Bulletin

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Editorial

Welcome to the latest Bulletin. This year, social isolation has closed down all group meetings including our special Centenary Conference and we have only a few meetings to report which took place before lockdown. The lockdown also stopped our AGM when Matthew Chatfield was due to take over from Paul Bingham as President and similarly, our celebrations of our centenary have been put on hold and hopefully will take place in 2021.

An enforced lockdown has re-awakened an awareness and appreciation of the natural world helped no doubt by the unseasonably prolonged dry sunny spring and early summer weather following an unprecedented wet and mild winter. Naturalists are probably better at self-isolation than many people. I am extremely grateful to all the members who have submitted articles and photographs to ensure that this bumper edition of the Bulletin remains an interesting and very varied read. We have taken the decision on this occasion to post all copies out to members. We hope that we can return to using volunteers to distribute postings soon because this is greatly appreciated and a considerable saving on costs.

Currently, it is not possible for us to hold meetings but Government advice regarding easing Covid-19 restrictions is evolving all the time. We have taken the decision at this time not to send out our programme of meetings for the autumn/winter. However, it may be that it will be possible to hold some outdoor meetings and we are hoping to hold our postponed AGM on Saturday 3rd October at 2pm at Arreton Community Centre with appropriate safety measures in place. Please keep an eye on our website and e-bulletin for the current position. If you do not receive our regular e-bulletin and would like to do so, please send us your current contact details to iwnhas@btconnect.com . We are currently exploring the possibility of holding on line events either as live events or recorded highlights. Section leaders may arrange some outdoor meetings during the autumn/ winter period (access to the countryside, entomology, fungal forays, geology, ornithological meetings). Please contact the section leaders if you would like to be informed if and when meetings are arranged or phone the Society HQ (01983 282596) and leave a message.

Editor

President's address

This opportunity to write a last 'President's address' is a bonus (for me at least!). Our AGM had to be postponed, and I have had a 6-month extension in office. The situation we are in is, however, in spite of what the politicians keep saying, not entirely unprecedented. Think back to our foundation year of 1918/1919. Many Island residents had lost relatives, unemployment was increasing, money was short and as I point out in our Proceedings, a virus was causing disruption and death.

Arguably, a difference between now and 1918/1919, is that back then our Island's ecosystem was under increasing pressure, as due to escalating food shortages through the war, marginal land was put under the plough. In contrast, during lockdown, our countryside has had a bit of a holiday and certainly levels of atmospheric pollution have decreased. Hopefully, whatever results from forthcoming changes to trading arrangements, it will not result in more marginal land being ploughed, and let's hope that the crops that are grown this year and in the future are fully harvested.

Well my closing reflection: would I prefer to be an IWNHS member in 1920 or IWNHAS member in 2020? I must say that I would have dearly liked to have met some of our luminaries - not least Frank and Catherine Morey, James Jackson, George Colenutt, Hubert Poole, Edward Poulton, Reginald Fox and others. However, digital photography and internet-based identification has meant that the non-expert can make much more of our natural history. This is a distinct advantage: the challenge to our society is to add value.

Paul Bingham

Bob Edney (1953-2020)

The tragic death of Bob Edney in March has left a void in nature conservation on the Island which it will be impossible to fill. Bob was a member of the Society for thirty-eight years and he has always been very helpful to the Society and to members. He touched many lives. Bob led numerous meetings around the Council reserves which he managed. Fort Victoria, Golden Hill and Freshwater Marshes were particular favourites of his and he was involved with the management of these sites for almost as long as the Society has had an active involvement (key members of the Society were instrumental in setting up management committees for some of these sites). Bob helped the Society in very many ways over the years and he will be sorely missed.

Coming from an Island family, he was one of the Isle of Wight Council's longest-serving officers, starting work for the Isle of Wight County Council in 1980. Matthew Chatfield writes that almost everyone on the Island will have benefited from Bob's work. He had many job titles over the years but all of them involved caring for the Council's range of country parks, nature reserves and green spaces. Bob's careful stewardship of these local havens for wildlife and people was a mainstay of the Council's countryside work for nearly four decades. As well as the usual ranger skills of visitor and habitat management, Bob was particularly good at working with other landowners and agencies to find agreement and move projects forward. He had a particularly longstanding involvement with and commitment to the Wight Nature Fund. His wise advice and gentle persistence delivered much to benefit wildlife and landscape work across the Isle of Wight. Bob will be greatly missed as a friendly, reliable and helpful face of the council by many landowners, parish councils, schools and charities.

Left: Bob on a works Christmas Walk along the Shide path in 2011, photographed by Matthew Chatfield.

Below: Bob leading a Society General Meeting around Afton Marsh nature reserve in 2017

Although he worked across the whole Island, Bob was most strongly associated with Fort Victoria Country Park where he began working in 1982 as Fort Victoria Ranger. He continued to manage the country park throughout most of his career, seeing it through many challenges and developments. He was particularly proud of the big improvements to the park and its facilities that were carried out in 2013-14 as part of the lottery-funded West Wight Landscape Partnership. Many thousands of schoolchildren and students over the years enjoyed learning about the countryside and coast from Bob at Fort Victoria, and the park continues to be a popular attraction today.

Bob's affable enthusiasm, alongside his extensive knowledge and understanding of the Isle of Wight's countryside also inspired many others. Rangers who worked for Bob have gone on to work for the National Trust, the Wildlife Trust, and many other organisations. Bob trained and encouraged hundreds of volunteers, some of whom went on to find employment in the countryside field. Within the Council, Bob was a well-liked and much-respected officer. He was an intensely private man, but the one aspect of his life he was always willing to share was his knowledge and understanding of the countryside. When somebody has done an important job so well, for so long, it is sometimes hard to understand what we have until we lose it. We, his colleagues, along with so many others on the Island, will miss Bob: his diligence, his skill and knowledge, his quiet patience, and above all his rich and genuine love for the countryside of the Isle of Wight.

Mary Edmunds has written to say that she was delighted when Bob came onto the Wight Nature Fund committee in May 1999, as IW Council Countryside Section representative. She said, 'Bob advised us on management at Pelham Wood, which we hold on licence from IW Council, and helped with grant applications & tree felling when needed. He later became interested in Mill Copse & headed the management sub-committee, organised work parties, supervised groups such as the Home Schooled children, Southampton University field studies group, local volunteers & Forest School. He helped build the bird hide & responded immediately to any vandalism, being especially good at liaising with local people

who reported problems. He organised the annual Christmas tree from Mill Copse, which we donated to Yarmouth Town Council. Timber from Mill Copse went to shore up the sea defences at Fort Victoria. Bob helped at Alverstone Mead until it passed from IW Council to the Wildlife Trust, only recently working with Darrel Clarke to arrange grants for the replacement boardwalk at Bensteads Marsh, which meant getting permission to cross a local landowner's field. He worked with the warden at Youngwoods Copse with difficult tree work when needed, and again his skill with liaising with local people was invaluable in obtaining access across their land. When we took on the lease for Copse Mead at Lake, Bob was ever willing to help with the boundary hedge cutting and would respond on our behalf to residents who asked for help with overhanging branches, etc. Everyone I have spoken to has said how Bob was always willing to help, even it was at a weekend and he will be greatly missed by all of us at Wight Nature Fund.'

A private funeral ceremony was held on Wednesday 22 April.

What's in a name? *Achillea millefolium*/Yarrow

The genus was named in honour of Achilles, famed hero of the Trojan War, who is said to have used the plants to staunch blood flow from battle wounds.

The specific name *millefolium* means thousand-leaf from two Latin elements: *mille* for one thousand and *folium* for leaf, with reference to the innumerable segments of the long, narrow compound leaves. In the Sixteenth century, yarowe (*sic*) was alternatively known as myllefoly, which could have arisen as a result of 'The Grete Herball' of 1529 being translated from French into English. Myllefoly eventually became shortened to milfoil. The current French name for Yarrow is millefeuille. In French cuisine, there is a cake also called Millefeuille which is a vanilla cream slice made up of many layers, or leaves, of puff pastry.

Historically, Yarrow's leaves were thought to have resembled flight feathers on an arrow, giving rise to the belief that the common name of Yarrow is a corruption of the arrow. The Old English word for arrow was arwe, comparable with the O.E. name for Yarrow which was gearwe. During the Middle English era, the prefix ge- was changed to y-, thus gearwe became yarwe and subsequently developed into yarowe and yarrow.

Botanist Edward Step, F.L.S. (1855-1931), author of 'Wayside and Woodland Blossoms', interpreted Yarrow as an abbreviation of ye arrow. When the Old English letter called thorn, which represented the sound th, became obsolete and therefore not included on fonts of printing presses the letter y was used in its stead so ye was printed for the, hence ye arrow/y'arrow.

Achillea ptarmica / Sneezewort

A closely related plant to *Achillea millefolium* is *A. ptarmica.* Ptarmos is Greek for sneezing/a sneeze. *Achillea ptarmica* contains ptarmic, a substance that causes sneezing, so the plants were dried and used as an ingredient in the making of snuff, hence the English common name Sneezewort.

Ptarmigan

The gamebird Ptarmigan is named from the cognate Gaelic word tarmachan which means croaker, with reference to the ptarmigan's distinctive croaking call.

(Picture by Mike Cotterill of a pink flowered form of yarrow)

Sue Blackwell

What's in a place-name?

Some Island place-names with interesting derivations:

REW

There are at least two meanings here, and the spelling sometimes gets caught up with the word **Row**, producing a fair degree of confusion.

The most likely meaning of Rew Farm near Ventnor is 'the row of trees, hedgerow', from Old English *raew*. The name was first recorded as *Rewe* in 1266, but was sometimes spelt as *Rue*.

In the name Rew Street, the name is extended to mean 'the street or hamlet with a row of trees or houses'. The first reference appears to be in the 14th century; by 1708 it had become *Rewstreete*, with variant spellings *Rue Street* in 1781 and even *Row Street* in 1785.

However, Rew Down also in the Ventnor area, which one would *expect* to have the same derivation as Rew Farm above, had a totally different one and originally meant 'the rough hill or down', from Old English *ruh* 'rough' and *dun* 'down'. However, the spelling then became *influenced* later on by nearby Rew Farm, when locals would have long forgotten the original meanings. So, whereas the name is originally recorded as *Rowedone* in 1285, it had become *Rew Down* by 1769.

In fact, Rew Down – i.e. *Rowedone* – has the same derivation as Rowborough Down and Farm in Shorwell, which derive from *Rowebere* 1272 or *Rougheberg* 1282 – 'the rough hill', from Old English *ruh* 'rough' and *beorg* 'hill'. Rowborough Farm near Brading is identical in origin; and Rowridge 'the rough ridge' is similar. None of these spellings have become caught up with the Rew spelling as in the Ventnor example.

DUVER

As in St Helens Duver (and Seaview Duver). "This name, for the spit of land leading from the ruined tower of St Helen's Church and jutting out into Bembridge Harbour, is first recorded on Worsley's map of 1781. It represents a dialect word *dover* (from a French word *douvre*) probably referring to some shoreline feature, either 'ridge of sand or stones' or 'salt-marsh channel'". (Mills)

I had always imagined the St Helens version to have a similar derivation to Dover in Kent, but the latter appears to be quite different and derives from an old British (Celtic) name directly related to the modern Welsh *dwr* 'water' – referring to the stream or streams that entered the sea there, one of which is still called today the Dour.

CALBOURNE

Another name with a Celtic link. Its probable meaning is 'the stream where cole or cabbage grows', from Old English *cawel* and *burna*; the reference would no doubt be to sea-cabbage or sea-kale. It was recorded as *Cawelburnan* as early as 826, *Cauborne* in Domesday Book 1086, and had become *Caulburne* by 1247.

The well-known Welsh word *cawl* is used today to refer to any soup or broth containing meat and vegetables. However, when first recorded in the 14th century, it meant 'a cabbage' or 'stalk of a plant or cabbage'. This older use is preserved in the place-name Porthcawl, the holiday resort in South Wales – 'the harbour with sea-kale'. Not only does this directly refer to the same plant as in Calbourne, it is remarkably like the original *cawel* spelling of its name.

BUDDLE

With its historic reputation for smuggling, the name of the Buddle Inn at Niton might have expected to yield some stirring origin. In fact it is quite prosaic, though with some interesting connections. The word derives from Old English *bōthl*, simply meaning 'dwelling-place', and is recorded as Buddle or Buddel in 1580, Buddell place 1608, and Boddle in 1769. *Bōthl* must also be the base of the lost name *la Bothele* in Brading, c.14th century. And not forgetting the Buddlehole Spring to the north of Brighstone, simply indicating the spring which runs by the cottage once known as 'Buddlehole' and which would once have provided the water supply for Rock Roman Villa. The stream name also survives as the Buddle Brook.

While we may think of the name as quite unique to the Island, in fact versions of it, such as Buddleswick, Budleigh, Buddleford Farm, Buddlehayes and Buddle Oak, occur in Hampshire, Somerset and Devon.

However, looking up the word 'buddle' online produces a rather different meaning: 'an inclined trough or shallow container in which crushed ore is washed with running water to flush away impurities' (16th century origin, from Low German *buddeln* 'to agitate'). But as far as one can tell, this meaning does not appear to relate to the Island word.

References

Kökeritz, H. 1940 *The Place-Names of the Isle of Wight. Uppsala.*

Mills, A. D. 1996 *The Place-Names of the Isle of Wight. Stamford: P. Watkins.*

Alan Phillips

What's in a word?

Farming Some local agricultural terms raised in a conversation with retired Island farmer Roy Cheek. (References are to W H Long's *Dictionary of Isle of Wight Dialect*, 1886)

Drug – damp or moist; also, heavy
"That shower's made the haay rather drug, you."
"Hollo, meyat! The roads goes deuced drug today, I sim." (Long)

Cant – not in the local dictionaries but one of the standard meanings is:-
'a slope in the turn of a road or track; a sloping or slanting surface'.

Loten – a loft over a stable: Long just gives it as 'lote'.

Lew – I searched initially for the spellings 'loo' or 'lieu' before hitting on the correct version, as in Roy's example "the lew side of the hedge". The word simply refers to being sheltered from the wind, and is the dialect version of 'lee', as in 'on the lee side'.

"I was zet down, you, the lew zide o' the hedge, and I heerd zomebody scuffen along the road, zo I looks droo hedge and zid twas wold Joe Sargent. A had zummet in his hand, zo I zays to'n, 'Hollo Joe! what's got there?' – 'Oh,' a zays, 'I jest ben and ketched a faddikin**.**' "

(Long assumed that everybody understood what was meant by 'faddikin' as he gives no explanation for it, and I have been unable to find a reference anywhere. Maybe a pigeon?)

Foggage – a lot of examples of this one, again not as an IW dialect word but as a standard farming term, meaning 'aftermath; stubble regrowth or grass grown for winter feed'. It is derived from an Old English word 'fog' – as a noun, the long grass left standing through the winter; and as a verb, to feed cattle on fog. So foggage is, as Roy correctly said, 'the pasturing of cattle on fog'. There was even a term 'fogger' recorded in 1851 for a farm-hand chiefly engaged in feeding cattle. All this has led in modern times to the use of 'foggage farming', of which there are many references in agricultural websites on the net.

Brush, as in 'brush that hedge'. Nothing specifically to be found in the dictionaries, but when one considers the standard definitions such as 'touch lightly or briefly' or 'cut or broken branches', it's not surprising the word was used for trimming hedges. The National Hedgelaying Society refers also to 'single and double brush hedges', and there are even adverts for 'brush hedge trimmers and cutters'.

Eat, Drink and Be Merry

Several years ago, when Rob Wilson was composing a folk song round the theme of cake, he asked me to look out some local dialect words on the topic, as well as on the theme of eating and drinking more generally. This was the result, all based on Long's dialect dictionary. Bear in mind that these words were already old when Long collected them in 1886, and the vast majority have long since gone out of circulation.

Seedy Cake – containing a good sprinkling of caraway seeds.

Taatie Cake – made of mashed potatoes and flour, and served with a large dollop of butter.

Applestucklen – a small apple pie or tart, baked without a dish.

Hollan or Hallan Cakes, made for All Hallows Day, or Hollantide (very old dialect words, virtually unknown on the Island today).

Related, and rather better remembered as Isle of Wight 'specialities', are:

Forest House Puddens – puddings made of flour and suet, containing neither raisins, currants nor sugar, and supplied to the inmates of Forest House, the workhouse for the Island in the area where the hospital now is.

Hard Puddens were similar, made with flour only, and boiled and eaten with meat.

Isle of Wight Doughnuts – also very well known, made with currants or plums instead of jam.

Particularly noticeable is the preponderance of dialect words for gulping one's food down:

Yet – this was a standard dialect word for 'eat', 'ate' or 'eaten'.

"I han't got a mossel o' bread in house: 'twas all yet up at dinnertime."

Swally / Zwally – simply to swallow.

Cham – to chew vigorously.

Chock – to choke.

Scoggel – to eat voraciously or gulp down. "How we ded yet an' scoggel."

Snobble – to devour greedily or snap up, like ducks eating slugs.

Scrannel / Rawn – likewise means to eat greedily; **Rawnish** – hungry, ravenous.

Glutch / Gollop – to swallow, gulp down

Binder – a large quantity of food.

"We had liver and crow [pig's liver] vor dinner, and I ded take in a binder – I shan't want noo moor grub today."

By the end of all that you may well feel: **Crapzick** – sick from over-eating!

Rot gut – small beer, i.e. beer of a poor or inferior quality. The descriptive name says it all.

"How bist, varmer Ben? Thee doesn't look very pert jest at present." "Noa, I don't spooase I do, vor I don't feel over toppen, and kindy queer in my innerds, I can tell'ee. I yet [ate] zome apple pudden at dinnertime, and then I went down to wold Beagle's and was fool enough to git a pint or two of his rot gut into me, and 'tes sarren me out cruel. I shan't doo't agen, I'll war'nt it."

Swizzle – another term for small beer.

Heeltaps – liquor left in the bottom of a glass after drinking. "Don't leave noo heeltaps!"

Mothery – thick, as applied to liquors such as beer, with mouldy particles floating in it.

Pricked – sharp, slightly sour, as beer.

Zwivetty – giddy; feeling of vertigo, or swimming in the head.

Slued – intoxicated, drunk – is of course not unique to the Island: as 'slewed' it is in common use everywhere.

"He ben to Cowes wi' a looad o' barley, and come back about dree parts slued."

This use links in with 'three parts shot away', which was also once in fairly common use locally.

Devil's Dancen Hours – midnight.

"My wold man's gone to Nippert, and if there's a fiddle gwyne anywhere, I shan't zee'n hooam till the devil's dancen hours."

Reference

Long, W. H. 1886 *A Dictionary of the Isle of Wight Dialect*. Newport, IW: Brannon & Co.

Alan Phillips

Interesting finds during lockdown

Will Hannah was on a mission to find an Early Spider Orchid on his local walk around Freshwater in April. This is a very rare early flowering orchid on the Island but in some years, a single plant puts up a flower, generally in the vicinity of the Tennyson Monument on the downs. This year, there was none to be found but Will's persistence paid off and he eventually discovered a plant flowering at the far end of the Island near the Needles Battery. We have never seen one here before. It is probable that these occasional plants arise from seed blown across from the large populations on Purbeck in Dorset.

Ian Hogg reported a strange insect on Isle of Wight Nature facebook which he found in his garden at Nettlestone in May. It was a Mole Cricket, one of the most endangered insects in this country, and a remarkable find. At one time they were found on the Island and both Sandown and Carisbrooke Grammar School had pickled specimens in bottles on shelves in their biology departments, brought in by curious pupils. The last record for the Island was in 1976 when Mr & Mrs Cooper found one in their garden at Providence House, Norton Green. Recent studies carried out on the status of Mole Crickets have established that the native species is extremely restricted to very specific habitats but others are occasionally introduced by accident in the horticultural trade. It is likely that this individual was a mole cricket or related species accidentally introduced from the Continent, but nevertheless an exciting find.

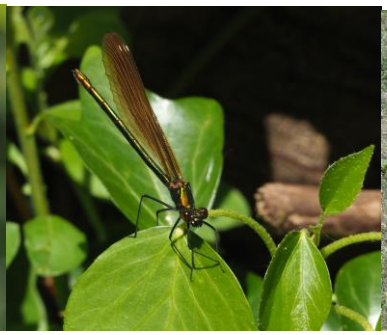
Lock down has given us the opportunity to slow down and to appreciate what we have around us. We have been sent a large number of pictures from people's gardens and surrounding areas, a selection of which have been included. A number of people noted what an excellent spring it was for invertebrates, and bees and hoverflies in particular seem to have been popular with those wishing to use their time in lockdown to get to grips with a new group.


Left to right: A sharp-tailed bee *Coelioxys ssp.*and a bumblebee mimic, *Volucella bombylans* in Michelle Van Buren's garden at Carisbrooke (photos Mike Cotterill) and (right) a hoverfly, *Helophilus sp.*in Dave Dana's garden at Wroxall


Left: A splendid show of sea pink at Freshwater (Dave Trevan) and **Right:** Cowslips in Northwood Cemetery (Julie Watson)



Left: Sparrowhawk on Carisbrooke roof (Mike Cotterill); **Middle:** Hedgehog gathering nesting material (Julie Watson); **Right:** House sparrow feeding young in Carisbrooke garden (Mike Cotterill)


Left: Downy Emerald Dragonfly, Stag Lane pond; **Middle:** Female Beautiful Demoiselle, Gatcombe Withy Bed (both Keith Marston); **Right:** Impressive display of the nationally vulnerable Ox-tongue broomrape on Afton Down (Dave Trevan)

What has happened to Dung Flies?

I wish to bring to the attention of members that over a period of 25 years or so, I have noticed with some alarm a massive decline of the Yellow Dung-fly on walks between Porchfield and the shore at Burnt Wood. When I was a kid and you walked past a cow pat, a great crowd of Dung-flies would take to the air. Throughout the summers of 2017, 2018 and 2019, I didn't see any Dung-flies on cow pats on this footpath.

This is caused by some kind of wormer which farmers feed to cattle to kill parasites in the cows' guts. This chemical is still on active service when it comes out at the back end. It kills all the creatures that live on the dung - Yellow Dung-flies, Dung-beetles and, I am told, it even kills worms in ground beneath the dung. These are important decomposers helping with breakdown and nutrient recycling. This is a global problem and if we don't soon sort it out it we will be up to our dung in trouble.

Andy Yule

Lockdown Nature - Wildlife observations in a 1km² close to home

In the last few months, we have been recording the wildlife from grid square SZ4889, a short walk from home. This 1 km² area, bisected by the Gunville Stream flowing through a shallow valley, straddles the land from the northern edge of Carisbrooke across to the boundary of Parkhurst Forest. There are over 4km of public rights of way from which we made our observations.

The land use on the heavy clays of the Hamstead Beds provides a range of habitats for wildlife. These include residential areas with gardens, hedgerows, areas of scrub, pasture fields with cattle and horse grazing, and for taking hay and silage, arable fields with wheat and barley, mixed forest, the Gunville stream, and even part of a cemetery. A balancing pond was created in conjunction with the housing development on Sylvan Drive and four small ponds were dug in 2009 as a conservation area for great crested newts.

During the six visits to the area in April, May and June 2020, we recorded 205 species of plant, 40 species of bird, 17 species of butterfly and two species of damselfly.

Plant species in the square included Almond Willow (*Salix triandra*) growing alongside the Gunville Stream (not previously reported from the 1km^2 square), Garden Solomon's-seal (*Polygonatum x hybridum*) naturalised in a trackside verge alongside a garden and Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*) on the edges of tracks as well as in the grassland . Water plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*) was recorded in one of the seasonal ponds that had dried out by the end of May. This was planted when the ponds were constructed.

During our visits, birds were in full song as they established and retained their breeding territories, while others were in song while resting on passage. Birds holding territory in the corner of Parkhurst Forest lying within the grid square included Coal Tit, Goldcrest, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker and Jay. The species holding territory in and around the fields included 19 pairs of House Sparrow, 13 Wrens, 12 Robins, 12 Blue tits, 12 Blackbirds, 10 Dunnocks, 8 Goldfinches and 2 Greenfinches. The migrants included a Garden Warbler, Whitethroats, a Lesser whitethroat, Chiffchaffs, Blackcaps and Swallows.

Our first butterfly in the area was a Speckled Wood on the April 9th, followed by Comma, Peacock, Holly Blue, Small White, Green-veined White and Orange-tip during the month. In May, we recorded Brimstone, Common Blue, Large White, Meadow Brown, Small Heath, Red Admiral, Small Copper and Wall. In early June, we added Large Skipper and Small Tortoiseshell to the list.

The 2 species of damselfly seen at two of the ponds in May were the Large Red Damselfly and the Azure Damselfly.

We also found evidence of a midge, *Rabdophaga heterobia*, which causes the formation of distinct oval downy galls on the catkins of Almond Willow and ergot (*Claviceps purpurea*), a fungus growing on the flowers of Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*).

No doubt there is much more to be seen as the season progresses, so we'll keep looking!

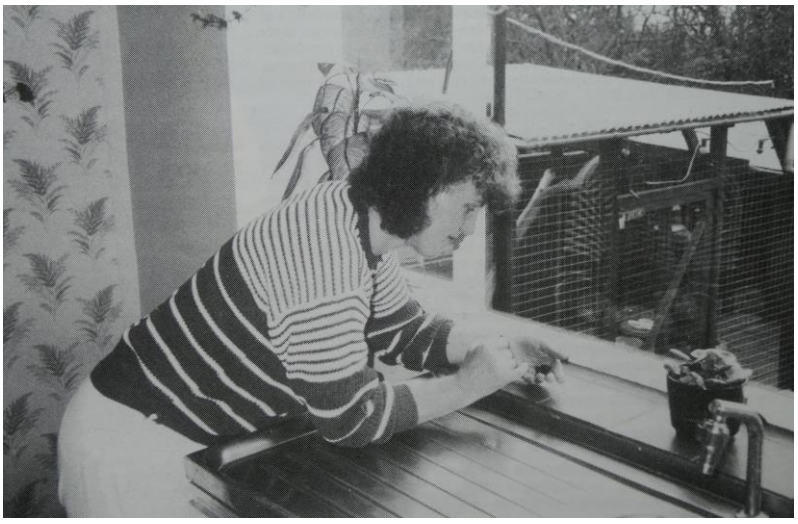
Photo montage shows:
Top left: Almond willow with catkins galled by the midge *Rabdophaga heterobia*; Bottom left: Meadow browns; Top right: Large red damselfly on Water plantain; Middle right: Meadow buttercups and Yorkshire fog; Bottom right: Ox-eye daisies with Pot marigolds

Keith and Anne Marston

Farewell to Sheila

We are sorry to report that Sheila Cooper, a long standing member of the Society (together with her husband Clive) died on 6th May. In the late 1980s and 1990s, Sheila was often featured in the local news because of her involvement with bats. Those of you who remember Oliver Frazer will be familiar with his enthusiasm

for bats. Oliver set up the Isle of Wight Bat Group in 1981, following the legislation (Wildlife & Countryside Act) giving protection to bats and their roosts. His enthusiasm was infectious and Sheila and Clive joined in 1985 following the discovery of a bat roost in their house at Northwood. In 1986, Oliver organised a weekend training course for interested members of the bat group to acquire a bat licence, essential for anyone wishing to work with bats. Sheila acquired a bat licence and, with Oliver's encouragement, set up the first Isle of Wight Bat Hospital in 1988. This was one of the first bat hospitals in the country and in the first year treated fifty injured and grounded bats. 60% of inmates were able to be subsequently released, a high percentage at the time when knowledge of care of bats was in its infancy. In their first year, Sheila and Clive collected a grounded bat from Swiss Cottage, Osborne, which proved to be a pregnant female. It gave birth in captivity and received much media attention being the first bat baby to be born in captivity (see photo). Sheila continued to run the bat hospital for a number of years until Graham and Donna Street set up their highly successful bat hospital in 1997.



The house roost at their home proved to be interesting because it was a colony of Whiskered Bats, more typically a tree roosting bat. A number of top bat workers from across the country visited the house to inspect this roost. The bat roost is still present and Sheila has continued to monitor the colony for the National Bat Monitoring Programme up until a few months ago. Sheila died from a cardiopulmonary condition believed to have been brought on when keeping doves.

The Grounded Gannet

On 23rd May 2020, in the midst of the Corona Virus lockdown, there was a full gale blowing. I was on my way along Longhalves Lane in Freshwater when I noticed a large white bird being mobbed by a fox on the sports field of All Saints Primary School. From a distance, I could see that the fox was being kept at bay as the bird was fighting back with its beak but I couldn't see what sort of bird it was. Luckily as I help out with the school garden, I was able to access the school field to take a look. On closer inspection, I realised that the bird was an adult gannet and it was tightly wrapped up in fishing line all around its head and neck obscuring one of its eyes and restricting its bill.

It seemed exhausted and unable to move very far so, with the help of my parents, several blankets and a very small pair of scissors, we very carefully removed all of the fishing line and avoided any pecks from the very sharp beak. Despite the removal of the fishing line, the bird was still too exhausted to do more than a couple of paces and without a cliff to take off from, the Gannet was quite vulnerable. We decided it would be best to contact IOW Wild Bird Rehabilitation and we were put in touch with Edward Burden. Caroline Dudley and Elaine Rice also came to help to manoeuvre the bird in their carrying box off the school field and over to the school drive to wait for Edward to arrive.

Edward arrived very promptly and took the Gannet for a condition assessment and weight checks. It was found to be just ½ kilo underweight with no obvious signs of damage from the fishing line. Edward continued to care for the Gannet and provided nourishing meals of mackerel and sardines and swims in the hydrotherapy pool to build up its strength. Finally, 4 days later, on 27th May, Edward successfully released the bird at Freshwater Bay and watched as it flew comfortably and headed south towards the Channel Islands. Maybe it went to join the large colony at Alderney?

First two photos by Lucy Temple; third photo by Edward Burden

It is always hard to know how much to intervene with nature and I suppose the fox may have seen things differently. ‘Grounded gannet’ was probably to have been on his evening menu before I turned up! However, with the human influence of the fishing line having had such a negative impact on this bird’s life and the unusual opportunity to put right the damage done, it was a real privilege to have been a part of

rescue of this magnificent bird. My sincere thanks go to Edward and his family for investing their time and sardines on restoring the bird back to full health before its release.

Lucy Temple

Our Pond

Our pond was three years old this May. From the start, we put in a variety of aquatic plants, including Water-mint, Forget-me-not, Mare's tails and two types of native pond weed, all of which established well. The mint is particularly vigorous and requires a bit of judicious pruning to prevent it from taking over completely.

Wildlife was very quick to colonise. Broad-bodied Chasers, Emperor Dragonflies and Azure Damselflies came to egg-lay in the first few weeks, and common newts turned up soon after. Numerous birds have also made use of the water to bathe or drink. So far, we've counted a total of twenty-eight species, including Meadow Pipits, Linnets and, on one memorable occasion, a female Kingfisher.

Probably the most interesting development came this February, when dozens of Toads made their way here to spawn. Having read that they always use traditional breeding ponds, this came as quite a surprise. Ours is relatively shallow, with a surface area of approximately two x three metres. As far as we're aware, there has never been a pond on this site.

The tadpoles have not fared well, gradually falling prey to the larvae of Great Diving Beetles, which have been particularly abundant this spring. At one time we rarely saw one without a tadpole in its jaws. In fact the largest appears to be capable of tackling adult newts, as we also observed this year.

The pond's wildlife was further reduced by a pair of Mallards that frequented the garden during April. They proved to be surprisingly voracious, eating newts, tadpoles and various invertebrates. Regrettably, after one particularly gluttonous visit, we decided to discourage them forthwith. The newt population has since recovered, but we've seen very few emergent dragonflies so far this summer. I dare say it will all balance out in the long run...



Chris Hicks & Rob Pearson (Cranmore)

Isolation Archaeology

In common with many groups missing their regular meetings during the coronavirus lock down, the Archaeology section decide to hold online meetings using Zoom. This presented some technical challenges at first but it proved to be a successful way of training the group in interpretation of LIDAR images. In fact it was so useful that we may well use Zoom on those days when bad weather causes cancellation of outdoor activities. Many thanks to Ann Ticehurst who instigated and took responsibility for this.

The indefatigable David Marshall has continued to develop his IT expertise, adding to his work with LIDAR, GIS and exploring records and archives. He has used ‘Planlaufterrain’ to manipulate LIDAR data to create 3D images which he can enlarge, twist and turn to create shadow effects and give new insights into features and topography. We have, for example, been able to trace possible tracks or boundaries across the

Island relating them to known sites or archaeological finds. By changing direction and angles, we can see from sea, ground or hilltop level to gain a sense of lines of sight without interference from modern planting and buildings.
Here are a few brief examples of what we have considered:

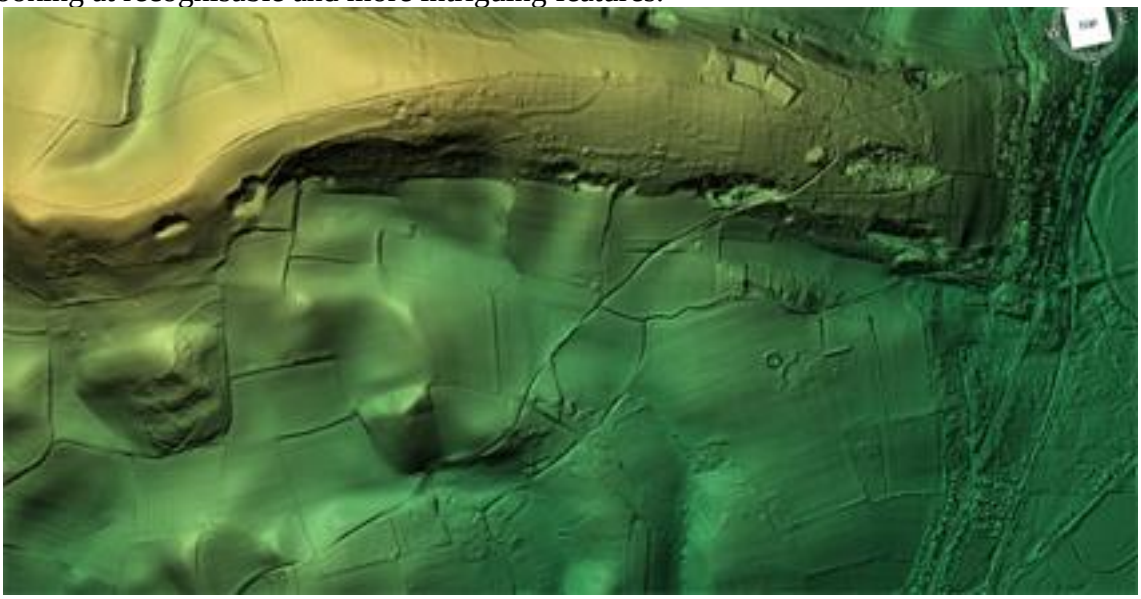
We explored the areas around Mersley, Brading and Ashey learning to 'read' the LIDAR landscape, such as barrows, medieval ridge and furrow, Roman field systems, prehistoric field boundaries.

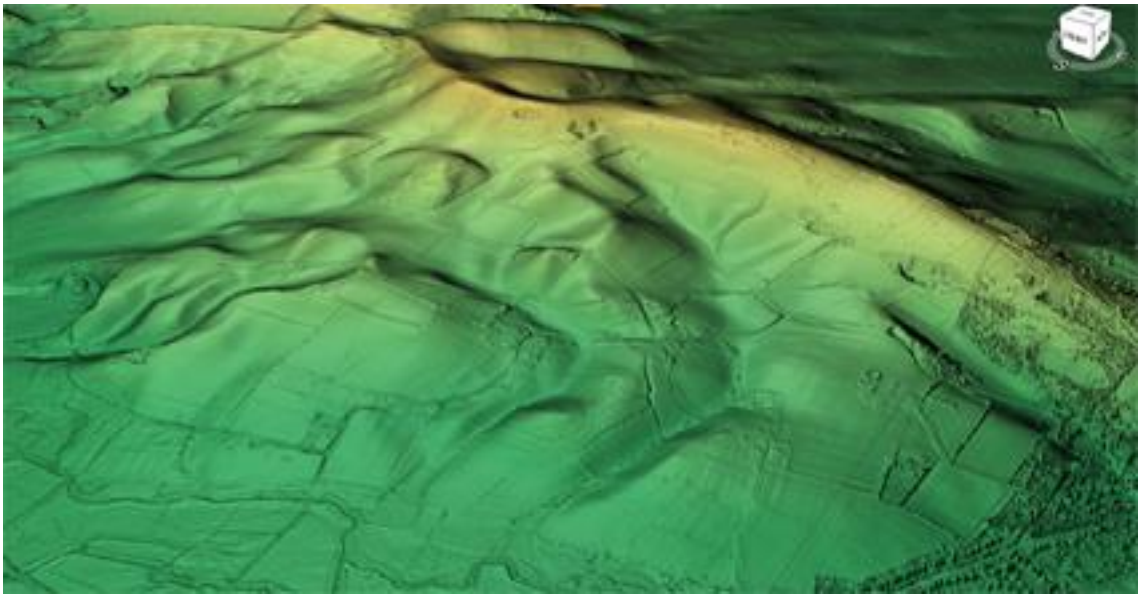
Gurnard Roman villa, long lost to the sea, has been assumed to have been a trading site, positioned by Gurnard Luck. David showed us how longshore drift had partially blocked what may have been a much wider estuary in the past. It is known that there was a Roman trading site across the Solent at Lepe. We could track clear routes to Carisbrooke, Clatterford and Bowcombe, all know villa sites. It has long been suggested that Rew Street was an ancient trading route and this technology provides another way to explore the theory.

We looked at the south side of the Island, starting at Whale Chine. We could follow a track from Walpen farm northwards along the ridge towards Chillerton. An interesting feature was the portions of detached parishes alongside what may have been a boundary. These portions were acquired or given to parishes elsewhere because they had particular value.

At Chillerton hill fort we could clearly see the boundary banks and the entrance. We then changed our line of sight to look across to Bowcombe and Carisbrooke and even to the head of the Medina estuary. David suggested that anyone sailing up the Medina would have seen the white chalk ramparts of the hill fort. This may give some insight into the purpose of what does not look like a defensive rampart. Even more dramatic was the image created by a change of angle of what sailors approaching Whale Chine across the channel might have seen.

Ventnor, Wroxall, St. Martin's Down: it was easy to spot the 'dimpled' barrows that have been excavated but there seem to be more than have been recorded. We also have to distinguish between between barrows and bomb craters. There were several mysterious features on the downs that warrant further investigation. Having explored that side we then moved across to Appledurcombe, Rew valley and Stenbury, again looking at recognisable and more intriguing features.





Above: Two LIDAR views of Brading Down

This technology is addictive. One sees well-loved and familiar landscapes and features in a whole new way. This knowledge adds to information from old maps and documents, the Historical Environment Records and the Portable Antiquities database as a valuable tool in raising questions, inspiring investigations and hopefully getting more understanding of the Island's past.
We now have a new list of features to explore on the ground when we can get out and about again.

Helen Jackson

British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) News

Like everyone, the effect of COVID-19 has been extremely challenging for the BTO. All surveys, with the exception of the Garden BirdWatch (GBW) survey, were halted while the planned Breeding Waders of Wet Meadows was cancelled. The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) was reduced to a single late visit where possible.

The effect was less severe for the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) which was able to recommence towards the end of May, following the lifting of some restrictions, so only the April survey was lost. However, as with all of the BTO surveys, no surveyor is under pressure to cover a site if they do not feel safe or social distancing cannot be maintained.

Bird ringing was not permitted away from home so the qualified ringers of the Isle of Wight Ringing Group have been ringing birds in their gardens. The BTO launched a garden version of their Constant Effort Sites (CES) Scheme which has enabled some systematic ringing across the country. The CES scheme requires ringers to operate the same nets in the same locations over the same time period at regular intervals through the breeding season. The scheme provides valuable trend information on abundance of adults and juveniles, productivity and also adult survival rates for 24 species of common songbird.

Garden BirdWatch (GBW)

At the start of lockdown the BTO decided at this unprecedented time to make Garden BirdWatch accessible to more people by temporarily waiving the annual subscription to this survey. Over 7,000 have taken advantage and joined the survey, hopefully including some of our IWNHAS members, to record the birds and wildlife in their gardens each week.

Now in its twenty-fifth year, GBW has received over eight million lists of birds and other wildlife from a total of more than 50,000 British gardens, which has given a unique insight into the changes at our bird feeders over that time.

The following table lists the ten most commonly recorded species in gardens in 2019 with the equivalent 1995 results in parenthesis.

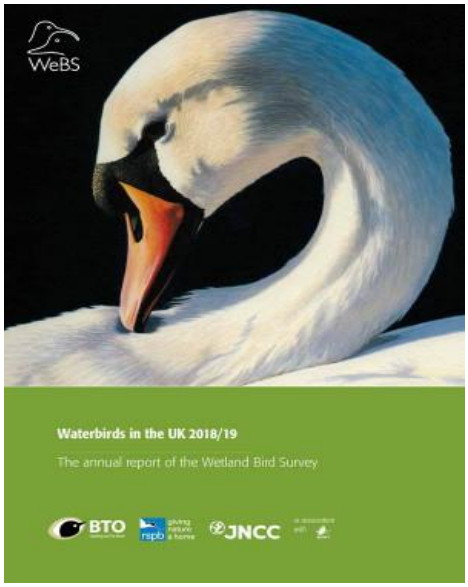
Position	Species
1 (1)	Blue Tit
2 (12)	Woodpigeon
3 (2)	Blackbird
4 (4)	Robin
5 (5)	Great Tit
6 (6)	Dunnock
7 (3)	House Sparrow
8 (20)	Goldfinch
9 (11)	Magpie
10 (9)	Collared Dove

The three species which have dropped out of the top 20 since 1995 are Starling, which has dropped from 7th place to 13th, Greenfinch has fallen from 8th to 15th, due to the decline in numbers caused by the disease trichomonosis, and Chaffinch from 10th to 11th. Other birds are more common today than they were in 1995. Goldfinches are now a regular sight at garden bird feeders, having moved from 20th place to 8th, and may soon be a more common sight than House Sparrows. Those of you who feed your garden birds will not be surprised to see that Woodpigeon has moved from 12th to be the second most commonly-recorded bird, pushing Blackbird into third place.

However, GBW isn't just about tracking changes in bird numbers; in our urbanising landscape, gardens and urban areas are becoming more significant, and it's important to understand how birds and other wildlife use our gardens.

You can find out more about the 25 years of GBW at the following link:
https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/bird-table-101-gbw-25-year-article-web.pdf

Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS)



The latest report for the 2018/19 reporting year is now available online at the following link:
https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/wetland-bird-survey/publications/webs-annual-report/waterbirds-in-the-uk
The above link also provides a further link to the online reporting facility which allows you to view the monthly maxima data for each waterbird species for all of the Isle of Wight's count sites with some going back over 50 years! If you wish to know more about how to access this data, or have problems accessing it, please contact me.

BTO CEO announces retirement

After 13 years at the helm of BTO, our CEO Andy Clements has decided that he will retire at the end of 2020. Andy will be sorely missed and he has set the bar high for his successor. The recruitment process for our next CEO is now underway.

If you require further information or are interested in becoming a member of the BTO please contact myself, Jim Baldwin (BTO Regional Representative) either by phone (01983 721137(home), 07528 586683(mobile)), email (wightbto@hotmail.com) or write to me at 21 Hillcrest Road, Rookley, I.W PO38 3PB.

Jim Baldwin

The Island in the stone age - A brief look at some of the implements used by our ancestors.

Back in the nineteenth century there was a thriving oyster fishery based in the Solent and also in the estuaries and rivers that were adjacent to it including, for example, the Medina and Newtown on the Island. The method of fishing would have been fairly simple with dredges towed behind sailing smacks or even by oar power in the shallower, tidal rivers. The dredges would have, by necessity, been fairly small to allow them to be hauled up by hand although steam winches may have been used. The fishery eventually became uneconomical for a number of reasons that included overfishing, and depredation of the oysters by the tingle whelk (a small, snail like mollusc that drills into the oyster and kills it). By the 1930's it was finished. In the 1970's it all started up again as large quantities of oysters had been found in the Solent and this eventually became the largest fishery of its type in Europe. This time, round the boats were more powerful and bigger, as were the dredges. It wasn't just oysters that came up in the dredges though, as we shall see.

The Solent hasn't always been like it is as we know it today; back in the age known as the Pleistocene Epoch it was a large river system that drained the Hampshire Basin and was also a tributary of the (English) Channel River. At that time Britain was attached to the Continent and sea levels were about 40m lower than the present, allowing access for many species of animals that eventually included the early human hunter- gatherers. The Pleistocene can be dated fairly precisely, starting 2,580,000 years ago and ending 11,700 years ago. This long time span included periods when life was not viable, with severe cold spells so humans and wildlife retreated south to survive and then returned when conditions improved, although in one of the warmest periods, known as the Ipswichian Interglacial 130, 000 to 115,000 years ago, humans were completely absent from Britain. It is not known why this was. When they were here however, they left evidence of their stay in the form, amongst others, of stone tools many of which were left along the banks of the then Solent River where they remained for thousands of years before being covered by the Post Glacial sea level rise when the Solent was flooded about 8- 9,000 years ago. There they stayed unknown, until the oyster fishery started and with the bigger, heavier dredges and diesel powered boats they started to be found mixed in with the catch. It is worth mentioning that as well as these stone tools there were all sorts of other interesting artefacts coming up such as wild boar tusks, antlers, old bottles, pottery from all ages, German bombs (live) from WW2, cannon balls, in fact anything that had fallen overboard or came from wrecks or submerged buildings etc. It has to be said that oyster fishing was a really boring job, carried out through the winter in sometimes pretty grim weather and looking for these things brightened up the day.

Some of the earliest stone implements to be found were the hand axes belonging to the Acheulean type, named after an archaeological site at St. Acheul near Amiens in the Lower Somme Valley, France, where they were first identified. This was a tool industry that originated in East Central Africa about 1.5m years ago and spread to Europe about 500,000 years ago. They are not axes as we know them today but a tool that had a number of different purposes, almost a multi tool; stone tools are the oldest and longest used working tools ever made by humans. The one illustrated (left below) was found in the eastern Solent and was probably made about 250,000 years ago, according to the County Archaeologist; this means it was possibly made by somebody belonging to the Homo Heidelbergensis or, perhaps, the Neanderthalensis race, an interesting thought when you hold it in your hand. They were made of flint or chert and known as bifacial (a working surface on both sides) and amygdaloidal (almond- shaped). This one is made of flint and hairline cracks can be seen in it showing it was out in the open during the last Ice Age. According to the literature these tools were used for butchering animal carcasses and for breaking open bones to extract the marrow or cracking open molluscs and other shellfish. They might also have been used as a weapon by members of the tribe or group if attacked by an enemy. If there were fatalities the winning side may then have used the axes to dismember the bodies prior to eating them, cannibalism in other words.


Another interesting find (above right) was this scraper, possibly of the same time period. It is sharpened on one side only and was used, as the name implies, to scrape off the flesh from an animal hide prior to its intended use as, perhaps, an item of clothing or as a shelter covering.

The majority of tools shaken out of the dredges were from the Mesolithic Period, 11,000 to 5500 years ago. These were distinctly different to the earlier ones and would appear to be more custom-made for specific purposes. For example the one illustrated (left below) is a pick that could be used for digging or chopping wood or bone, it may have been fitted to a wooden haft to make it even more effective. The pointed one (right below), although rather rough, may be for use as an awl to make holes in hides or perhaps as a one off tool for a particular job. When you hold one of these tools it is quite remarkable how easily and comfortably they fit into your hand and your fingers naturally fit into the depressions made for them thus making them easier to use. Recent research has shown that some were apparently made for (and presumably, by) left handed users. Roughly 85% of the population today is right handed and the proportion is thought to have been the same in early humans; whether a right handed maker could make a left handed tool (or vice-versa) is something not known but is an intriguing thought, to say the least.


When handling these tools one can't help but think about the person who had actually made it. Was it a man or a woman? What was going through their mind as they shaped it? What sort of a day were they having? We, of course, will never know but of one thing we can be certain, Stone Age people were clever, highly skilled and very aware of the land they lived in and all that was on it. They successfully survived for an immense span of time; present day humans on the other hand are running out of time and are busy destroying the world they live in.

Andy Butler

The Brimstone Saga

After moving to Carisbrooke in 2014, I wanted to attract wildlife to my garden, and chose insect-friendly plants. One of these was an Alder Buckthorn shrub (*Rhamnus cathartica*) from Frank and Maretta Heap at Northwood, well known Island conservationists, woodland crafts enthusiasts and arboriculturalists of native trees. It came with maintenance instructions, together with notes about its historic use when coppiced to give good charcoal suitable for gunpowder, and about its importance as a food plant for the buttery-yellow Brimstone butterfly. Is it a coincidence that brimstone (sulphur) is a component of gunpowder?

How the butterfly would find the bush in the suburbs of Newport was, and remains, a mystery. The Covid-19 Lockdown necessitated a prolonged period of garden-watching from early Spring 2020. Surprisingly, for the first time as far as I know, a Brimstone duly arrived on the morning of 21st April. It inspected the small sapling, with leaves still partly in bud, and liked what it saw. Eggs were laid in dribs and drabs, for half an hour or so, and again when it returned periodically that afternoon.

About three weeks later, on 10th May, lots of tiny green caterpillars were thriving on the underside of leaves, lined up like leaf veins. There seemed to be so many that all the leaves would soon be lost. But avian predators – House Sparrows and probably Blue Tits – soon reduced caterpillar numbers and upheld one of the 'The Serengeti Rules' in Sean Carroll's 2016 view of ecology. Eventually, on 13th June, only one large caterpillar could be found, on the upper surface of a leaf, and its future seemed uncertain.

Regardless, I hope to see more episodes of the Brimstone Saga next year. I would recommend planting Alder Buckthorn, which also attracts many other insects, but that is another story.

Michele Van Buren

Photos by Mike Cotterill- Top left: The Alder Buckthorn sapling 23 April; Top right: Brimstone butterfly laying eggs on the Alder Buckthorn 21 April; Bottom left: Brimstone Eggs on Alder Buckthorn 23 April; Bottom right: Large Brimstone Caterpillar 13 June

Historical Association honours for Johanna Jones

Now retired from public life, Johanna Jones was for many years a member of the Isle of Wight Natural History and Archaeological Society, serving as President from 2008 to 2010. She has also been a member of the Isle of Wight Branch of the Historical Association and its immediate past President. In recognition of Johanna's contribution to historical research and education, the Historical Association recently awarded her an Honorary Fellowship. Johanna's research interests and publications have been wide-ranging. She gained her M Phil from the University of Southampton in 1982 with a thesis on 'The Administration of the Poor in the Isle of Wight 1771-1836'. In collaboration with her husband Dr Jack Jones she wrote 'The Isle of Wight: An Illustrated History' (1987). Her research into the Swainston Manor Survey of 1630 was published in the Society's Proceedings (1991 & 2003) and represents a major contribution to Island landscape history. She ventured into the field of garden history in her article 'Thirteenth century gardens in Carisbrooke Castle', also published in the Proceedings (1989). The architectural history of the Isle of Wight has been another research interest, reflected in her book 'Castles to Cottages: The Story of Isle of Wight Houses' (2000). More recently, Johanna has been researching the life of Isabella de Fortibus, the last quasi-independent ruler of the Isle of Wight.

Johanna has been significantly involved in several local organisations. She was a long-term tutor for the Workers Educational Association, inspiring many students with her courses on local social history, landscape history and architectural history. As President of the Isle of Wight Natural History and Archaeological Society Johanna was responsible for organising an exhibition at the Minster Church of St Thomas, Newport in 2009 celebrating the centenary of Frank Morey's 'Guide to the Natural History of the Isle of Wight', published in 1909.

On Thursday 30th January I was delighted to attend a short ceremony where Johanna was presented with a framed certificate giving details of her Honorary Fellowship of the Historical Association. The award was presented by Ken Hicks, President of the Isle of Wight Branch of the Association. Also present were Vivian Roberts (Chairman), Terence Blunden (Secretary) and Gillian Burnett (Treasurer).


Left: Johanna Jones leading a General Meeting at Carisbrooke Castle

Right: Johanna being presented her award by Ken Hicks at The Elms, Bembridge, courtesy of the Historical Association (Isle of Wight branch).

Vicky Basford

An opportunist blackbird

We have an olive tree in a pot on our terrace. Each year it flowers and bears a few olives, each less than a cm long. I look hungrily at them as they mature to purple but they are too small and too few to be useful so they shrivel on the tree. In May, I prune a little to expose the thickening trunk of the tree and open out the centre. This year, the day after I pruned, a male Blackbird appeared and stood in the centre of the tree studying the branches. He took an olive and swallowed it. I felt immediately guilty because I had removed more during the pruning. I had a look and one scruffy fruit remained.

The following day he appeared again, looked carefully for a few seconds and picked the last one, then flew down to the paving and spent at least a minute bashing it against the hard surface exactly like a Song Thrush with a snail (so much rarer a sight than it used to be). The dried shell came off and he swallowed it before flying off.

This bird will never have seen or eaten olives in profusion. He set me wondering if blackbirds exploit the lovely grove at Ventnor Botanic Garden, or other fruiting olives on the Island.

Has anyone noticed them?

Daphne Watson

Andy Yule's named specimens

Andy is a unique fossil collector with a passion for collecting from the exceptionally well preserved early Oligocene insect and plant beds exposed along the Island's north-west coastline. He has a unique knowledge of where and how to find fossils and his many finds include the highest quality museum specimens which he has donated to the collections at Dinosaur Island, where there is a special case exhibiting a selection of his finds. He has received the honour of having fossils named in his honour and here he describes four finds which have been named after him.

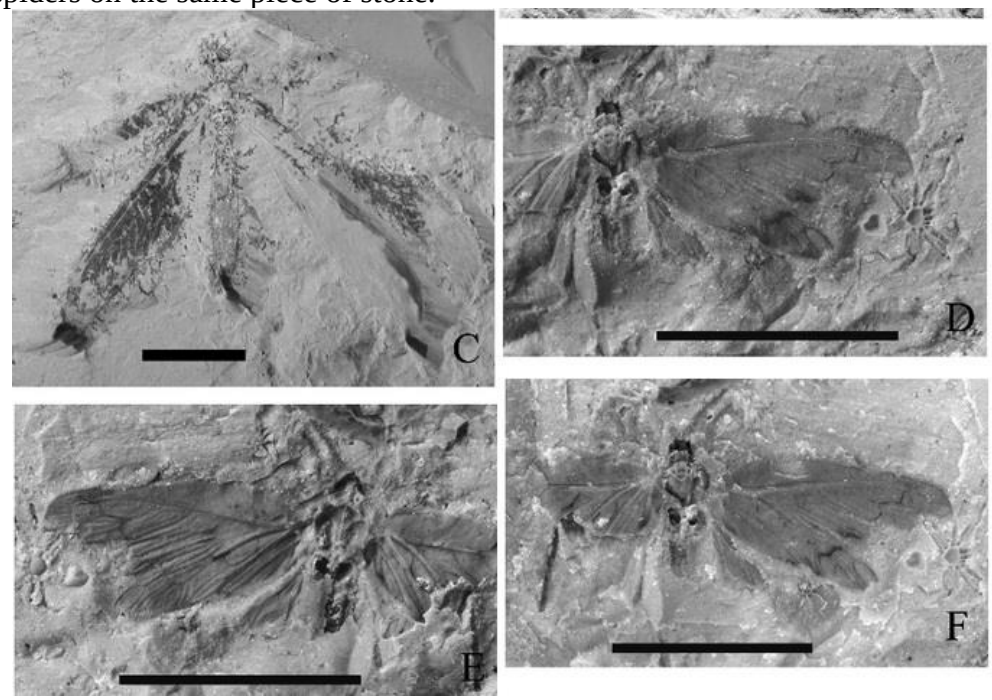
1/ One Friday morning, July 2001, on a visit to our museum at Sandown, I was handed a copy of Paleontology, the journal of the Paleontological Association. I was told to have a look on page 695. There was an article about a new species of fossil spider, *Vectaranius yulei.* Dr Paul Selden had been studying fossil spiders stored in the Natural History Museum and had found a new sort, 'derivation from after Andrew Yule, prolific collector of Isle of Wight fossils'. Of course, I was pleased to find this out but also a little upset, for I had lost my father towards the end of October 2000. He would have been overjoyed that my name was out there.

2/ The second fossil attributed to me was a dragonfly, Odonata, *Aeschnophlebia andreasi*, holotype specimen collected by A. Yule Etymology after finder.

3/ The third fossil, a wasp, featured in Flora and Fauna of the insect limestone (late Eocene), Isle of Wight Vol 1 (2014). This one is called *Ascogaster yulei* Etymology after A.Yule 'who has collected a lot of important fossil specimens from the Bembridge marls'.

4/ Now there's a bit of a story here! I found the rock that bore the insect back in June 2001. I split it on a bedding plane but only half came away; a few inches was still covered in stone and not wanting to damage the insect already exposed it was put away until May 2003. I was working with a brickie on a house in Cowes. We were building an extension and had been there a couple of months. Jessi, aged I believe seven years, was off school with chicken pox; I never saw a spottier kid! I had given her a couple of crocodile teeth and promised an ant wing fossil. I was looking for some bits indoors and found the 2001 rock. I gave it a couple of light taps and lifted the top to expose an almost perfect insect, wings and body. Wow! I had a photo taken and sent a picture to the Natural History Museum. I thought it could be a moth. Dr A. Ross wrote back. Not a moth but he needed to see it.

In July 2004, the Festival of Fossils was held at the Natural History Museum. I go up and find Andy Ross. Lacewing he says but not like any he has seen before. How do I feel about me naming it? I feel OK about it, I say. He sent me a framed picture of it later that year. Time moves along. In February 2020 I get hold of Flora & Fauna of Insects of Limestone Vol. II. Here I find *Sympherobius yulei.* Oh, I almost forgot. There were also two spiders on the same piece of stone.



Andy Yule's lacewing (*Sympherobius yulei*)

P.S.………and they keep coming! Some time after writing this, Andy phoned up the Society headquarters to report that he had discovered another insect named after him. *Niadrima yulei* is a Hemipteran plant hopper in the family Nogodinidae. It was published in September 2019 in a paper in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh on fossil insects from the late Eocene limestone beds of the Island.

Andy Yule

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iWatchWildlife Update

At this time of year, the iWatchWildife Team would ordinarily be busy planning and delivering public events, however we have switched to working wholly online via Social Media and the IWNHAS website for the time being. With many of us spending more time at home over the past few months, there has been a huge surge in interest in doorstep nature and subsequently the increased sharing of wildlife observations through Social Media. Our County Recorders and local species experts have been really busy assisting with species identification requests from the wider public and supporting iWatchWildlife in general through this period, for which we are very grateful.

As our 'Species of the Month' campaign tends to focus on wildlife of the wider countryside, we took a pause at the beginning of lockdown and launched the alternative 'iWatch My Garden' instead – calling for species observations from windows, in gardens and made during daily exercise. Species featured during 'iWatch My Garden' include the Bee Fly, Holly Blue butterfly, Greenfinch, Three-cornered Leek, Slow Worm, Newts, Toad and Froglets and Grass Snake and many of you have been in touch with your observations and wonderful pictures of these species and more.

With the easing of restrictions in May, we felt it acceptable to re-instate 'Species of the Month' which now runs alongside 'iWatch My Garden' with Stag Beetles being the first to feature. Stag Beetles are a regular in the iWatch calendar, and with the help of Jim Baldwin, we annually gather the IW observations of these magnificent, and nationally scarce beetles for entry into the IW Species Database (held and maintained by the Society). This data then feeds into the National Survey through a data exchange agreement with PTES. The Stag Beetles caught us out this year slightly by making an appearance earlier than expected during May (probably owing to the period of hot weather around this time). It seems to have been a good year for them with more records received than previous years; especially males, or perhaps more people have been looking and noticing?

Golden-ringed Dragonflies followed as 'Species of the Month' in July, Hawk-moth Larvae throughout August and Wasp Spiders will feature during September.

We would like to thank the Isle of Wight Biodiversity Partnership and IW AONB for funding the continuation of iWatchWildlife this year.

Tina Whitmore

Images: *Male Stag Beetle by Nick Edwards; Hedgehog by Josh Mattick*

Can you help boost our IW species record data?

The iWatchWildlife Team aim to capture a variety of species records shared by the wider public on Social Media e.g. hedgehogs and other small mammals, reptiles and amphibians, bees – all sorts of things really that would otherwise slip through the recording net, and we'd warmly welcome any assistance.

If you have an interest in a particular species and / or enjoy interacting with the local Facebook nature groups, could you perhaps help us as a Social Media Species Record Champion?

There have been some interesting and unusual local observations shared recently by the wider public e.g. Long-horned Mining Bees, Mole Cricket, Sun Fish - all of which have now been logged, but would have been missed ordinarily.

Being a Social Media Species Record Champion is really just about keeping a general look out for wildlife observations of interest during your usual browsing activities, then capturing the data e.g. where, who, when and an image so it can be converted into a local species record. If you would like to find out more, please contact Tina on iwatchwildlife@gmail.com.

Natural Wonders of the Isle of Wight Centenary Project

Earlier this year as part of our Centenary Projects we were awarded funding for a Natural History / Arts project called 'Natural Wonders of the Isle of Wight'. The plan was to work with schools to generate artwork based on the Island's unique habitats and wildlife. Following this, the curation of the artwork for display in a set of natural history-style cabinets, then ultimately exhibited; however the restrictions put pay to this temporarily.

We were pleased to report in our May e-bulletin that the project has since been progressed via Zoom - the web video conferencing platform, where our lead artist successfully delivered three group input sessions to Queensgate Primary. The pupils created artwork focussing on species, habitats and natural heritage relevant to the area (in this case East Cowes Esplanade) themed with shoreline inspired artwork and clay models of the iconic Turnstone population, of which the locals are very fond.

Images: *The first Natural Wonders of the Isle of Wight cabinet in progress; Detail of the clay Turnstones*

Tina Whitmore

Flagging-up the Glanville

Island Artist Liz Cooke makes stunning, large-scale flags for high profile festivals, events and organisations and for this year's 'Hullabaloo at Home', Liz set herself a real challenge during lockdown to create a one-off flag inspired by the Glanville Fritillary. 'Hullabaloo at Home' was beamed directly into our homes this year live and online packed with science, arts, music, dance, magic and opportunities to learn about the Island's wildlife and landscapes. The event also coincided with the 1st Birthday of the Isle of Wight Biosphere status.

As you know from The Society logo, the Glanville Fritillary has an extremely intricate wing pattern,

taking its name from the Latin ‘fritillus’ meaning a ‘dice-box’ and these were often carved and inlayed with checkerboard patterns. Inevitably for Liz, this involved much cutting and stitching to capture the essence of the butterfly’s delicate markings. Liz says “I chose this butterfly as it’s unique to the Isle of Wight and a nice way to celebrate my local environment which has been declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. As lockdown progressed so did my fritillary - any time the dining table was free of family lockdown activities was my chance to sew. I loved how this butterfly kept me occupied on and off for the first few weeks of the lockdown, as I came to terms with the loss of all my event work this season. As well as being a symbol of our Island’s status as Biosphere, this butterfly spoke to me of transformation, freedom and environment”.

Liz has very kindly offered to loan the flag to The Society for future events and we plan to take her up that as soon as we are able!

To watch the making of Liz’s Glanville Flag see: https://youtu.be/D734-c_hsFY to view all the ‘Hullabaloo at Home’ content see: www.hullabalooiw.com

Tina Whitmore

Some thoughts on a hippopotamus tusk found at Newtown

The tusk in question was found just outside the entrance to the Newtown estuary one winter’s day back in the nineteen seventies, when picking winkles for the London market. Incidentally there was, and still may be, an excellent bed of mussels in the same place.

Research on the internet gives a date for the tusk of about 115,000 to 130,000 years ago in an interglacial period known as the Eemian also called the Ipswichian in Britain. Although the temperature then was obviously higher than the present day the difference was not that extreme indicating just how much the present day climate has changed. It is difficult to imagine a time when if you were looking out across the marsh you could see a six and a half ton hippo wallowing in the mud; they were half as large again as the modern day animal which weighs in at mere four and a half tons. Information is sometimes contradictory when trying to find out just what it was like in the area that would eventually become Southern England and Newtown Isle of Wight. One thing that seems clear is that as well as warmer temperatures, sea levels were much higher, possibly as much as six to ten metres, but as the height of the levels before the rise is unknown the effect cannot be ascertained. All that can reliably be deduced is that the habitat in the ‘Newtown’ area suited hippos because, obviously, they were there. What the associated flora and fauna would have been like is impossible to know but presumably would have included the equivalent of species similar to those found in Africa now. It is known that as well as hippos there were lions present at the same time, as far north as where London is now. The strange thing is that there is no evidence of human activity at this time, they were simply not there. As the Ipswichian period was very brief, lasting only about 15,000 years, just a blink

in time really, there is consequently a dearth of fossil evidence to show what was here; when you consider, for example, that Iguanadon vertebrae are relatively common in the Island as dinosaurs inhabited the area for millions of years, the hippo tusk can be seen to be quite a rarity.

Hippos were thought to be closely related to pigs (as they look like them) but it is now known that their nearest living relatives are cetaceans, whales and dolphins, from which they diverged about 50 million years ago. They are a very dangerous animal with the tusks used for fighting, either each other or any other animal that is perceived as a threat. They can and do kill crocodiles, so the much larger historical ones would have been fearsome beasts indeed.

This particular tusk is about 15cm long and 4cm wide with grooves running the length of it. A local fossil collector offered to put it into a preserving fluid so that it would stay intact, and this was done although it took eight years before it was returned. Hippos have two of these tusks, one on each side of the lower mandible and as this one is not particularly large it is possible that it came from a relatively young animal. This odd period in the Island's history with a semi tropical climate, no humans and unusual animals is a time that we will never really know a great deal about and a lot is conjecture. How long, for instance, after the temperature started to increase did it take for these animals to move north and end up here? How long were they here for and did they just die out or did they migrate back to the south as the early stages of the next ice age approached? We shall never know but one thing we can be sure of is that at some time in that period at least one hippopotamus was living in the area that eventually became Newtown. We have the evidence!

Andy Butler

Recording Red Squirrels, Become a Citizen Scientist

You don't have to be a 'techie' to report red squirrel sightings, there is a way for everyone. Monitoring is the most important aspect of Wight Squirrel Project's work but we need many eyes to look out for our native reds. The data is put together with other research and surveys to build up a picture of how our red squirrel population is getting on. Results are in the annual newsletter and on the website.

Writing down sightings for the year and sending them in annually to PO Box33, Ryde, IOW, PO33 1BH, is the simplest method. If you don't see many in a year, then ringing 611003 is very easy. For the more technically minded, there is email: wightsquirrels@hotmail.com. For the whizz kids there is an online form on Wight Squirrel Project website: www.wightsquirrels.co.uk. For the really switched on (not me!) there is an app and here is how to download and use it:

Mobile App:

1. From your App Store search for 'Epicollect5'.
2. Get Epicollect5.
3. Install Epicollect5
4. Once installed (30 seconds) Open the App..
5. Tap + Add Project and search Wight Squirrel Observations.

6. Tap Wight Squirrel Observations and then + Add entry.
7. Allow location services for this app.
8. If you are not at the same location as the squirrel when entering the record please note where you are in the comments field.
9. After answering the questions then close and upload the data and image.
10. Look for another squirrel

I look forward to hearing about the squirrels you see, alive or dead, red or suspected grey!

Helen Butler MBE, Wight Squirrel Project

Navelwort or Pennywort in St. Lawrence

During lockdown, our regular walks have taken us all over St. Lawrence and in particular the coastal path from Binnel to Woody Bay where we walk past Binnel Studios at Old Park. We have known for some time that this is one of the sites to see Navelwort or the name we prefer Pennywort (*Umbilicus rupestris).* This curious plant is one that I remember from my childhood in Cornwall where it is much more common, and reminds me of damp Cornish hedgerows and stone walls. It is not a spectacular plant in terms of garish colour but is such a wonderful feature of old walls and roofs.

The leaves are circular and succulent. It is called Navelwort because the leaf stalk (petiole) grows from the centre of the leaf. The leaves also resemble a coin hence it's other common name of Pennywort. The flowers are produced in upright racemes, and are greenish white to pinkish brown in colour. It is a member of the Stonecrop or *Crassulaceae* family which includes other succulent genera such as *Sedums*, *Aeonium* and *Sempervivum.*

This plant is beloved of young children who use the leaves as imitation coins. Richard Mabey in Flora Britannica describes children making Victorian posies by pricking holes in the leaf and filling it with small flowers. Another name for it is “coolers” and derives from using the sappy leaves to treat burns.

Once we got our eye in at Binnel Studios, where it grows on an old wall, we found other populations of this species in other parts of the Old Park Estate, mainly on walls but also on roofs. Also in our village we found a roof covered with Pennywort near holiday cottages at Lisle Combe, More surprising still were some very fine specimens growing at the base of a wooden fence in Undercliff Drive near the botanic gardens. In the Flora of the Isle of Wight *Umbilicus rupestris* is described as a rare plant with a very localised distribution.

Dave & Hazel Trevan

Why Are Plants Green?

During the Wood Calamint conservation work early this year, Society President Paul Bingham sprang an enigmatic question : Why are all the plants we see around us green? The straightforward answer, as you may have realized, is that they reflect the green wavelengths of sunlight instead of absorbing them for photosynthesis. They have not been out-competed by black-leaved plants with total light absorption, so the question remains : Why green? The answer involves both the origins and evolution of plants, and some discussion about the very complex biochemistry of oxygen-releasing green plants. What we see as green is

just a segment of wavelengths in the wider visible spectrum of sunlight. Photosynthesis has been defined as the conversion of light energy to electrochemical or chemical potential energy. In modern plants it takes place in special compartments or organelles called chloroplasts, present in large numbers in leaf cells. The process is usually thought of as comprising two parts – firstly 'light reactions' whereby absorption of light energy powers the removal of electrons from water (releasing oxygen gas as a waste product) followed by a series of electron-transfer events leading to the production of high-energy compounds, especially NADP.2H and ATP. Secondly there are 'dark reactions' when those energy compounds are used for the conversion of carbon dioxide gas into organic molecules for growth. 'Dark' reactions work perfectly well in the light but do not require it.

The first life on Earth, about 3800 million years ago (Ma), possibly used steep natural chemical gradients as an energy source. Such conditions are found today at undersea volcanic hydrothermal springs (black smokers). It has been speculated that bubbles in the mixing zone between hot, electron-rich alkaline water and acidic electron-poor waters containing iron salts and carbon dioxide, may have facilitated living processes. Marine sediments in Greenland, dated 3800 Ma, contain graphite layers of carbon with the ratio of stable isotopes (13C and 12C) that is typical of living and fossil organisms. The oldest life forms we know about were single celled Bacteria, and similar-looking but distinctive Archaea which according to the ribosome genetic 'clock' in living examples are probably a little less ancient despite their name. Both lack a membrane bag (nucleus) to hold their genes, so most genes are in a long twisted loop of DNA but some are held on small string-like plasmids. Gene-swapping of plasmids between different 'strains' or 'species' was and remains common. Bacteria fossils dated 3260 Ma. occur in Swaziland.

The early atmosphere had no oxygen gas. Nitrogen was as abundant as today, but there was a lot more carbon dioxide, with some carbon monoxide and methane. Aquatic Bacteria and Archaea acquired the ability to photosynthesize at about 3400 Ma, using a variety of pigments to trap various wavelengths (colours) of sunlight. The pigments supplied energy to very complex sequences of chemical reactions but these did not release oxygen, which was actually poisonous to all life forms because it is so reactive. Instead of splitting water, they obtained electrons from minerals and gases like sulphur and hydrogen sulphide. Similar Bacteria and Archaea still exist, but are now confined to anoxic environments where there is little or no oxygen present. Two groups living in volcanic hot springs are of particular interest. Green Bacteria get electrons from the dissolved gas hydrogen sulphide and use sunlight energy in a chemical sequence very similar to Photosystem I in green plants. Purple bacteria, also in hot springs, get electrons from dissolved iron, and use sunlight in a quite different chemical sequence very similar to the Photosystem II in green plants. The ancient world, with an oxygen-free atmosphere, would have been a riot of pigment colours, not just greens, wherever there were suitable minerals and shallow aquatic conditions to protect against harsh ultraviolet sunlight in the absence of an ozone shield in the upper atmosphere.

Water-splitting, oxygen-producing photosynthesis is thought to have originated before 2700 Ma when an ancestor of modern Cyanobacteria (once misnamed blue-green algae) acquired genes from two other, different species of Bacteria. This enabled it to make both Photosystem I and Photosystem II. Cyanobacteria are very resourceful – some today can fix atmospheric nitrogen. This particular ancient Cyanobacterium somehow linked the two photosystems together, in the reverse order with PS II followed by PS I. After some more chemical juggling PS II became powerful enough to split water, protective chemicals were used to reduce oxygen poisoning, and an electron was sent to PS I which eventually produced the NADP.2H that is used to power the fixing of carbon dioxide (carboxylation) into organic molecules. The complexity of these changes is so great that evolution of this combined system it thought to have occurred only once in the history of life on Earth.

The next stage in complexity came with Eukaryotes. Over a vast period of time Bacteria and Archaea performed very complex chemistry inside their small free living cells. But these processes could be better controlled in small compartments (membrane-bags or organelles) within cells, which enabled cells to grow larger. Eukaryotes have these compartments, and were originally single cells but evolved into all the multicellular plants and animals we are familiar with. Their genes reside in an organelle called the nucleus. Most organelles may have originated at different times by endosymbiosis, whereby a host cell engulfed another cell and kept it trapped to perform useful functions. Passed on to the offspring of the host cell during simple reproduction (cell splitting or fission), their functions changed over time. An important event occurred when one Archaea surrounded a Bacterium like modern purple non-sulphur bacteria, which took

up residence and evolved into the mitochondrium, an energy processing organelle found as multiple clones in almost all Eukaryote cells. One descendant of this Archaea engulfed a Cyanobacterium which already had the oxygenic combination of Photosystems II and I, and over time this bacterium became the chloroplast organelle. Because this transformation was so complex, that particular Archaea is considered to have been the single ancestor of all modern algae and plants.

But why green? Green plants have very numerous chloroplasts in their leaves. Both Photosystems II and I in chloroplasts have funnels or antennae of around 300 pigment molecules to absorb sunlight and channel it down to a reaction-centre. In all oxygenic organisms the main pigment is chlorophyll-a, which absorbs best in the blue and red regions of the visible spectrum, but less well in the middle of the spectrum which we perceive as green. There are a few other secondary pigments that absorb shorter wavelengths (higher energies) of light like chlorophyll-b and carotenoids. Beta-carotene absorbs only blue light, and in autumn its presence causes many tree-leaves to reflect the mixture of green and red that we see as yellow. Some secondary pigments help prevent damage to chlorophyll-a under excess light, or increase light absorption in shade and other environments.

In the antenna, a light photon is absorbed by causing one electron to jump up to a higher energy level. This particular electronic excitation (S1 state) of an electron belonging to a chlorophyll-a molecule involves vibration of the molecule. A whole subset of possible S1 vibration states exist which increases the spectrum of potential wavelengths absorbed. Chlorophyll-a is one of the strongest known absorbers of light. The antenna pigments have the correct structure (double-bonds in conjugation) to allow that vibration energy to be passed efficiently by inductive resonance through successive molecules to the reaction centre. Photosystem II has two reaction centres acting together, though each has a separate antenna. Both reaction centres have a special pigment-protein structure (called P 680) made of two linked chlorophyll-a molecules. There the excited electron is converted into chemical energy by irreversible transference (primary charge separation), when it is pulled off P680 by another molecule (Ph) and carried away, to eventually reach Photosystem I. After losing its excited electron, P680 is the most highly oxidizing molecule known in nature and immediately steals an electron from one manganese atom in a special cluster of four. When all four manganese atoms have an electron, the cluster has enough positive charge to pull four electrons off two molecules of water. The manganese atoms keep those electrons and are then ready for reuse. The two water molecules disintegrate, releasing four protons (hydrogen atoms without electrons) which are stored for later use, and one molecule of oxygen gas which is discarded. This is how the atmosphere gets all its oxygen. Stored protons (held in the thylakoid lumen) escape through a specialized molecule (ATP synthase) which generates energy-rich ATP.

Photosystem I, located very close by, has its own antennae with chlorophyll-a molecules, but a different reaction centre (called P700). The antenna delivers energy to excite an electron of P700 into a higher energy level, allowing it to be detached and sent through a sequence of molecules to form the energy-rich NADP.2H.The P700 immediately regains an electron, sent to it by PS II, and so it is ready for reuse. All of these activities constitute the ‘light reactions’ in the chloroplast.

The ‘dark reactions’ occur in close proximity, both in Cyanobacteria and in the chloroplasts of Eukaryotes. They involve a sequence known as the Calvin Cycle, in which chemicals combine and then separate to regenerate the starting material (RuBP). A very large catalysis molecule called Rubisco, which is the most abundant protein on Earth and makes up half of all the proteins in a leaf, causes RuBP to react with one molecule of carbon dioxide and one of water, to make two new organic molecules. Then, with the addition of a substantial amount of energy supplied as ATP and NADP.2H from Photosystem I, they are both changed into triose phosphate. One in six of these triose phosphate molecules is removed from the cycle and converted into sucrose, starch, cellulose, fatty acids or amino acids, just as the plant requires. The other five are changed back into RuBP and recycled.

In most plants (called C3) carbon dioxide entering the leaf through pores (stomata) goes directly to the Calvin Cycle. But some plants have evolved special variations. Some tropical plants (called C4) both dicots and monocots but particularly grasses like maize, reduce water-loss by having small leaf stomata. This restricts the available carbon dioxide. To compensate, in most of their leaf cells the gas is converted first into a molecule called malate, which is transported to relatively few specialist cells where the gas is released in sufficient concentration to enter the Calvin Cycle. Another variation is used by some succulent plants like cacti, which reduce water loss by keeping their stomata closed in daylight. They absorb carbon

dioxide at night, store it as malate, and release it in the same cells during daylight to enter the Calvin Cycle. Both variations waste more energy than C3 plants.

Green plants dominate terrestrial environments, but the range of pigments used by various photosynthetic bacteria (bacteriochlorophylls) and algae such as deep-sea red algae (phycobilin pigment) means that one life form or another is capable of using any segment of visible sunlight from the near-ultraviolet (350 nm wavelength) to the near-infrared (1050 nm). Some Victorian critics of evolution saw the human eye as the epitome of complexity, but the arrangements of chemical reactions achieved by ancient Bacteria and Archaea are exquisite and fundamental to the later success of plants and animals alike.

Mike Cotterill

Andy's Nature Notes January to June

JANUARY

1st. Male Blackcap in garden (left below). A Common Plume moth on dining room window, the first moth of the year.

2nd. A number of Gannets diving for fish close in off Wheeler's Bay, presumably for sprats.

3rd.Went to Yarmouth with Dave Nordell. 4 Bullfinches along the rail track and good views of the Spotted Redshank with a Greenshank. I managed to get a reasonable photo (middle below). Also one Spoonbill out on the marsh.

4th. A pair of Ravens along the revetment. A Song Thrush in the garden and a male Blackcap.

8th. The Ravens sat on the boathouse roof in front of my house this morning.

10th. Newtown with Pete Campbell where we saw 16 Red-breasted Mergansers and 2 Spoonbills. Later, I watched and photographed a large Grey Seal (probably Ron seal) kill, skin and eat a Conger of about 12lb. He was in very close just off the sea defence in front of my house. After playing with it for a bit he suddenly swallowed it whole in one go (right below).

11th. A female Black Redstart along the revetment.

12th. A Red Admiral in the garden was my first butterfly of the year.

18th. Went to Brook to photograph Iguanodon dinosaur footprints for an upcoming talk (right below). I then on to Yarmouth but there was not much about.

20th. Female Stonechat in the garden.

29th. Male Blackcap on the bird feeders.



FEBRUARY

2nd. Blackcap still around and a single Fulmar off the bay.

5th. Red-throated Diver off bay heading east.

7th. Went to Yarmouth with Pete. One Spoonbill, 35 Snipe and c.100 Lapwing. One of the naturalised Wallflowers that grow along the cliffs behind the revetment is in full flower.

A feature this month is the strong winds and rain.

26th. A sunny day so out at last! Went to Atherfield, very muddy and not much to see although watched a Stoat close to. Found one Glanville web.

27th. Wall Lizards on my front steps.

29th. A Chiffchaff in the garden this morning, possible migrant.

MARCH

1st. Little Egret along at Monk's Bay.
6th. Small White in the garden. Along to Chilton Chine for Glanville webs. None found. It was very wet and large cliff falls everywhere.
8th. A Black Redstart in Wheeler's Bay car park. A Humming-bird Hawkmoth [HBHM] in the garden.
12th. Another HBHM in garden.
13th. First Bee Fly (*Bombylius major*) of the year in my garden.
16th. Out to Atherfield looking for Glanville webs, only 3 found. A male Wheatear on the cliff edge. Back at Bonchurch saw a smart male Black Redstart on a house roof. On the sea and close in were 3 first winter Guillemots that looked to be covered in palm oil or something similar.
22nd. Went to St. Catherine's Point for webs. Only 4 found plus an Adder and 2 Black Redstarts.
23rd. A Comma in the garden.
24th.Large White, Small White, Peacock and Comma in the garden plus about 30 Bee Flies (*B.major*), never seen so many here. Covid 19 restrictions now in place. Bit of a nuisance, to say the least.
25th. HBHM in garden and a Swallow over the house.
26th. 21 Glanville webs along the revetment seen on my permitted walk.
28th. 3 Spotted Bee Fly (*B.discolor*) in garden.
30th. A Common Lizard along the revetment, a bit of a rare sight nowadays.
31st. Little Egret at Bonchurch.

APRIL

1st. Peacock, Small White, Small Tortoiseshell and a HBHM in the garden.
2nd. 8 or 9 Bottle-nosed Dolphins heading up Channel this am (below). 3 Chiffchaff in the garden.
4th. 2 Holly Blue, 2 Small White, one Large White and a HBHM in the garden.
5th. Male Brimstone in the garden.
6th. 2 Willow Warblers in the garden early am. Male Orange Tip plus usual. Wheatear along the revetment.
9th. Green-veined White, 4 Orange Tips 3 Holly Blues and Large and Small Whites in the garden.
10th. Ron seal in the bay this am.
13th. Hardly worth running the moth trap lately but a slight improvement last night. Blossom Underwing, 3 Mullein moths, 6 Muslin Moths, one Early Grey, a White-shouldered House Moth, 2 Hebrew Character and *Agonopterix rotundella* (not common).
15th. Bloxworth Snout moth in the dining room. I get one every year indoors.
16th. Wall butterfly at Monk's Bay.
18th. 3 Willow Warblers in the garden early am.
20th. Arctic Skua heading east am. A HBHM actually nectaring on an Echium in the garden for about 5 mins. Not seen this before.
22nd. Common Blue along the revetment.
23rd. The first Glanville Fritillary of the year in Pete's Garden.
24th. 8 Glanville Fritillaries along the revetment and 2 Common Blues.
25th. 2 Little Egrets over the Bay. A Spectacle was the best of the moth catch.
26th. First Dingy Skipper along the revetment. A Whimbrel at Monk's Bay.
27th. A Painted Lady flew through the garden this afternoon.

MAY

1st. Painted Lady, female Orange Tip and 3 Holly Blue in the garden.

2nd. Glanville Fritillary and a Cream-spot Tiger moth plus 5 Holly Blue in the garden. Holly Blues seem to be having a very good year.

6th. Went to Binnel Bay. 2 Wheatears, 3 Glanvilles and a big, old Fox (left below). 4 Glanville Fritillaries at Woody Head.

7th. Walked up to and along the lower slopes of Bonchurch Down. 6 Adonis Blue, 56 Common Blue, c30 Brown Argus, 14 Dingy Skipper, 6 Glanvilles, 8 Small Heath, 5 Small Copper,2 Silver Y moths and a Rose Chafer. Back home a Rusty-dot Pearl moth, a migrant, in the garden.

8th. 26 Glanville Fritillaries along the revetment.

15th. Went to Flower's Brook at 0700 and walked to Woody Head and back. 81 Glanvilles at Castle Cove was a good count. On to Atherfield later in the morning, not so good, only 5 Glanvilles in total plus one Wall, one Painted Lady and a Yellow Belle moth.

18th. Met up with Pete at Laundry Lane, Brading. 3 Hairy Dragonflies, 4 Broad-bodied Chasers, a Hobby and a Green Hairstreak.

19th. Sandown Levels this am. 5 Scarce Chasers (female, middle below) and 2 Hairy Dragonflies.

20th. Watcombe Bottom today. 97 Small Blue and 86 Glanvilles. Atherfield later, a slight improvement with 15 Glanvilles seen. A Whimbrel in the field north of the road.

21st. Met up with Pete and we checked out Chilton Chine where we counted 36 Glanvilles. A Grey Heron on the cliff edge made a nice picture (right below). Moved on to Compton and had a total of 435. Not all the site was covered as it was a very hot day.

25th. Went to St. Catherine's Point and counted a total of 43 Glanvilles. Bonchurch Down late am, a Hairy Dragonfly was an unexpected sighting. They are expanding their range and are turning up in some unlikely places. Also seen were 14 Adonis Blue, 11 Glanvilles, 8 Small Heath, 8 Common Blue 5 Dingy Skipper and 3 Brown Argus.

27th. A Blyth's Reed Warbler was found adjacent to Dudley Road carpark in Ventnor this morning. It was there all day but I only managed occasional glimpses of it. Its song was loud and distinctive.

30th. I went for a swim! Not nearly as cold as I thought it would be and must be the first swim I've had in May for decades.



JUNE

1st. Went over to Bembridge Ponds to see a reported Marsh Warbler. Just like the Blyths, only had the odd glimpse but it was singing well. Had a look down Laundry Lane as I was over there, plenty of dragonflies; 18 Broad-bodied Chasers, 15 Black-tailed Skimmers, one Emperor, 2 Hairy Dragonflies and 3 Hobbies. Drove to Atherfield in the early afternoon and recorded 27 Glanville Fritillaries (west only), 6 Black-tailed Skimmers and one male Banded Demoiselle.

4th. HBHM in the garden.

8th. Had another look at Sandown Levels this morning. 4 Scarce Chasers and a Kingfisher. Moved on to Laundry Lane and watched 4 Hobbies catching dragonflies.

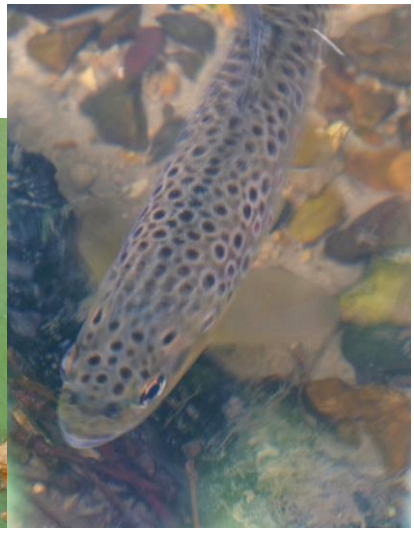
10th. First Marbled White in the garden today plus a Small Tortoiseshell and a Red Admiral.

12th. It rained all day.

14th. 2 mature Red-veined Darters and 9 Black-tailed Skimmers, south Wight. Also c200 Meadow Browns on 40ft of hedge along the Military Rd.

15th. Ran the moth trap last night and had 18 Small Elephant Hawkmoth, 3 Privet Hawkmoth, *Synaphe punctalis*, Bordered Sallow, 2 Scarce Footman, Shears and *Aethes beatricella* plus other more common species. In the afternoon went to Haddon's Pits, Shanklin, for another Blythe's Reed Warbler. Didn't see it or even hear it.
16th. Very calm morning with no wind. Went to Bonchurch fishing but didn't get anything. On to Laundry Lane later, where there were 5 Hobbies, 3 Small Tortoiseshells, 7 Black-tailed Skimmers and 4 plants of Yarrow Broomrape, found by Graham Andrews (left below).
17th. Went up to Bembridge Down early in the morning and saw Ravens, Peregrines and at least 200 Small Heath butterflies.
18th. A male soldier fly, *Stratiomys potamida* in the garden this morning (middle below). Not rare but a nice record for the garden (identified by Adam Wright).
20th. Over to Newtown today. Saw one Black-tailed Skimmer, 2 pairs of Ruddy Darters, 2 Emperor Dragonflies, 6 Silver-washed Fritillaries, 15 White Admirals and 6 Comma.
22nd. Met up with Pete at Shalfleet today. Walked along the Caul Bourne, bit windy but saw 3 female Beautiful Demoiselles and one male. Also 5 Brown Trout, the biggest about a foot long (right below).
24th. Joined up with Pete and Alan Clark at Windy Gap carpark, Niton, today. There were about 2000 Pyramidal Orchids in a nearby field, the most I've ever seen at one time. We then went on down the landslip to Rocken End and walked along the beach to below Blackgang Terrace to check for Keeled Skimmer Dragonflies. We only found 4 which was a bit disappointing. Also only a few *Cicindela germanica* tiger beetles, normally uncountable; perhaps we were a little early in the year for them. They have fearsome jaws for such a small insect that is only about 10/12mm long. It was very hot and probably not such a good idea to have gone today. In the afternoon Pete and I went out to a private reservoir along the Military Road and recorded 60 Black-tailed Skimmer dragonflies (the most I've ever seen) and the first Gatekeeper butterfly of the year. Later on I watched Iain Outlaw using pheromone lures for Six-belted Clearwing moths along the revetment at home. Instant success! At least a dozen in a few seconds. Very interesting.
25th. Pete and I walked along the cycle track from Alverstone to Newchurch by the river. At least 12 male Scarce Chaser dragonflies and one female plus 2 Emperor Dragonflies and numerous Banded Demoiselles. Also 8 Comma butterflies, a HBHM at the end of Park Avenue back in Ventnor and a Southern Hawker dragonfly in the garden late afternoon
26th. I had 2 reports today of the presence of young Long-eared Owls in Bonchurch Landslip: I have not heard of them being there before.
30th. A feature this year has been the cruise ships anchored up in Sandown Bay. Easily visible from my house in Wheeler's Bay they look as though they are actually off Bonchurch and quite close. A strange optical illusion.





Andy Butler


Left: Cliff tiger beetle, *Cicindela germanica* on Blackgang Terrace **Right:** Six-belted Clearwing moth at lure, Wheeler's Bay **Below:** Cruise ships & other vessels moored up in Sandown Bay during the pandemic

MEETINGS HELD BEFORE LOCKDOWN

General Meetings

Saturday 14th March A Talk about the Isle of Wight Hedgehog Rescue by Will Taylor

The Isle of Wight Hedgehog Rescue is run by four people: Jackie Wilson and her husband, in whose garden the hedgehog hospital is sited, Mandy Fielding, a veterinary nurse who recently joined the team, and Will Taylor, who raises awareness of the group's work by giving talks and holding stalls at events across the Island. They are supported in their work by the British Hedgehog Society, which publishes a series of leaflets and other materials about hedgehogs and how to help them. "Our mission is to save our hedgehogs on the Isle of Wight", says Will. Last year the team rescued 75 hedgehogs, far more than in previous years. "Could this be an indication of an increase in the hedgehog population on the Island?" Will asks. They recently set up a sanctuary, in collaboration with the Isle of Wight Zoo, for injured hedgehogs that cannot be released back into the wild. If you should see a hedgehog out in daylight, it may need help – except if it is a

sow nest-building, a sow taking a break from her hoglets, or an animal that has been disturbed and is having to seek another refuge.

What is a hedgehog? The hedgehog is a mammal: an insectivore, not a rodent. Its back and sides are covered in one-inch long spines, which are modified hairs and their armour against predators. These spines are absent from the face, chest, belly, throat and legs, which are covered in coarse grey-brown fur. The hedgehog grows to about 8 to 9 inches long and has a small tail.

Breeding A hedgehog sow produces some 2 to 5 hoglets in a litter. She can reproduce at 6 months old, and the gestation period is 30 to 40 days. When the hoglets are 6 weeks old, she will leave them to fend for themselves, but the young are often road casualties.

Diet Hedgehogs are omnivorous. Their main diet is beetles, caterpillars, earthworms, slugs, snails, millipedes, centipedes, earwigs, larvae and small mammals – dead or alive. They are noisy eaters.

Parasites Contrary to belief, only 5% of hedgehogs have fleas, and the hedgehog flea is host specific - so no threat to cats, dogs or humans. However, bloodsucking ticks are often found on them, especially on the sick and injured. Ringworm and lungworm may also be present, so wear gloves when picking them up.

Hibernation Only three kinds of British mammal hibernate: the hedgehog, hazel dormouse and bat species. From November to March, when the temperature falls below 5 degrees Celsius, hedgehogs reduce their heart rate, breathing and body temperature.

Why the rapid population decline? In the late 1970s to early 1980s there were an estimated 35 million hedgehogs, but now there are possibly only 1 million. There are numerous reasons why the hedgehog population has declined so sharply in recent decades. Nearly a quarter of hoglets die before leaving the nest, and perhaps half of the rest do not survive their first hibernation. Loss of habitat and hedgerow, the increased use of pesticides and slug pellets in agriculture and gardening, road development, more traffic and greater speeds – these are the main causes of population decline. And yet there are signs that urban hedgehog populations are growing.

How can we help hedgehogs? Gardeners can help by using alternatives to pesticides and slug pellets, ensuring access for hedgehogs by leaving a gap under their fences, using environmentally safe wood preservatives, and keeping pea netting a foot above the ground so that hedgehogs don't get tangled in it. Garden ponds should have gently sloping, not sheer, sides so that hedgehogs can go there to drink and not fall in and drown. If you build a bonfire, erect a barrier around it, or re-site the materials just before you light it, to make sure that a hedgehog is not hibernating there. And don't leave rubbish lying about that might injure hedgehogs and other wildlife.

Some hedgehog facts The hedgehog comes from an ancient family, and fossil records suggest that hedgehog-like creatures have existed for some 15 million years. Although the hedgehog has no close relatives amongst other mammals, it may have distant links with moles and shrews. But it has developed along a separate evolutionary line for millions of years. There are a dozen or more indigenous species world-wide, including several in South-east Asia, Africa and China, but none in the Americas or Australasia. The British hedgehog is the same species that occurs in most European countries (*Erinaceus europaeus*), and it has been introduced into New Zealand.

Hedgehogs search for food at night, covering a mile or two in their slow and apparently haphazard way. As they have poor eyesight, they rely on their excellent sense of smell and hearing to find food. Generally, they lead solitary lives and tend to avoid other hedgehogs, except in the mating season. Their characteristic smell warns other hedgehogs to keep out of their way. Hedgehogs do not pair bond, and the female raises the young by herself.

Where to find hedgehogs on the Isle of Wight A recent survey has produced the data for a hedgehog activity map of the Island. In the south, hedgehogs are scarce, because this is badger country, and badgers and hedgehogs compete for food.

How to get in touch For further information about how to report sightings and anything else, go to the Save Our Hedgehogs Isle of Wight Facebook page, where you can see some lovely photos and videos of rescued hedgehogs and find contact details.

We thanked Will for giving our audience of some 25 members such a fascinating talk.

Saturday 14th March Wight Squirrel Project by Helen Butler & members of her outreach team

The Wight Squirrel Project was founded in 1993 and is affiliated to the Conservation Volunteers. It is run entirely by volunteers – currently 26 of them. They carry out research that provides data for published scientific papers; monitor red squirrel welfare and population sizes, using non-invasive techniques; run citizen science projects; record citizen sightings; and produce maps of sightings - dead or alive - and signs of red squirrel presence - any grey squirrel sightings are always followed up; and they produce annual newsletters.

Squirrels are monitored in several different ways:

- Biannual walks – in spring and autumn, each volunteer takes three woodland walks within two weeks, in the same location, at dawn and in fine weather, at a specifically controlled pace, looking closely for squirrels. If a squirrel is sighted, the distance from the transect is recorded, as well as the species of tree it is in and its behaviour.
- Hairtube surveys – squirrels are attracted into baited tubes that have sticky patches at either end. As the squirrel enters the tube to feed, it brushes against the sticky pad and leaves hairs behind. These hairs are examined under a microscope to identify which species of squirrel they came from.
- Wildcams are set up to remotely record squirrel activity at feeding stations.
- Observing rescued squirrels can tell you a lot about squirrel behaviour.
- DNA samples may be the future of monitoring. The Red Squirrel Project is determined to keep up with the technology used in monitoring squirrels elsewhere.
- Post-mortems – corpses can provide important information on the state of squirrels' health. Although most bodies recovered were killed by traffic or pets, post- mortem examinations reveal a squirrel's breeding condition, general health and sometimes disease.
- Food leavings – you can tell by examining empty hazelnuts and fir-cones whether a squirrel or another kind of animal has eaten them. Squirrels open hazelnuts by notching the top of the nut and splitting it in half. They strip the fir-cones of their scales, extract the seeds and discard the cores.

Red Squirrel diseases

Helen showed us a Mortality Map from July 2018 to 2019, using data from 149 autopsies, all on naturally dead squirrels, showing what diseases were present:

- Leprosy – low numbers,
- Adenovirus, affecting the digestive system,
- Toxoplasmosis – widespread, spread by cats,
- Cancer – testicular, lung, kidney, stomach, squamous,
- Staphylococcus aureus – is fairly common but treatable,
- Hepatitis – rare,
- Congenital defects – occasional,
- Rat poison and Fenn traps – not rare,
- Arthritis.

Are peanuts causing bone problems? Isle of Wight squirrels have lower bone density than Cumbrian squirrels (A Sainsbury, 2004). Peanuts are known to cause osteoporosis. "DNA is likely to be the next big thing", says Helen, "using hair collected from sticky pads placed on feeders."

Projects in Progress

The Red Squirrel Project volunteers are

- updating their monitoring techniques to include the use of DNA,
- updating their data collection, waiting for national guidelines,
- updating their website, regarding data collection,
- testing for adenovirus and squirrel pox virus,
- awaiting a staphylococcus aureus paper, and
- awaiting the latest genetic paper.

During Queen Victoria's reign, the first grey squirrels were introduced into Britain, causing a sharp decline in the red squirrel population. Greys outcompete reds for food and pass on the squirrel pox virus to them. Greys live in dense communities, reds more spread out. Greys are aggressive, reds are timid by comparison. Red squirrels vary greatly in colour, from silvery grey to black and all shades of brown, but they are typically ginger, with a bleached tail in summer. As some have a greyish coat, characteristics other than colour should be used to distinguish them from greys. Reds are much smaller and lighter and have ear tufts, and greys have red on their heads. We should be on the alert for grey squirrels on the Island, as they are sometimes smuggled in, they may board ferries in search of food, or could even swim across the Solent. Attempts are being made to keep numbers of grey squirrels down. Pine martens could be used, as they will eat greys, whereas reds are lighter and could escape. But this is controversial. DNA tests show that our Island squirrels are pure British, not mainland European. Brownsea Island's problem is leprosy. It has a very small and inbred population.

What and how to feed red squirrels It is a myth that red squirrels love acorns. They get stomach-ache from the acidic tannins in acorns. They can eat peanuts, but too many of these can reduce bone density. They can eat other nuts, such as hazelnuts and coconut. Squirrel feeders must have a light lid so that they can push it up.

Red squirrels bury nuts. They have excellent memory and don't forget where they have buried them. A Harvard study found that squirrels hide nuts one at a time, using a system of triangulation using landmarks, such as particular building or tree. If they know they are being watched, they will only pretend to bury something, so that the watcher cannot steal their cache.

People are encouraged to feed squirrels in winter, putting the feeder under cover. Reds prefer to stay up high for their safety from predators. A rope bridge strung across the garden is ideal to save them from coming down too far. They will eat sweetcorn, grapes and peas, as well as seeds, berries and nuts. To prevent illness, please empty your feeder regularly, wash it and refill with fresh food.

The red squirrel's drey is in the fork of a tree, as high up as possible. They do not hibernate. The mother will throw the kits out of the drey when they are 12 weeks old. They are excellent swimmers, but, like hedgehogs and other animals, can get stuck in a pond and drown if the sides are too steep.

Further information The Red Squirrel Project has a range of information available, from leaflets to books and videos. They issue an attractive, glossy newsletter every year. Go to their website to see the latest news and find out how you can help. There is an app you can download to record your squirrel sightings.

Following a short Question and Answer session, we thanked Helen and her team for a most informative talk.

Saturday 22nd February More Than Catherine: the role of women in the early years of the Isle of Wight Natural History and Archaeological Society, a talk by Richard Smout

Before the Second World War, the Isle of Wight Natural History and Archaeological Society was "enormously male dominated", says Richard, by Frank Morey, George Colenutt, John Dover, Herbert Poole and others. The fields that women were involved in were limited to such specialisms as collecting seaweed and botany. In Morey's Guide of 1909, only one female author's report is included – on meteorology.

The one exception is **Catherine Morey**, sister of Frank. When he died, she took over as Secretary, in 1925. She was 70 years old, "a retired member in the finest tradition", says Richard. But her energy and commitment knew no bounds, as she was also Curator of Carisbrooke Castle until 1937, when she was 82, a member of the Hampshire Field Club, a leading light in the Isle of Wight Horticultural Association, a staunch supporter of the Red Cross and Newport Roman Villa, and she also maintained a meteorological station at her home. As to her character, "She was a woman of strong personality, with a fine intellect, kind and generous of spirit. She always responded to appeals for help. She was also quite steely and grand", Richard sums up.

Catherine Morey, however, was not the first woman to be active in our Society; many other women were involved, but Richard found them very difficult to trace. He researched all women who joined IWNHAS, among them J B Priestley's second and third wives, Jane Wyndham-Lewis and archaeologist Jacquetta Hawkes. In 1919 to 1920, its inaugural year, the Society had a hundred foundation members, but women were a sizeable minority. There were six honorary members.

One of the most notable female honorary members was **Miss Catherine Hearn**, one of the Hearns of Haseley Manor, of whom Richard says: "She was a giant in local history and on the talks circuit in the first

half of the twentieth century. She was the star to Catherine Morey's backroom role." She collected seaweeds. In her lectures she gave accounts of old Island traditions, such as 'gooding' on Good Friday. She used poetic, descriptive language. She ran a mission room in South Street in Newport, a rough area. The room had been a beer house. She sold goods to raise money and ran events in aid of a soldiers' home. She managed to solve a crime, the theft of hens, by calling out her hens. Fred Mew was prosecuted for stealing her stories, Richard discovered while researching court records. As she was very involved with the Women's Institute, and her lectures were her priority, Catherine couldn't dedicate all her time to IWNHAS, as Catherine Morey did. She died aged 85.

Princess Beatrice, youngest daughter of Queen Victoria, did not join the Society. **Lady Seely and Lady Simeon** joined it together.

Lady Baldwin, owner of the castle at St Helens, whose husband was dentist to the Queen, was an honorary member and was also active in the Council for the Protection of Rural England, the National Trust, the Women's Institute, Isle of Wight Society for The Blind and the British Legion. "She had a delightful sense of humour", says Richard, and she generously offered the use of her billiard room after a fire destroyed the village hall. Her family was from Glasgow. She worked at Addenbrookes Hospital, which was unusual for a woman of her status, and she had a good singing voice, taking part in performances of HMS Pinafore.

Notable among early rank and file members were **Alice Fisher** of The Maples in Bonchurch, who was born in India and was a great tennis player, and **Violet Oldham** of Courtlands in Shanklin. Both were active members of the Voluntary Aid Detachments linked to the Red Cross and helped to set up Red Cross Hospitals on the Island during the First World War. "Alice Fisher was known to be rather difficult, but she had a good heart", adds Richard.

Other members of interest include:

Fanny Minns, a watercolourist and well-known art teacher, famous for her watercolours of Carisbrooke, joined IWNHAS in her seventies, in the 1920s.

Evelyn Price, who joined in 1920, was a tracer of architects' plans and lived with the Ratseys in Cowes.

Grace Brandon, who joined in 1941, trained at the Glasgow School of Art and specialized in brass rubbing, creating dyes from hedgerow plants and weaving.

Members who sent in records include:

- **Mrs Reed,** of wrens roosting in her garden,
- **Mrs Brown** of Mottistone House, Brighstone, of cuckoos in her lane and pied wagtails.
- **Miss E Morgan**, a market garden owner at Gunville, of long-tailed tits and jays – she believed the jays drove out nightingales.
- **Mrs Sybil Berry** of Bonchurch who sent in a detailed description of a mole cricket. She was a vicar's daughter who came to the Isle of Wight to look after her niece. She ran a girls' club and women's group at St Albans Church in Ventnor and became a nursing sister.

The writing of articles

Some articles were written by women. The first of these were by meteorologists, two women who worked in the dispensary at the Royal National Hospital for Diseases of the Chest in Ventnor. One of them, **Miss Abercrombie**, known as Aber, was also keen on golf and amateur dramatics.

The second articles, on geology, were written by **Marjorie Chandler** and **Eleanor Reid**, about palaeo-botany in Gurnard and Thorness. They were based at Milford-on-Sea in Hampshire. They wrote about London clays and how London was once a tropical forest.

Members of Council in the 1920s

Women were on the Society's council right from the start. This was arranged geographically.

Miss Dale was elected in 1920. She lived at Kemming, near Whitwell. She was born in Warrington, was privately educated, got an MA from Cambridge before the Second World War, but had to wait thirty years to receive it. Her expertise was in plant pathology. She worked for Cambridge Botanical Gardens.

Miss Mabella Fennell was her companion. They generously made their garden open to the Society. They were very involved in Whitwell Church - high Anglican – and were very impressive figures until 1956.

Mildred Partridge went to horticultural college.

Sylvia Saxby – she and her mother were active in the Society in the early years. Her special interest was in hybrid plants, such as primroses. They were of humbler origins than most women members. Her mother owned a confectioner's in Cowes, and she married a shipyard painter and decorator. Most women members were middle class, and this mother and daughter were politically further to the left than most. Sylvia was very involved in sport and organized ladies' hockey tournaments.

Council members in the 1930s

Fewer women were involved in the Society in the 1930s. The reason for this, Richard suspects, was Catherine Morey's control. "Other women may have felt there wasn't a role for them", he says.

Marjorie Middleton, aka George, joined the Society in 1928. Her father was an electrical engineer and contractor who moved to the Island from Glasgow in 1911 and had eight servants.

Gladys Bullock was one of the few women who was a council member for as long as possible during this decade. Born in Havenstreet, she was a teacher of Biology. She had a great knowledge of Botany, but was very shy and self-effacing, and would volunteer little unless asked, according to Bill Shepherd's account of her. As a child, she won all the prizes for botanical collections and she was a thorough record-keeper.

To sum up, Richard says: "The tapestry of our early female membership was enormously rich. Many were clergymen's daughters, scientists and teachers, and all shared a passion for nature. We are lucky to have inherited their knowledge and experience to build on."

An audience of some 35 members thanked Richard for his very well researched account of some remarkable women who made important, and perhaps hitherto under-appreciated, contributions to IWNHAS in its early decades.

Maggie Nelmes

Archaeology

Saturday 25th January **Anglo-Saxon Runes: Alan Phillips**

For this talk, the 26 members were seated informally in a large circle round a scattering of rune stones on the floor – of which more later. Runes, the ancient script found across the Nordic and Anglo-Saxon world, were used for everyday life as well as magic. Whilst the angular designs were suitable for carving on wood and stone, texts on paper / parchment also occur. The origins are unclear, with evidence dating from the first century, but they probably date back much further. Marks on stones dated to the Bronze Age show similarities to runic symbols and numerous examples found in Scandinavia hint at the ancient beginnings.

Alan recommended 'Introduction to English Runes' by R I Page as the most useful resource. The Runic alphabet, known as the 'Futhark', has several variants, usually consisting of 22-28 letters. Whilst it took time and skill to master them, they were in theory available across society from farmers and craftsmen to witches. Once the knowledge had been acquired the runemaster or runecutter would have been a valued member of society.

Runic poems were probably used as a mnemonic to help one learn them but they also provided cryptic clues that could help interpret the symbols when used in magic or ritual. Tacitus wrote a description of rune-casting but much of the process is still shrouded in mystery. Alan focused most of his talk on their everyday use, which was much more widespread than I had realised.

At least 82 Anglo-Saxon Runic texts have been found in Britain, many on grave goods; they date across 6 centuries and extend into the Christian tradition, sometimes alongside Roman script. Most examples have been found in the North of England so the two discovered on the Isle of Wight at Chessell Down are particularly significant. Inscriptions on monuments and stones might suggest literacy was widespread; there are about 37 known rune-stones in Britain but about 3000 in Scandinavia.

Those of us who went to Orkney remember the runic graffiti carved inside Maes Howe by a succession of medieval visitors to what was even then an ancient monument. These 30 carvings form one of the largest collections in Europe.

Other examples are on the Franks Casket in the British Museum and collections of prosaic, colloquial messages found in, for example, Bergen and Dublin. Reminiscent of the Roman Vindolanda tablets they give insights into daily life and personalities, but also the spread of literacy by the Viking period. In England their use seems to have come to a halt after 1066, but continued for further centuries in Scandinavia, notably Iceland, before being revived.

Many questions remain to be answered especially their use in magic and ceremony. Nobody knows how Anglo-Saxons or Norsemen actually threw the runes, but the 3 concentric circles on which Alan had scattered a set of rune-stones at the beginning of the talk is one possible example, with the three circles perhaps representing psychological aspects of the individual, the everyday world, and the world of ice.

Saturday 15th February Bronze Age: Delian Backhouse-Fry

About 15 members braved the storm to learn about the next stage in human history which started in Britain about 2,700 BC. Delian began by reminding us how migrants to Britain during the Neolithic introduced an era of agriculture, settlement and monument building. Yet around the time that Stonehenge was completed upheavals were afoot in mainland Europe that would have a huge impact – climate change, more population movement, horse power, development of metal working. The 'Amesbury Archer' who was buried near Stonehenge but originated on the continent had hair ornaments made of gold.

There is evidence in Britain of a change from the iconic to the personal: long barrows were ritually closed as were buildings at the Ness of Brodgar on Orkney. Boat building techniques improved, as seen in the Dover boat, leading to increased travel and trade. And the Isle of Wight would have been a welcome sight for those crossing the channel from Britany. At Binnel Bay, the archaeology group excavated middens containing pieces of Beaker pottery dating from the transition between Neolithic and Bronze Age. Travelers standing on the beach at low tide could have looked up to the territorial marker barrows on Week Down.

Archaeologists now acknowledge there was a brief period before bronze was invented when copper was the first metal to be developed; they have named this the Chalcolithic. After we found some slag at the foot of the cliffs at Brook Delian sent it to the British Museum. It was identified as copper, not bronze. Where could it have come from?

Recent DNA analysis shows that the Beaker people were incomers who supplanted the Neolithic residents, just as they had supplanted the Mesolithic. Evidence of the new communities survives in barrows, field systems, trackways, boundaries and homes. Organised communities, such as that recently excavated at Must Farm in Cambridgeshire, show their skills in farming, weaving, metal work and boat building.

On the Island we have barrows and the Motkin boundary, named after David Motkin who identified it. There have been several hoards found, such as the Arreton and Freshwater hoards. Once again, upheavals across Europe eventually permeated to Britain and during the century before Christ the new technology of iron-working arrived along with more sophisticated pottery, chariots and carts.

Helen Jackson

Looking at the Countryside

Wednesday 15th January Godshill

When Jill Green led this walk in January 2019, wet weather put many people off attending, so the walk was repeated this January. However, it was raining again, as it had been on and off for the past 24 days. The forecast said it would clear up and five members trusted the forecast and arrived at the start.

Many of the fields through which we walked were full of cauliflowers. Eighteen different kinds are grown, the first being harvested as early as 30th December. We found several weeds of cultivation and more lichens than last year, due in part to the wet weather.

The walk crosses the old railway line twice. This branch line was opened in 1897 and closed in September 1952, the same year that Jill Green led her first walk, aged ten!

The river Yar was full and muddy; no chance of seeing any fish. The site of Budbridge Manor is fascinating as this area has had continuous habitation for 200,000 years. So much to say about this location from pitchfork fights in Medieval times when the house had a moat around it, to the relatively modern 1633 when the current house was built. Mrs Venetia Verey, who we meet in the garden, told us her father in law, Mr John Verey, had planted a Dawn Redwood, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides,* which is now a fine specimen. We were also pleased to see a Black Poplar tree doing well.

We walked on round the small lake at Kennerely, crossing the Anglo Saxon boundary discovered by David Motkin from aerial photographs. Then back to Godshill via the burnt out barn of Scotland Farm. We walked round Godshill church via footpath Godshill 62. This goes to the old Bell Inn. It was used as a public house from 1850 to 1925, when it was closed down for selling alcohol after hours. We visited the interesting Mausoleum in the grave yard and went into the church to see the unique old mural of the lily cross dating from c1450 and amazingly preserved.

Snowdrops were just coming up heralding the start of another year beaten, as usual, by the great show of daffodils on the church bank.

Jill Green

Botany

Saturday 4th January **New Year Plant Hunt**

A group of 15 gathered by the propeller on Newport Quay and hastily took over under the dual carriageway bridge while a brief shower rattled through. We then set off along the eastern side of the harbour looking for native or naturalised plants in flower. The harbour wall yielded Mexican Fleabane (*Erigeron karvinskianus)* and the flowerbeds around the Riverside Centre had Dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg), Petty Spurge (*Euphorbia peplus*) and Smooth Sow-thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*). The grassy slope underneath the road bridge produced the most unusual flower of the expedition, Blue Fleabane (*Erigeron acris*). We walked on along Hillside hoping we would be able to see something on the allotment gardens, but nothing was visible from the road. At the top of Hillside, we turned left on to Fairlee Road where we found a garden wall with Adria Bellflower (*Campanula portenschlagiana*) and Yellow Corydalis (*Pseudofumaria lutea)* in full bloom. We made our way into Newport Cemetery where a plant growing in the path caught our attention - Corsican Mint *(Mentha requienii).* The fragrance of mint was obvious, but as it was not in flower, it couldn't be added to our list.

The groups spread out to search the cemetery and found Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*), Wild Daffodil, (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*) Thyme-leaved Speedwell *(Veronica serpyllifolia*) and White Dead-nettle (*Lamium album*). Emerging from the western entrance on the Quay, we walked in in a northerly direction towards the Premier Inn. We found Pellitory of-the-wall (*Parietaria judaica)* at the base of an old building and Shepherd's Purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris)* in a shrub border. We then turned back towards the town centre and on the grassy bank we found a yellow composite, which on close examination, was identified as Hawkweed Ox-tongue (*Picris hieracioides)*.

By the time we reached Sea Street we had 38 plants on the list and were only about an hour into the 3-hour allotted time for the Plant Hunt, so we set off via Little London along the west side of the river. We found ivy with a flower-head remaining and on a slope opposite the Odessa boatyard, there was Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium)* and Common Cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*). Along the riverside path leading to the mermaid sculpture we found Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) catkins, both the long yellow male catkins covered in pollen and the tiny female catkins, with no more than the red tuft of the stigma visible between the bud scales. Out route back was along Riverway -possibly not very promising at first glance - but we added 16 new species including Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa),* Scarlet Pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis),* Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*) to the list in this section, reaching a total of 59 as we reached the bottom of Holyrood Street.

Back in the vicinity of Quay Arts, the dilemma was refreshments, or a further lap of the area along the Lukley Brook to Foxes Road, in search of our sixtieth species? A sizeable portion of the group persisted and saw 17 species as we walked along – but was there anything new? Yet indeed - species number 60 was Hebe 'Midsummer Beauty' in full flower, hanging over the stream in Mill St. A quick check of the New Year Plant Hunt website back at Quay Arts suggested that our total was quite 'respectable' in that we appeared to be 12= in the national listings. We didn't quite retain this position when all the results were collated, and we finished at 18=. Predominantly we had found a lot of 'stragglers' -plants not killed by the frost and still 'hanging on' to their flowers, or plants which might be expected to be in flower at this time of year. The analysis of the national pattern is similar and can be found at https://bsbi.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/BSBI-New-Year-Plant-Hunt-2020-analysis-KW2-LM2.pdf

Anne Marston

Saturday 18th January Identifying trees and shrubs from their twigs

The venue for this meeting ws the Millennium Wood on the edge of Seaclose playing fields and the nearby arboretum. This area has a good range of fairly common native species and also some more unusual planting in the arboretum. A preliminary visit by the leader the previous week to collect samples of twigs enabled the production a simple key to assist in their identification by the group.

The morning was bright and clear but very frosty as we made our way to the planted area. We looked at a twig briefly to acquaint ourselves with features we needed to examine carefully: for example, the arrangement of the buds along the twig (pairs, opposites, or spiral arrangements), the size, shape and colour of the bud scales, the shape and colours of the pores (lenticels) in the bark, and the different types of scar (produced when bud scale or leaves fall off).

When faced with our first specimen, the first thing we noted that we need to look at a range of twigs in order to arrive at a description – for example, thorns may not be present on every twig and the bud shape may differ slightly on twigs of different age. Some trees were relatively easy to identify – for example the black buds on Ash *(Fraxinus excelsior)* are very distinctive, and the two unequally-sized red scales on Lime *(Tilia x europaea)* do have a passing resemblance to a boxing glove if you exercise your imagination! We were able to check our identifications and read a fuller description in the Key to Winter Twigs by John Poland.

One small tree initially caused some confusion as it didn't appear in the key but the discovery of a piece of supplementary evidence – some ripe seeds remaining attached to a branch – gave us the clue it was Hornbeam *(Carpinus betulus)* and we were able to read the full description on confirm our identification.

Once we had found and identified the native shrubs and trees on the key, we made a short detour into the arboretum to look at various conifers and a Judas Tree (*Cercis siliquastrum*) which had some pods remaining. We found Butchers Broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*) which had buds, open flowers and fruits all

present on the cladodes – structures which look like leaves but are actually flattened stems. We also had a glimpse of a red squirrel bounding through the overhead branches of the conifers.

Anne Marston

Saturday 8th February Indoor Meeting

This year we met at the Arreton Community Centre for the first time, the Medina Valley Centre having sadly closed. Anne Marston was thanked for leading the Botany Group for twenty four years and was presented with a card and a bouquet of spring flowers. Tony Stoneley gave and update on the Field Cow-wheat (*Melampyrum sylvaticum*) at St Lawrence Bank, which had a good year and is starting to spread into the adjoining field. Anne gave a resume of the work to conserve Wood Calamint (*Clinopodium menthifolium*) at Rowridge. Conservation efforts have led to an increase in the plant and, if a suitable woodland management scheme can be implemented by the Rowridge Estate, a hopefully sustainable population. Mark Larter gave us a resume of botanical work which he has been involved with on behalf of Natural England and plans for 2020. Colin Pope provided a resume of interesting plant finds made in 2019 and an update on the final year of recording for the BSBI Atlas 2020 project. This was followed by a tea break, supplemented by home-made cakes kindly provided by Anne and Hazel. After the break, Dave Trevan gave an illustrated talk on the wild flowers he and Hazel have seen on their visits to Greek islands.

Colin Pope

Saturday 21st May Ryde Canoe Lake

A small band of five of us met at Ryde Duver at the start of the Coronavirus lockdown, at what was to be the last meeting of the season. It was a bright sunny day but with a keen easterly wind. We looked at a wide range of sand dune specialist plants growing along the south bank of the Canoe Lake. These included Little Mouse-ear (*Cerastium semidecandrum*), Lesser Chickweed (*Stellaria pallida*), Common Storksbill (*Erodium cicutarium*), Henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*), Bur Chervil (*Anthriscus caucalis*) and Suffocated Clover (*Trifolium suffocatum*). There were exceptionally fine displays of flowering Early Forgetmenot (*Myosotis ramossisima*) and Divided Sedge (*Carex divisa*) was coming into flower. In addition to native species, a wide range of alien species were naturalised here including very attractive swards of Star Flower (*Tristagma uniflora*) and patches of Scentless Geranium (*Pelargonium inodorum*) just coming into bud, a plant first found here by Sue Blackwell in its only known British site. We walked back along Canoe Lake Road noticing a range of plants growing in the old wall including Maidenhair Spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*) and Rusty-back Fern (*Asplenium ceterach*).

Colin Pope

Ornithology

Sunday 19th January Binfield to Folly and return.

14 members met on a lovely but cold morning at the car park at Binfield for a walk lead by David Biggs by the west bank of the River Medina. We started our morning looking at the species at Binfield and noted two Mute Swan, some Woodpigeon, Magpie, and Blackbird. A number of Coot were seen on the west bank of the River as were Mallard and Oystercatcher. Also seen were Brent Geese, Redshank, Black-headed Gull and one Mediterranean Gull was seen flying. Several Great Black Backed Gull were standing on various buoys on the river and at least three Little Grebe were spotted busily feeding. A Green Woodpecker was heard calling and a Curlew was standing on the exposed mud as was a Little Egret. Turnstone flew by. A Song Thrush was heard calling as was a Skylark. A mixed flock of Meadow Pipit and Rock Pipit were on the bushes, ground and fence. Also in the bushes were a Stonechat, four Reed Bunting and 7 Yellowhammer, of which two males were showing brightly in the sunlight. Towards the Folly we added to our species count with Great Tit, Goldfinch, Starling, Dunnock, Jay and Herring Gull and a Pied Wagtail. Back at the car park a Raven was heard calling. In all we noted 41 species.

Jackie Hart

Saturday 29th February Shalfleet Quay

Four intrepid members met at Shalfleet for a walk down Mill Road to the quay, led by Jim Baldwin. Luckily the weather forecast of 50+ mph winds and rain did not materialise but obviously deterred a lot of people. We started in cloudy conditions and a moderate breeze but enjoyed some sunny periods during the morning and only a couple of short showers. The wind began to increase towards the end of the walk. The conditions were not ideal for seeing the passerines but we still managed to record 32 species during the morning. The Rooks were busily building their nests as we set off and a Green Woodpecker was heard briefly in the vicinity of the woods. The highlight of the morning was the pre-breeding flock of 300+ Mediterranean Gulls at Shalfleet Quay. They congregate in the Newtown area before dispersing to their breeding sites along the south coast and in Europe. It is hoped some will stay and breed at Newtown as in recent years. Some of the wintering waterbirds are beginning to leave but there was still good numbers of Brent Geese, Wigeon and Teal in the creek and quay along with a female Pintail and a female Red-breasted Merganser. Four Little Grebe were seen in the creek while waders were represented by Oystercatcher, Curlew and Redshank. A single Buzzard was the only raptor recorded during the morning.

Jim Baldwin

Sunday 15th March Bembridge Harbour

11 members enjoyed a pleasant morning led by Toni Goodley, an interlude before some more rain fell about lunch time. The tide was far out so we looked over the estuary and St Helen's mill pond where we saw Teal, Redshank, Greenshank, Curlew, Black-headed Gull, a couple of Mediterranean Gulls and Mallard. We then looked up the eastern Yar from St Helen's road bridge and saw Coot and in the distance a Great Crested Grebe. Cormorant were sitting in the trees where they nest. A Cetti's warbler was calling, the first of 11 heard during the morning. It was not long before we had our first sighting of a Marsh Harrier. We then moved on to the old railway line and looking over the first gate where we saw a pair of Gadwall and in the pool and a good view of a pair of Great Crested Grebe. Looking over the RSPB reserve we noted a Grey Heron, Little Egret, Mute Swan, Kestrel and a Sparrowhawk. Nearby some Canada Geese, a lone Brent Goose were spotted. In a copse at the beginning of the old railway line we had good views of Chiffchaff, Goldcrest, Wren and also Dunnock, Robin, Great Tit and Blue Tit.

One of the lagoons held 12 Tufted Ducks, six of male, and six of female and in the opposite field six Pochard. Two Water Rails were heard and three of our members at the front were fortunate to see two Kingfishers together. On the return to our cars we looked over the estuary between the house boats and checked through the flocks of gulls and were able to add to our species list with Common Gull and Great Black Backed Gull. In all we noted 34 species.

Jackie Hart

AN ANNIVERSARY WALK – SOLO

The 20th May 1920 was the date of the third excursion arranged by the Isle of Wight Natural History Society, after trips to Bowcombe Down and Sandown Bay in the preceding weeks. Twenty members had set off from Shide Bridge, at the slightly unusual time of 2:15, designed no doubt to fit in with the railway timetable. The members had crossed the Blackwater Road and proceeded up the Shute and onto St George's Down. On their way, the Proceedings reported a "very cleverly concealed" Wren's nest inches from the wheels of the gravel carts, a Green Hairstreak and a Grizzled Skipper.

This May we had hoped to recreate some, but not all, the details of that day. It was never going to be possible for a number of the members to walk on and take the train to Sandown from Merstone Station. The aim was to have a sense of how the walk and the views from it might have changed over the intervening years. In addition, we were aiming to see how our wildlife has changed over the same period, and work out which species seen in 1920 could be rediscovered. Any Wren's nest would be left well alone, finding a

Grizzled Skipper sounded unlikely, but would we manage to find a Green Hairstreak, as had been the case a century before?

As it was clear that no General Meeting would be possible, rather than give the walk up entirely Ann and I did the walk ourselves on 17th May, a glorious day with very pleasant temperatures. We left Shide, heading up the road to the golf course following the Bembridge Trail. We got to the top distinctly puffed, a reminder of the fitness of some of our earliest members who would walk for miles on end. One of the members in 1920 had walked on to Ryde.

This was a good walk for birds, Blackcap, Whitethroat and Chiff-chaff were in full song, the first in particular seeming to be more numerous this year. Nowadays hearing a Willow-warbler is unusual. In Morey's Natural History of 1909, he refers to swarms in our copses throughout the spring. If they were absent, other species are a good deal commoner than they used to be. Herring Gulls, now a feature of the outskirts of Shide, were a bird of the coastal cliffs in 1909. A number of Buzzards were seen, and are clearly breeding whereas Morey reported "no record of its breeding with us." A family of Canada Geese on the golf course were unlikely to have been seen here a hundred years ago. The two sightings of a Green Woodpecker on our walk would have caused much more excitement 100 years ago. Morey reported that it "must be a very rare bird, I never saw or heard one," and a Green Woodpecker is hardly going to be overlooked, if present. Also seen were a pair of Reed Bunting and a Sparrowhawk.

Insects were also of interest. Six butterflies were found. The commonest species was Speckled Wood, but a single Wall Brown was seen and we found one of our target species, a Green Hairstreak, on brambles where the trail runs adjacent to the working quarry. Odonata included a Large Red Damselfly, in very much the same area as the hairstreak.

Great minds clearly think alike and on the top of the down we met Colin and Jillie Pope who were studying the same area to see what they could find. Appropriately distanced we swopped notes and Colin kindly shared his account of what they, in turn, had found that day. "In May 1920, 'a very large number of flowering plants were investigated, there being several botanists amongst the party'. At the time, there was much good heathland surviving on St George's Down and a most interesting collection of unusual plants would have been found. Today, precious little heathland remains here and the few best remnants are becoming scrubbed up. Nevertheless, we found Heath Speedwell and Clustered Clover for the first time since 2000. A particularly nice find was Upright Chickweed, a small heathland annual which today is classified as nationally vulnerable. It would have been common on St George's Down in the 1920s and in 1965, Bill Shepard found it to be 'not uncommon in turf by the roadside'. Today it is rarely recorded from here. Another good find was a very luxuriant growth of Black Spleenwort fern on the shaded banks of the sunken lane leading from St George's Down to Merstone. This is a fern of old walls and the banks of ancient trackways. It would probably have been growing on these banks for hundreds of years."

The highlight of the walk were the views from the down, but even here there have been changes. Some elements are of course constant, including the views of Standen and across to Marvel Farm and Whitecroft. Nowadays on the horizon we can see the masts at Rowridge and on Chillerton Down. Beyond Standen was the neatly mown cricket ground at Newclose, a distinctive wedge shaped field. Another new arrival, and one that blends less well, is the anaerobic digester plant near Gore at Arreton, with in the distance the glasshouses, which are now on a scale which far outstrips anything that would have been present a century ago. These made a striking contrast with the historic trackways that swoop down off the down.

Our early members chose well when they decided on their walk on St George's Down, and they were clearly fit. One can only speculate how they would have greeted the changes. One thing they would have had in common with us, (in a way that we never guessed when this walk was arranged), was in their shared experience of a pandemic … those who took part in 1920 had survived both the First World War and the Spanish Flu that followed it.

Richard Smout

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

We welcome the following new members for 2020:

We are saddened to report the deaths of the following members:

Toni Goodley

An Archaeological Timeline compiled by Paul Bingham

Decade	1900-1909	1910-1919	1920-1929
National (legislation etc)		**1910** Ancient Monuments Protection Act **1915** British Archaeological Association visits IOW.	
Isle of Wight (organisational)	**1907** Pageant of Isle of Wight History held at Carisbrooke Castle (CC). Percy Stone, architect & antiquary, acts as advisor.	**1911/13** O.G.S. Crawford prompts the transfer of contents of Newport Museum to Carisbrooke Castle Museum (CCM) in the gatehouse.	**1927** IWNHS incorporates 'Archaeology' in its remit and title
Archaeologists/ Curators		Crawford: involved in enhancement of CCM. In **1920**, he supervises recovery of Early Bronze Age urns at Rancombe. Frank Morey: curator CCM & founder of Isle of Wight Natural History Society (IWNHS).	**1926** Catherine Morey: curator CCM. **1927** Marjorie Middleton joins IWNHAS & carries out archaeological fieldwork in Undercliff. Later she was leader of the Archaeology Section.
Excavations, Fieldwork and Projects	Percy Stone excavates at St Catherine's Oratory (and earlier at Quarr Abbey). Ronald W Poulton and family retrieve Palaeolithic implements from Priory Bay.	**1910/11** Percy Stone and George Colenutt investigate the 'Down Pits' (dolines), at Rowborough.	**1920s** onwards, minor excavations at Carisbrooke Castle. **1926** Newport Roman Villa excavation, supervised by Percy Stone. The site is adopted by John Millgate and covered by a protective building.

Publications and Reports	**1900 & 1903** Wight's archaeology is summarised in *Victoria County History* vol 1 & 2 **1909** *Discoveries of Palaeolithic implements* published by RW Poulton in *'Morey's Guide to the Natural History of the Isle of Wight'*. **1909** *'Guide to Carisbrooke Castle'* by Percy Stone.		**1911** Dr John Whitehead publishes *The Undercliff of the Isle of Wight*.		**1926** Sherwin and Poole publish the first archaeological articles in *IWNHAS Proceedings (IW Proc.)*. **1927** *Excavation of a barrow on St Catherine's Hill, Niton, IW* by Gerald Dunning in *Proc. Hants Field Club*. **1929** *A Roman villa at Newport* by Percy Stone & *Part 2: The Pottery* by Gerald Sherwin in *Antiquaries Journal.*

Decade	**1930-1939**	**1940-1949**
National (legislation etc)	OGS Crawford is appointed archaeologist to the Ordnance Survey, where he pioneers aerial archaeology.	
Isle of Wight (organisational)		
Archaeologists/ Curators	Gerald Dunning (Island-born) is active in the Undercliff and on St Catherine's Down. Later he becomes a senior Inspector of Ancient Monuments and a national authority on medieval ceramics. Hubert Poole is a recognised authority on the Palaeolithic of the Isle of Wight.	H E Pritchett: 'enthusiast'. Gerald Sherwin: see below. E A Sydenham: curator CCM. He was a national expert on Roman coins.
Excavations, Fieldwork and Projects	Gerald Dunning excavates at least one undisturbed barrow near Niton (*IW Proc.)* but otherwise records chance finds. He also attempts rescue excavations on the face of coastal erosion. Up to his death, Hubert Poole recovers flint implements from the Island's gravel pits and ploughed land.	Harry Pritchett and others undertake minor excavations up to the 1940s, leaving no record except for general MS notes. **1940** Leslie Grinsell (leading authority on prehistoric barrows in southern England) collaborates with G. A. Sherwin to produce a comprehensive survey of the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age barrows on the Island. (*IW Proc.* 3, (3), 179-222). **1947** Gerald Dunning publishes observations on the unfinished Iron Age hillfort on Chillerton Down.
Publications and Reports	Archaeological articles in *IWNHAS Proceedings* and *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club* by Dunning and Poole. Those by Poole describe Palaeolithic, Mesolithic & Neolithic flint implements found throughout the Island.	**1936-42** Sherwin compiles an Archaeology Survey of the Island. It now survives as an unpublished MS in Society of Antiquaries Library. This forms one of the sources of the Wight's current Historic Environment Record. **1947** 'Chillerton Down Camp, Gatcombe, IW' by G C Dunning in *IW Proc.*

Decade	**1950-1959**	**1960-1969**
National (legislation etc)	**1950s** Ordnance Survey employs 'Field Investigators' to record 'Antiquities'. OS record cards & Carisbrooke Castle Museum record maps of archaeological sites & finds became main sources of current Historic Environment Record.	
Isle of Wight (organisational)	Trustees of CCM become the first IOW based organization to appoint a professional museum curator/ archaeologist.	
Archaeologists/ Curators	**1950-51** D M Waterman First professional curator of Carisbrooke Castle Museum appointed by Trustees. **1951-53** J E Bartlett Curator of CCM. **1953 -1982** Jack Jones Curator of CCM. Archaeology included among his many duties.	
Excavations, Fieldwork and Projects	Excavation of round barrow on Arreton Down by J Alexander reveals evidence of Neolithic settlement and Early Bronze Age wooden structures and burials beneath the Bronze Age Mound. Jacquetta Hawkes and Jack Jones excavate at the Longstone at Mottistone. Here, they recognise kerb stones and ditch and concluded it was a long barrow, favouring the view of OGS Crawford, and negating that of G C Dunning and others. **1959-1960s** Stuart Rigold excavated at Carisbrooke Castle for Ministry of Works	**1968/9** Three round barrows on Week Down excavated for Ministry of Works by Robert Carr. **1969** Excavation of two round barrows and fieldwork on Ashey Down by Peter Drewett. **1968- c1980** Laurie Fennelly excavated at Combley Roman villa. **1966-1969** Laurie Fennelly excavated Iron Age enclosure and medieval pottery kiln at Knighton.

Publications and Reports	**1950** *'The Roman villa at Brading'* by C Aspinall-Oglander. *'The excavation of a round barrow on Arreton Down, IW'* J Alexander, PC Ozanne & A Ozanne in *Proceedings of Prehistoric Society* (articles on this excavation also published *IW Proc.)* **1957** *The Longstone, Mottistone*, Jacquetta Hawkes, *Antiquity* 31(123): 147-152, September 1957.		**1960** *'Carisbrooke Castle Museum: a guide to the collections'*, Jack Jones/Trustees of CCM **1969** *'Excavations of Roman Villa at Combley'* L R Fennelly in *IW Proc.* **1969** *'A Late medieval kiln at Knighton'* L R Fennelly in *Proc. Hants Field Club.*

Decade	**1970-1979**
National (legislation etc)	A decade of rescue archaeology throughout Britain as archaeologists struggle to record sites threatened by development in towns and cities and by ploughing up of sites in the countryside.
Isle of Wight (organisational)	**1973** Trustees of CCM appoint David Tomalin as Assistant Curator with special responsibility for archaeology. (1981, transferred to Isle of Wight Council). **1976** Formation of IW Archaeological Committee to promote & administer grants for rescue archaeology.
Archaeologists/ Curators	Laurie Fennelly: leader Archaeology Section IWNHAS. David Tomalin: see above. Vicky Basford: Field Survey Officer for Wessex Archaeological Committee/Isle of Wight Archaeological Committee 1976-1981. Job Creation Schemes at CCM from 1978 employed archaeologists Frank Basford and Claire Halpin.
Excavations, Fieldwork and Projects	**1976-1982** Christopher Young excavates at Carisbrooke Castle for Department of Environment. Rescue excavations by David Tomalin and volunteers (including members of IWNHAS): **1974** Rock Roman villa **1976** Apes Down ring ditch **1977-78** Newbarn Down round barrow **1978** Redcliff Neolithic occupation and Roman salt-working site **1979** Small-scale rescue excavation of ploughed-up Anglo-Saxon cremations on Bowcombe Down
Publications and Reports	**1970** *The excavation of two round barrows and associated field work on Ashey Down, IW* by Peter Drewett. *Proc. Hants Field Club*. **1975** *Newport Roman Villa & Roman Wight*. Guidebook by David Tomalin. **1979** *Barrow excavation in the Isle of Wight* by David Tomalin in *Current Archaeology.* Features reconstruction of mortuary house posts at Newbarn Down (Gallibury Down) barrow on front cover of magazine.

Decade	**1980-1989**
National (legislation etc)	**1983** English Heritage takes over responsibilities for listed buildings, scheduled monuments and grant-aid for investigation of threatened archaeological sites.
Isle of Wight (organisational)	**1981** Archaeological collection of CCM transferred on loan to Isle of Wight County Council and the County Archaeology Centre was established at Clatterford Road, Carisbrooke. IW Sites & Monuments Record, later Historic Environment Record (HER) was established by Vicky Basford, initially as a paper-based record. Later developed as a sophisticated digital record by David Motkin & Rebecca Loader, the HER has become an invaluable database of knowledge, shaping development proposals and underpinning responses to these proposals.
Archaeologists/ Curators	At County Archaeology Centre • David Tomalin County Archaeologist (until 1997). • Vicky Basford SMR Officer 1981-1984 • Frank Basford Field Officer 1981-2006 • John Margham (museums documentation, sites & monuments, vernacular building recording 1983-4) • Jo Bailey SMR Officer 1984-86 • David Motkin (SMR Officer/Deputy County Archaeologist 1986-2001)
Excavations, Fieldwork and Projects	Excavations by David Tomalin: **1980** 17th century water pipe in Newport High Street. **1980** Ploughed-out Bronze Age round barrow investigated at Mount Joy. **1982** Roman corn-drier at Packway, Newchurch. **1980** Excavations carried out by IWNHAS at Brading Roman Villa under the villa's archaeological advisor, Margaret Rule. Underwater excavation of HMS Pomone – Archaeology Centre and Royal Navy divers. Major projects funded by Manpower Services Commission, based at Archaeology Centre, involving fieldwork & recording: Maritime Heritage Project, Maritime Sites and Monuments Records and Historic Buildings Record. Many project staff employed including Rebecca Loader, Alison Gale, Paul Simpson, Marion Brinton and Mark Tosdevin. Fieldwork by Maritime Heritage Project including underwater excavation of Yarmouth Roads Wreck and survey of Bouldnor underwater cliff David Motkin continues the programme of air photography started by David Tomalin. Many new sites located from the air.

Publications and Reports	**1980** *The Vectis report: A survey of IOW archaeology.* H V (Vicky) Basford **1987** *'Roman Wight: A Guide Catalogue'* David Tomalin, published IW County Council Excavation by David Tomalin of Newport water pipe. Report on this site & on excavation of Packway Roman corn-drier & Redcliff salt-working sites published in *IW Proc.*

Decade	**1990-1999**
National (legislation etc)	**1990** Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16) is produced by UK Government to advise local planning authorities on the treatment of archaeology within the planning process.
Isle of Wight (organisational)	Following the introduction of PPG 16, the County Archaeology Centre starts to comment on all planning applications affecting archaeological sites (David Motkin lead officer on planning). **1990** IW Trust for Maritime Archaeology founded - later Hampshire & Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology. **1994** Brading Roman villa transferred to a Charitable Trust. **1996** Museum of Isle of Wight History opened at Guildhall, incorporating archaeological material formerly at CCM.
Archaeologists/ Curators	Rebecca Loader, Ivor Westmore and others employed as project archaeologists on the Wootton-Quarr coastal survey (see below). Kevin Trott and Alan Brading active as a voluntary field archaeologists.
Excavations, Fieldwork and Projects	**1990** onwards: 'Wootton-Quarr Project'. Major pioneering inter-tidal survey and fieldwork project based at Archaeology Centre with funding from English Heritage is followed by post-survey analysis and production of report from 1996-1998. Project involved staff of Archaeology Centre and EH funded project archaeologists together with a multi-disciplinary team of specialists. **1990s** geophysical survey and excavation by English Heritage and County Archaeological Centre to inform management plan for Brading Roman Villa. Kevin Trott carries out developer-funded fieldwork and excavation in late 1990s and involved in fieldwalking projects involving IWNHAS members from late 1990s onwards. **1993 and 1995** Geophysical Survey and excavation at Clatterford Roman villa by English Heritage **1999-2001** Isle of Wight Coastal Audit carried out by Rebecca Loader and Frank Basford; the first of the English Heritage funded programme of Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment Surveys. **Late 1990s** HWTMA start further investigation of Bouldnor underwater cliff.
Publications and Reports	**1991** *The Story Beneath the Solent: Discovering Underwater Archaeology* Alison Gale for IWTMA **1990** *Thorley – a parish survey* J Margham *IW Proc.* **1992** *Freshwater – Man and the Landscape* J Margham *IW Proc.* late 1990s to present day: Numerous articles by J Margham in IWNHAS Proceedings on Anglo-Saxon landscape, IW medieval parish churches and other landscape archaeology topics. Reports by David Tomalin on IW combe-cluster barrow cemeteries, Iron Age ceramics from Mount Joy, Newport & late Iron Age ceramics from Packway, Newchurch appear in *IW Proc.* **1997** *Time and Tide: An Archaeological Survey of the Wootton-Quarr Coast*, R. Loader, I. Westmore and D. Tomalin **Late 1990s onwards**: reports of developer-funded excavations and fieldwork by Kevin Trott, Southern Archaeological Services and others (including much unpublished 'grey literature'). **Late 1990s onwards**: Archaeological and Historic Landscape Surveys commissioned by National Trust for properties and sites in NT ownership on IW. (Various authors).

Decade	**2000-2009**
National (legislation etc)	
Isle of Wight (organisational)	**2004** Brading Roman villa steel and corrugated iron cover building dating from 1908 is replaced with new cover building of modern design with enhanced visitor facilities.
Archaeologists/ Curators	At County Archaeology Centre: • Ruth Waller: County Archaeologist • Rebecca Loader: Historic Environment Record Officer • Owen Cambridge: Planning Archaeologist • Frank Basford: Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officer • Vicky. Basford: Historic Landscape Characterisation Project Officer Alan Phillips: leader Archaeology Section IWNHAS
Excavations, Fieldwork and Projects	**2001** 'Time Team' excavation at Yaverland of Iron Age defensive site with later occupation. County Archaeology Service & IWNHAS members involved in dig. **2002-2006**: Isle of Wight Historic Landscape Characterisation Project funded by English Heritage **2003** Isle of Wight incorporated within national Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). From this date Isle of Wight metal-detected finds have been consistently recorded online on PAS database www.finds.org.uk **2003** members worked on excavations at Brading Roman Villa before construction of new building. **2006-2008** Isle of Wight Coastal Assessment Enhancement Project funded by English Heritage **2006-2009**: Isle of Wight Historic Environment Action Plan Project **2008-2010** Brading Roman Villa excavations led by Prof Barry Cunliffe (IWNHAS members helped excavating and finds processing) Excavations at site of Newclose cricket ground. **2009**: Below The Ground Project: Magnetometer and Resistivity machine bought with grant from LEADER to investigate sites of potential archaeological interest. Delian Backhouse-Fry, Jackie Hart and Mike Cahill worked with County Heritage Service to create the successful bid for funding. Training by Wessex Archaeology. Developer funded surveys and excavations carried out throughout the decade

Publications and Reports	**2000** *Excavations at Carisbrooke Castle 1921-1996.* Christopher Young for Wessex Archaeology **2000** onwards: reports by K Trott on local fieldwalking published in *IW Proc.* **2000** onwards: Various reports by David Tomalin in *IW Proc.* **2006** Isle of Wight Archaeological Resource Assessments for various periods. Ruth Waller, Rebecca Loader, Vicky Basford, Owen Cambridge & others (grey literature produced for the Solent Thames Archaeological Research Framework). **2007** *The Portable Antiquities Scheme in the Isle of Wight* Frank Basford in *IW Proc.* **2008** *Isle of Wight Historic Landscape Characterisation.* Vicky Basford for IW Council & English Heritage. **2008-2015** *Isle of Wight Historic Environment Action Plan.* Various reports by Vicky Basford & others for IW Council and AONB.
Decade	**2010-2019**
National (legislation etc)	**2013** National Planning Policy Framework replaced PPG 16 (revised 2018). **2015** Monument protection role of English Heritage now under Historic England.
Isle of Wight (organisational)	IOW Archaeology Service downsized. In advance of the sale of Archaeology Centre at Carisbrooke in 2017, the IW Council rehoused the Archaeology Service at Westridge. Frank Basford moves to Museum of Isle of Wight History which is now the base for Portable Antiquities Scheme. Museum of Isle of Wight History at Guildhall, Newport under threat. Closed for a short while but re-opened with 'Visit Wight' staff operating ticket sales from Tourist Information Centre. In late 2019, Visit Wight staff move out. Museum is currently open 2 mornings a week, manned by Heritage Service staff. Maritime Archaeology Trust (formerly HWTMA) take over management of the Shipwreck Centre and Maritime Museum based at Arreton Barns and owned by Martin Woodward.
Archaeologists/ Curators	At County Archaeology Centre: • Rebecca Loader: Senior Archaeologist • Rosie Lansley Archaeological Offier • Rebecca Bevan, part time Assistant Archaeologist Delian Backhouse-Fry: leader Archaeology Section IWNHAS.
Excavations, Fieldwork and Projects	Geophysical and fieldwork projects carried out by Archaeology Section of IWNHAS including: **2014-16** HLF funded excavations carried at Quarr Abbey directed by Matt Garner (Southampton City Council Archaeological Unit) with assistance from IWNHAS Archaeology Section Developer funded excavations and surveys carried out by several contractors. Below The Ground Project continues. 2019 new gradiometer purchased with grant from IWNHAS. Research using LIDAR, by David Marshall, is the latest tool for identifying sites of potential significance. Excavations at Quarr as part of HLF funded Two Abbeys Project. Small excavations at Crocker St, Newport, Newtown, Quarr. Residential field trips to Orkney, Dartmoor, North Yorkshire. Members help cataloguing exhibits at Arreton Barns Shipwreck Centre.
Publications and Reports	**2010** onwards: various reports by David Tomalin in *IW Proc.* **2011** *Mesolithic occupation at Bouldnor Cliff and the submerged prehistoric landscapes of the Solent*, G. Momber *et al* Council for British Archaeology **2012** *Coastal Archaeology in a Dynamic Environment: A Solent case study.* David Tomalin, Rebecca Loader & Robert G Scaife for English Heritage **2013** *The Roman villa at Brading: The excavations of 2008-10.* Barry Cunliffe. **2013** *Late Prehistoric settlement features at Northwood, Cowes,* A.B. Powell in *IW Proc.* **2014** *Distinctiveness and Diversity: Historic Land Use and Settlement on the Isle of Wight.* Vicky Basford in *IW Proc.* **2015** *Below the Ground Project: a geophysical survey at Hill Farm, Newchurch, IW* David Marshall in *IW Proc.*

A spectacular sunrise photographed by Michele Van Buren from her bedroom at 5.15 am on 5th May.

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NEXT BULLETIN

Items for inclusion in the next Bulletin and Reports of any Meetings
for 1st July 2020 to 31st December 2020 should be sent to:-

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The closing date for acceptance of items and reports will be 2nd December 2020

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