Women's Movement – Mark EARP
Jan	'Introduction to the Education Project' by Geoff ALLAN with contributions from Pat PHILLIPS and Steve NEWBERRY
Feb	Cowes – Geoff BANKS
Mar	Isle of Wight Bus and Coach Museum – Andrew MORRIS

We continue to 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.

Journal editor's report - Steve Newberry

The Di Harding award winners for this year are:

1. Hilary LLOYD
2. Dorothy SCOTT
3. Liz POTTINGER

We previously revised the prize structure to offer free memberships (in terms of 3, 2, and 1 year(s)), rather than cash. However, this is now causing some difficulties in the membership system and accounting procedures, as the 'value' of the award varies depending on Membership status.

For subsequent years we propose changing the designation of the Award to 'Journal Authorship Award', having a group of committee members do the judging and having gift vouchers as prizes.

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>

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

At present we do not have any volunteers at the CRO working on our Projects. Some of our members do volunteer work on behalf of the CRO directly; eg Derek Osbourn is working on the 1889 Electoral Roll for the Island.

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. Last year's project to document Licensed Premises and Licensees on the Island formed the basis of our Conference in September 2025. At least a dozen people have contributed to this.

We are continuing to work on the Charlie Taylor legacy material.

We have a number of beautifully compiled (hand written for the most part) family trees and books from the late Donald Riley which will need to be reviewed and presented in a format for further research.

The 2026 Project is 'Education on the Isle of Wight' and we have commenced work on this.

Pedigree Index

Mike Hoar has reviewed the functionality of this and has implemented 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. If anyone is interested in covering the Ventnor and Wroxall cemeteries please let us know.

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/>

Geoff ALLAN (IWFHS Member 392)

Chairman

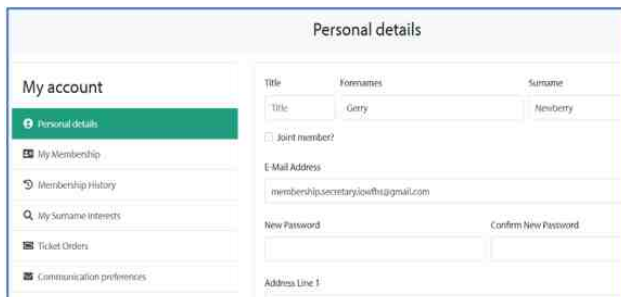
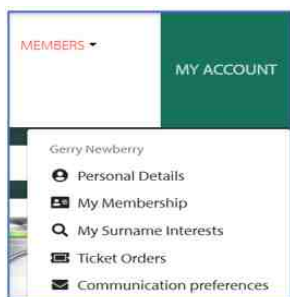
chairman.iowfhs@gmail.com

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 make changes to your Personal details such as name, address, email address, password:



Renewing your Membership To renew your membership, simply make a payment – we will do the rest.

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 from you. The Society's bank account is checked daily and your membership account updated accordingly. You will see automated reminders sent to our Members – check that you don't pay twice as a result!

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

Information about the One Day Conference can be found in this Journal. ([See inside back cover](#)). 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.

Do contact me with any queries or questions.

Gerry NEWBERRY (IOWFHS Member 2189)

Membership Secretary

membership.secretary.iowfhs@gmail.com

From the Desk in Westward Ho!

I am writing this in March, just as RootsTech is starting.

RootsTech is the largest genealogy event in the world with thousands of people attending live in Salt Lake City and many more taking part virtually from across the globe. Many of the sessions are recorded and you can access them for free:

www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/



These remain online after the event, so you can watch presentations from this year and previous years at your leisure. This is a brilliant opportunity to learn more about research methods, sources, genealogy related technology, DNA, social history and much more. There really is something for everyone, including a few talks from me!

One of the hot topics this year is the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). I am ambivalent about this. I have serious concerns about its impact on the creative industries and on the environment. I do however acknowledge that it is here and here to stay and perhaps I should be trying to understand it and through that understanding, be aware of its uses, its pitfalls and the ethical connotations. In particular, I am interested in how people are using it for genealogy. It can be used to transcribe documents for example. At the moment it isn't all that great at

doing this and I certainly wouldn't rely on the results but it can be a guide that should then be checked by a human brain.

I do firmly believe that anything that is created with AI, be that text or an image, should be clearly labelled as such. I know that some people use it to write family history stories from an input list of facts. My view is that an AI story is better than no story at all but to me they are still obviously AI generated and tend to be very emotional and speculative. 'The grieving family gathered at the death bed of their father' and the like. How do they know? The family may have hated the sight of their father and been off down the pub celebrating. AI stories definitely need to be edited and checked and not used wholesale.

I did recently use AI to try to imagine what my great grandmother, Fanny BISHOP, might have looked like. Although I don't have a photograph of her, I do have photographs of two of her children and three of her grandchildren. I also have photographs of her father and his siblings, her grandfather and incredibly, her great grandfather, who lived to be ninety-two, dying the year after she was born. I used those photographs of Fanny's relatives and asked AI to create a period photograph that, in its opinion, might be consistent with what the daughter/mother/niece of the uploaded photos might look like.

The result was unnerving. Physically I strongly resemble my mother and this great grandmother was on my paternal side but I could see a resemblance to me. I have been scrupulous about not sharing that image anywhere public, not even clearly watermarked 'created using AI'. It isn't something that I feel comfortable doing although she may get used in a talk at some point. Whatever our views, we need to be both aware and wary of AI, whilst embracing the ways in which it can be used to good effect.

Janet FEW (IWFHS Member 50)
Vice-President
jfewhistory@gmail.com

Janet went on to recommend a RootsTech presentation she heard about Artificial Intelligence; 'a very balanced discussion':
<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/guidelines-for-the-responsible-use-of-artificial-intelligence-ai-in-genealogy-in-2026>

If you are reading a printed copy of the Journal and that URL was too much to type in, try using this shortened version: <http://bit.ly/4cBqASN>

Obituary – Simon CLEMENTS (1944-2026)

Simon Keith Astley CLEMENTS was born on the 6th of June 1944 in Victoria Road, Cowes. This date is one of the most famous of the 20th century as it marked the start of the D-Day landings. As the midwife arrived at Simon's family home to deliver him, she told his mother that all the ships had left the Solent in readiness for the landings.

Simon was born to Frank and Nada CLEMENTS (née TRIBBICK), who along with Simon's brother Trevor made up the Clements family. Together, they left the island when Simon was six months old and settled first in Linslade and then Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire. Despite the family leaving the island so soon into his life, Simon maintained a lifelong love and affinity for the Isle of Wight, visiting here many times over the course of his life.

A number of years ago, Simon began researching his ancestors, leading to his membership of the IOWFHS. He started with his mother's side (the Tribbicks and the Sprakes) and then continued by researching his paternal Clements family.

Simon was particularly proud of his great-grandfather, Charles Robert Tribbick, who was born in the House of Industry, Carisbrooke, in 1865, to his unmarried mother, Matilda Tribbick. She herself died in childbirth, and Charles was raised by her parents. He later went on to become a Master Mariner.

Unfortunately, Simon was never able to find an official death notice for Charles. There is an entry of death, recorded as the 24th of June 1913 by the Grand Lodge of Freemasons Membership Register (1910-1921), but Simon couldn't discover where or by whom they received that information.

Any IOWFHS members are welcome to view Simon's family tree, which is public on Ancestry, and also to notify his family if they might come across Charles' source of death.

Simon passed away on the 28th of January 2026, aged 81. He is survived by his wife Judith; daughters Debbie and Michelle; grandchildren Victoria, Charlotte, Max and Harry; great-grandchildren Dylan and Layla; and brother Trevor.

Judith CLEMENTS (non-member)

Schools

The subject of schools started last summer when we had a visitor from Australia, John HALL. He asked if we had any information on the schools on the Island. I said yes - and so our story began.

He mentioned that in his youth he had gone to Gurnard School, starting there in the 1950s. What a surprise! My son in law David is Deputy Head there.

The school had moved to Baring Road in Cowes but still maintained the Gurnard name. I asked David if he had any information on the old school in Gurnard where he had started his career as a teacher: 'I will ask the caretaker if there is anything stored in the new building.'

The caretaker came up trumps with school log books listing all of the children who had started at the school since it opened in 1906. The log books mentioned the school inspector's visit and many visits by the local vicar.

I was able to give John information on his short stay at the school. His parents were in fact teachers and went on to travel the world with him ending in Australia.



This then set the ball rolling: 'Shall we do a project on the Island schools?'

We found private schools on the Island before 1800 in some cases teaching the boys and also the girls. They were set up in many of the Island's towns and villages. In Sandown in 1820, a little cottage within the chine was occupied by the KINGSWELL family; the lady of the house was a school mistress and was trying to educate the local boys and girls reading from the Bible.

Around 1800, all the well-to-do on the Island sent their children to boarding schools or employed a governess teaching mostly boys. And the girls were taught basic sewing skills and cooking.

The first school in Brighstone was opened in 1815 serving 20 poor children, 15 from Brighstone with another five from Hulverstone. Several acres of land were purchased and two cottages were built providing room for the head teacher.

In the 1803 Census for Calbourne, Ann BELLVAID was recorded as a governess. This may be because she worked at the local BARRINGTON family home, Lords of the manor of Swainstone.

This was before the National School opened in 1844. There had been no formal education before this time, with many of the children working on the land by the time they were eight years old.

Little did we know what a project we were letting ourselves in for. As with previous projects, the churches on the Island, the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) project and the pubs on the Island, these are still ongoing as and when information comes in.

We add to our previous information hopefully giving you all an insight into what has happened on the Island over the many centuries.

Here with the Schools Project this will be no different. We go back to the 1800s. Education for the poor was limited to charity and Sunday Schools. It was not till 1833 that the state began to pay annual grants to societies. This came with increasing demands from the state.

After the 1870 Education Act, school boards were established across the Island with the power to raise funds through the rates. This then allowed basic education for the Island's children.

The 1880 Education Act made school attendance compulsory for all children from the age of five to ten years. By the year 1899, this was extended to the age of 12 years.

By 1921, with the exception of Ryde and Newport who set up their own education committees, higher and technical education was established. This was later absorbed by the Island in 1945.

We have had a few Islanders who have given over their own school experiences and of course we are always looking for more.

I have a lovely story of Isle of Wight memories written by Peter SLOPER. Peter went to Hunnyhill Infants School in Albany Road Newport. He talks about riding down Heytesbury road on his cart past the old Soldiers Home and into the millpond. And calling into Newport railway station where you could pay a penny for a platform ticket and watch the trains to Cowes and Ryde.



The Soldiers Home (left) and the millpond(right) showing the Freshwater-Yarmouth-Newport (FYN) Railway viaduct (c 1900)

‘Miss PLUM as I remember, a lovely old grey-haired lady always smiling and pleased to see you. Mr FERGUSON was the headmaster, Miss BELCHER helped me get over my stutter. Miss DRUDGE was classed as the best teacher I had; the only woman I know who could play the piano with her back to you and still shout “Shut up Sloper!” when I was only whispering.’

We checked the piano for mirrors. We never did find any. She must have had mystical powers.

If you can add to our current project we would love to hear from you. If you feel you would like to share your experiences with our members, would you be willing to give a short talk at our One Day Conference to be held in the Quay Street Chapel on Saturday the 5th September 2026?

Hazel PULLEN (IWFHS Member 2650)

Librarian

librarian-iowfhs@gmail.com

Obituary - Maria TUCK (17 Oct 1942 – 5 Jan 2026)

Maria was born at St Mary's Hospital in Newport on the Isle of Wight, the first and only child of Leslie Arthur FOREHEAD and Dorothy May Forehead (née SANSOM). The family lived in St Mary's Rd. Cowes and Maria attended Denmark Rd. Primary School then Sandown Grammar School. There she met her husband Pip (Norman Ludwig Peter) TUCK; they married young and had three children together, living, along with Maria's parents in a house in Northwood. In the mid 70's the whole family moved together to a bigger house in Shide, Newport where Maria and Pip settled happily for the rest of their lives.

Around the time of the move to Newport, Maria began work at St Mary's Hospital in the Pathology Department, during which time she resumed her studies first at A level, then taking a Higher National Certificate at Portsmouth, allowing her to progress in her career. Maria continued to work at St Mary's Hospital until she retired.

Maria was extremely active throughout her life, dedicated to her family as well as enjoying many interests and hobbies – one of which was of course in family history. She spent many hours researching and tracing her ancestry on the Isle of Wight, going as far back as the early 1500's to an ancestor living at Little Duxmore Farm situated between Haven Street and Newchurch. She liked to try to imagine how life must have been for ordinary people in times very different from our own.

Maria was bright, kind and generous of spirit and will be very greatly missed.

Martha ROBERTS (non-member)
Daughter

Obituary - Betty DHILLON (nee SYMES) 1932 - 2025

Betty DHILLON, a former member and committee stalwart, died on the 4th July 2025 aged 93. We have only recently been advised of her passing by her family.



Betty (who preferred this diminutive to her given name Beatrice) may be remembered as the author of an open letter to the *County Press* in November 2003, in which she appealed for a 'Lonely Millionaire' to help the Society overcome the problem of where to store the growing mountain of books and research material which she and other committee members were obliged to store at home. Whether this was instrumental in our acquiring our first premises in St Thomas Square is debatable.

I recall being a passenger in her car in 2009 as we journeyed to Weston-super-Mare for a Family History Fair; she was somewhat fearless behind the wheel! She was involved in many aspects of the Society, including as Secretary, as noted in a brief profile which appeared in the Aug 2006 Journal.

Janet Few recalls that on rail trips to London, Betty always asked for a Senior fare, even though they didn't exist at the time 'due to there being no demand' – but Betty then said 'Well, I am demanding it!' or words to that effect. Perhaps Senior Railcards were introduced due to her influence.

More recently, in March 2021, she appeared in an episode of *The Repair Shop*, engaging the saddler and leather expert Suzie Fletcher to renovate her treasured briefcase which she had used in her career as a structural engineer and teacher. You can see this part of the episode on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKW2Qu2REmg>

We have retrieved several books from her daughter Kiren, and these will be catalogued and placed in the HRC library at some point.

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

The Preservation of Digital Assets

The death of Betty and other former members prompted me to examine what we can do to preserve our legacy for future generations, not only with the physical artefacts we wish to pass on (books, family trees, photos) but also with our digital assets.

More recently, Peter CALVER, who founded the *Lost Cousins* website, also died. I am sure that he, as a computer specialist, will have ensured that his work goes on. In this vein I have started to look at what we can do to preserve our website, and other digital assets.

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

1921 Census Transcription Corrections

In previous articles (Journal 149 Page 26 and Journal 158 Page 43), I described problems with FindMyPast's (FMP) transcriptions of the 1921 Census.

Finally, I queried whether, following Ancestry's acquisition of FMP's transcriptions, the two companies were sharing corrections submitted by users. A written reply I recently received from FMP confirms they do not:

'I'm sorry but unfortunately we do not share any error corrections at this time. This would need to be done through Ancestry also for any corrections on their site.'

Another company, MyHeritage now seems to be using FMP's 1921 census transcriptions (complete with errors) and has added them to its online database. Presumably the same limitation on corrections applies.

Personally, I intend to submit 1921 Census corrections to FMP only.

Steve NEWBERRY (IWFHS Member 2189)
Journal Editor
journal.editor.iowfhs@gmail.com

My Family Autograph Album

My family autograph album is not one in the traditional sense, no friends or famous people have made witty comments or drawn a cartoon. Most of the signatories are dead, some longer than others. The style of my signature has changed quite a lot over the years and not only from H GOSDEN to H LLOYD. It is the Gosden family I am interested in. My brother's signature looks like one of those hospital monitors when the patient dies; just a couple of zig zags trailing off to a straight line.

Our dad's handwriting was very neat and precise with long up and down loops. Roy GOSDEN would have been taught to write when he attended Wootton Council School in the 1920'/30's.

Dad's father, Edmund James GOSDEN [Ted], died in 1938 before I was born, so how to find his signature? He was, I believe, quite a clever man. He too had attended Wootton School, winning prizes. Ted was born in 1871, so there was a legal requirement for him to go to school. His first marriage, in 1896 to Matilda HALE, took place in Portsmouth, (Register image on Find my Past) so I could see he signed in full. His second marriage was to Mary HALE in 1922, at the IW Register Office, so no chance of seeing his signature there.

In 1933 Mary's sister married at St Edmund's, Wootton, and Ted obliged as one of the witnesses. Signing by then with just initials as EJ Gosden his hand looks quite confident. When Ted filled in his 1911 census form (another possible source to spot an ancestors signature) it was all perfectly done.



Signature of Edmund James Gosden [1871-1938] - witness to marriage at St Edmund's, Wootton 1933

I was pleased to see that Ted's father, Edmund GOSDEN, my great grandfather, had been one of his daughter Louisa's witnesses when she married in 1904 at Arreton. He had quite a nice careful hand. Edmund had been born at Northwood in 1846, but he must have had some schooling. At the age of 4, in 1851 he was listed at



Signature of Edmund Gosden [1845-1930] - witness to marriage, 1904 at Arreton

Northwood as a scholar, but maybe just Sunday School? Ten years later, 1861, he was already working as a plough boy and spent his whole life as a farm labourer.

My 2x great grandfather, David GOSDEN (1809-1884), had rather a struggle. He was the eldest of eight children, born at Brighstone. Nothing much is known of him until his marriage in 1832 at Shorwell. Marriage registers had to be signed but it was not a surprise to find he, his wife, Charlotte LOCK, and the two witnesses all made their marks.

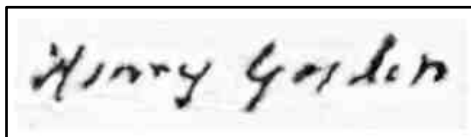
Within two years of his marriage he was getting outdoor relief from the House of Industry and working as a farm labourer. With one child born before their marriage and another seven afterwards, moving about for work from Brighstone to Northwood then Duxmore and finally Wootton Bridge it is unlikely he would have had the time or inclination to sign anything, especially autograph books.

A marriage register entry again came up trumps. My 3x great grandfather, Henry GOSDEN (1784-1835), married in 1808 at Brighstone and he just about

managed a signature which implied he couldn't write much more. His older brother James

signed quite well as one of the witnesses. Henry and his wife, Elizabeth MILMORE who made her mark, had eight children and maybe

we shouldn't look too closely at their marriage date and the baptism of their first son, David. Henry also had some relief from the House of Industry around the time of the birth of one child in 1815.



Signature of Henry Gosden [1784-1835] -
Brighstone marriage register, 1805

Henry's father, Richard GOSDEN (1746-1809), married twice, in 1771 at Brighstone and 1780 at

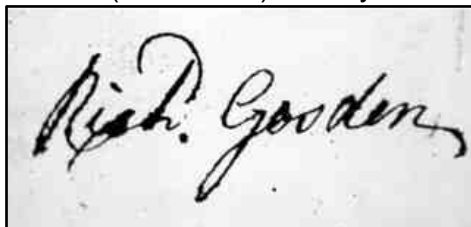
Freshwater, both entries still recorded in printed registers. All the spouses and witnesses were able to sign their names. The licence for the first marriage to Mary COTTON still survives and Richard signed with a flourish as Gosden. He may not have read



Signature of Richard Gosden [1746-1809] -
marriage licence, 1771

the document too closely as the person filling it in consistently records him as Gosling. With, probably, thirteen children from the two marriages it seems only the ones from this first marriage had any sort of proper education. My Henry was one of the second batch.

Richard's father, another Richard GOSDEN (1710-1758) and my 5x great grandfather, really upped the ante in the handwriting stakes - perhaps he was taught by his father. His marriage at Northwood in 1742, to Anstes LAWRENCE, though he was of Brighstone, is just a line in the register; no need to sign or have witnesses back then.

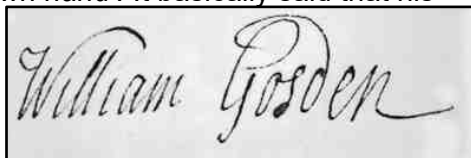


Signature of Richard Gosden [1710-56] - will, 1756

However, he could sign his name with confidence on leases in the local Brighstone rate books and his own will. I would even guess that in 1746 when he was churchwarden, the accounts were actually written up by him, and maybe in other years as well. His wife, Anstes, could also sign her name very well when she was taking out leases after Richard's death in 1756.

The Brighstone Rate Books and the signatories helped me out with the next two generations back, both called William GOSDEN. The earlier one lived from 1649 to 1722, possibly rather a long time I thought. However, the signatures are definitely different before and after 1722. It is with the second William (1680-1736) my 6x great grandfather, that things get interesting.

Like his son, Richard, after him, there are many of his signatures in the Brighstone Rate Books as well as leases and his will. He made a new will in 1729 after his wife had died, but then, in 1735, he added a codicil stating '*This Codicill I writ with my own hand*'. It basically said that his son Richard couldn't be trusted to marry a suitable woman; that is, one that did not have or was not worth £100. This had to be proved to three people and if they '*Did not lick off*' her then Richard only got a shilling. William may have had



Signature of William Gosden [1680-1736] - codicil to his will, 1729

cause to worry as Richard, just five months before he married Anstes Lawrence in 1742, acknowledged his illegitimate daughter by Ann CAWSE as Mary Gosden at her baptism.

A fellow descendant of William is Jan Toms, a well-known Freshwater author. She knew someone who did handwriting analysis – well, of course, we had to have it done. It was very in depth, running to four A4 pages.

It suggested that due to his upbringing he missed out emotionally and had a chip on his shoulder. He was proud of his achievements through hard work, but was unable to express loving and affectionate thoughts. He liked to be correct socially and while a bit of a loner he could relate intuitively to others.

Mentally he was mature and alert, with an analytical mind, rather pedantic, but could think creatively. His sense of humour could be tinged with sarcasm. He had a strong sense of obligation and responsibility, but would want to get his own way in the end and could be a bit tetchy. How much this analysis is owed to the actual text and to 20th/21st century values is difficult to know.

The analysis of William's handwriting was very interesting and, while my signature is not like his, my 'd' is exactly the same – but which of his traits does that relate to?

Hilary LLOYD (IWFHS Member 14)

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

Appuldurcombe House and What the Papers Said - Part 6



Western end of the house showing the Porte Cochere -
A covered entrance for carriages to drive through

In August 1861, the *Hampshire Advertiser* reported on the Isle of Wight Petty Sessions:

‘The Appuldurcombe Hotel License – The Rev. Mr LEA, the proprietor of the Appuldurcombe hotel, addressed the bench on the subject of their refusing the application of Sarah WATSON for the transfer of the licence of that hotel to her, on the previous Saturday. He had been informed that Mr. J.H. HEARN had stated to them that he had turned a person out, and made some strong remarks. He hoped any remarks which had fallen from Mr. Hearn had not prejudiced the bench in coming to the decision to refuse the application. The Chairman said that the rev. gentleman had been misinformed. They had refused the application on the ground that the applicant was not a responsible party to whom the license could be transferred, she being by her own showing a servant in his employ.

The rev. gentleman appeared to be surprised at hearing this, and remarked that she had denied to him that she had made such statement.'

The *Hampshire Advertiser* also reported in August 1861:

'Appuldurcombe Park. – The costly Equipment of the Mansion, recently supplied from the principal Manufacturers in London: also a Gasometer, with all the expensive apparatus and Fittings. MESSRS. FRANCIS PITTIS and SON have to announce their instructions to SELL by AUCTION under a Bill of Sale, during the present month, the extensive and valuable assemblage of EFFECTS, which will be described in a future advertisement, stating the days of sale. Newport, Isle of Wight, August 8th, 1861.'

The *Isle of Wight Observer* stated its views in August 1861 on the sad demise of the hotel:

'APPULDURCOMBE HOTEL – And so a break up of this establishment is decreed, is it? Well, we are sorry for it. We had hoped in time to have witnessed a first-rate business carried on in a first-rate style at the Appuldurcombe Hotel, and which we hoped would have been for the benefit of the whole island. Instead of this we see that a petition for winding up the company has been presented, and placards announce the selling off by auction of the entire stock of furniture, etc., at an early period.'

In January 1862 the *Salisbury & Winchester Journal* reported the death of the Earl of Yarborough, after a prolonged illness, who died at Brighton. One of his titles was Baron WORSLEY, of Appuldurcombe, Isle of Wight. The Earl inherited Appuldurcombe from his late father in 1846 and sold the house and estate in the 1850's.

In June 1862 both the *Leamington Spa Courier* and *Isle of Wight Observer* reported the death of Robert Vaughan Wynne WILLIAMS, aged 63 years, late of 10, Upper Brook-street, Grosvenor-square, London who was the owner of Appuldurcombe House. Robert and his infant son – Heriot James Wynne WILLIAMS are laid to rest at All Saints Church, Godshill.

Back to the hotel – the *Hants Advertiser* reported in August 1862:

‘Gasometer for Sale at Appuldurcombe Park, Isle of Wight. –

To be Sold by Auction, by

MESSRS. FRANCIS PITTIS and SON, at the Star Inn, in Newport, Isle of Wight, on Thursday, the 21st of August, 1862, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon precisely, the GASOMETER recently erected by the Appuldurcombe Park Hotel Company, in the Isle of Wight, comprising a gas holder 25 feet diameter, 10 feet deep, with iron guide columns, rollers, valves, syphons and stand pipes, also a cast iron dry lime purifier, a condenser, three cast iron retorts and 700 yards of 3in cast iron main pipe.

The above are from the manufactory of Amos Fletcher, Dudley.

May be viewed previously, and particulars obtained from Francis Pittis and Son, Newport, Isle of Wight.’

In October 1862 the *Hampshire Advertiser* reported on:

‘THE STORM AND THE FLOOD – The heavy rains of Saturday and Sunday, and the strong gale which blew on Sunday night, has caused a considerable amount of damage in several parts of the island. We hear of trees uprooted, chimneys blown down, roofs stripped, bridges carried away, houses and homesteads wash out, but happily no loss of human life on shore. The loss of live farm stock, too, has been very inconsiderable, though a score or two of fat pigs and some sheep had to swim for their lives.

At Wroxal a man was standing for shelter in a wooden door porch, when the flood came and swept away the porch and the man in it down the stream; the man received some injuries, but his life was saved. The dwelling house and buildings of Span Farm, Wroxal, were flooded, the house, furniture, some dead stock, etc, destroyed. The flood left a deposit of about seven loads of gravel against Span Farmhouse, and mud and sand in the basement of the house a foot deep. At Appuldurcombe the flood did some considerable damage. A portion of the enclosure wall on the west side of the park was washed away.’

The *Hampshire Telegraph* in October 1863 reported the exciting find of a Roman urn filled with Roman coins:

‘THE ROMANS IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT – On Friday last, as the workmen employed on the eastern section of the Isle of Wight Railway were making a cutting near the little hamlet of Wroxall, in the vicinity of Lord Yarborough’s former seat of Appuldurcombe, they came upon an urn filled with Roman coins. Unfortunately the urn was broken up, and the contents partially dispersed before its value was discovered; but a considerable number of the coins, of which there appears to have been some thousands, together with the fragments of the urn, still remain in the possession of George Smith, the foreman (but for whom the whole would have been carted away with the rubbish), in addition to a large number that have found their way into the stores of private collectors. The urn, which was a perfectly plain one of baken clay, lay about 5ft. beneath the surface. No bones or marks of interment were discovered near it. This is by far the largest find of Roman coins ever made in the Isle of Wight, though a considerable number have been discovered scattered about in different parts. The coins still await examination by a qualified antiquary. The earliest noticed in a cursory survey is one of Claudius, by whom, or rather his General, Vespasian, the Island was first reduced under the Roman yoke.’

The *Hampshire Independent* dated July 1865 reported that:

‘The teachers of the United Methodist Free Church gave the Sunday school scholars a treat on Tuesday last, when a public picnic was, by permission, held in Appuldurcombe park. The weather was exceedingly fine, and the pleasures of the afternoon were greatly enjoyed by both young and old. The procession, both on going and returning, was preceded by the Temperance brass band.’

Lesley ABRAHAM (IWFHS Member 540)
lesley@kitechillfarm.co.uk

Sources:

British Newspaper Archives

Appuldurcombe House – English Heritage – for reference

Ground Floor Plan of Appuldurcombe House – Ancient Monuments
Dept, Kensington, 1947.

Census Counting by Electricity – Machine to help the Registrar General

‘The report on the census to be taken on 1st April will be, for the first time in English history, a machine-made article. All the interesting, shocking and pathetic details will be sorted by electrically propelled labour-saving machines, instead of a host of gentlemen armed with quill pens sifting mountains of foolscap to ascertain the number of undertakers in the land, etc.

A youth or maiden will place bundles of cards in the top of a machine and turn on the electrical current. They will take out the cards, by then, sorted into separate packets and place them into another machine which records the numbers. Not only will the machine tell precisely the number of undertakers, but also how many are aged 35 to 40, or 40 to 50, etc. Any intelligent youth or girl can take a roomful of census schedules which have been filled in by householders, prepare the cards, put them in the machines and take out the results.

The census ‘operator’ sits before a kind of pocket typewriter and slips a thin Manilla card underneath which is printed in columns corresponding to those on the census paper. Someone then reads out the information given by Mr Bones and the operator punches a small round hole in the correct places on the card. Every person in England will have a card. A duke, one card and no more; one card for a dustman and no less. All the vital facts of the English nation will be represented by so many round holes in 36,000,000 Manilla cards.

The machine is fascinating to watch, it is like a four-legged stool made of metal, about five feet high. An electrical brush can only make contact through the holes which sorts the cards. It can be set so, for instance, all stockbrokers can be extracted into a pile. A score or so of the machines have been hired by the census authorities from the British Tabulating



Hollerith Card Sorter
(Science Museum)

Machine Company. The last two American censuses had been tabulated by the machine, the invention of a man from Washington.'

Extracted from an article in the Daily Express dated Tuesday 7 March 1911.

Hilary LLOYD (IWFHS Member 14)

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

A Personal Timeline

The automation described in the Daily Express article (above) allowed the General Register Office to handle massive volumes of data with unprecedented speed and accuracy, enabling complex cross-tabulations that would have been physically impossible to calculate by hand. This transition from manual tallying to mechanical 'unit records' laid the architecture for modern electronic data processing.

5 decades after the 1910 Census, the unit record department of most big businesses was populated by a brigade of card processing machinery and their attendant dedicated staff. Arriving there as a very junior programmer direct from university, I had to take my sheaves of PL/I coding sheets with me to an 026 key-punch in the corner of a large room full of rather intimidating 'key-punch girls'.

The resulting decks of 80-column cards were piled into the hopper of a card reader to be compiled and executed on the new-fangled mainframe computer which I had programmed with complex algorithms, storing the data internally rather than requiring the physical manual labour of moving stacks of punched cards between separate sorting, tabulating and printing machines. A major advance.

Today, after a further **6 decades**, the processor in my mobile phone does more work 'in the blink of an eye' than my 60s mainframe could do in a whole day of continuous operation and the physically enormous storage disks in the old machine would have been far too small to save even a single low-resolution photo from the phone.

Steve NEWBERRY (IWFHS Member 2189)

Journal Editor

journal.editor.iowfhs@gmail.com

Isle of Wight Railway Staff in the World Wars of the 20th Century

We are occasionally asked whether there are any memorials to the railwaymen of the Island railways who served in World War I or World War II. Recently we had a request from a volunteer at the Isle of Wight Steam Railway along these lines (no pun intended) as the IWSR are considering erecting such a Memorial.

For WW I there is an excellent source of information – on 14th May 1919, there was a commemorative service at St Paul's Cathedral in London, and the Order of Service contained the names of over 20,000 railway workers in the United Kingdom who had died. These names are recorded in at least two online sources:

Roll of Honour 'Lest we forget'

<https://www.roll-of-honour.com/Databases/FallenRailwayWorkers/index.html>

National Railway Museum

<https://fallenrailwaymen.omeka.net>

The information in both is essentially the same. The big mainland companies such as the Great Western Railway erected memorials in several stations and printed lists were distributed as posters to be displayed also. As far as we know, none of the Island Railways erected memorials and the Southern Railway does not name, on the Waterloo Station Memorial, any of their employees who died in WW II. For World War I, we have identified these men:

Isle of Wight Central Railway

- George Henry ASH: Clerk
Rifleman, 1/8th Bn Hampshire Regt (Isle of Wight Rifles)
Died in Malta 2 Oct 1915
- F COOK[E]: Platelayer
Royal Garrison Artillery
(*No details of death known*)

- Arthur James PARKINSON: Clerk
Rifleman, 1/8th Bn Hampshire Regt (Isle of Wight Rifles)
Died 19 Apr 1917 Palestine
- Charles PHILLIPS: Coal Porter
Stoker 1st cl. H.M.S. Good Hope
Died 1 Nov 1914, at sea
- Charles George VINCENT: Clerk
Rifleman, 1/8th Bn Hampshire Regt (Isle of Wight Rifles)
Died 9 Jan 1916 at sea
Buried at Netley Hospital, Hampshire

Isle of Wight Railway

- Joseph Henry JACKSON: Porter
Private, 2nd Bn Hampshire Regiment
Died 28 Apr 1915 Gallipoli
- Archie Jabez LACEY: Engine Cleaner
Rifleman, 1/8th Bn Hampshire Regt (Isle of Wight Rifles)
Died 19 Apr 1917 Palestine

Freshwater, Newport and Yarmouth Railway

- Frederick Jacob OAKLEY: Pass Guard
Serjeant, 2nd Bn Suffolk Regiment
Died 11 May 1915 Belgium

Two other men could be considered for inclusion, but as the references to the Isle of Wight come only from the fact that their widows lived on the Island following WW I, then it is likely that they only worked on the mainland for the Great Western Railway.

- George William BRINE: Porter, Marston Magna
Private, Wiltshire Regiment
Died 29 Dec 1918, Germany
- Thomas William WILKS: Clerk, Paddington
Private, London Regiment
Died 29 Mar 1918, France



The position regarding any employees who died in WW II is not so easy to determine. There seems to be no central record of fallen railwaymen or women for the United Kingdom.

The only source we have been able to use is the *Isle of Wight County Press Archive*. Most deaths were reported and many give brief biographical details including their places of work. From this we have identified three men of the Southern Railway who died – coincidentally all airmen who served in Bomber Command who lost their lives on air operations over Europe.

- Leslie HARRIS: Porter, Alverstone
Flight Sergeant (Navigator), 76 Sqn RAFVR
Died 29 Jun 1943 over Belgium
- Richard John POWELL: Porter, relief staff
Flight Sergeant (Air Gunner), 7 Sqn RAFVR
Died 29 Jun 1944 over France
- Roy WHITTINGTON: Clerk
Sergeant (Flight Engineer), 90 Sqn RAFVR
Died 16 Sep 1944 over Holland

We are also trying to build up a picture of those who also served their country and survived the wars; many railway workers were in reserved occupations or were too old to be taken into the armed forces, but it is likely that many served in auxiliary roles such as the Home Guard or ARP services.

We would be pleased to receive any further information about other railway workers who died or served.

Geoff ALLAN (IWFHS Member 392)
Chairman

chairman.iowfhs@gmail.com



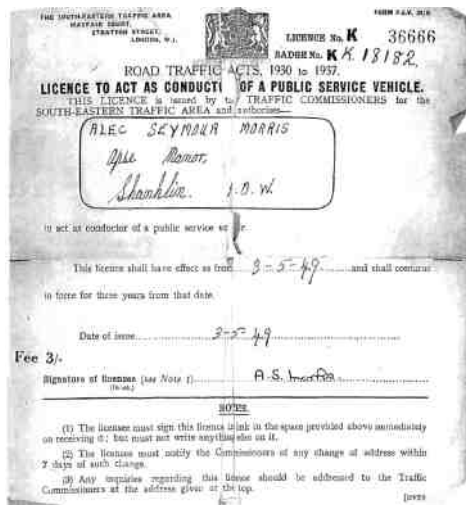
Archie Jabez LACEY in the uniform of the Isle of Wight Rifles prior to going abroad.
Image courtesy of Ann Ryder

Road Passenger Transport and The Isle of Wight Bus and Coach Museum

A Talk by Andrew Morris

Andrew's fascinating talk outlined the evolution of road passenger transport on the Isle of Wight, tracing its history from 19th-century horse-drawn coaches to the modern era of nationalised and privatised bus services as preserved by the Isle of Wight Bus and Coach Museum.

But first, Andrew explained how he became interested in the subject and he introduced us to his father, Alec Seymour MORRIS (29 Nov 1930 – 15 Jan 2010).



Alec Morris' Bus Conductor Licence

Alec was employed as a Temporary Conductor at the Newport Depot in 1949 and was transferred to the Shanklin Depot in 1954. He was appointed Depot Clerk there in 1978 and after the Shanklin Depot closed in 1984 continued in the same role at Newport and Ryde until he retired in 1995 with 46 years' service.



Conductor Badge



Alec met his wife Mavis Jean KIMBER in the Spring of 1953 on the bus going to work and he evidently made a lasting impression on her as after a year of courting they were married at the Congregational Chapel in Newbridge in 1954. Andrew was born four years later.

Early transport relied on stagecoaches like the *Rocket* and *Civility* and while railways expanded significantly between 1862 and 1900, local carriers remained vital for village connectivity.

The first motorised efforts, such as the Isle of Wight Express Motor Syndicate (1905), struggled with unsuitable vehicles and road conditions leading to the winding up of the company in 1907.

The inadequacy of Island transport was revealed to Frank DODSON the son of a London horse-bus builder. When visiting Osborne House he had to walk two miles from Whippingham Station. He was convinced of the potential for a bus service and began running single deck Daimlers and his family company changed to building the bodies for petrol engine buses. In September 1922 Frank Dodson set up business in Watergate Road, Newport. The company was renamed Vectis Bus Company in 1923.

Following the Railway Act of 1928, Southern Railway purchased the company which was incorporated as Southern Vectis Omnibus Company Limited (1929-1960s). This period saw a rapid growth in passenger numbers and the challenges of WW2, where a third of the fleet was requisitioned and services were strictly curtailed for the war effort.

Under the National Bus Company (1969-1986), local identities were replaced by a strict corporate image, notably a 'Leaf Green' livery and the direct association with British Railways ended.

From 1986, deregulation led to a management buyout of Southern Vectis in 1986, followed by the 'minibus era'. In 2005, the company was acquired by the Go Ahead Group, becoming part of the Go South Coast regional collective.

The Isle of Wight Bus and Coach Museum was founded in 1997 by a group of enthusiasts, most of whom owned or part owned a bus or coach and needed collectively to provide secure, undercover accommodation.

The Museum is currently housed in a historic 1937 Art Deco depot designed by H J STARKEY of Mayfair, the chief architect for the Tilling Group. The museum in Ryde preserves the Island's transit legacy. Key exhibits include:

- **Civility Stagecoach** - a rare survivor of the horse-drawn era. Built 1880 by Newport-based Richard Bird CHEVERTON and originally operated by Albert Emmanuel VANNER & Son. Famously named *Civility* in mock deference to a rebuke from Queen Victoria's Royal Coachman at Osborne House following a road rage incident on Lushington Hill.
- **Daimler DL 5084** – An original 1920s vehicle salvaged from use as a garden shed which is currently a long-term restoration project. This is the latest project for our volunteers which will take many years and 10s of thousands of pounds to achieve – a complete rebuild from the ground up. The vehicle is now completely in bits and most of the wooden bodywork has been scrapped.



- Dennis Ace DL 9015** – These compact buses were known as pigs because of their long bonnets that resemble snouts. They were ideal for the Island's narrow winding roads in the 1930s. As times changed the Aces started to look old and were sold or used for other purposes. The bus at our museum was the last to be withdrawn. In 1958 it was sold to Medina Holiday Camps where it stayed for five years. After changing hands several times Derek PRIDDLE paid to have her restored to the pre-war condition she is now in.



- Bristol K5G EDL 657** - They don't make them like this anymore...and for good reason as countless downstairs passengers banged their heads when they stood up to get off. This is an important vehicle in our collection as it represents the sunken gangway double decker design from the 1940s. Four-seater benches were introduced upstairs with a sunken gangway to the right. This meant that the overall height of the bus could be reduced in order to run under the Island's many low railway bridges.



- Bristol Lodekka SDL 628** - This bus is lower than the normal double deckers which came before, by about 12 inches, hence the name



Lodekka. Her revolutionary design with a drop centre rear axle meant that the vehicle could fit under low bridges so around 75 were ordered over a long period. She was part of the Southern Vectis vintage fleet until 1995 when she joined the Museum.

Andrew's talk emphasised the transition from fragmented private carriers to a unified professional service, highlighting how vehicle designs such as the 'sunken gangway' and 'Lodekka' were specifically introduced because of the island's unique geography and infrastructure.

A visit to the Bus Museum is a Journey Through Time where you can explore a meticulously restored fleet ranging from Victorian horse-drawn transport to the 'bread van' minibuses of the 1980s. Witness ground-up rebuilds in progress, where the volunteers breathe life back into local treasures like the 1920s Daimler, once salvaged from use as a garden shed.



Learn the local legends behind the vehicles, including the 'road rage' incident that gave the stagecoach *Civility* its name and enjoy the atmosphere of our Grade-II style home, designed by the legendary H.J. Starkey, which once housed 30 buses serving the bustling Ryde routes.

The museum opens for the season on Sunday 5th April 2026. Full details of opening hours and special events can be found on the website: <https://www.iwbusmuseum.org.uk/>

Admission to the museum is FREE for all.

Steve NEWBERRY (IWFHS Member 2189)
Journal Editor
journal.editor.iowfhs@gmail.com

Report of a talk given to the Society on 2nd March 2026

Records Office Update

The Isle of Wight Council have, yet again, changed their website and menu hierarchy (or 'upgraded' it, as they insist).

As a result the County Records Office and Registrars URLs found in the 'Some Useful Addresses' page of previous IWFHS Journals have become invalid.

The new Records Office website can currently be found in the IOW Council menu hierarchy under 'Museums and Heritage':

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/article/1853/Records-office-and-archive>

The Registrars website (under 'Births, deaths and ceremonies') is:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/registrars>

Happily, the Records Office is fully open again following the recent closure for essential maintenance works.

The bad news is that their parking facilities are suspended until further notice. This is due to major demolition works at a nearby site.

The closest parking is now at Newport Harbour. See the new website for details and opening times:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/article/1858/Using-the-Record-Office>

Family History can be found under 'Births, deaths and ceremonies' at:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/article/1255/Family-history>

Steve NEWBERRY (IWFHS Member 2189)

Journal Editor

journal.editor.iowfhs@gmail.com

Crematorium Open Day

The Isle of Wight Crematorium is holding an Open Day on Saturday 30th May 2026 between 10am and 2pm to mark a significant milestone; the 65th anniversary of the first cremation on the Island (30th May 1961). Before that date there were no cremation



facilities on the Island and the closest mainland crematorium was at South Stoneham (opened in 1932). Cremation was relatively rare for Island residents before 1961 because of the logistical difficulties of transporting a body across the Solent.

Members of the IW Family History Society have been invited to the event which will have a 1960s theme with a display of 1960s vehicles from local classic car and motorbike clubs as part of the celebration. Visitors are encouraged to wear 1960s-inspired clothing and accessories.

There will be guided tours led by knowledgeable staff and the opportunity to explore the tranquil ancient woodland setting and the grounds which include woodland paths, a babbling brook, a wildflower meadow and formal gardens.

Visitors can enjoy the natural beauty and learn about the various flora and fauna that inhabit the area, including hedgehogs, red squirrels, and woodland birds. The Friends Groups who play a crucial role in maintaining and preserving these spaces will be present to share their experiences and encourage community involvement.

The Isle of Wight Crematorium is at Whippingham, PO32 6NJ

Steve NEWBERRY (IWFHS Member 2189)

Journal Editor

journal.editor.iowfhs@gmail.com

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/article/1853/Records-office-and-archive>

Isle of Wight Register Office

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

registrars@iow.gov.uk

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/registrars>

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>

Shanklin

<https://shanklinhistory.net/>

Ventnor

<https://ventnorheritage.org.uk>

Family History Federation

<https://www.familyhistoryfederation.com>

The National Archives

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

SAVE THE DATE
ONE DAY CONFERENCE
SATURDAY 5th SEPT 2026



Methodist Church, Quay Street, Newport PO30 5BA

This year's One Day Conference
'Education on the Isle of Wight' will be held in
Newport Methodist Church

An exhibitors' display will be in
the rear hall, along with
refreshments

Booking information will be in
the yellow pages of the August
Journal





ISSN 1356-8256

www.isle-of-wight-fhs.co.uk

