



**Minutes & Information**  
**Zoom - Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021**  
**Present at the meeting**

Forum Members:

**Alex Lawson** – Cycling; **Cllr Paul Fuller** - Elected by IWC; **Mike Slater** – Ramblers; **Mick Lyons** – IWALC; **Richard Grogan** - AONB

Others & Observers:

**Jennine Gardiner**-IWC PROW - LAF Secretary; **Darrel Clarke** – IWC Rights of Way Manager, **Cindy Bentley**, **Helena Hewston**, **Cllr Steve Hastings**, **Dina Jung**, **Robyn Munt**, **Aileen Wood**, **John Truswell** (Natural England), **Kathy Domaille**, **Doug Alldred**, **Giles Alldred**, **Ben Agricola**, **Stuart George**, **Jan Brooks**, **David Howarth**, **Chole Walker-Panse** (Natural England), **Lee Matthews** (IWC)

Apologies

**John Heather** – NFU. **Tricia Merrifield** – LAF. **Petronella Natrass** – BHS

- **Confirmation of the Minutes of previous meeting** - Agreed

**Updates to tasks / matters arising from meeting of 3rd September 2020**

We did not have the time to review the September action points

**England Coast Path (ECP):** John and Chloe have recently taken on their roles as others have moved on, and they have resumed site visits from this week. There are coastal erosion issues that need addressing and they are awaiting advice from DEFRA. John is the lead for Stretch 1 (East Cowes to Wootton). Chloe is the lead for the rest of the route and is currently working on objections and representations (11 objections and 45 representations).

What are the objections? NE will not release details of the objections or who made them, after getting legal advice regarding confidentiality. This is because they would not want anyone to be identified and be subject to outside pressure. However, the planning inspectorate may do this once their report is published. Refer to Section 52 notice on Gov.uk website to see how the planning notice is laid out (link to an example but not Isle of Wight) :

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coastal-access-section-52-notice-for-iwade-to-grain/notice-by-the-secretary-of-state-under-section-52-of-the-national-parks-and-access-to-the-countryside-act-1949-iwade-to-grain-lengths-igr1-to-igr3>

Stretch 1 update – still in consultation as it is a complex area of landownership, alignment, and sensitive features. Conversations ongoing in background with landowners and stakeholders. Landowners have been notified of Covid related delays. The principles of safe alignment are to try and get as close as possible to the periphery of the coast or provide a route with sea views. Porchfield and Thorness MoD land. General principles mean MoD land is excluded from coastal access.

Disabled access - NE will try to take a realistic option of replacing stiles with gates and ramps into paths.

**Restoring your railway bid** - Robert did not attend as the opportunity to comment had closed. However, the Bus Users Group made a response to the consultation.

**Active Travel** – Lee Matthews explained that the Department for Transport (DfT) has launched a Capability Fund scheme for 2021/22 which has replaced the Access Fund. The IWC has applied and been granted funding. There will be an e cycle extension fund (\*we did not have details of this scheme at the LAF meeting but the project has since been launched and the press release is as follows):

## **Council wins e-bike funding**

More than 1,500 Islanders will have the chance to go electric this summer with the roll-out of a series of innovative electric bike pilot projects across the Island, delivered by the Isle of Wight Council.

The plans include an e-bike roadshow, e-bike hire and loan schemes working in partnership with local cycle hire operators, and an e-cycle corridor along the Newport to Cowes cycle-path.

The projects will focus on introducing Islanders to e-bikes in a safe, structured manner, focussing on residents from groups which have traditionally been less attracted to cycling.

The announcement has been made possible thanks to a £132,920 grant from the Department for Transport's E-Cycle Extension Fund — from which the council was one of only nine local authorities to secure funding.

The projects included in the Isle of Wight programme are:

- a subsidised e-bike hire scheme working with local cycle hire operators;
- a dedicated fleet of e-bikes available for loan for up to one month;
- an e-bike roadshow offering people the opportunity to try e-bikes in a safe setting;
- a peer to peer e-bike share scheme, allowing e-bike owners to receive an income in return for making their bikes available for others to use;
- an e-bike corridor utilising the Red Squirrel Trail cycle-path between Newport and Cowes, giving local residents the opportunity to use e-bikes as an alternative to their car.

Between people being at home with more time on their hands, residents itching to spend more time outdoors after lockdown, and commuters looking for socially distant ways to get to work while avoiding public transport, the Island has witnessed a cycling boom over the past 12 months.

The new projects are additional and complimentary to the council's popular Key Worker Cycle Scheme, part of its Access Fund programme, which has enabled more than 500 residents to receive a complimentary bike loan or cycle repair since April last year.

It is anticipated the latest projects will further support the bicycle renaissance and make it easier for Islanders to choose zero-emission and active travel options.

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/news/Council-wins-e-bike-funding>

**LCWIPs** In addition to the e bike this round of funding will also encourage Town and Parish Councils to create Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) in a standard format that the DfT require to be used as a lever for getting future grants for walking and cycling: Cowes, Gurnard & Northwood, the Bay and West Wight are being encouraged to apply but all town and parish council will be invited to apply including rural ones like Havenstreet and Newchurch who have in the past missed out on opportunities or lack frequent bus services. These new LCWIP's will then link into existing plans i.e. Cyclewight and ROWIP. In the meantime, we are awaiting news about sustainable funding for capital and revenue schemes.

**Gunville Greenway** Cyclists are disappointed that only a small part of this potential route has been opened. Lee confirmed that this is still developing and ongoing.

**Mews Lane to Riverside Centre** – a surfacing scheme should be implemented later this year/next year.

**West Wight Greenway**– Lee has reminded everyone that it will be a team effort within the IWC to secure funding required to create this much desired link between West Wight and Newport. Darrel confirmed on site meetings were happening and is gaining momentum and support from landowners. There was a planning application for Lee Farm (21/00684/FUL) which if approved may secure part of this route in mitigation, and even if the Greenway doesn't go ahead it will at least restore the lost permissive access.

**Sandown to Newport cycle track closure**– Alec thanked Rights of Way and the H&IWWT who have worked together at the last minute to agree a diversion route. Bad planning on the part of Southern Water and Island Roads as SW had known about this for last 18 months but even back in January 2021 no one else knew about this forthcoming closure.

LAF to write to Highways Contract Management Team about the lack of notice for this and other big projects (SW & IR knew about this for a long time) - make representation to Colin Rowlands (IWC Director of Neighbourhoods) regarding utility companies giving more notice and that advance notice is provided to users groups and to generally improve communications about works on the

highway network that impact Rights of Way users / cyclists. Lee has a meeting with Jayne Dando (IWC Strategic Manager Highways & Transport) next week about improved communications

**ACTION:** Paul Fuller will send email to Colin and Jayne

**Electric Motorbikes** – Ben Agricola is a green lane (byways – BOAT) user. Lightweight electric motorbikes are gaining in popularity but fall into normal motorcycle legislation. However due to the lightweight nature of these bikes they cause less damage to the surface of unsealed tracks. In the winter the rural byways network is closed to motor vehicles due to the surface damage caused to the wet unsurfaced tracks, which then poses safety problems to walkers, equestrians and cyclists and is very costly to repair.

Ben wants the LAF to know that closing the byways in winter to motor vehicles has a big impact on electric motorbike use which do not cause surface damage. Could the Traffic Regulation Order be adjusted to relate to 4 wheeled traffic only (ie open for all 2-wheeled traffic)?

Members asked how would the Police know the difference between a petrol and electric motor bike when it came to practical enforcement? We need to know what is happening in other areas regarding good practice before we would start to have informed discussions.

**ACTION:** Ben to get more information for next meeting

### **Updates from last meeting:**

A few member resignations, advert for new LAF members will go out tomorrow in the IW observer.

**LAF Members** need to be proactive and lead on projects. Engage much more with the disabled community to make sure the rights of way are more accessible to everyone. Make disabled engagement the priority for the LAF in the next 12 months, including access to bus stops

Jan Brooks reminded everyone that there has to be a specific type of gate which helps disabled people gain access especially if in a scooter. The Ramblers donate a gate scheme replaces stiles with gates, and the ramblers are aware of the type of gate that suits mobility scooters but have to work with landowners who have concerns about stock control. The DaG scheme is in jeopardy as the ramblers don't have the volunteers to keep it going. Any LAF members interested in assisting with running the DaG?

Concerns raised that anyone who has not got access to a car is disadvantaged as connectivity is vastly disjointed and road walking / riding on main roads unsafe. Could simple and cheap options like segregating some of the road to create a footway occur?

**ACTION:** Donate a Gate info and a copy of the Ramblers last newsletter attached to these minutes

**ACTION:** Agenda item for next meeting; issues faced by disabled users

**ACTION:** Invite someone from Island Roads to the next meeting

**Hedge Cutting** – Steve Hastings was looking into this and Island Roads has said that flail cutting is a good process and the hedges come back. For information this is what Island Roads have on their website about hedge cutting:

Island Roads are responsible for maintaining a small number of hedges on land adjacent to the highway.

These hedges are cut by Island Roads. All cuttings are removed from the footway and/or road after cutting.

The maintenance of hedges that front the public highway are the responsibility of the owner of the land abutting the highway. This may be a private householder, a farmer, a company or the Council. Overgrown hedges cause safety problems to highway users, obstructing sight lines and causing potentially hazardous obstructions.

### **How can I report a hedge that is overhanging the highway?**

To report a hedge overhanging the highway, please contact the Island Roads' helpdesk on 01983 822440 or report this via our online form <https://fms.islandroads.com/>

### **What can be done to ensure that hedges other than those maintained by Island Roads are kept correctly?**

It is Island Roads' responsibility to maintain the safety of the highway network and to ensure that landowners responsible for any hedges bordering the highway maintain them to avoid problems. In many cases landowners are not aware of their responsibilities for maintaining hedges. When Island Roads becomes aware of a hedge requiring maintenance, an "Overhanging Hedge Notice" is served on the landowner or occupier under the Highways Act 1980. This gives the landowner 14 days to undertake the necessary maintenance work. In the event that the maintenance is not carried out and that no contact has been made with Island Roads, Island Roads may carry out the work itself and recharge the landowner.

Whether landowners cut the hedges themselves or use a contractor to carry out the work, all debris resulting from cutting the hedge must be removed from both the footway and the road and the work must be carried out in a safe manner which does not put themselves or other road users in danger.

**E-Scooters** – Paul is trying to get a meeting set up with Beryl <https://beryl.cc/bikeshare/isle-of-wight> If anyone has any issues then please email him [paulfulleriw@gmail.com](mailto:paulfulleriw@gmail.com) and he will take this up with Beryl and the officer overseeing this in the IWC highways team. Jan Brooks will send the minutes of her last meeting to Paul as her members had some issues such as scooters left lying on the ground, trip hazards. Paul needs a full response from the police on how they are viewing the pilot scheme i.e. are the roads being shared and are the scooters being used lawfully and safely? **ACTION:** Paul to write to police and copy in Donna Jones (Police & Crime Commissioner for Hampshire & IW) to say that they need to take enforcement action on **illegal privately owned electric scooters** (which are different to the Beryl ones lawfully being used under the trial scheme). Enforcement is the problem.

**Dimond Races cancelled for 2021** – 2 races / events – there is no actual proposal only media talk. ACU <https://www.acu.org.uk/> licencing body state they would not allow two races. Safety and consultation: Brighstone Parish Council will ask every resident their viewpoint in case the races should happen in future years. IoM safety statistics are scary on injury and deaths of riders and spectators. Steve Hastings has said he cannot support this event unless 100% safe and can't see how this can be achieved. **Giles Aldred** – can a TRO stop pedestrian access – until a proposal is put forward no IWC legal advice can be given regarding the TRO.

## **7. Updates**

### **IWC Rights of Way – Darrel Clarke**

Lots of closed paths reopened, Alum Bay steps, Forelands Bembridge. We have started our capital programme. A joint scheme in America woods with ramblers and bridleways group. John Brownscombe is now IWC full time England Coastal Path officer. Closed permissive path via Brighstone holiday centre, there was a meeting last week conversation seemed positive so hopefully we will be able to get this reopened.

### **Cyclewight**

1. Cycle Track Maintenance: There was a meeting yesterday between an IWC highway's inspector and CW who walked the section of track from Blackwater to nearly Herringford. The report is in progress but some understanding was reached.

2. Cycle Track Maintenance: Cyclewight is in touch with IWC contract manager over how various bodies work within IWC/Island Roads. A date is to be set for a meeting.

3. Cycle Track Closure: As per today's agenda, Cyclewight congratulates IWC/PROW and also HIWWT on the efforts to put a diversion in place for the Southern Water closure. We believe other



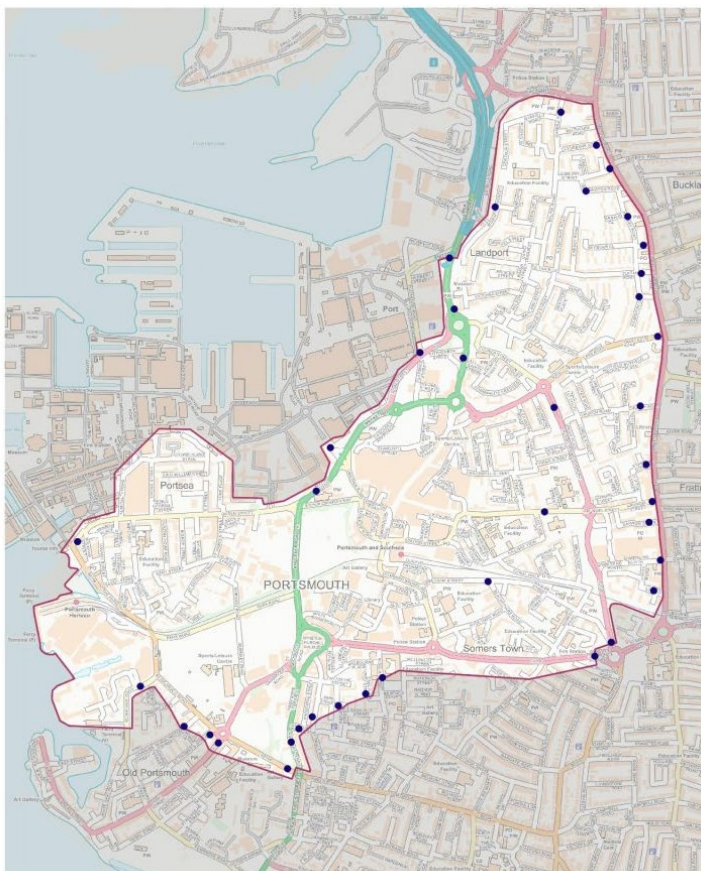
agencies could have done more to anticipate this problem. Also, we need signage which warns in advance of closures.

3 Active Travel: Cyclewight remains to be convinced that the emergency funds have been well spent.

4. The Gunville Greenway opening announced by IWC/PROW at the last LAF is welcome but we hope for a lot more, including the West Wight link.

[IW 4X4 Club](#) – No update

**Bridleways Group** – Portsmouth emission charge which is due to start in November 2021 and is applied to HGV's, Buses, coaches, taxis & private hire vehicles (not private cars). The bridleways group were concerned as many members have older horse boxes (HGV's) which might attract changes. Tricia could not come to this meeting so we will add this to next agenda so the IW bridleways group can let the group know what they wish the LAF to do. In the meantime, the area has been scaled back and the zone is now as the map below:



**CAZ Traffic Camera Locations**

Traffic Camera Locations are shown by the blue markers. These have been located at the best locations available in order to capture images of vehicles at the CAZ boundary.

Contains OS Data © Crown Copyright 2021

**Landowner** – [NFU](#) & [CLA](#) – nothing to raise.

[IW Ramblers](#) – 20 parish path reps walk all the paths in their allocated parish. But there are vacancies for Sandown, Newport, Godshill and Calbourne - if people want to be involved please contact Mike Slater.

**Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils ([IWALC](#))** - nothing to raise.

Next meeting: **4pm Thursday 2 September 2021**

# Are you looking for a novel, inspiring and lasting way to...

- mark the life and passing of a loved one;
- remember a loyal family pet;
- commemorate a special event;
- promote your organisation?

# Donate a Gate

... then becoming part of the Isle of Wight Ramblers' Donate a Gate scheme could be the answer.



For lovers of walking and the countryside, the Isle of Wight Ramblers' Donate a Gate scheme is an opportunity to set up a memorial that will provide practical ease of access for fellow walkers for years to come.

The scheme has been set up by the Ramblers and the Isle of Wight Council rights of way department, with support from the National Trust on the Island.

A donation of £490 will finance a new footpath gate, incorporating an oak plaque (similar to those above), locally engraved with a message of your choice, which will be placed at a suitable Island location.

In particular, by identifying stretches of footpath we would like to see wholly converted to gates, the Donate a Gate scheme is improving access to the countryside for those people who cannot easily negotiate stiles.

So not only will your gate be a personal memorial, it will also be improving access for families with young children, and less agile walkers who may find stiles a problem.

For more information and an application form, please go to [www.iowramblers.com/Donate a gate](http://www.iowramblers.com/Donate_a_gate).



ACCESS  
FOR ALL

# Application for Isle of Wight Ramblers' Donate a Gate scheme

To make an application to the scheme, please send the completed form with your donation cheque, payable to IOW Ramblers, to Mike Slater, Isle of Wight Ramblers Donate a Gate Organiser, 10 The Sheilings, Freshwater, Isle of Wight, PO40 9LL.  
Telephone: 01983 752997. Email: iowramblersms@hotmail.co.uk

Name ..... Tel no.....

Address .....

.....

..... Post code .....

Email .....

Location agreed with scheme organiser .....

.....

Proposed inscription (for 200mm [8in] diameter plaque, maximum 15 words) .....

.....

Please tick boxes:

- I have read and agree with the attached scheme terms and conditions.
- I am a tax payer and wish my donation to qualify for charity gift aid. (If you cease to pay tax on income at least equal to the amount donated please inform the scheme organiser).
- I wish to participate in the Donate a Gate scheme and enclose a cheque for £490 payable to IOW Ramblers.

Signed ..... Date .....

## Terms and conditions for Ramblers Donate a Gate scheme

1. My donation does not bestow upon me any rights to the ownership of the gate/structure.
2. Maintenance of the gate is the responsibility of the landowner.
3. As the gate Donor I am responsible for the maintenance of the plaque. (The Ramblers will replace plaques if required, the cost of replacement being borne by the Donor)
4. Gate locations are determined by landowners and ROW requirements. Donors can choose from gate locations agreed with landowners and listed on the IOW Ramblers website.
5. Gate installation will be completed as soon as possible, as part of the ROW programme, as determined by the nature, quantity and location of all the work to be carried out. Hence, a time limit cannot be imposed on installation.
6. Initially the Ramblers Donate a Gate Organiser will contact the Donor to agree the plaque artwork and to confirm the location of the gate. Finally, when installation has been completed the Donor will be informed.
7. The Ramblers will be the sole arbitrator if an inscription is considered unsuitable by the scheme organiser.
8. By agreeing to gift aid your £490 donation, IOW Ramblers will reclaim £122.50 of tax from HMRC for use on our charitable activities. To qualify for gift aid you must be paying income tax and/or capital gains tax for the current tax year (6th April one year to 5th April the next) that is at least equal to this amount.
9. Occasionally the route of a path or the use of the land over which it passes may change. In these circumstances the Landowner, ROW Department and IOW Ramblers will need to explore suitable arrangements for any donated gates affected.
10. Wooden donated footpath gates have an expected life of 15 to 25 years. When a gate is beyond economic repair, the landowner and ROW department will need to arrange for replacement.



# walktalk

## Summer miles... summer smiles

Thank heavens for that!  
Our walks leaders get  
busy again as lockdown –  
and the weather – relaxes

### IN THIS ISSUE...

- + First Word
- + A tribute to John Rolfe
- + Wales to Wight
- + Mad May on the Solent coast
- + Chillerton Down-load
- + Occes to Ordnance Survey
- + Coast with the most
- + Wood for the trees





## >> First word



With the continued loosening of covid regulations, The Ramblers can look forward to the future with some well-placed optimism. On the Island meanwhile, we are coming out of this uncertain period with some new volunteers – and renewed enthusiasm, says Chairman

David Howarth

The recent demise of some of our key volunteers reminds me of the importance of succession planning.

I am pleased to say that we have plans for new chairs of the main committees and I am sure that their enthusiasm will take the Ramblers forward.

I am delighted with the current members of our committees who have a great depth of skills and knowledge.

We are very fortunate to have these volunteers who work so hard to protect our footpaths and the countryside.

We will soon be seeing improvements to the path through America Wood.

This is thanks to a grant contribution and funding from IW Council, as well as IW Ramblers.

This is a popular bluebell walk, and the residents of Shanklin will be delighted with this major improvement.

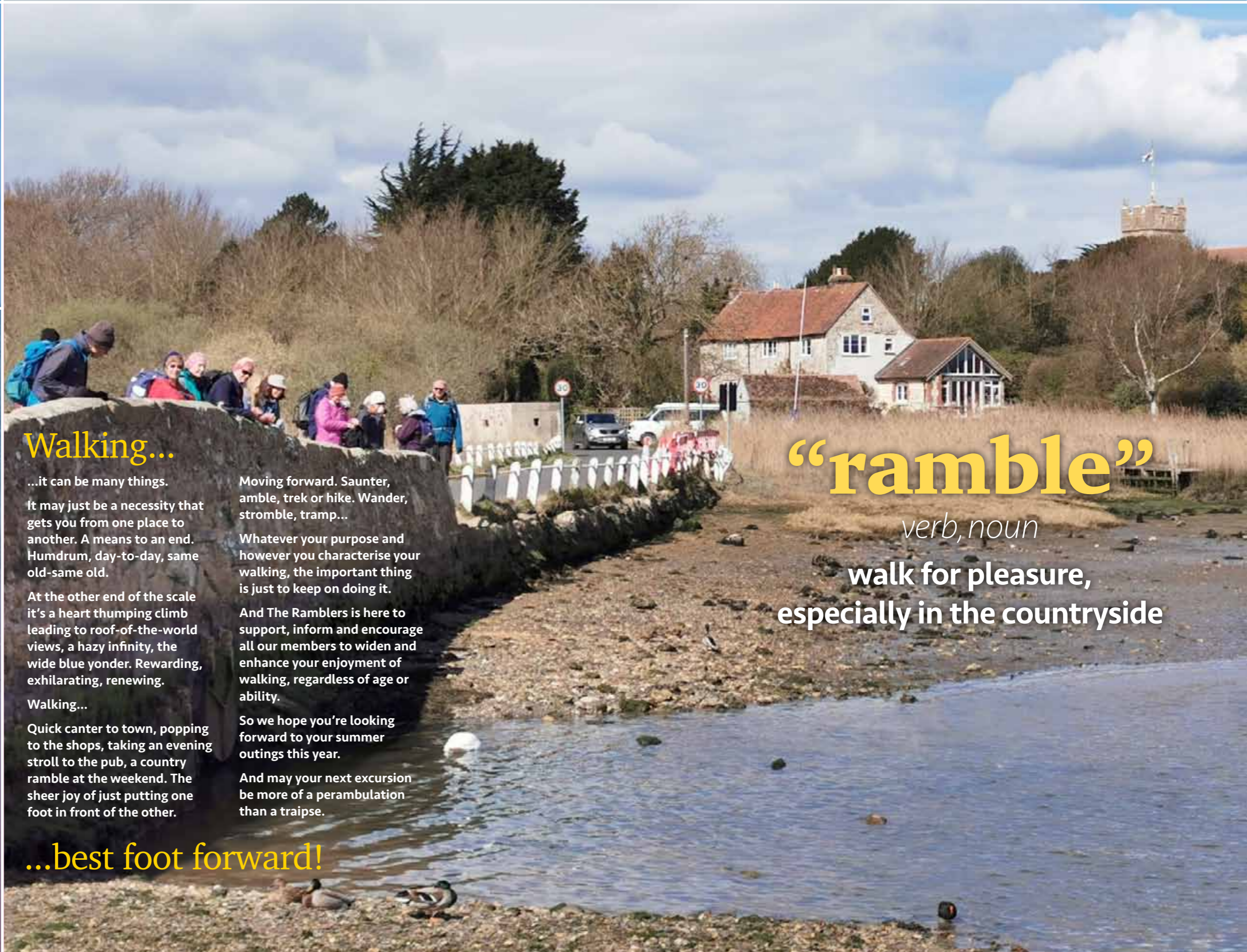
Our walks programme is beginning to take shape again, and I am mindful of the effects of coronavirus.

Walk leaders may be cautious of dealing with large groups of people.

So, it is better to gradually reintroduce walks at a pace that suits everyone.

We seem to be nearing the end of a trying period and can look forward to that magic green light soon.

David



### Walking...

...it can be many things.

It may just be a necessity that gets you from one place to another. A means to an end. Humdrum, day-to-day, same old-same old.

At the other end of the scale it's a heart thumping climb leading to roof-of-the-world views, a hazy infinity, the wide blue yonder. Rewarding, exhilarating, renewing.

Walking...

Quick canter to town, popping to the shops, taking an evening stroll to the pub, a country ramble at the weekend. The sheer joy of just putting one foot in front of the other.

Moving forward. Saunter, amble, trek or hike. Wander, stromble, tramp...

Whatever your purpose and however you characterise your walking, the important thing is just to keep on doing it.

And The Ramblers is here to support, inform and encourage all our members to widen and enhance your enjoyment of walking, regardless of age or ability.

So we hope you're looking forward to your summer outings this year.

And may your next excursion be more of a perambulation than a traipse.

### ...best foot forward!

# “ramble”

verb, noun

walk for pleasure,  
especially in the countryside

>> Please remember to always check The Ramblers main website for the most up-to-date advice on the status of our national activities – [ramblers.org.uk](http://ramblers.org.uk)





# It's good to **walk**talk

July 2021 membership total for the IW Ramblers **456**  
Main Group 403  
Wightssole 53

Want to join us? Just go to [www.iowramblers.com](http://www.iowramblers.com) and click on the membership link

### Area Council

Area Chair David Howarth 07477 600337  
Acting Secretary David Howarth 07477 600337  
Area Treasurer Carolyn Lymin 01983 565506  
Publicity, Social Media David Howarth 07477 600337  
Newsletter Editor Stephen Williams 07967 272066  
Footpath Secretary Mike Slater 01983 752997  
Membership Secretary Patricia Macaulay-Fraser 07894 466881  
Countryside Officer Maureen Le Roi 01983 612666  
Committee members Pam Dana 01983 863189  
Chris Slann 07794 699558  
Frankie Goldspink 07794 69955

### Group Committee

Chairman (Designate) David Yates  
Secretary Steve Gibson 07901555789  
Membership Secretary Patricia Macaulay-Fraser 07894 466881  
Walks Coordinator Steve Gibson 07901555789  
Treasurer Jackie H 01983 868517  
Newsletter distribution Tim H 01983 868517  
Committee members Roger Mann 07740 541153  
Carol H 01983 537445

### Footpath Sub-Committee

Area Secretary Mike Slater 01983 752997  
Planning John Hague 07779 208871  
Committee members Maureen Le Roi 01983 612666  
Howard Duffus 07428 461619

### Wight Sole Group

Chairman Gary 01983 867098  
Deputy Chair Tracey 01983 867603  
Treasurer Dave 01983 297304  
Membership Suzanne 01983 297304

### Items for the next edition of WalkTalk

WalkTalk is published in print and online three times a year, in April, August and December. Submissions to the next edition should be sent to David Howarth, by 7 November 2021.

Email: [davidhowarth220@btinternet.com](mailto:davidhowarth220@btinternet.com)  
Tel: 01983 759823, 07477 600337



Print: St Mary's Hospital Print Unit



## Heading on to **Headon**

Our cover picture says it all really. Finally, lockdown loosened its icy grip, the weather began cooperating, and our walks leaders emerged into the light – summer miles and summer smiles indeed.

As walktalk went to press a total of 20 led-walks, ranging from less than five miles to 18, have taken place since rules relaxed in April, when the resumption of sociable rambling with knowledgeable and engaging leaders was allowed.

IW Ramblers walks leader Linda Jones helped clear the cobwebs away for 15 participants on a West Wight walk in April, ascending Headon Warren and Tennyson Down on a crystal clear day, as our pictures here and on the cover reveal.

In June, Eric and Pat Priest headed up an eight-mile walk around Carisbrooke, taking in Garstons and Bowcombe and returning to Carisbrooke Priory via the Tennyson Trail (pictures, inset).

The group of eight enjoyed the intense



## **Wolverton Garden Fair is back!**



greens of the Island's early summer countryside, and there were far reaching views as far as Culver Down as fields and woods rolled away to the east.

Many, many thanks to Linda, Eric and Pat for arranging and leading these rambles, and indeed to all our walks leaders without whom these pleasureable outings would not take place.

If you think you'd like to join our bank of walks leaders, you'd be welcome. It's not difficult or arduous and you can lead as few or as many walks as you choose – it's entirely up to you. You won't necessarily have to train, and support and advice are readily available.

Please contact Steve Gibson, Walks Coordinator on the Group committee if you're interested, tel 07901 555789.

Isle of Wight Ramblers will be exhibiting at the Wolverton Garden Fair on Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th September.

We will be located in the environment tent alongside friends from other conservation organisations.

This is a good opportunity to chat to the public about the range of activities and the work that we do, and to encourage membership as well as selling guide books and maps.

We generally work in pairs in two-hour slots, all volunteers are given a pass for the show and briefing notes will be given to all helpers.

Would you like to volunteer? Just contact Chairman David Howarth on 07477 600337 or email [davidhowarth220@gmail.com](mailto:davidhowarth220@gmail.com)



## Introducing... **Volunteers at the heart of all we do**

Chris Slann and Frankie Goldspink, Area Council members, in the third of our *Meet the Committee* series

Chris and Frankie are accomplished adventure walkers who have travelled the world.

They have bagged Everest Base Camp, the Inca Trail, New Zealand's Tongariro Crossing, the Lycian Way, Camino de Santiago as well as, closer to home, the Coast to Coast, West Highland Way and all of Wainwright's 214 Lakeland tops.

Chris and Frankie are directors of the New Carnival Company, who work across the Island on carnival and outdoor events, including a number

of projects with IW AONB.

IW Ramblers has worked with the New Carnival Company at the "All along the Riverbank" series and at Mardi Gras Ryde.

They are currently planning our "Crossing the Bar" events in October when walks and local events will take place at six coastal locations.

Chris and Frankie both recently joined our Area Council and it good to have them on board.

## The Three Manors Walk

Every now and again, events conspire – with pleasing results. Linda Jones reports

I first walked the Three Manors Walk with friends and decided it would be good for the Ramblers.

When we recce'd it again, the owner of Stockbridge Manor, Justin, was just the other side of the gated entrance to the manor house and we struck up a conversation with him.

He was a great speaker and knew the history of the manor house – ghosts and all – very well.

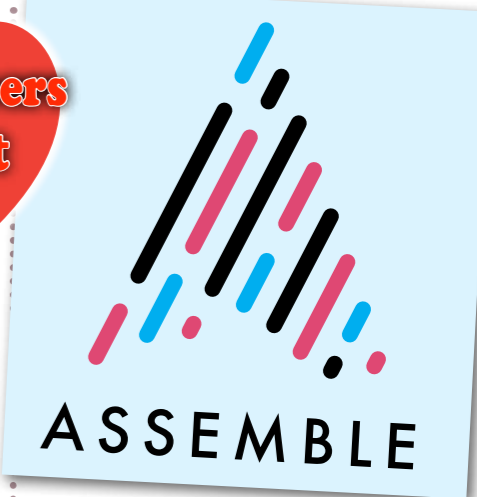
The house even has a connection to Garibaldi's love-child, who died aged 86, when he fell off the roof which he was repairing at the time!

Justin agreed to talk to us on our scheduled walk and on the day

he welcomed us into the gardens to view the house.

He gave an excellent potted history of the house and at the end we presented him with a thank-you gift of Garibaldi biscuits.

We hope at some stage in the future, he will be willing to invite us in again.



## A new website for our volunteers

Assemble is a one stop shop for Ramblers' volunteers where you can find all the information you might need to carry out your role.

You can also message other volunteers across Great Britain through the Message Centre, without using an email.

The profile for each volunteer is listed on the website and can be changed by that person, so check that everything is correct. Communications from the Ramblers will be dependent on the profile listed.

So how do you access Assemble?

Go to the Assemble Ramblers website <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone/assemble.aspx> and simply use your login email and password used for accessing the main Ramblers website.

For smartphone or tablet users, you can download the Ramblers Volunteering App, but this does not have the full functionality of the website.

There's a Document Hub, where there are lots of tips and guidance for your specific role and a News section so you can make sure you're always up to date with what's happening across the Ramblers.

The Training section will give everyone the opportunity to brush up their skills and knowledge at their own pace.

As a recorded volunteer, you will be covered by our liability and accident insurance when carrying out tasks. required by your volunteer role, which is really important.

The "Talk to Us" function within Assemble can be used to notify changes to roles.

When you use the 'Talk to Us' function, it sends an email to the Volunteering team so it's a good way of getting in touch.

A comprehensive guide to using this new facility can be found in the document hub on Assemble.



# A tribute to John Rolfe

**David Howarth remembers John Rolfe, a popular walks leader and committee member, who died in April following a long battle with cancer**

JOHN CAME FROM an established Totland family, and his Uncle Fred ran Broadway Garage near the war memorial.

He attended West Wight Secondary school in the early 1960s and then went into the building trade as a brick layer and a stone mason and remained a builder all his working life.

He lived in the West Wight until the early 2000s and then moved to Wellow, spending a year or so rebuilding and renovating his bungalow by himself, and then moved to Mill Street in Newport which is where he remained.

As well as rambling, John was also a keen sea angler.

He never learnt to drive but made full use of the excellent Island bus service.

He was also at one time a keen member of the Island Professionals social group and held some events jointly with IW Ramblers.

John's walking repertoire included his trip out to the

Needles at very low tide and of course, you were told to bring wellies. This walk involves going to Alum Bay and then following the rocky coast to the iconic Needles. This walk can only be attempted during a very low tide. Many people will know of Jill Green who accompanied John on this walk on three occasions. John was very particular with safety aspects, but the Needles walk was not for the faint-hearted: leaping from rock to rock on slippery surfaces and exploring long dark tunnels.

His 70th birthday walk to the Needles did not quite go to plan. At Alum Bay there were barriers to overcome and a loudhailer sounded telling them to "clear off!"

The group ended up in Totland Bay which in itself is quite a scramble. Birthday cake was nevertheless enjoyed by everyone.

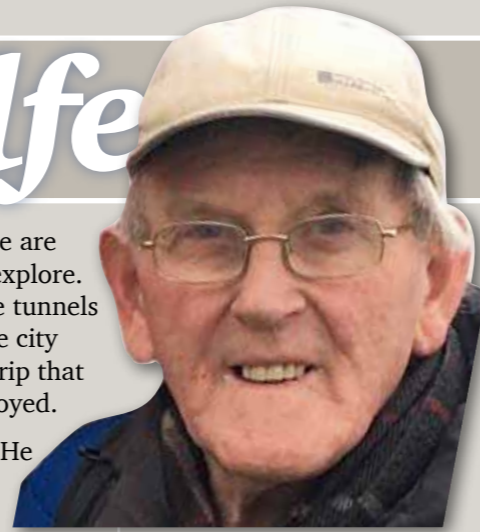
Another adventure for John was when Jill's son Fred took him to the stone quarries and Roman caves at Box in

Wiltshire where there are complex tunnels to explore. The stone from these tunnels was used to build the city of Bath. This was a trip that John thoroughly enjoyed.

John was a one off. He knew most Island footpaths well. If he came across a new area he would explore, and so organised his walks on a rather ad hoc basis. A five-mile walk might become an eight-mile ramble, or more. His walks were characterised by his consumption of a whole box of Mr Kipling apple pies. So the length of walk was perhaps determined by the number of pies remaining!

He had a passion for the countryside and organized a walk to wildlife meadows, as well as snowdrop and bluebell walks.

I recall a walk in 2011, organized with the Wildlife Trust, to visit a spectacular wild flower meadow. He always carried wildflower and fungi books and shared his knowledge with everyone.



We are very grateful for all he did volunteering for IW Ramblers, being a walk leader, sitting on committees, and organising events. We are planning to have a memorial gate for John in West Wight at Headon Warren at his preferred location and we will arrange special walks there to commemorate his life. John particularly liked this area and took groups of walkers to Warren Farm and enjoyed their cream teas.

Finally, I would like to thank our members who helped John during his illness – I know that there were many, and in particular Tina Eccles with her caring ways. I know also that Anne Parker helped with trips out. Roger Mann visited John many times.

**IW Ramblers has had numerous messages on social media; they show that John was seen as a devoted and popular Rambler, passionate about Island wildlife and countryside, an adventurer.**

*"Rambles will not be the same without him. His walks, knowledge, and humour brought enjoyment to so many"*

*"He will certainly be missed. He fought a courageous battle."*

*"John has gone on his last long walking adventure – and will be sorely missed."*

*"So sorry, a lovely guy."*

*"We will miss you lots. We had some fun times on lots of walks over the past 20 years. You will be sorely missed"*

*"John was a very popular walk leader who bravely fought his serious illness."*

*"Terrible to hear of John's passing. A real Island character and devoted walker. I will miss his unique banter and outdoor enthusiasm."*

*"Great guy, great stories and a great leader."*



**"Full of mischief and quite a character."**

# Wales to Wight

In June, Group's north Wales visitors were treated to a classic Isle of Wight walking weekend – but it was a little behind schedule, as Tim and Jackie Hough report

**OUR GROUP HAS** had two good holidays in Snowdonia, hosted by Prestatyn Ramblers, with some excellent walks.

Now it was IW Ramblers' turn to host our Welsh friends.

They finally made it to the Island in June after their original holiday was cancelled – twice – due to COVID restrictions.

Their party of 25 ramblers stayed at the Trouville Hotel in Sandown, from which they travelled by coach each day to the start of their walks, arranged and led by IW members.

The first walk was a circular from Godshell, taking in Appuldurcombe House and the Donkey Sanctuary for the short walkers as their afternoon had been booked at Osborne House.

Vernon led the long walkers up Gatcliff and over the downs to Ventnor and through Wroxall to pick up the short walk route back.

Tennyson Down was a requested route on their itinerary so the short walk started from Golden Hill Fort, down to the Causeway, a coffee stop at the End of the Line before reaching Freshwater Bay.

A lunch stop up at the Tennyson Monument with views to Hurst Castle and then onwards to the Rocket Testing Site and the Needles viewpoint.



The long walk started at Yarmouth, led by Roger and Julia with help from Eric and Pat, and took in Fort Victoria before continuing on a similar route as the short walk ending in Alum Bay.

Unfortunately the group's last day was wet, very wet!

The coach dropped the short distance walkers at Wroxall, then continued to Ventnor to drop the long walkers.

Vernon and myself had put together a route back to the hotel, taking in the highest Downs – we felt we had to take

them to our highest point St Boniface Down (241 metres) although it was never going to be anywhere near where they took us – Snowdon (1085 metres) and Moel Siabod (872 metres)!

We continued down the tricky wet "cliff steps" to Upper Hyde and through America Wood to Ninham, eventually joining the coast path. We said our soggy goodbyes in the Sandown Battery shelter where I was presented with a donation for our Donate A Gate Fund.

We all had an enjoyable long weekend!



Main picture The group pauses above the coloured sands of Alum Bay  
Inset Our Welsh visitors at Fremantle Gate



# Mad May on the Solent coast

Murky spring weather eventually subsided into balmy early summer – perfect for this ramble from Egypt Point to Thorness on the Island’s north-west coast

THERE’S CHARACTER AND curiosity on this walk from Egypt Point on the esplanade between Cowes and Gurnard.

The impermanence of this coastline – susceptible as it is to erosion – has an echo in the old-fashioned, faded appeal of some of the seaside chalets that are such a feature here.

Some of them, solidly modernised, are right on the sea wall at Gurnard but further west that faded appeal is in evidence: here they are set back from the coast, beyond meadows where long grasses sway in the sea breeze.

This is a ramble of only two or three miles, and, being linear, can be truncated at any time.

It’s flat walking west along the seafront with a couple of steepish ascents through Gurnard and later – on the cliff path towards Thorness – where you should expect mud if you’re walking out of season or during wet weather in summer.

The light at Egypt Point is a local icon. It shone out across the Solent for nearly

100 years before being decommissioned by Trinity House in 1989. Its name is believed to derive from a colony of gypsies – then known as “Egyptians” – who lived in the area in the sixteenth century.

It’s a breezy stroll from here to Gurnard, initially along Egypt Esplanade and then Princes Esplanade, opened by the then Prince of Wales in 1926.

Follow the coast path signs up hill on Shore Road and Winding Way to Worsley Road, then down again on Solent View Road to Gurnard Marsh where you will cross a stile onto the cliff path.

From here the path rises gradually until the view across Thorness Bay opens out.

There’s much to see on the way: glimpses between the trees of white sails on the Solent and shipping entering Southampton Water to the east, grassy enclosures lined with woodland, and the fascination of the many holiday chalets from last century that perhaps speak of a gentler time when life was less complicated and “getting away from it all” did not involve aeroplanes, ferry

ports or motorways.

Low ground at Thorness allows access to the beach at several points, but beware: after wet weather, and especially in winter, this area is very prone to cliff tumble and muddy flows slumping onto the shingle where the unwary can very easily become stranded.

In summer though, a walker can take in wide views west towards Yarmouth, and across to the mainland coast where the tall industrial structures of the oil refinery at Fawley, visible beyond the trees, seem to provide a curious counterpoint to the coastal quiet on the Island side of the Solent.

What better place to stop for a picnic and to drink in the atmosphere of this rather remote location – observing all that frenetic activity across the water, while for the walker, all is peace and silence on this part of the Island’s coastal path.



Pictures inset, left to right Egypt Esplanade; the decommissioned light at Egypt Point, the Island’s most northerly point; beach huts on Gurnard Green; forest of masts at Gurnard Sailing Club; time-worn trees on the coast path; trees are often eroded out and end up on the beach due to instability of the land; the path can be this dry – but can be equally muddy







From dinky des-res to romantic ruin, if you're fascinated by seaside holiday huts, this is the ramble for you...

# Sheds, shacks and chalets

THERE IS A MARKED contrast between the north and south coast of the Island.

The back of the Wight – salty, wind-blasted, wild – could not be more different to the north's sheltered river valleys and bosky inlets such as at sleepy Newtown.

These contrasts will not be lost on Island ramblers of course, who will be very familiar with this aspect of the Island's complex coastal personality.

A ramble along this north-western section of the coast path is characterised by the many seaside huts that range from little more than humble sheds to bang-up-to-the minute seaside pads.

There are converted railway carriages, re-purposed decades ago, summer-houses with ramshackle extensions, and 21st century New England-style des-res's. Many have gardens. Some look as if they might be permanent residences.

Older ones exude a sort of end-of-time



air as if they've been there forever, while others, past their best, have been left to be consumed by brambles.

One thing they all have in common is a certain laid-back 1930s vibe, which would not have been out of place in Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons*.

Today, they still offer their owners an escape from the humdrum, a place to go and simply watch the world go by and to settle back with a glass of something cold – and to watch those famous Solent sunsets as the sun slowly dips below the New Forest tree line.



Believe it or not, these two characters inadvertently led to the production of a series of downloadable walks leaflets created by Chillerton and Gatcombe Parish Council. Let them be your guide...



# Chillerton

## DOWN-LOAD

**MANY walktalk READERS** will recall the Chillerton and Gatcombe Scarecrow Festival in 2017, when roadside verges and private gardens in the twin villages were decorated by residents with weird, wacky – and humorous – scarecrows in every kind of costume imaginable.

The festival was the result of some imaginative thinking on the part of the local community association which planned and executed the project with a group of local people, and with residents creating the scarecrows.

Much interest was generated by this focus on the area, so much so that the council decided to publicise Chillerton and Gatcombe further through a series of walks leaflets.

The following year they were awarded a Lottery grant to part-fund production, and local volunteers developed the routes.

The result is a comprehensive series of walks directions covering topics such as the history and wildlife of the area, and a springtime sensory walk especially developed for children.

Five of the series are available in printed form: Chillerton Circular Walk; Chillerton Down with Historical Notes; Two Short Walks; Wildlife Walk; Western Two Ridges. The others can be downloaded from the parish council website, [chillertonandgatcombe.org](http://chillertonandgatcombe.org).

During the pandemic, availability of the leaflets was reduced, (apart from contacting Chillerton and Gatcombe Parish Council or by going to Rookley Post Office – always fully stocked), but it is hoped they may soon be available again at the Isle of Wight Information Centre, Guildhall, Newport; St Olave's Church at Gatcombe; and Chillerton's Gallybagger Inn.

The leaflets don't have a cover price but the parish council does ask for a 50 pence voluntary donation to help towards costs of production. Any requested from the Parish Council direct will incur a charge of 50 pence per copy, plus postage.



### Chillerton Wildlife Walk

This is a circular walk on bridleways, footpaths and rural lanes in the centre of the Island, through a mix of arable, downland and woodland, with plenty of stunning views from high points, and opportunities to spot birds, animals and wildflowers.

### Chillerton Circular Walk

Higher level walking for great views, via Berry Hill, Chillerton Down and Dukem Down.

### Chillerton Down History

Strong legs needed for this walk with accompanying guide to the history of the Down.

### Chillerton Inner Ring

Relatively low level, circular walk around the outskirts of Chillerton Village.

### Chillerton and Gatcombe Circle

Relatively low level, circular walk between the two villages.

### Gatcombe Circle

Fairly easy circular walk from the Church via Snowdrop Lane.

### South Eastern Chillerton

An exploration of a less well-used route. Some steady up-hill gradients with one steep section.

### Spring time Sensory Walk through Tolt Copse: Worksheets especially for children.

### Western Two Ridges Walk - clockwise

High level walking along the ridges of Chillerton and Dukem Downs with a fair amount of up and down walking for the first half of the route and a steep descent towards the end.

### Western Two Ridges Walk – Anti-Clockwise

For this way around, there is a steep ascent at the start followed by some level terrain before an up and down section which gives way to a steady downward finish.

### Billingham Extension

This short section, which briefly ventures outside the Parish, may be accessed from the first part of the Chillerton Circular Walk.

\* With thanks to Chillerton and Gatcombe Parish Council for contributing to this feature.



# From **Occes** to the **Ordnance Survey**

Almost from the beginning of recorded time, map-makers have had very different ideas about the shape of our Island...

IN OUR MODERN world, it is hard to imagine navigating a completely unknown landscape without a map to guide us – which only makes the discoveries of the early explorers all the more remarkable.

As modern ramblers, we put our trust in maps – two dimensional representations of a three-dimensional reality – whenever we're walking in territory new to us, but of course the ancients had no such tools to guide them.

Early maps may have been wildly inaccurate by today's standards, but even the earliest cartographers managed to achieve a recognisable likeness of the actual shape of the British Isles.

One of the earliest practitioners known to us is Ptolemy (inset, above right, in a medieval painting), a second century Greek mathematician, astronomer, geographer, and cartographer.

No contemporary copies of his treatise *Geographia* are known to survive, and so our knowledge of the world as Ptolemy saw it two millennia ago is based on a much later printed version

from 1486 – the *Prima Europe Tabula* (inset, right).

This is one of the earliest maps of the British Isles, with the Isle of Wight marked as "Occes".

Making a 1500 year leap from Ptolemy's day, we come to a map drawn in 1570 by John Burghley, which forms part of an atlas that belonged to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Secretary of State to Elizabeth I, whose in-laws, the Chekes, owned Mottistone Manor. Fortifications erected during the reign of Queen Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII, have been drawn on the map, clearly demonstrating the Island's important strategic position close to the royal dockyards at Portsmouth.

Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator's map was published the year after his death in 1594. He is best known for his use of what was later known as the Mercator projection. He also introduced the term *atlas* for a collection of maps.

Next in the timeline is John Speed, a very well known name in map making. This map dates from 1611 and was one of a series of maps published in his *Theatre*

of the Empire of Great Britaine. Thought in some quarters to be less accurate than earlier maps, this representation of Wight is arguably more recognisably "the Island".

Morden's map of 1701 further demonstrates the mapmakers' gradually increasing accuracy – the evolution of the shape of the Island is becoming obvious. This map shared a page in Camden's *Britannia* showing the *Smaller Islands in the British Ocean*.

Maps from around this time forward show the Island almost as depicted by modern Ordnance Survey maps. The OS – the national mapping agency for the UK – provides a wide range of maps in printed and digital form used by government, businesses, and the individual.

Its name derives from a national survey of the country's military resources at the height of the threat from France during the Napoleonic Wars of the early 1800s.



## Is the Island in good shape?

Global warming and associated sea level rise might indicate further changes to the Island's outline – but real ones this time, not just two-dimensional representations on a map.

Low-lying land at Brading and Freshwater, and along the river valleys, could potentially succumb to flooding in the future.

So might we, in decades to come, inhabit the Isles of Wight?



Burghley 1570

Mercator 1595

Speed 1611

Morden 1701



# COAST WITH THE MOST

## English coast path Latest news

Work is proceeding to resolve the remaining issues regarding a new coast path on the Island.

Natural England has visited the various locations but since publication of their reports, there has been significant erosion at Bembridge, Binnel Bay, Brighstone Holiday Camp, Compton Bay car park and Headon Warren.

The council is resolving most of these issues and at several places the path has reopened, but as this is a change from the original proposals by Natural England, DEFRA has said that modification orders are necessary and this allows for a further eight-week consultation period.

Inevitably this is leading to further delays in implementation which can only take place once DEFRA has approved each section.



## Karen completes her Island coastal adventure

**IN THE JANUARY** edition of walktalk we featured the amazing coastal adventure of Karen Penny, as she walked the whole of the British Isles and Irish coast, raising funds for Alzheimer's Research.

Karen arrived on the island in November and had planned a one-week journey around our coastal path.

As lockdown occurred, she was forced to return home to the Gower in Wales, having completed just one day's walking.

Karen returned to the Island in style and brought much improved weather. The crew of the *Jolie Brise* offered to bring her from The Hamble to St Helens harbour.

This 1913 Gaff Cutter was the three-times winner of the Fastnet race and winner of many tall ships' races.

Since 1977 it has been owned and operated by the Dauntsey's School, taking students to the Arctic Circle, St Petersburg in Russia and South Carolina. It has covered 175,000 nautical miles.

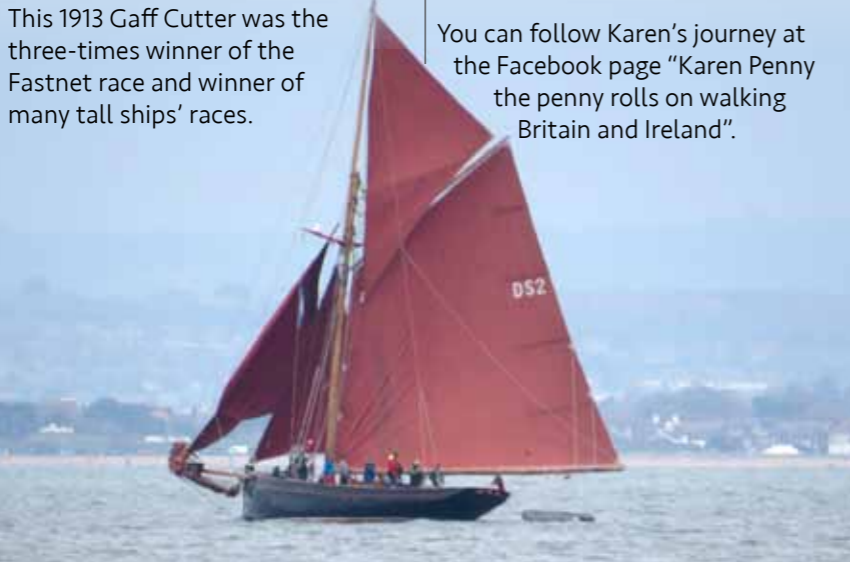
David Howarth was at St Helens Duver to greet Karen as she recommenced her Island walk, through Bembridge.

She then continued around the Island with some accommodation provided by Rambler's members.

Her final night was at Wootton staying at Palmers Farm where she witnessed lambing.

Many thanks to everyone who made this journey possible. Karen has now raised in excess of £85,000.

You can follow Karen's journey at the Facebook page "Karen Penny the penny rolls on walking Britain and Ireland".



## Countryside Code refreshed



**THE GOVERNMENT HAS** recently published a new countryside code, with The Ramblers being instrumental in amending and updating the details.

We have all seen a huge increase in the number of people out walking during the Covid lockdown so the publication of the new code is a timely event.

This is a guide to enjoying parks and waterways, coast and countryside.

- Respect everyone
- be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside
- leave gates and property as you find them
- do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking
- be nice, say hello, share the space
- follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available
- Protect the environment
- take your litter home – leave no trace of your visit
- do not light fires and only

have BBQs where allowed

- always keep dogs under control and in sight
- dog poo – bag it and bin it – any public waste bin will do
- care for nature – do not cause damage or disturbance Enjoy the outdoors
- check your route and local conditions
- plan your adventure – know what to expect and what you can do
- enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory

### What to do if you see a farm animal in trouble

Walkers are often the first people to discover livestock in trouble.

Unfortunately, there is no easy way of reporting it to the farmer.

Livestock Lookout provides a quick and private way for the public to report livestock issues directly so farmers can quickly respond to often costly problems.

There may be signs on the farm (see inset), otherwise, text or phone the number shown to report a problem. Best to add this number to your phone.

## Independence for America Woods

**ISLE OF WIGHT** Ramblers has secured funding to ensure that a major improvement project can proceed at America Woods, Shanklin.

This popular bluebell route has suffered from poor ground conditions and muddy paths.

Work was due in July to improve the entrance at Shanklin Road.

A deep step will be removed and new handrailing installed with a wider entrance. The two-metre path will be reconstructed with drainage, and a solid rural surface using local materials and the ditch will be cleared.

The Down to the Coast project has granted £9,000 of the £22,000 total, with a contribution from Isle of Wight Ramblers of £2000 from local fundraising.

Isle of Wight Council and Island Bridlegroup are funding the remainder.



## WOOD FOR THE TREES



## An a-maze-ing day

Golden Hill Fort country park has had a facelift and now boasts a new willow maze. David Howarth reports

**GOLDEN HILL COUNTRY** Park is 20 hectares of public open space managed by Gift to Nature.

There is a series of lecterns and pillars inviting you to stop, look, or listen for something special, maybe a white admiral butterfly or the remains of a military building nestling in the undergrowth.

There are three new trails to explore – a Red Squirrel Walk, a View Point Walk and a longer Wildlife Walk that takes in the open grassland, the woodlands and ponds.

Golden Hill was not named after the colour of common gorse bushes that are found around the site, as many

have claimed. Instead, it is recorded in 1299 as 'Gaul Down' which means 'the rented hill'.

The copper beech, planted by Earl Mountbatten, has been rescued from more invasive species and the way has been cleared to reveal stunning views towards Fort Victoria and Fort Albert.

### The Golden Hill Golden Celebrations Project

As part of a Heritage Lottery Funded project, the site's military history has been researched and recorded, with the foundations of many of the original World War One buildings being revealed, new wildlife trails created, access improved



and information panels installed across the site to help users understand the history, flora and fauna.

Willow sculptor Eddie Glew's organic installation (pictured) echoes the Fort visually and was created for discovery and play.

Made from natural willow and hazel from local Afton Marsh, and other cut material, the new maze-like structure, with its supporting buttress-like arms and viewing windows, has brought the area to life.

A recent Open Day had experts in attendance to discuss the project, as well as music, dancing and kite flying.



# It's a cake walk!

The traditional Chairman's birthday walk was due in February but in this year of the pandemic it could not be held due to Covid restrictions.

But as we emerged from lockdown, and not to be outdone – or deprived of cake – a group of ramblers, led by David Howarth, set out from Fort Victoria on Easter Monday, 5th April.

As always, Group committee member Carol Henley (pictured) baked the sumptuous and much

admired simnel, chocolate fudge and coffee walnut cakes.

Walktalk has it on good authority they were rapidly and comprehensively demolished!



# Christmas 2021

We hope we can now hold our popular Christmas Lunch at the Regency Suite at Shanklin Conservative Club.

Date for your diary: Saturday 11th December at noon for 12.30 lunch.

There will be a choice of starters and main courses. There'll be coffee and mince pies, background music, and our famous raffle, all for £17.50.

Ann Cable is our organiser. Please send your cheques to her at Flat 7, Hedley Court, 74 Victoria Avenue, Shanklin PO37 6LY by 4th December.

Cheques should be payable to Isle of Wight Ramblers. Please put your name and address on the reverse of the cheque, stating your choices from the menu below. We will contact you should there be a need to cancel the event.

## Menu

Winter Vegetable soup, croutons, roll and butter  
OR

Garlic Mushrooms in a brandy cream sauce

Roast turkey and all the trimmings, cranberry and chestnut stuffing, bacon wrapped chipolata  
OR

Spinach, chestnut and blue cheese en croustade, buttered new potatoes

## Walks Programme

We expect our programme to expand in the near future with a gradual return to near normality. So we have not produced a paper version in this issue, but you can go online: [iowramblers.com/walks/walks-programme](http://iowramblers.com/walks/walks-programme)

The website has recently been improved and you can now print the current walks listing.

Click on each walk to see much more information.

It is even possible to plot your own walk showing mileage and elevation travelled.

## steve's [BOOTS] revisited



## Where are we?



This skeletal tree, known as the Fairy Tree, can be found at St Helens Duver. A sign nearby advises the walker to tread carefully "as fairies play here". People leave messages for the fairy residents, wishing them well.