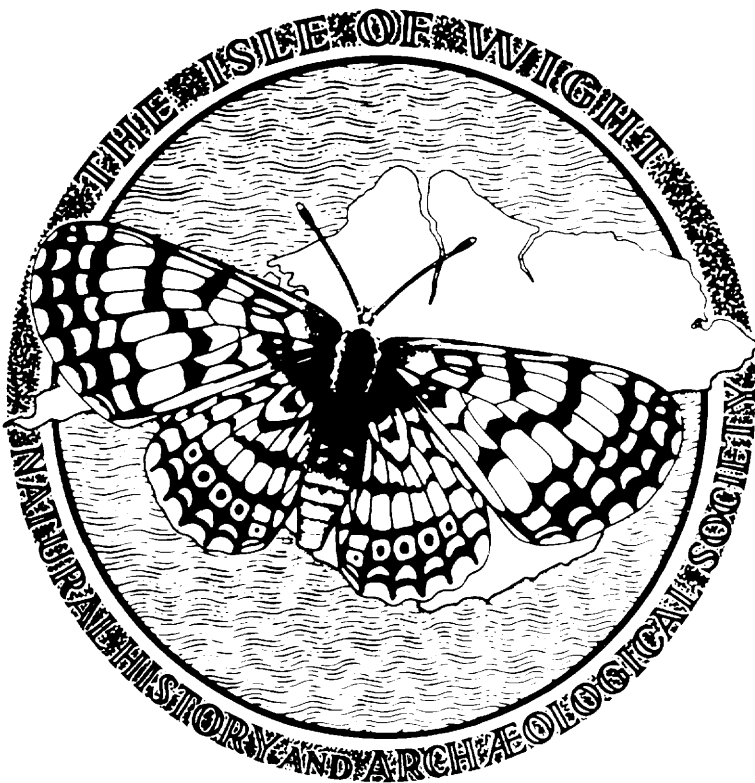


PROCEEDINGS
of the
ISLE OF WIGHT
NATURAL HISTORY and
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

VOL. VIII

Part 1

1986



Issued 1987

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ISLE OF WIGHT NATURAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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The promotion and advancement of the study of the flora, fauna, geology and archaeology of the county.

Activities

The Annual General Meeting on the last Saturday in January. General and sectional excursions on Saturdays and/or Sundays throughout the year. General and sectional evening meetings and lectures.

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EDITORIAL

This issue of the *Proceedings* sees a change of editor. After many years at the ‘sharp end’ Oliver Frazer has decided to retire as editor. The Society owes him an immense debt for the time and effort that he has made in producing the *Proceedings* in addition to all the other functions he fulfills in the Society. Few people realise the problems that an editor has to deal with. After one year effectively in this office, I can only wonder at the way that Oliver dealt with the difficulties in such an amiable way. Thanks and a happy ?retirement Oliver.

Although the editor has changed, the general policy of the journal will not. What I hope to do is build upon the foundations that Oliver has created. The main criteria for publication in the *Proceedings* will remain quality of content and readability. Certain changes have been instituted which it is hoped will ensure that these criteria are adhered to. Firstly, all papers submitted to the editor will be vetted by one or more independent (and anonymous) referees to ensure that blatant errors and unproven statements are eliminated. Where the referee(s) and/or editor feel it necessary, a manuscript will be returned to an author with suggestions for alterations and an invitation to resubmit. The final decision on publication will remain with the editor. This may appear to be an overly bureaucratic procedure but it regularises a procedure which had already been informally adopted and is a standard practice used by learned journals to retain their standards. The other, and most obvious, change is an alteration in format from A5 to metric quarto. This latter, larger size will improve the appearance of our publication and will also enable the reproduction of clearer tables and figures.

If the *Proceedings* is to survive as a serious publication, not only must the standard of production be maintained but also the content. It is important that the contents reflect the broad spectrum of interests of the members of the Society. This is clearly not true of this issue. I have to make the usual editorial plea for more papers on more varied topics.

It is important that the *Proceedings* is an annual publication and not an irregular event. Due to my own inexperience, this issue is late but in future this will be rectified. However, in order for this to happen I insist that authors submit their manuscripts to me by July 1st each year. Any received after that date will be held over until the next year. You have been warned.

Finally, I hope that you all find something to interest you in this issue. If you do not then there is a simple solution – take up your pen.

Allan Insole
Editor

THE PLEISTOCENE GEOLOGY AND FAUNAS AT NEWTOWN, ISLE OF WIGHT

Martin Clive Munt and Ariane Burke

Site and situation

Newtown is situated on the north-west coast of the Isle of Wight between Thorness Bay and Hamstead Point. The site lies on the seaward side of Brickhouse Point and falls within the Newtown Harbour Nature Reserve, which is jointly administered by the Isle of Wight County Council and the National Trust (see fig. 1).

The solid geology of the area comprises a foreshore cut in the Osborne Marls and Fishbourne Members of the Headon Hill Formation behind which is a low cliff of Bembridge Limestone (nomenclature after Insole & Daley 1985).

The western tip of Brickhouse Point is covered by sand dunes. The harbour probably dates to the later middle Flandrian submergence, having been formed by the drowning of the confluencing flood plains of two rivers, one flowing from the east and the other from the south-west. The seaward cliff line rises to a maximum of 10 metres, and is fringed by broken ground. Cliff recession has resulted in the development of a wave-cut platform, the proximal margin of which is obscured by sand and shingle up to high water mark (base of cliff).

The tidal range rarely exceeds 4 metres with maximas between 5 and 6 metres. This range limits access to the Pleistocene deposits which lie seaward of the platform. Access is provided by a shingle bar visible for approximately 100 metres offshore at maximum low tides.

Site history

The earliest recorded finds of Pleistocene Mammalia at Newtown are mentioned by Adams (1877–1881). Adams records the presence of an ultimate upper molar of *Mammuthus primigenius* in the Woodwardian Museum, noting that the specimen displayed eight ridges in 4 inches. The enamel was thin, but the dentine and especially the cement was in excess.

In 1923 a number of bones were found on the shore at Newtown. The collector, Mr. M. Thorne believed the material to have come from a cliff fall (Museum of I.W. Geology records). The material, which was presented to the Museum of I.W. Geology, comprised lower molars (M.I.W.G. 1775), part of an ulna (M.I.W.G. 1777), fragment of a mandible (M.I.W.G. 1776) all of *Bos* sp. and a mandible of *Cervus elaphus* (M.I.W.G. 1778). All these specimens, with the exception of mandible M.I.W.G. 1776, have since been lost.

The significance of the Newtown site seems to have gone unnoticed after these early finds. Poole (1936) mentioned Newtown in his exhaustive study of the Mesolithic industries from the Island. He noted that an associated fauna at Newtown consisted of teeth and bones of horse and ox. The bones of ox were said to be numerous, many of the long bones having been split longitudinally. The fauna and industry were recovered from

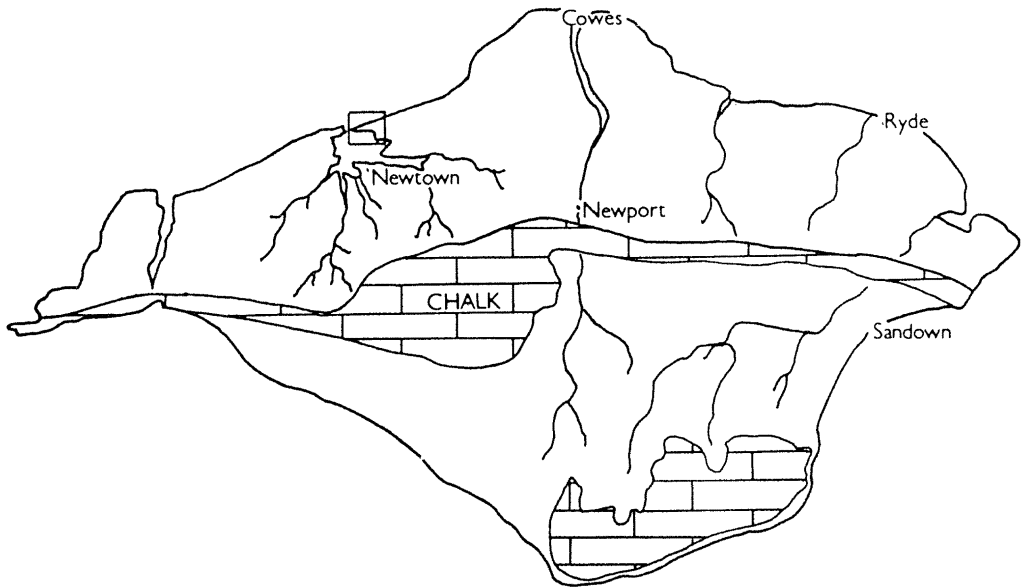


Figure 1a. Map of the Isle of Wight showing the location of the Newtown site.

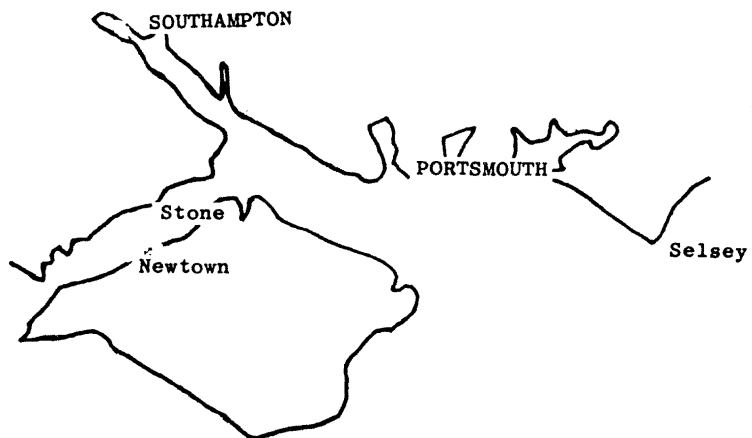
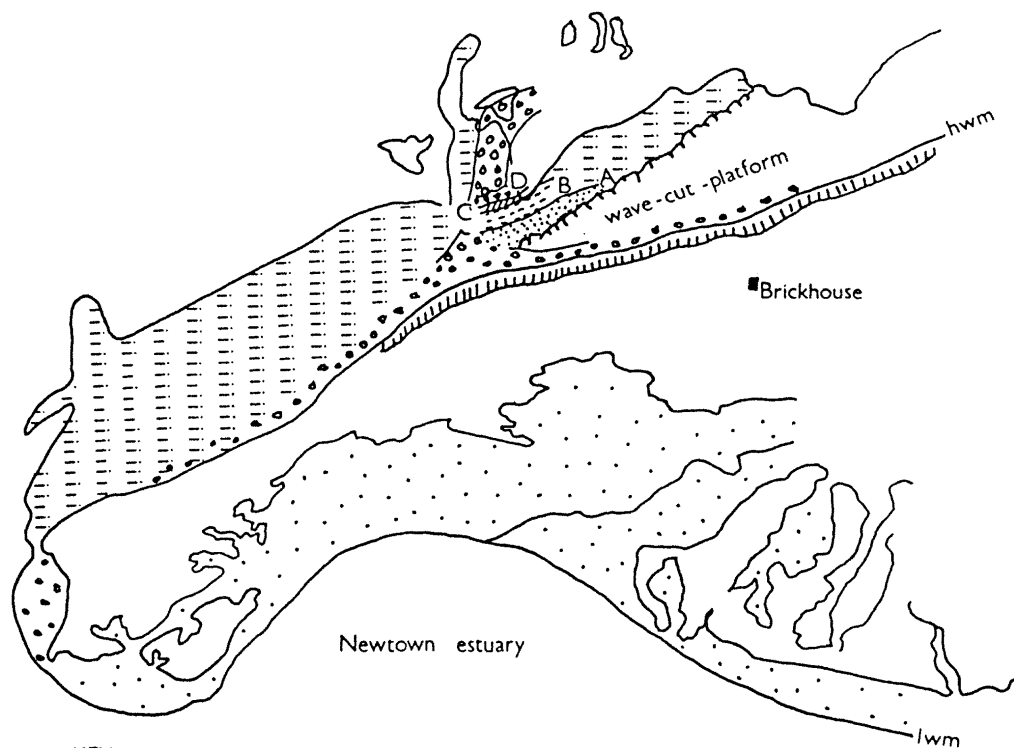


Figure 1b. Map of the Solent-Spithead area showing the location of Pleistocene localities mentioned in the text.



KEY

Modern sediments

•• shingle

⋯ estuarine silt

— marine silt

Earlier Pleistocene sediments

A Broken Ground Bed

B Bovid Stratum

C Blue Silt Bed

D Gravel Stratum

Scale: 1cm = 50m

lwm = low water mark

hwm = high water mark

Figure 2. Brickhouse Point showing distribution of Pleistocene deposits.

an estuarine clay found below high water mark. From Poole's description of the location as being on the eastern bank of the estuary mouth, the Mesolithic site would seem to be some distance from the main faunal site, being 1 kilometre from the harbour mouth.

In 1939 interest was again roused, Jackson (1939) records the discovery of the bones of *Bos primigenius*, *Palaeoloxodon antiquus* and *Hippopotamus* sp. At this time it appeared that the *Bos* bones had come from a different context to those of the elephant and hippopotamus. Jackson proposed that the bones had been obtained from a composite

deposit, suggesting that wave action had intermixed the *Bos primigenius* bones (Mesolithic according to Poole) with the older *Palaeoloxodon* and *Hippopotamus*. Jackson's conclusions stemmed from the preservation and colour of the bones. Upon examination Jackson suggested that the colour of the *Bos primigenius* bones was suggestive of derivation from a soft, silty or peaty alluvium. This was in contrast to the matrix adhering to a portion of *Palaeoloxodon* tusk, which had been found projecting from the shore (*in situ*?). This matrix Jackson described as a very compact and tenacious brickearth. A similar matrix was found on an *Hippopotamus* sp. tooth.

Lucas (1971) produced an update on developments and finds from Newtown. In addition to *Palaeoloxodon* and *Hippopotamus*, the remains of *Cervus elaphus* were reconfirmed from fresh discoveries. The bones of *Bos primigenius* were re-identified as *Bison priscus* after the recovery of a number of partial and complete crania. *Sus scrofa* had also been found, although the antiquity of these remains was viewed as suspect. In addition, the bones of *Ovis* sp. and *Equus caballus* had been recorded, but the recent date of these remains was apparent from their condition.

With the exception of numerous references in Newtown Survey Reports (e.g. Cox 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979), the site has received no major coverage, although the 'reef fossil hunts' have continued annually.

Site geology

During the spring maxima tides of May 1985 the first systematic attempt to record the geology of the site was undertaken. With high tides in excess of 5.1 metres predicted, the two hour window of low tide exposed a horizontal area reaching up to 70 metres from high water mark. This revealed four distinct stratigraphic units seaward of the distal edge of the wave-cut platform (fig. 2). Each unit ran approximately parallel to the platform edge. A transect was selected at random and the width of outcrop of each unit was measured. It was not possible to gauge the thickness of each unit as all pits dug rapidly filled with water. The following sequence was recorded:

H.W.M. to distal edge of platform (28m; Osborne Marls and Fishbourne Members of Headon Hill Formation).

Unit 1. 28m to 50m (22m)

A mass of clasts, ranging up to 2m in diameter, of weathered blocks of mudstone in a matrix of clay with scattered pebbles of flint. Both angular and rounded clasts are present. These clasts can be attributed to the adjacent Palaeogene on the basis of their fossil content and colour (blue-grey with grey, green and brown banding). This bed has been designated as the 'Broken Ground Bed'.

Unit 2. 50m to 55m (5m)

Grey-blue (weathering brown) clay with laminations, parallel to the surface, containing clasts of mudstone (less than 1cm diameter) and derived fossils (*Polymesoda convexa*, *Corbicula* sp. and *Melanoides ?acuta*) common in the nearby Palaeogene beds particularly the Bouldnor Formation. During the survey numerous bones were collected from this bed attributable to a bovid. The bed was subsequently designated the 'Bovid Stratum'.

Unit 3. 55m to approximately 65m (approximately 10m)

Blue silty clay with no apparent structure. This bed yielded two elephant tusks and a *Palaeoloxodon antiquus* molar. Derived Palaeogene fossils are also present. This bed has been designated as the 'Blue Silt Bed'.

Unit 4. 65m to below lowest tide mark (seaward extent unknown)

Matrix-supported gravel with a maximum clast size of 7.5cm. The clasts are predominantly flint, being mostly sub-rounded and displaying both frost and impact fracture surfaces. The matrix is a sandy clay. No faunal remains were observed. This bed,

designated the 'Gravel Stratum', overlies the Blue Silt Bed. The contact with the Blue Silt Bed is irregular.

Gravel Bar

The site is partially obscured by a modern gravel bar which spreads out and covers much of the surface of the Blue Silt Bed. Within this deposit there is much bone material reworked from the underlying fossil beds.

Discussion of the site geology

Very few direct conclusions can be drawn as to the relative ages of each unit. What is definable is that the Gravel Stratum overlies (or even oversteps) the Blue Silt Bed, and is therefore younger. The Bovid Stratum is nowhere observed to either overlie or underlie the Blue Silt Bed. The horizontally laminated Bovid Stratum abuts against the Broken Silt Bed. This in turn abuts against the wave-cut platform of Palaeogene mudstones.

In terms of energy regimes during deposition, the Gravel Stratum stands out as a separate event. The fine grained sediments and the conservation of derived fossils from the Palaeogene beds points to low energy conditions, possibly even the in situ breakdown of the solid geology during the Blue Silt Bed depositional phase. The marked lamination of the Bovid Stratum points to cyclical influxes of locally derived sediment. The Broken Ground Bed may be interpreted by comparison with the modern cliff line as the remnants of ancient cliff instability. The breakdown and erosion of this ancient cliff line may well have acted as a sediment supply to the Bovid Stratum, the two units being contemporary. Three possible interpretations can be forwarded for the origin of the Blue Silt Bed: (i) that it represents an inlier created by erosion; (ii) that it represents facies variation contemporary with the Broken Ground Bed and the Bovid Stratum; or (iii) it represents a channel fill cut into the older Bovid Stratum.

Faunal analysis

From the outset it was apparent that the sample size of the Newtown collection was too small to withstand much statistical handling. This inhibited the calculation of minimum numbers, comparison with other assemblages and detailed fragmentation analysis. A hierarchical agglomerative cluster analysis (using the Clustan package) was carried out on the *Bos/Bison* sp. This resulted in the identification of two separate assemblages within that group (see below).

The following Mammalia were identified:

Proboscidea

- Palaeoloxodon antiquus* (straight-tusked elephant)
- Mammuthus primigenius* (mammoth)

Perissodactyla

- Coelodonta antiquitatis* (woolly rhino)

Artiodactyla

- Hippopotamus amphibius* (hippo)
- Cervus elaphus* (red deer)
- Cervus* sp.
- Rangifer tarandus* (reindeer)
- Bos primigenius* (aurochs)
- Bos/Bison* sp.

In addition the following Recent species are present:

- Equus caballus* (horse)
- Sus scrofa* (pig)
- Bos taurus* (domestic cow)
- Ovis capra* (domestic sheep)

Division of the fauna on the basis of preservation and colour of the bones

On the basis of the type of preservation and the colour of the bones, four groupings can be identified.

Firstly a megafauna can be identified as a separate group on the basis of the orange/ochre colouration. This includes the bones of *Mammuthus primigenius*, *Coelondonta antiquitatis*, *Cervus elaphus* and *Rangifer tarandus*. This colouration could have resulted from inclusion in gravel.

The second and third groupings consist of *Bos/Bison* sp., the two clusters being divisible on the basis of preservation. These two groupings far outnumber the first group. The first *Bos/Bison* cluster consists of better preserved material. This includes an almost complete adult skeleton. Lucas (1971) reported that several articulated skeletons of adult *Bison* had been discovered. The excellent and unravaged state of the remains would seem to point to swift burial, possibly following some catastrophic event, such as drowning. The second *Bos/Bison* cluster may or may not derive from the same bed as the first. The cluster appears to represent mostly surface finds, poorly preserved and of unknown derivation. No further conclusions may be drawn concerning this cluster.

The fourth and final grouping consists of the Recent species, which are easily identifiable as intrusive to the collection by their colouration.

Discussion of the faunal results

Palaeontological evidence from Newtown supports the identification of a cold stage fauna consisting of reindeer, woolly rhino and mammoth. These remains would seem to have been derived from a gravel deposit. At the same time it is not possible to attribute all the megafauna to the gravels, i.e. *Palaeoloxodon* and *Hippopotamus*. *Palaeoloxodon antiquus* has been confirmed from the Blue Silty Bed by the authors. On the suggestion of Jackson (1939), the remains of *Hippopotamus* can also be attributed to this unit.

The recognition of a clearly definable Bovid Stratum places no doubt upon the origin of the 'better preserved' cluster. The second *Bos/Bison* cluster, as implied above, seems to have been collected as surface finds. This interpretation is borne out by the collecting strategy which has been applied to the site. As for most of the year the *in situ* material is below low water mark, many finds have been made on the bar which cuts across the site and on the beach. Collecting strategy would therefore favour recovery of redistributed material which is more readily available throughout the year.

Butchery and predation

No butchery marks (except on bones identified as modern intrusives) have been observed nor are there any marks which could indicate that the collection had been ravaged by predators. Wave-rolling and encrustation may have obscured such marks had they existed. However no remains of carnivores have been collected from the site. Neither is there any evidence of human occupation and/or exploitation of comparative antiquity.

Additional notes on the Newtown fauna(s)

In addition to Lucas's (1971) observations regarding the discovery of articulated *Bison*

skeletons, further interesting instances have been noted by collectors. S. Hutt (pers. comm.) noted the discovery of an articulated fore-limb of a proboscidean (radius, humerus and scapula). Sadly the poor state of preservation resulted in instant disintegration as attempts were made at excavation. D. Tomalin (pers. comm.) notes that fishing operations throughout the eastern Solent have resulted in the dredging up of large mammalian bones similar to those found at Newtown. P. Ewbank (pers. comm.) has observed that *in situ* proboscidean remains are only found during the maximum low tides and at a considerable distance from the shore. Divers have also remarked on the quantity of large mammal bones to be found on the estuary floor (V. Basford pers. comm.)

Discussion of the fauna and geology

From the geological and faunal observations made at Newtown, three distinctive biostratigraphic 'units' can be defined (excluding Recent intrusives). The most recent phase is demonstrably represented by the Gravel Stratum. Tentatively we may assign the cold stage fauna consisting of mammoth, reindeer and woolly rhino to this unit. These remains form a distinct group on the basis of colour and preservation which is tied in with burial in a gravel substrate. There are no other adjacent known gravel outcrops. It is proposed that this grouping forms a definable assemblage present in the Gravel Stratum.

Underlying the Gravel Stratum we encountered the Blue Silt Bed with its fauna of straight-tusked elephant, *Hippotamus* and possibly *Bos primigenius*. *Hippopotamus* is a warm stage animal and reflective of a freshwater environment.

It is proposed that the Broken Ground Bed and the Bovid Stratum be considered as contemporaneous but with only the Bovid Stratum yielding *Bos* and/or *Bison* remains. This occurrence can be explained if this fauna be viewed as a death assemblage, consisting of individuals caught by rising waters or as corpses floating in. The adjacent cliff line could have also contributed to the death trap scenario. *Bos/Bison* remains are fairly common throughout the Pleistocene and it is not possible to reach any conclusions as regards dating.

Conclusions

On the basis of the geological and palaeontological evidence the Newtown fossil beds appear to be a complex of sediments formed during Pleistocene warm and cold stages. The earliest phase of sedimentation is represented by units 1 (Broken Ground Bed), 2 (Bovid Stratum) and 3 (Blue Silt Bed) yielding a rich 'warm' fauna. Further investigations may reveal that bed 3 (Blue Silt Bed) represents a second phase perhaps of channel cutting more recent than beds 1 and 2. In terms of fauna, the Blue Silt Bed assemblage of *Palaeoloxodon antiquus* and *Hippopotamus* sp. represents a full interglacial of Ipswichian character (presence of *Hippopotamus*).

The Gravel Stratum (bed 4) represents a more recent phase of sedimentation under high energy conditions. If we accept the hypothesis that the cold fauna is derived from this deposit, a late Ipswichian glacial-stadial or a Devensian interglacial-stadial is probable.

The authors propose that the events at Newtown should be viewed in relation to those at comparable Pleistocene sites in the Solent area. At Selsey West and Sparks (1960) recorded a sequence of sediments which was interpreted as a marine transgression of Ipswichian age. A similar sequence has been described from Stone (Brown et al. 1975), a site geographically close to Newtown. Sadly it is not within the scope of this work to draw more precise correlations which may be achieved by detailed pollen analysis and/or the isolation of a Pleistocene molluscan fauna.

Appeal

The authors would like to hear from persons interested in the site and in particular those who would be interested in and could provide facilities and/or expertise in the field of palynology. Interested parties should contact M.C. Munt, c/o Museum I.W. Geology, Sandown Library, High Street, Sandown, Isle of Wight.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank the following for their kind assistance: Mr. Pat Ewbank for making access to the site possible; Dr. C. Gamble, Dr. A.P. Carrant and Dr. A.J. Sutcliffe for consultation on identifications; Mr. L.J. Mitchell for allowing access to the collection and records of the Museum of IW Geology; Mr. F. Heap of the National Trust; and to Mr. S. Hutt, Dr. A. Insole and the staff and pupils of Cowes High School for their painstaking collecting expeditions to 'the reef'.

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NEWTOWN SURVEY REPORT 1984

L.E.L. Cox

The Twenty-Sixth Survey was held at Newtown this year from Wednesday May 11th to Wednesday May 30th. The advance party arrived a day earlier, as the weather deteriorated and rain settled in. As we left the landing stage at Cassey Bridge the first rain arrived.

Our advance party consisted of Paul Burland and Nick Osborne from the VIth Form, Michael Atkinson, Colin Newbold and Matthew Parker from the IVth. We were transported by the Warden, Pat Ewbank and Sandy Leath from the National Trust. Sandy's capacious boat was a great asset as we were able to move all our stores in one journey. We were soon ashore and at work establishing the camp for the main party. It is to the credit of all concerned that all necessary preparations were satisfactorily completed by the late evening despite the weather conditions.

We had to make a late night boat trip in order to phone for missing stores which duly arrived the following day with the main party at 11.00 hours.

The new arrivals comprised 3rd year students, Tim Eccles, Wayne Eggerton, Michael Garrett, Karl Smout, Peter Turner, and Peter Lillington from the IVth and Tracy Hart, a former student who was to be my assistant for this year.

Tracy has attended the Newtown camp since she was a student at School and has maintained contact since leaving, successfully completing her course at Horticultural College, working in Germany for a year and returning again to assist as an efficient and well informed leader. My thanks are due to her for all the work she undertakes and the readiness with which she was prepared to act as a voluntary leader.

I was pleased that two former students, Wayne Tyler and Neil Oakley were able to join us; their experience and knowledge was welcome in organising activities and instructing our new recruits. Wayne did admirable work in setting up, maintaining hides and organising bird watching. Neil continued with his transect on the North shore and was able to update and maintain his records.

Our party changed in the second of the two weeks with most of the third year leaving. They were replaced by a VIth Form group which included Jeanette Norris, Elizabeth Price, Anne Chambers, Colin Bell, Graham Williamson and Nicholas Cox.

Our survey work ranged over the activities detailed below. It was hampered by adverse weather conditions. Our weather notes read as follows:-

Wed 16th	Rain at start, damp, dull, grey. A cold night.
Thu 17th	Start grey and dull, clearing with some fine sun. Cold night.
Fri 18th	Started cold. Fine sunny day. Cold night.
Sat 19th	Started cold. Fine sunny day. Cold night.
Sun 20th	Blustery – wet – cold.
Mon 21st	Cold – windy – rain all day.

Tue 22nd	Cold – windy – rain all day – very muddy. Students confined to tents and study tents. Normal meals however with students dispersed under cover. Rain easing towards evening. A cold, wet night with gale.
Wed 23rd	Change over day. 3rd Years leave – last of VIth Formers arrive. Weather improves – a little warmer. Wind SE. Fresh – good for drying up the mud. A quiet, warmer night.
Thu 24th	A fine, warm morning, the best so far. All at work – students in hides – photographers searching. A double water run. Matthew P spots a lizard sunbathing near W point, South shore.
Fri 25th	Fine sunny morning – Afternoon rain which then continued through Saturday, Sunday, Monday. Continuous rain with strong, cold winds. Survey work continues but we are in a sea of mud and continually wet.
Tue 29th	Fine and dry. Enables us to dry out and prepare for breaking camp. We have to be ready by 11.00 on Wed.

Despite the variable weather conditions we were able to complete an extensive work schedule.

Mammals

Small mammal trapping was completed within the camp site as usual. Records note a significant increase in the population of bank voles, the wood mice remain steady and there was an increase in the numbers of common shrew.

Actual figures compared with 1983 are:-

	Total Catch 1983	Recapture	Total Catch 1984	Recapture
wood mice	90	72	96	78
bank vole	1	0	189	177
common shrew	1	0	9	2

A transect through the main trapping site was completed by Colin Newbold and is on display in the exhibition. Colin, Matthew Parker and Paul Burland were the principal organisers of this work which was effectively and accurately completed.

Colin Newbold continued with his rabbit studies. His maps and details of the territory covered by individual rabbits provides an interesting and accurate study. There was an increase in the number of rabbits resident within the camp-site this year. This appears to coincide with the activities of the local farmer who has removed hedges and slashed areas of bramble thicket. The consequence is that we have evidence of rabbit activity in scratching holes along banks within the camp site and an increase in the numbers of resident rabbits that have constructed new tunnels.

Paul Burland continued with his attempts to locate the roosting sites of the bats that we see on many evenings. Although no site has been identified he has taken a step nearer with the aid of Frank Heap and his bat detector plus the united efforts of all the students in camp placed as spotters to determine the flight paths of the bats. These are shown in the display and seem to locate an unexplored site in a copse on the North shore, adjacent to the camp site on the East. Brick kilns do not appear to provide roosts as we had expected. The Dark Pond needs further checking.

Using the frequencies picked up on the detector the range is within that of the pipistrelle, as we had suspected.

The bats only appeared on warm evenings so we were limited to three observations. When they were flying, the first appearances were about 12.15 with a steady increase in sightings until they tailed off and stopped at 22.03, the latest recording.

Birds

An interesting fortnight for the bird watchers this year with more species closer to the site than we have seen in recent years.

Wayne Tyler returned with his usual enthusiasm to organise the hides and was well supported by Wayne Eggerton and Karl Smout who found a developing interest in bird watching. They were further motivated by discovering a linnets nest in the meadow. They subsequently maintained a careful watch as is shown by their records. Hides were erected to the North of the camp. Temporary bridges had to be built to gain access but the effort proved worthwhile as four brent geese and eider duck were observed in addition to nests of black headed gull, lapwing and oyster-catcher which were eventually located. The gull had its nest destroyed during the night of Wednesday 25th, the remains of egg shell providing evidence of some predator.

The black headed gulls had a bad season as the usual nests along the sea wall had been washed out prior to our arrival. The only nesting bird remaining was the great black back gull that has become a regular feature during the last ten years but not successfully breeding until three years ago and not since.

The oystercatchers nested on the seaward edges of the salting but had not hatched before we left. The lapwing had not laid before our departure. The excellent sequence of photographs of the redshank observed on the salting is encouraging as we hoped that this bird may return to breed in the area from which it has been missing recently.

The redshank shots plus the little terns and shelduck is the work of Paul Burland. He had his equal in Nick Osborne who has excellent pictures ranging from the small birds, such as his willow warbler, to his magnificent picture of turnstones in flight and the great black back gull on the sea wall.

The hide towards the West point provided an excellent vantage point for general observations, many of the birds on our species list were observed from this point.

A natural hide was constructed inside the bushes beside the fresh water ponds providing an excellent position to observe birds seeking fresh water. Peter Turner enjoyed a visit from twenty-four shelduck during one of his vigils in this hide.

Karl, Wayne E and Peter produced some fine plaster casts. One in particular of oystercatchers' foot marks includes the probe holes made by the beak.

Matthew Parker completed his second survey of local chaffinches and has an excellent record on display. We took his work along with us to display at the Young People and Environment Group, a two day course held on the Island for advisers and teachers throughout the South of England.

Botany

Elizabeth Price and Jeanette Norris continued with their flower studies this year; Elizabeth preparing for her 'A' level work by identifying shade plants and checking light intensities. Jeanette has maintained her transect of the East of the landing stage from a fresh water pond, across the meadow and to the waters edge. Her 'A' level project will show changes in soil water content, humus content and salinity. A noteworthy discovery is our first record of an adders tongue fern located just below the pond. This plant is abundant at some locations within the district but this appears to be the first time that it

has been seen and identified at Brickfields. Our thanks to Jonathan Cox who spotted it as we were working our way down the transect in pouring rain, just one small specimen.

Erosion

Colin Bell has updated his computer file with his records of cliff erosion on the North shore. There is considerable loss of material as can be seen in the comparative transects exhibited in the display.

We have not had to move the initial datum line but the time is not far away when it will have to be moved further inland.

Colin was again joined in his work this year by Peter Lillington who has an equally good record registering erosion of material.

Michael Atkinson started his first work on the cliff this year and will be able to continue for a couple of years to come.

The photographs in the display, once again, illustrate mud flows that form on the cliff face when any period of heavy, continuous rain is experienced. Colin leaves for university this year so we may not see him at Newtown for some time. We wish him well, he has established some good records over the last four years. He it was who led the team in the talk to the Environmental conference.

Fossils

This aspect of our studies was once again restricted. Access to the outer beds was again restricted. Only the tops of the banks were uncovered for a few minutes before the tide returned.

The zoster beds appeared to be in good shape with good growth and healthy specimens. Inspection of these beds was also difficult because of the tides.

The main mussel bed yielded small pieces of both bison and elephant bones.

Insects

The moth trapping was unrewarding, we have only one record – that of a brimstone caught on the night of Friday 18th. Wet days and cold nights did not encourage either pupils or moths to emerge.

During warm sunny periods butterflies were in evidence but we only recorded specimens of wall, meadow brown and small meadow. Even our usual speckled woods were missing.

Pond dipping

This activity was again popular yielding a wide variety of specimens, both plants and animals which serve to give a picture of the web of life associated with a given habitat. The display includes the detailed mapping of the pond and its associated species. It has been checked and updated during the last three years and exhibits a stable habitat. The charts and pictures were included in our display to the Environmental Group. All third year pupils were involved in this work as a starting point for their studies.

Photography

This years collection of slides is evidence of the growing expertise of our senior students and of the success of our younger students.

We were pleased to have the use of a 35mm Halina camera given to us by Mr David

Parr, one of the old boys. It allowed newcomers to learn all the basic skills using good equipment.

As ever we had the full support of Oliver Frazer in his provision of cameras and subsequent developing and printing.

Wardening

We had few visitors, the weather and conditions saw to that, although we were pleased to see some of our parents, Mr and Mrs Hart and Mr and Mrs Newbold. Our Headmistress, Miss Dorothy Moir MA paid us her first visit whilst Mrs Margaret Evans who retired this year as Deputy Headmistress, paid us her last official visit, though we hope to see her in years to come.

Mr and Mrs Frank Heap, from the National Trust were welcome visitors. Frank played a large part in directing the bat watches.

Mr Tony Fisher was with us for the first time this year. He provided the opportunity for some of our pupils to learn canoeing.

A considerable amount of work was put into erecting gateways, to enable the site to be fenced, to prevent the ground being poached by cattle. This should allow control of cattle movement. Colin Newbold proved to be our most able builder.

The site was scavenged for all litter and scrap, it was bagged and left to be hauled away in a skip during the summer months.

The landing stage was refurbished and strengthened. It gets more precarious each year as the bank is getting washed away inshore. We cleared a mud berth this year beside the landing stage.

In concluding this report I must not forget to mention the excellent water colours completed by Michael Garrett. They show his talent and form a welcome addition to the display.

Considering the variable weather and some continuous periods of cold, wet conditions, the amount of work completed was quite extensive. It is a credit to the resilience and spirit of our students who continued with their studies in adverse conditions.

My thanks must go to Oliver Frazer who is always ready in the background to support us, to Sandy Leath for his efficient shipping of our equipment and to the Warden, Pat Ewbank for his continuing support.

I was also pleased to have the help of Mrs Sue Nelson in the final stages of camp. The final packing up is always hectic as we have to be ready for the tide. Her quiet efficiency and organisation is always appreciated.

ADDITIONS TO THE FUNGI OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT, 1984

Oliver Frazer

The following is a list of fungi not previously recorded in the Island which were determined by Dr Derek Reid and Mrs Audrey Thomas on the occasion of the Society's annual Fungus Foray on the 19th/20th October 1984:

From Town and Walter's Copses and associated meadows at Newtown.

Aphylophorales

Grevicellicium olivascens

Hyphodontia crustosa

Tubulicrinis subulatus

Agaricales

Coprinus impatiens

Cortinarius duracinus

C. saniosus

Hebeloma anthracophilum

Inocybe mixtilis

Lactarius mairei var. *zonatus*

L. rubrocinctus

Leccinum quercinum

Leptonia babingtonii

L. fulvostrigosa

Pseudocraterellus sinuosus

Russula decipiens

R. persicina

In addition the following Agaricales were recorded from the places named:

From Dickson's Copse, Dodnor, Newport,

Tricholoma orirubens

From The Firs, St. Lawrence,

Hygrophorus langei

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From Mottistone Woods and associated meadows, Mottistone.

Ascomycetes

Eutypella acericola

Agaricales

Melanoleuca strictipes

Mycena avenacea var. *thymicola*

Paxillus panuoides

Pleurotus pulmonarius

Aphylliphorales

Ganoderma adpersum

Hypochnicium punctulatum

Tyromyces gloecystidiatus

Uredinales

Phragmidium mucronatum on *Rosa* sp. (rose)

Ustilaginales

Ustilago violacea on *Silene dioica* (anther smut on red campion)

Hyphomycetes

Ramularia lapsanae on *Lapsana communis* (nipplewort)

In addition the following species were recorded from the places named:

From East Cowes Cemetery, East Cowes,

Agaricales

Psathyrella multipedata

From St. Helens Duver,

Aphylliphorales

Phellinus hippophaecola (first recorded in January 1985)

From Teacher's Centre, Newport,

Hyphomycetes

Fusicladium pyracanthae (on *Pyracanthus* berries)

EARLY SIGHTINGS OF THE PAINTED LADY (*Vanessa cardui*)

J M Cheverton

The Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*) is a migrant from North Africa occurring sporadically, common some years and scarce in others, normally arriving in this country about the third week of May.

During a walk through Bobberstone Farm on 8 April 1985 my wife drew my attention to a butterfly which proved to be a Painted Lady. In my experience this was a very early date on which to see this species so, having checked in various handbooks, I reported the fact to the Recording Organiser of the British Butterfly Conservation Society. He replied stating that there had been one other early sighting. Gaining interest I collated other early records from the Island. These were:

- 6 April – East Ashey – Mr B. Warne
- 6 April – Nr Crematorium – Dr C. R. Pope
- 7 April – Combley Great Wood – Mr B. Angell
- 9 April – Dodnor – Dr D.T. Biggs
- 10 April – 3 – Rowridge – Dr D.T. Biggs
- 13 April – Eight Acre Copse, St Helens – Dr C.R. Pope
- 17 April – Porchfield – Mr B. Angell
- 17 April – St Catherine's Point – J.M. Cheverton
- 18 April – Porchfield – Mr B. Angell
- 19 April – Centurion's Copse – P.F. Lee
- 20 April – Bembridge Marsh – J.M. Cheverton
- 21 April – Calbourne – P.F. Lee
- 21 April – 2 – Ramsdown – Dr C.R. Pope
- 24 April – Brighstone Forest – P.F. Lee

Early records in the past have been (Goater 1974):

4 March 1928 – Shanklin

23 March 1942 – Ryde

Great influx during March and early April 1952.

References

Goater, B 1974. *The Butterflies and Moths of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*. Classey.

ISLE OF WIGHT FIELD NAMES 1835–1848

Marjorie G. Middleton

The field-names in this survey were taken from the records of the Tithe Commutation Commission, made when church tithes were changed from tithes in kind (i.e. corn, milk, wool, lamb, etc.) to money rents paid for land. For this purpose every field in every parish in the Isle of Wight (as elsewhere) was numbered and recorded, together with its owner's and/or tenant's name, the name of the field (if any), its use, area and value for rent. The Island list covered 27 parishes, and totalled 11,914 entries, including woods and plantations; besides these, homesteads and other buildings were recorded and the work was carried out between 1835 and 1848. In the following necessarily brief observations on the field-names, neither homesteads nor land used only for buildings, yards, or gardens have been included.

A little difficulty was experienced in reading one or two of the various handwritings in the Schedules; some clerks not only seemed to enjoy writing highly ornamental capital letters, but complicated matters by using more than one type for the same letter. Fortunately, however, in the main the Schedules were very clearly written. The greatest difficulty in interpreting some of the field-names stemmed from the fact that most of the information must have been given to the Surveyors by word of mouth, and where the name was strange to them they simply wrote down a phonetic version of what they heard, with some odd results. A classic example of this was the name *majanders* in the Niton Tithe Schedule; this was unknown in the village, and no one could offer any explanation of it. However, in a Court Roll of 1595 that particular field was shown as in the possession of *Madge Andrews*, which proved to be the name still being used for it in the village – after nearly 400 years! *St. Foyne*, far from commemorating some minor saint, was the name written in the Schedule for a Carisbrooke field in which sainfoin was grown; and *scotch hills* must have been a mis-hearing of *Scotchells* (Brading). Spelling was uncertain, the same word or name often appearing in several different forms.

A number of fields were recorded simply as *arable*, *field*, *pasture*, *meadow* or *mead*, but the majority were named. Since fields were named for the purpose of simple identification for working them, it follows that the most obvious names occur in many parishes – e.g. *barn field* which naturally was recorded on almost every farm; likewise *dog kennel field*.

The different types of field were indicated by denominatives such as *mead*, *close*, *land*, *paddock*, *meadow*, *cowleaze*, *pasture*, *butt*, *ground*, *croft*, *moor*, *down*, *furze brake*, *withy bed*, etc., etc. Small fields were called *plat* or *plot*, *slip*, *pightle*, *butt*, *nook*, *stitch*; there was one *moiety of a slip of wood* (Freshwater) under two roods in size.

The denominative *piece* was frequently used of a section of a field, but mostly when the land concerned had been a *strip*, once part of a *common field* – *piece in common field* (Whitwell and others); a number of common fields still remained in the Island, particularly in Niton, Whitwell and Freshwater. The original *great fields* had been divided into *furlongs* then split into strips which were not named but known for convenience by the name of the men who currently owned them. In a variety of spellings,

furlong was still an existing field-name (Arreton, Newchurch, Brook, etc.). The strips were sometimes numbered and then recorded as 'in' a certain field – e.g. 325 *in Kempsons* (Niton) – or marked on the map with a single letter, which represented the farm responsible for that strip. A *gore* (somewhat three-sided in shape) was what remained after the furlongs had been laid out, and a *headland* was the land at either end of a field where the plough was turned. A *hoe* was an open-field division, probably on or near a ridge – *upper*, *lower* and *peaked hoe* (Brading) – and *several* (Whitwell) was an area of privately owned land, especially enclosed pasture. In the Island a wood was generally called a *row* or *rue*, but in one or two parishes – notably Arreton – the word *shaw* was also used.

Where one or more fields bore the same basic name they were differentiated by 'qualifiers' such as *long*, *short*, *yonder*, *hither*, *upper*, *lower*, *new*, *old*, and so on, or by numbers, compass points or any other descriptive word. In the following analysis an effort has been made to clarify a great quantity of material by putting the names into groups, such as acreage, shape, situation, endowments, colours, etc.; and a few possible derivations are given, as they emphasize the fact that many of the names have been in use, in one form or another, over a long period, often from mediaeval times. It should be born in mind that in this analysis only a very small proportion of examples can be given.

Acreage

Very many fields were named by acreage – *4 acre field*, *the 20 acre*, *West Noads 9 acre* and so on. With regard to the areas of the fields it is of interest to compare the stated figure with the measurements taken by the Tithe Commissioners' Surveyors, remembering the old system of 40 perches = 1 rood, 4 roods = 1 acre (see Table 1). In the table 'accurate' means within $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre +/- a few perches. It should be remembered, also, that some parishes were not the same as they are today – Brading included Bembridge and St. Helens, and Newchurch stretched from Ryde to Ventnor. In Bonchurch and Binstead many fields were in the possession of Quarr Abbey and so paid no tithe and were not listed. Yarmouth had no field names as such, only *common*, *meadow*, or *pasture*.

In all parishes there were many trifling discrepancies between the old and the new measurements, but there were also some very large differences, of which a few examples are given below.

Parish	Total Fields	Acre Names	Accurate	Over Estimate	Under Estimate
Arreton	964	132	85	27	20
Binstead	32	3	2	1	0
Bonchurch	22	2	1	1	0
Brading	1222	126	63	22	41
Brighstone	470	44	21	17	6
Brook	86	8	6	1	1
Calbourne	453	99	61	21	17
Carisbrooke	999	117	50	38	29
Chale	418	46	25	12	9
Freshwater	871	28	15	5	8
Gatcombe	182	7	6	1	0
Godshill	903	145	92	32	21
Kingston	83	5	2	2	1
St. Lawrence	131	6	3	2	1
Mottistone	152	18	12	3	3

Parish	Total Fields	Acre Names	Accurate	Over Estimate	Under Estimate
Newchurch	1126	141	58	56	27
Niton	411	5	4	0	1
Northwood	736	86	46	16	24
Shalfleet	850	118	79	14	25
Shanklin	54	1	1	0	0
Shorwell	585	42	22	11	9
Thorley	172	20	12	7	1
Whippingham	637	94	64	10	20
Whitwell	172	45	23	16	6
Wootton	55	3	2	1	0
Yarmouth	27	0	0	0	0
Yaverland	101	2	0	0	2

Table 1. Comparison of areas of fields given in field names with measurements taken by Tithe Commissioners' Surveyors.

In Arreton a '*13 acre*' field actually measured only just over 2 acres, which seems such an improbably large error that one wonders if the figure '*1*' was entered by mistake and the field should have been recorded as a *3 acre*; there are a number of similar problematical measurements in various parishes. In Newchurch a field named *the 15 acres* had an area of only 4 acres +, and one stated as 11 acres was only 5 acres +, whereas one recorded as a 10 acre field actually measured 19 acres. In Brighstone the *further 10 acres* measured just over 6 acres, a 14 acre field only 3 acres +, and *upper 5 acres* only just over 1 acre, while in Carisbrooke a stated 14 acre field covered over 22 acres, and a 20 acre exceeded 31 acres.

A number of fields and/or woods were named *hundred acre*, but in every case this was apparently a joking reference to a very small piece of land. The largest *hundred acre* was in Shalfleet (27 out); in Calbourne these were *hundred acres field* (1 acre 12 perches) and *lower 11 acre field* (3 acres 32 perches). In Chale *100 acre* occupied less than 2 acres, in Newchurch *100 acre orchard* was just over 1 acre, and all the other *100 acre* fields were actually less than one acre – Carisbrooke 1 rood 32 perches, and *100 acre copse* 1 rood 16 perches; Brading (two fields) 1 rood 19 perches and 2 roods 28 perches; Shorwell 1 rood 5 perches; Shanklin 2 roods 17 perches; Freshwater 1 rood 30 perches; Mottistone 1 rood 2 perches; and the smallest 100 acre of all, also in Freshwater, 34 perches – less than a quarter of an acre.

In Freshwater, a 40 acre field (stated) had been divided into two which together only totalled 34 acres, and in Kingston three fields named the *south, east and west 40 acres* only covered 35 acres in all. In Calbourne a group of three fields had apparently been made into one, as the divisions had been crossed out on the map, and so they had presumably lost their old names of *little witch, great little witch and pretty little man*.

In Arreton the measurements of some of the hedge rows were recorded, as well as those of the fields.

Situation

This was a means of identifying many fields, with names such as *upper, lower, middle, nether* (*neither field* in Chale must surely have been a spelling error!), *hither, yonder,*

further, near, far, beyond, inner and outer. A complicated name was *further lower house ground* in Kingston; this could have meant that there was a group of three fields, the first one being called simply *house ground*, the one below it *lower house ground*, and the one beyond that *further lower house ground*; however, fields with similar names do not always appear in such tidy groups, and may not even adjoin each other.

Hanging. A good descriptive word for fields or woods on a slope or hillside.

Hanging piece and *hanging wood* (Brading), *hanging 10 acre* (Northwood).

Sidelong, sidelands (many), *sidling* (Arreton and others), *siddles* (Brading etc.) = land alongside a lane or other feature. This is possibly derived from the OE word *sidling* = land alongside.

Home. Usually close to the farm or manor, and so were possibly demesne fields in early days. Many 'home' names in all parishes.

Townsend. A name usually found on the outskirts of a village (Niton).

New barn outs was on the border of the parish.

In the Island distant fields were often given far-away geographical names, such as: *North Britain, little Israel, Birmingham*, all in Arreton; *Winchester* and *Colchester* in Calbourne; *Mount Ararat* and *America* in Shorwell. There were several called *Newfoundland*, one on the extreme edge of Freshwater parish at the back of High Down.

Scotland (Godshill and Newchurch) probably meant a field subject to a tax or scot.

Many fields have self-explanatory situation names, as in *front piece* (in front of the house) and *top piece*.

Butt before the door (Northwood).

By the potato butt (Shorwell).

In the common (numerous)

Behind the stable (Shorwell).

Field below (Northwood).

Right hand butt (Northwood).

Eastover (Whitwell) and *westover* (Calbourne) may have the meaning of land beyond, or across, other land.

Noke = a ME word meaning land in a secluded corner; e.g. *noke corner ground* (Northwood). It may also be a surname.

Coal or *cold harbour* = shelter in an open place. *Harbours land* (Arreton) was probably owned by a person of that name, which is recorded in 1834.

Boundary ground (Newchurch); important if it marks the limit of a parish or estate.

Ham = OE, land beside a river, enclosure (*great ham*, Thorley).

Brow = land on a cliff-edge (Freshwater, Shalfleet).

Shape

This was an obvious means of identifying a field, but not always accurately used.

Round. There were several 'round fields' but only one was really circular – the *round o*, a circular embanked field still existing at Downton Farm (Brook), which may have been used in early times for breaking-in horses.

Round coppice (Godshill) was triangular.

Crooked. This name applied to very angular fields, and there was a great variety of similar names, a few of which were *crockets* and *criss-cross* (Chale); *crooked acre butt* (Whitwell) which had a surprising number of angles; and *angels butt* (probably a mis-spelling of *angles*) in Brading which consisted of two very angular fields.

Square. Fields so named tended rather to be rectangular; the three most accurately named were *square butt* (Brook), *square close* (Newchurch) and *square field* (Whippingham).

Triangular. Fields so shaped included the very small *ketches corner* (Yaverland); *pro*

and *corners mead* (Newchurch); *3 corner field* (Northwood); and *3 cornered woods* (Arreton). There were many other examples.

Octagon (Godshill); an irregular, badly-named field.

Peaked, picked, picking, etc. Fields so named were always pointed, of whatever size, but *peck* means a very small field like *little peck* (Newchurch). There were many '*peaked*' names.

Hatchet. Frequently used as a field name, and often reasonably recognisable in shape. The best was *hatchett ground* (Freshwater) which really looked like a hatchet, complete with a long handle.

Dogtail. Two long, very twisted fields, one in Arreton, the other in Wootton.

Hookem (Carisbrooke) and *hooks* (Arreton) were crescent-shaped.

Half moon copse (Shanklin) was a long shallow crescent.

Diamond butt (Shalfleet); the field butted up against a perfectly diamond-shaped wood.

T-piece. T-shaped but slightly lop-sided (Brighstone).

L-ground or *ell*; so shaped, but it could sometimes be *hell ground*, a name for a poor field.

Coffin. *Coffin coppice* (Northwood) and *coffin land* (Brighstone) both bore some resemblance to this depressing shape.

Wrongs (Whitwell, St Lawrence, Arreton). This name comes from ON word '*vrangr*' and/or OE '*wrang*', meaning a crooked piece of land.

Outlet. A funnel-shaped piece of ground on a boundary (Calbourne).

Ambrose's throat of bones. This field is also funnel-shaped, of a type often called a 'throat', presumably Ambrose was the owner. The *bones* could have been one of the Frenchmen killed in the raid of 1377, as the field lies on the edge of Carisbrooke.

Harp and lute (Shorwell). This field was definitely shaped like a harp, but so far there seems to be no explanation of *lute*.

Trowsers (Gatcombe). Given in John Fields' *English Field Names* as showing 'a fanciful resemblance to a pair of trousers'.

Trowsers and jacket. There were adjoining fields (Godshill), but with no resemblance in shape to either garment – possibly the rent or the produce of the two fields paid for a new suit?

Breeches (Carisbrooke) usually referred to newly broken-up ground.

Milkpan. A fancied resemblance to the shape of this utensil (Godshill, Arreton, Shalfleet)

Sling three and six acres (Northwood) might have been so called from part of its shape; *sling* was generally used of a small piece of land and could refer to the pouch-like shape of one end of this field.

The great A (Gatcombe) was composed of two fields, together having a rough resemblance to a rather bent capital A.

Size

Many fields were identified by their comparative sizes (not acreage), words such as *broad, narrow, great, little, short* and *long* being added to their basic names. These were in general pretty accurate although it was not always clear which fields were being compared. There was an unusual number of '*long*' names in Brighstone, almost all well described. *Pigtail* (Shalfleet) was probably a mis-spelling of '*pightle*', a word meaning a small field.

Seasonal use

A few names described fields which were best used at particular seasons, as in

winterlands (Brighstone), *winter close* (Calbourne) and *summer field* (Chale and Shalfleet). *Summerlea* was the large field close to St Catherine's Lighthouse, too exposed for winter use.

Compass points

The cardinal points were not infrequently used as 'qualifiers' and included *north prospect* and *south prospect* (Arreton) correctly orientated.

Surnames

In most parishes a very considerable number of fields were called by the names of one-time owners or tenants, and these may have continued in use over a long period.

Talbot (Thorley); this family was certainly in the parish in 1706, and gave their name to several fields. There were Talbots in Mottistone from an earlier date.

Coomers mead (Brading) was owned by one Sarah Coomer.

Jones/White (Niton); a field rented in partnership by two men.

Rice field (Carisbrooke) was held by James Rice, not used as a paddy field!

Garston (Gatcombe). This name also appears in other parishes, and with so many examples it is possible that some of them may derive from the OE word *gaerstun*, a grass enclosure or paddock. There were also *gassons* and *glassgons* (Freshwater) with the same possible meaning.

Christian names

Infrequent and may be misleading as some like *Paul*, *Walter*, *Charles*, *Jacob* and others could also be surnames. An interesting field name was *Christians* (Shalfleet) which must have belonged to someone of that name; there was a Christian Talbot in Mottistone in 1569, but also a George Christian in Shalfleet in 1664, so it may have been a surname. Other possible first names came in *Fanny's lee* (Shalfleet), *Johnny's ground* and *William butt* (Newchurch), *Paul's moor* (Arreton), *James's butt* (Carisbrooke), *Lydia croft* (Brighstone) and *Joe's butt* (Brading). *Rosemary copse* (Newchurch) could have referred to the plant, or the girl's name. *Timothy* was the name used for cat's-tail grass (grown for fodder) which was introduced into the USA by one Timothy Hanson. *Jack* or *Jacky* names (Newchurch, Calbourne, Mottistone) might have come from a dialect word meaning vacant, unused land.

Endowments

The profits or rents of various fields were often made over to charities, or given for the upkeep of churches, chapels or other religious foundations; *church acre* (Shorwell), *charity moor* (Brading), *nun's croft* (Brading), *chapel mead* (Newchurch) and *lady acre* (Niton) could have been used in this way; local priories owned land or were the beneficiaries. *Prior's butt and paddock* (Brading) and *prior's land* (Gatcombe) are two possibilities. *Granfers paddock* (Brighstone), *grandfathers butt* (Godshill), *grammers common* (Mottistone) and *grammers ground* (Yaverland) were possibly dower lands, or allocated for the benefit of elderly dependants. Glebe lands were assigned to the parish priest as part of his benefice, there were *parsonage fields* in several parishes, *vicarage butt* in Thorley, and *vicar's acre* (Shalfleet) – a mere scrap of land. The local doctor was also provided for with *doctors meadow* and *row* (Calbourne), *doctor's ground* and *mead* (Carisbrooke) and *upper* and *lower doctor's bull* (Brading). *Proxy* (Shorwell and Whippingham) was a name given to fields which provided the incumbent with money to pay for the accommodation of a visiting bishop, instead of entertaining him at the Rectory.

Colours

There were quite a number of fields with 'colour' names, but it does not seem a very secure means of identification.

Brown appeared in various places – *little brown's down* (Niton and Shorwell), *brown's mead* (Carisbrooke), etc.

White was very common – a few names were *white's ground* (Godshill), *white field* (Whippingham), *white pit* (numerous), *whitcombe* and *white house ground* (Carisbrooke).

Green is frequent, as in *green field* (Brighstone), *green close* (Calbourne), *the green pasture* (Northwood) and *green down* (Carisbrooke).

Black. There were several *blacklands* (Shalfleet and others) which may refer to dark soil; also *blackrock moor* (Newchurch), *blackmans* (Carisbrooke) and other names.

All the above 'colours' may have been surnames.

Red possibly referred to the colour of the soil – *red lands* (Northwood) – but in *red lake withy bed* (Freshwater) is more likely to be a contraction of *reed*.

Newchurch, Arreton and Godshill all had fields called *changeable*, supposed to refer to differences in the colour of the soil.

Numbers

There were a considerable number of 'triple' names, such as: *3 meads* (Shorwell); *3 grounds* (Brighstone); *3 gates* (Arreton and Northwood); *3 crop butt* (Newchurch); and *3 halves* (Whitwell and Yaverland) which meant three units of equal size.

Moor the first, first, second and third moors (Arreton).

Second, third and fourth fields (Arreton).

Yonder six – which happened to be a 5 acre field (Arreton).

1st and 2nd mullions (Brading) – probably millions, a known ironical name for small areas.

1st steps marsh, 2nd steps marsh, 1st and 2nd Norton field, and nine gates moor (all Brading).

1st, 2nd and 3rd moors (Carisbrooke).

1st, 2nd and 3rd ground (Calbourne).

1st close (Mottistone and Carisbrooke).

1st meadow (Carisbrooke and Calbourne).

Four paddocks (Calbourne).

Values

Sadly, there were only three fields named by value (possibly the rent they brought in, or had to pay): *upper shillings* and *lower shillings* in Calbourne, and *twelve-and-six* in Arreton.

Qualities

It was quite common to name a field for its good or bad qualities, and it is a depressing fact that there were many more 'bad' names than 'good' ones! Taking the 'good' first, one naturally starts with *Paradise* (Chale, Carisbrooke, Whitwell, Yaverland). Alas! It may actually be ironical in some cases.

Upper and lower allweathers (Carisbrooke).

Fortune butt (Brighstone).

Profits (Newchurch).

Joy lands (Freshwater).

Sweetland (Gatcombe).

Clean lands (Freshwater).

Pleasure field (Arreton).

Greetings (Shalfleet and Whitwell).

Butter butt (Godshill); *butter* refers to a good rich soil.

The bad qualities were so frequent that it is a puzzle that some of the fields continued in use, and certain parishes seem to have had more than their fair share.

Bare bones (Carisbrooke 4, Calbourne 3, Arreton 1).

Pickpockets (Calbourne).

Galled heels (Calbourne).

Little poverty (Calbourne)

Poverty close (Arreton 4, Brading 1).

Small gains (Arreton, Gatcombe, Carisbrooke, Whitwell, Shalfleet 2).

Hungry/Hunger – ground, acres, hill, etc.; very many examples. Sometimes confused with *angers* (Chale) or *underhill*.

Poor or *poors* (Godshill and others). May also have been fields given for the benefit of the poor of the parish.

Hard acres (Niton).

Lazy butt (Arreton).

Couthey (Calbourne, Shorwell, Godshill and others); swampy ground which produced disease in sheep.

Little bargains; this may not have been derogatory, as farms were sometimes called *bargains*.

Troublesome (Whitwell).

Foul piece (Freshwater); boggy or contaminated ground.

Raw bones (Freshwater).

Leather acre (Arreton); stubborn ground.

Weary bottom (Calbourne, Shorwell).

Sour mead (Northwood).

Starve ground mead (Northwood).

Long Friday (Whippingham); considered unlucky ground; may refer to Good Friday.

Bad meadow (Northwood).

Lean field (Freshwater).

Bare field (Freshwater).

Vain ground (Mottistone).

Hell bottom (Newchurch).

Hell ground (Shorwell).

Soil

The kind of soil was another means of identifying a particular field. *Gravel*, *gritten*, *grithens*, *gritton*; such names come always on sand or gravel (gritty) (Freshwater, Brighthstone, Shorwell, Gatcombe, Arreton, Wootton, Newchurch and Whitwell).

Peat (Newchurch, Brading, Arreton and Godshill).

Mud land (Thorley) on a river or estuary.

Clay. This gave such obvious names as *claylands* (Shorwell); *clay close* (Whippingham) possibly produced material for pipes as it lay between two fields called *upper* and *lower tobacco pipes*.

Wet land. *Gallants* (Carisbrooke), *gallonds* (Whitwell) and *gall close* (Carisbrooke) possibly derive from OE *galla* = barren, wet land.

Slinks, of which there are examples all over the Island, referred to deep and often gloomy areas.

Types

The different appearances of fields produced some picturesque names.

Humps or rocky outcrops. *Mountains* (Godshill), *humpittes* or *humpets* (Niton and others) and *clouds* or *floats* (Newchurch).

Drunken ground = marshy or shaky or just uneven (Chale).

Plain = flat ground (Kingston, Godshill).

Lawn = usually a large meadow (Whippingham, 18 acres).

Crumps. The name of two groups of fields in the Wellow/Thorley area. This ME word meaning compressed strata – crumpled – goes back to at least 1300, and these fields have literally been compressed into inverted bowl-shapes. The clerk wrote the word as *qumps* in the Schedule, but the local pronunciation is *crumps*.

Plaish, plash (Carisbrooke and others) = wet, marshy; ME *plasket*.

Dead ridges (Shalfleet); field no longer ploughed, but showing the outlines of old ridge and furrow.

Rushy piece = wet or muddy, with rushes.

Clappers = field with rabbit burrows; Latin *clapere* = rabbits.

Stroud = possibly from OE *strod* = boggy land overgrown with brushwood (Newchurch and numerous others).

Stocks = possibly tree-stumps left in the ground; also *jacket stocks* = unused ground with stumps (Godshill).

Rowen. Rough ground. Sometimes spelt *rowin*, and confused with *row* (a wood) in a field – e.g. *rowin barn close*, a wood or copse in barn close; *rowin knods*, (Chale).

Rough borough = Rough hill (Freshwater).

Hayes or *hays*. Land enclosed by hedges. *White hays* may refer to hawthorn hedges, very common after the Parliamentary enclosures. *Long hays*, a very long, narrow enclosed field (Freshwater); also probably a continuous hedge bordering more than one field.

Use

A very large number of names described the use to which the land was put, or referred to some feature such as a *quarry* or *kiln*, in or near the field in question; such names occurred over and over again in many parishes, because they referred to the kind of activity found on every farm as part of its normal working. These names may be conveniently divided into ‘industrial’, ‘farm or domestic’ and ‘general’ use.

Industrial. *Blacksmiths*, *Bakers* (and *Bakehouse*), *Butchers*, *Coopers*, *Crockers* (the potters), *Millers*, *Draper*; occupational surnames, which may be possessive – e.g. a field owned or used by the village blacksmith, baker, potter, or whatever.

Tinkers acre. A piece of ground which the tinkers were allowed to use during their visit to the parish or village.

Brew house, *malt house*.

Salt pit, *salting ground*, *lime pit*, *chalk pit*, *sand pit*, *clay pit*, *saw pit*, *quarry*, *marl pit*, *malm pit* (*malm* or *mawm*, a ME word for a light loamy soil often incorporated with heavy clay to improve the texture).

Tan yard, *timber yard*.

Rabbit warren. A considerable source of food from early mediaeval times.

Part of paper mills. A short lived industry in Carisbrooke.

Farm or domestic. *House*, *barn* (many), *dog kennel* (many).

Brook, *spring*, *pond*, *well*, *cistern*, *pump*.

Mill, *windmill*.

Shearing butt, *sheep wash*.

Cow-keeping house, *cow shed*, *calving close*, *cart house*, *stable*, *stock*.

Close, *pen*, *pound*, *stockbridge*.

Muck or dung mead.

Fodderhouse, hay pound.

Rick yard, rick place.

Fatting ground, winnowing bank, plough ground.

Sheperds

Laundry field, drying field.

Garden, orchard.

Vineyards (Newchurch, Godshill, Freshwater).

All the above were frequently used as field-names.

Cowleaze, ox leaze, ewe leaze, lambs leaze were grass fields where the animals were grazed. In the Freshwater Schedule the field-name *yew leys* has been corrected to *ewe leaze*, which seems more likely to be correct.

Hackleaze (Brading, etc.) may have some connection with trees.

Cutleaze (Binstead) was probably deeply drained land.

General. *Tollgate, tollhouse mead* (Whippingham), *tollgate butt* (Newchurch).

Watch house and *beacon fields* adjoined each other in Northwood, for defence purposes.

Direction post field (Arreton).

Haunt ground, haunt butt, haunt down (Carisbrooke) – no ghosts, but places where deer came to be fed during the winter.

Wild animals.

Some fields took their names from animals, both wild and domesticated.

Badger/brock. Brock-holes = badger setts, and several other badger names for fields show that this creature was an old inhabitant.

Fox, wolves, stag, rat.

Rabbit or *coney* (originally *rabbit* referred only to the young).

Frog, toad, snake.

Snail, leech (*little leech moor*, Godshill).

Monkey is a dialect word meaning 'young hare', which appears in *great monkey lands* (Whitwell) = the land where the young hares are seen – local people have often watched them playing in this field.

Lions (Godshill), *lyons* (Freshwater) and *lion butt* (Arreton) were unlikely to record the wild beast, but may be derived from Latin *linum* (flax), which was grown in some quantity up to the beginning of the 19th century.

Leopards. Again unlikely as an animal name, but possibly a mis-hearing of the surname *Leaper*, and not an animal at all.

Domestic animals.

Every possible farm animal seems to have given its name to some piece of land, usually to the field in which such an animal was kept.

Ox, bull, cow, calf.

Ram, ewe, sheep, lamb.

Horse, mare, colt, foal.

Pig, hog.

Dog, cat (cat is very uncommon).

Wild birds.

Eagle, kite.

Stork, heron.

Swan (numerous), *duck*.

Peewits, wheatear, pheasant, curlew.

Pigeons, known as *culvers* from the OE word *culfre* (Culver Hill, Godshill, and others).
Woodcock, a breeding bird in the Island; its curious habit of 'roding' its territory may be responsible for field-names such as *cock-roads* and *cock crows* (Whippingham), *cocklands* and others.

Domestic birds.

Pigeon, which was a source of meat in mediaeval times, when every manor and most farms had a pigeon/dove house or cote.

Goose, gander, gosling, duck.

Chickens. *Fowl* which may often have been confused with *foul* in field-names.

Insects.

Comparatively few fields were named after insects, but it is interesting to find three mentions of *stouts* (the Island name for horseflies) in *west stouts mead* (Brading), *stouts mead* and *stouts close* (Brighstone).

Nit ditch (Shalfleet) could be an insect name.

Ants. *Antils* (Arreton) and *emmetts hill ground* (Kingstone).

Wasps (*wops*). *Wop acre* (Newchurch).

Moth butt (Godshill); *Moth* is also a surname.

Fish.

There are hardly any references to fish which is curious considering the amount of fishing which was done around the Island.

Mackerel mead (Arreton).

Fishes close (Shorwell).

Whale chine (Brighstone); a whale is not a fish but seems to belong in this small group.

Trees.

An easy means of identifying fields, and about two-thirds of the species present in the Island were so used.

Oak, ash, elm, alder, beech, poplar.

Walnut, birch, fir, thorn, privet, hazel.

Crabtree, peartree, yew.

Willow or *ozier beds*, recorded in many places produced the withies for baskets and lobster-pots.

Cherry. *Cherry pits* is recorded four times in Carisbrooke, and seems to refer to disused pits in which cherry trees grew in the disturbed ground in profusion, as they do on St. George's Down and in Marvel Copse today.

Lower merry orchard and *upper merry heath* (Brading). In these names *merry* is derived from the French word *merise*, which means 'cherry'.

Crops.

The practice of naming fields by the crops grown in them seems to imply a lack of rotation if the field-name was to remain unchanged.

Barley. The names *berrill*, *berelay*, and *barrack* are all derived from the OE *berewic* = barley farm; confusion was possible with *barrack*, as many troops had been quartered on the Island from time to time and so naturally there were a number of military barracks.

Lucerne, sainfoin, clover, vetch and *timothy* (cat's-tail grass) were grown for fodder; the herb *fennel*, mostly used as flavouring with fish.

Peas (often spelt *piss*), *beans, potatoes*.

Rye, wheat, and oats all named the fields in which they were grown.

Hop garden is recorded in Northwood.

Woodwax, the name of a field at Providence Farm, Ningwood, was evidently a crop of some kind. Reference to Bromfield's *Flora Vectensis* produced the information that it was dyers greenweed (*Genista tinctoria*) very largely grown on the Island during the 19th century for its yellow dye, especially in West Wight where it was called *woadwaxen*. By about 1884 the name had become altered (purely locally) to *woodwax*. Some faint recollection remains in Ningwood, possibly because it seems to have been unusually hard to eradicate! Another crop was woad (*Isatis tinctoria*), grown for its blue dye. It was often called *wad* and, like flax, was cut and put to ferment in sheds in the fields. *Wad* or *watch houses* were woad sheds and on the Island many will have been confused with *watch houses* for look-outs. One of the Niton 'great fields' was divided into three parts, all called *watch houses*, one of which must have referred to the watch which was undoubtedly kept on top of the cliff looking out to sea. There are a number of *watch house* field-names in the Island, some of which are in places unsuitable for look-outs and these could have been woad fields.

Carrot field was recorded in Calbourne and *carrotts butt* in Chale.

Cinquefoin. This was the result of a clerk confusing sainfoin and cinquefoil; the former was probably the correct name as cinquefoil had no value as a crop.

Weeds

Where crops were grown there must inevitably have been weeds, and some fields were apparently so infested that they were named after them.

Bennetts (bent grass).

Thistle, bramble, furze.

Heath, hemlock, horsemint.

Fern, rush.

Cliders or *clidders* = goosegrass.

Scutts and *witch* or *twitch* names could have referred to scutch or couch grass.

Upper and *lower thistle piece* belonged to the appropriately named Mount Misery Homestead in Whippingham.

Thistle fat (Calbourne) seems a contradictory name, as *fat* refers to rich, good soil, which nevertheless produced thistles.

Tracks and lanes

Fields were also named conveniently by tracks and lanes which passed alongside or across them; *quarry lane* (Calbourne), *clay lane* (Freshwater) and others.

Drove lane moor (Arreton), *drove lane* (Shorwell), *Dotten's drove* (Northwood) and *drift road* (Godshill) were a few of the 'ways' along which cattle were moved.

Packway (Northwood and others) may refer to a bridle-way or pack-horse trail, often almost the only means of carrying goods to outlying farms or villages.

Redgun, the name of a field in Whitwell – *piece under redgun* – had an interesting meaning. *Redgond* or *redgun* was the name of a bridle-path up the face of the cliff, one of the very few communications with the Undercliff. This name has nothing to do with St. Rhadegund, one of the patron saints of Whitwell church, but was recorded in 1283 as *radegang*, an OE word meaning a bridle or riding path. This ancient track was

unfortunately truncated by the railway, but its probable course remains via a lane once known as the Gipsys' Path down to the lower part of St. Lawrence.

Footpath meadow (Arreton) could have had a right-of-way across it.

Path acre was a long narrow field resembling a footpath.

The old road to Newport (Whippingham). This disused track had become a pasture.

Local legend

Cream pots castle (Newchurch). The local inhabitants are said to have built a fort in a field on Ashley Down constructed entirely of milk-cans – for what reason is unfortunately not known!

Unknown

All field-names were given for a good reason and had definite meanings, some of which have unfortunately become obscure in the course of time. There are only too many of these in the Island and a short list is appended in the hope that they may one day 'ring a bell' and be elucidated:

big germs and *little germs* (Arreton)

copperals (Newchurch)

crocumbs (Freshwater)

dirty hurdles (Newchurch)

favours (Godshill)

fetch burthen (Brighstone)

glaziers box (Chale)

good robins (Shorwell and Brighstone)

governess (Calbourne)

great holy bars (Calbourne)

great and little killy cow (Shorwell)

little dears green (Newchurch)

little mippets (Calbourne)

little quod (Brading)

mortal pits (Newchurch)

mortar earth (Shalfleet)

mott wallop (Freshwater)

setmell (Niton)

sharmony (Arreton)

sheepskins (Godshill)

spring latch (Brading)

stark knatt (Freshwater)

stone heavers (Shalfleet)

succours (Carisbrooke)

upper and lower dutchman (Chale)

Abbreviations

OE = Old English.

ME = Middle English.

ON = Old Norse.

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THE LOCATION OF BRICKWORKS ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

Alison Gale

Introduction

In the second issue of 1974 the *Isle of Wight County Press* carried a brief report of the closure of Rookley Brickworks (*Isle of Wight County Press*, January 19, 1974). The closure represented the end of centuries of brickmaking on the Isle of Wight. Manufacture at Rookley had spanned fifty years, a period in which the national industry had become both highly mechanised and increasingly centralised. Despite the adoption of mechanised processes the owners of the last Island brickworks succumbed to the pressures imposed by an international market economy. High production costs, caused by the rising price of oil, made it impossible to withstand the competition of capital intensive companies on the mainland.

Over the ensuing years any remains of the clay pits and machinery have been removed or redeveloped to leave no reminder of the old works. Today a picture of the local industry, from which Rookley emerged, must be gleaned from the few documentary sources available. Poor Rate Books, Landowners' Surveys and leases provide basic evidence of brickmakers working in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, it is only with the map-makers, census recorders and geological surveyors of the nineteenth century that detailed information becomes available. This permits the observation of patterns within the rapidly developing local industry. A strong network emerges of commercial brickyards supported by the expanding towns.

Early history

Brickmaking was reintroduced to Britain during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The craft was probably transmitted across the Channel to the South Eastern Counties from the Low Countries, and then spread throughout Britain (Woodforde 1979: 42–3). By the seventeenth century brickwork had gained popularity and the brickmakers were well-established on the Isle of Wight. Around 1613 the Corporation of Newport is reported as declaring that:

'noe persons shall burne anye lyme or bricke within this Towne upon payne of x^s everye tyme soe offendinge' (Jones 1968: 24)

A little over a decade later a survey of the Manor of Ashey recorded the holdings of one Freeman Bounde:

'the Brick Kiln ground with Marle out of the Marle pit in the Downe and sand from the sandpits at Coneydover . . . at rent of 4 Quarters of good and vendable white lyme and 200 good and vendable bricks'. (*Survey of the Manor of Ashey*, Item no. 8)

Both of these references suggest that brickmaking was a daily feature of life for the Jacobean communities of the Island. Brickburning must have been quite large scale to warrant the measure taken by the Corporation to protect their towns-people from the pungent fumes and risk of fire. While at Ashey the demand for rent committed Freeman Bounde to a brickmaking operation.

Seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

The brickmakers of the seventeenth century centred their work on two areas of demand; one supplying the town as it grew in economic importance, and the other by remaining tied to the Manor, the traditional centre of economic and political life. However the records from the building of Sandown Fort reveal that both were capable of competitive production. The weekly accounts note that bricks were brought from Gosport, Freeman Bounde's kiln and a second kiln in Newport (Jones 1968: 24). The Government agents had chosen to transport bricks from established works rather than use itinerant brickmakers on site. The latter were frequently preferred for convenience and economy. Moreover the use of itinerant workers was not precluded through lack of materials, during the nineteenth century the area around Sandown and Yaverland supported a number of brickworks. To merit the cost of transport Freeman Bounde and the brickmakers of Newport must have produced readily available, good quality and competitively priced bricks.

Documentary evidence for the remainder of the seventeenth century is scarce. However, brief references appear in various Poor Rate Books between the 1670s and 1690s and again in the first decade of the eighteenth century. These are sufficient to show that brickmakers continued to meet the local demand for cheap building materials. The succession of George I brought a revival in classical architecture and a corresponding decline in the popularity of the brick. The growth of the brickmaking industry was checked further by the taxation schemes introduced to finance the American War. In 1784 green bricks were taxed at 2s.6d. per 1000, and this was raised to 4s.0d. per 1000 ten years later (Woodforde 1979: 70; see also Dobson 1850). Despite taxation bricks remained cheaper than stone and the brickmakers generally survived the period of low popularity.

Nineteenth century

During the early decades of the nineteenth century interest in brickwork began to revive. Writers, such as Ruskin, began to criticise the use of stucco facades and promote a new appreciation of brick (Woodforde 1979: 90). The change in fashion coincided with outside influences stimulating the growth of towns situated on the north coast of the Isle of Wight. The advent of peace brought new opportunities for trade and time for sporting activities to Cowes. The purchase of Osborne by Queen Victoria provided a boost for both East and West Cowes, while nearby Ryde enjoyed popularity through the town's proximity to Osborne and the packet service to Portsmouth.

The location of the majority of brickworks was dependent on three factors: availability of materials, demand for products, and the ability to transport the produce to the customers. The commentators of the nineteenth century (Shore 1890: 34) noted that the brickworks were concentrated on the clays of the Northern Wight (fig. 1). There were equally rich deposits to the south of the Chalk downs but these supported temporary workings only. Bristow, for example, mentions a large deposit of brickearth at Brighstone, which he describes as extending from Grange to the mill (Bristow *et al.* 1889: 251). This was only dug to provide bricks for the construction of the viaduct carrying the Military Road over the Chine. The brickworks were situated in the north of the Island not simply for access to raw materials but for the advantages of being close to the growing towns of Ryde and Cowes with their constant need for building materials.

In the first half of the nineteenth century Island brickmakers were forced to depend on water or horse-drawn transport. The barges working the inland and coastal waters were ideally suited to carrying heavy bulk cargoes such as bricks. Obviously this form of transport was only available to those who were able to find the necessary raw materials

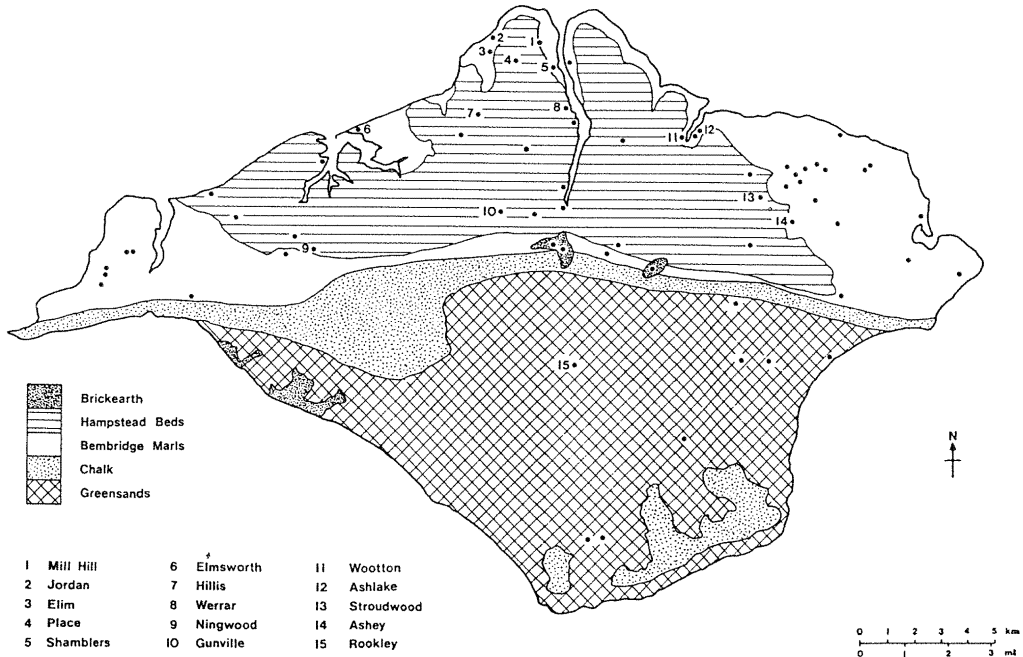


Figure 1. Sites of brickworks in the Isle of Wight.

close to navigable waterways. The northern half of the Isle of Wight provided many such sites alongside the rivers flowing into the Solent.

The Medina supported half a dozen brickworks. The 1862 Ordnance Survey map shows a works in Shamblers Copse with rails laid from the kilns to a quay. The works is recorded as opening around 1850 and the sons of the proprietor used lighters to transport bricks up and down the river (Pritchett 1939: 10–11). Perhaps the most favourable position was held by the works at Werrar, half way between Cowes and Newport just opposite the Folly Inn. These successful works first appear on a map of the Ward Estate c. 1815 (Basford pers. comm.), and were still operating in the 1960s (*Classified Telephone Directory* 1963). The long survival of brickmaking on this site may be attributed to its possessing three essential factors: an abundance of good quality clay from the underlying Hampstead Beds, a means of cheap transport on the river and a ready market in the development of the three nearby towns.

To the east a number of brickworks opened alongside the creek at Wootton. Ashlake Brickworks was auctioned in 1858 (*Isle of Wight Observer*, March 27, 1858: 1) The advertisement of the sale stressed not only the available materials and equipment but the potential for transportation. The works had a quay with sufficient water to be approached by vessels of 50 tons burthen. This was adequate for the majority of sailing barges plying the Solent between Chichester and Poole.

Water transport was exploited profitably by Edmund Pritchett at Gurnard. Jordan Brickyard was opened with the specific intention of supplying bricks to the fort being built at Freshwater (Pritchard 1939: 11). Edmund chose a site on the water-front near to the present Woodvale Hotel, and built a quay to permit the loading of barges with newly fired bricks. A vessel was essential for the Pragnells who made bricks at Elmsworth (*Calbourne Magazine*). The necessary sand to mix with the clay could only be found at the mouth of the creek which was not accessible by land. Therefore the brothers built a

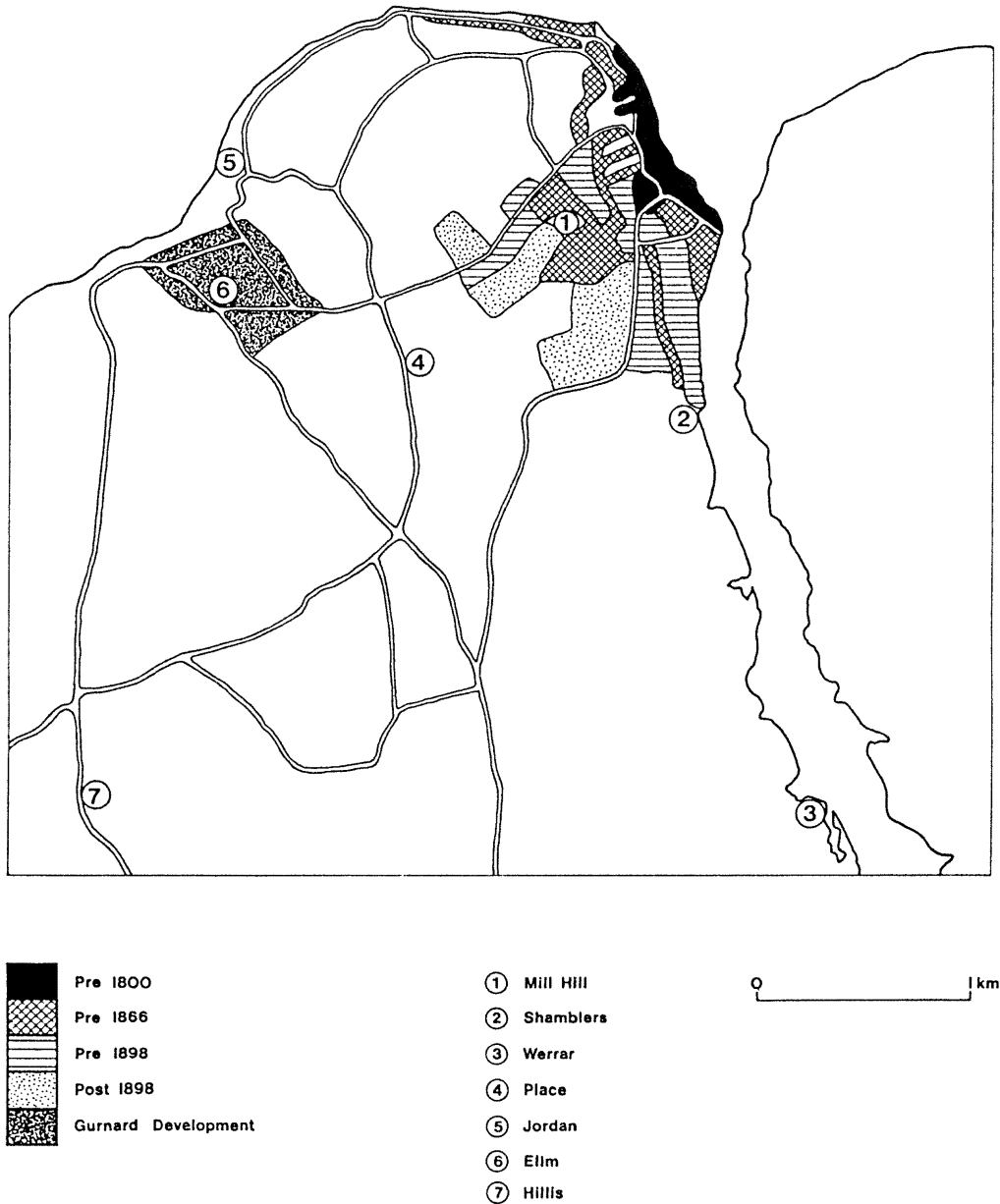


Figure 2. The main building developments and brickworks in the Cowes area in the nineteenth century.

boat. Based on the timber barges of the Medina the vessel carried 3500 bricks to the slipway at Shalfleet or the bridge below Newtown town hall (*Calbourne Magazine*).

Those brickmakers operating some distance from waterways were dependent on horse transport. The poor condition of the roads undoubtedly shortened the distance that a

horse might draw a load of bricks in one day. This was a problem shared by those using water transport once the bricks had been off-loaded onto a wharf and needed carting to the building site. However, for brickmakers who had chosen sites with good deposits of sand and clay the difficulties of road transport were not overwhelming. Thus the successful works at Ningwood supplied bricks for the prison at Horsebridge Hill. Horses drew cartloads of 1000 bricks the five or more miles to the building site (Pritchett 1939: 9–10). Their popular 'white' bricks were used in building the new resort of Brighton and were regularly carted to Yarmouth before being shipped to Fareham (Pritchett 1939: 8).

The problems of transport were minimised by siting brickworks close to growing towns or particular building sites where a demand for bricks was guaranteed. This produced a series of brickworks grouped around an expanding town, each new works being sited further into the countryside as the development spread outwards. Ryde provides the clearest example of a large number of brickworks opening at a time of rapid expansion for the town, but Cowes gives an indication of the pattern of development.

The early development of Cowes began in the seventeenth century. During the eighteenth century the town expanded as a naval shipbuilding and victualling centre. By 1800 the town buildings were concentrated on the waterfront at the mouth of the river. A field name on a map of c. 1815 marks the site of an early brickworks on Mill Hill Road (Basford pers. comm.). Possibly long disused this works had been ideally situated to supply bricks for the initial development of the town. The continued success of the shipbuilders and the new prosperity from the patronage of yachtsmen promoted the expansion of the town. By the mid-1860s the site on Mill Hill Road had been engulfed and a large development had appeared to the south of the original town (fig. 2). The brickworks in Shamblers Copse was well placed to benefit from the construction of this artisan housing. Towards the end of the century the builders moved away from the river in the direction of Gurnard and a new works opened near to Place Farm. The Pritchetts were quick to exploit the demand for bricks, the Elim Yard was started on the strength of knowledge that a building site was to open in Gurnard (Pritchett 1939: 12).

The well known works at Hillis do not fit into the pattern surrounding the expansion of Cowes. The works were originally opened (1856) to supply agricultural drainage pipes for the Ward Estate (Pritchett 1939: 15). The subsequent success of the works must be attributed to the diligence of the proprietors and their introduction of machinery and new kilns.

In comparison with the busy port of Cowes, Ryde was little more than a village. As late as 1770 John Potts, a yeoman, opened a kiln well within the boundaries of the present town (*Lind Papers*). This was to the west of the High Street in the area now occupied by Woolworths. The town only began to expand after the Napoleonic Wars. Naval officers, ashore on half pay, took advantage of the regular packet services to Portsmouth and enjoyed residences on the Island. This early building boom was not exploited by brickmakers and the Newchurch Tithe Map shows no works in the area. This contrasts sharply with the older towns of St. Helens and Brading where over half a dozen field names reveal the presence, or past existence, of brickyards.

In 1845 Queen Victoria purchased Osborne House and sealed the future of the Island as a fashionable resort. Ryde was the main landing point for visitors from the mainland and quickly benefited from the new popularity of the Island. By the 1860s a ring of brickworks had opened to supply the needs of the growing town. (1862 Ordnance Survey maps). These were situated either on main routes into the town or in areas of new development. The link between supply and demand is illustrated by the entry in a Directory of 1859 (White 1859). The few brickmakers listed were also builders, clearly they would have found no difficulty in disposing of their produce.

Ryde continued to develop for several decades. The opening of the railway to Sandown and Shanklin in 1864 enhanced the role of the town as a staging point for tourists. The spreading buildings slowly over-took the original ring of brickworks; each

old works is now contained within a modern area of Ryde, at Swanmore, Haylands, Oakfield and Elmfield. Only the brickyards furthest into the country at Ashe and Stroud Wood continued working into the twentieth century.

The influx of visitors which had stimulated the growth of Ryde soon began to affect the rural areas of the Island. During the late 1860s and the 1870s the small village of Shanklin underwent the earliest stages of its development into the present seaside resort. However the expansion of the towns on the south east coast did not produce rings of 'urban fringe' brickworks comparable to those spawned by the growth of Cowes and Ryde. Writing in 1889 Bristow *et al.* (p. 251) described the brickworks in the area: at Borthwood, near Sandown, brickearth had been found in association with gravel, and at Gatten, near Shanklin, and at Rookley, brickworks had opened where the laying of the railway had opened faces in the clay.

The opening of the railways to Sandown and Shanklin, and later to Newport, introduced three new considerations in locating brickworks on the Island. Firstly, the growth of the seaside towns was accelerated thus creating a demand for building materials in the south east of the Island. Secondly, the railway cuttings revealed clays running through the Lower Greensand, which indicated the possibility of commercial brickmaking taking place away from the rich clays of the northern Wight. Thirdly the railways provided the first viable alternative to horse or water transport.

The expansion of Shanklin and the location of suitable clays in the area re-created the conditions which had produced the 'urban fringe' brickworks around Cowes and Ryde. However, improving methods of transport were eroding the advantage to be gained by siting brickworks close to a ready market. The gradual opening of railways supported the evolution of an Island-wide system of supply and demand. Having carted his bricks to the rail termini the brickmaker had the opportunity to send his bricks further and faster. Over the decades of railway building the Island brickmakers took advantage of the new form of transport. In 1905 Henry Dowty paid the Freshwater, Yarmouth and Newport Railway Company to lay a siding to his works at Shalfleet (Sprake 1967). A second brickworks at Lee Copse, similarly far removed from any town, had been served by the Wellow siding since 1892 (Sprake 1967).

Twentieth century

In the first half of the nineteenth century brickmakers on the Isle of Wight had worked in an industry based on each local district. Lack of transport provided a buffer against competition. Following the integration forced by the railways, the arrival of effective road transport would destroy the fragmented nature of the local industry. This final stage was heralded by the opening of Gunville Brickworks in 1900 (Pritchett 1939: 24). The site had the natural advantage of lying over two types of clay as well as sand; this would provide for manufacturing a variety of wares. The Pritchetts introduced modern machinery, including heated drying sheds to permit all year round production of bricks. To ensure a good return on their investment the company sought to reach as many customers as possible. The telephone was installed and a steam road engine and wagon was purchased. The ability to supply bricks directly to building sites anywhere on the Island would have enabled the Pritchetts to squeeze out many small brickmakers who relied on traditional, seasonal methods of production. Fortunately for those employed in the smaller yards, the investors in Gunville lost confidence and the works failed.

The ambitious venture at Gunville provided an indication of the future nature of brickmaking on the Island. Once improved transport destroyed the advantage enjoyed by those brickworks sited close to building sites, or sources of transport such as rivers or railways, the balance of factors to be considered in locating a brickworks would alter. The quality of raw materials, the variety and excellence of the wares manufactured and the speed and cost of production would become increasingly important.

The First World War, with the introduction of conscription, forced many brickworks to close (*First Report of the Committee on the Brick Industry 1942*). The government failed to implement a programme of 'caretaking' and a large number of works did not re-open. The last, and only partially completed, Ordnance Survey of the inter-war years shows less than a dozen brickworks on the Isle of Wight (1938 and 1942 Ordnance Survey maps). Only a handful of these survived into the 1950s (*Classified Telephone Directories 1947, 1958, 1963*). In relation to prospective markets these post-war brickworks are scattered at random across the Island. However they possessed the necessary qualities to over-ride the once all-important factor of having transport to carry the bricks to the customer. The quality of clays available at Werrar and Gunville has already been mentioned, and the works at Downend lay on a large deposit of rich brickearth. The works at Rookley and Hillis had the benefit of mechanised brickmaking machines, heated drying sheds and modern efficient kilns. In addition the works produced a variety of building and ornamental wares.

Conclusions

The changing patterns in the location of brickworks on the Island can be split into four basic phases. Each phase reflects progress in the slow movement from an economy based on numerous isolated communities to an integrated economy where the system of supply and demand, along with the competition inherent in such a system, had become Island-wide. The first phase was that of association with the Manor. Although the building of Sandown Fort demonstrated the ability to supply bricks further afield, the brickmakers chose to be close to the political and economic centre. The practice of brickmaking to serve a highly localised unit is recorded in the field names on the Tithe Maps. These indicate that small brickpits had been worked independently within many parishes.

The second phase accompanied the rapid expansion of the towns in the north of the Island. The brickmakers polarised between the 'urban fringes' and the waterways. One section sought the benefits of proximity to a virtually guaranteed market, the other endeavoured to use cheap transport to achieve a wider distribution of their goods. Both groups were being drawn into competing for a market rather than relying on the demand for bricks within a designated area such as their own parish. The ability to transport goods was increased by the construction of the railways. During the third phase, therefore, brickmakers took advantage of the railways and had sidings laid to their works. The towns on the south east coast expanded after the railways were built. Their growth did not precipitate a movement of brickmakers to the fringe of the towns and this may be attributed to the improvement in transport having decreased the benefit derived by siting a works near to the localised demand.

The fourth phase came after the advent of powered road transport which further forced economic integration between districts. Brickmakers no longer sought sites near to towns, waterways or railways, but concentrated on finding excellent materials from which to produce a wide range of high quality wares by cheaper and faster methods of manufacture. The ability to distribute goods throughout the Island forced every brickmaker to compete for his share of the market for bricks, pipes and ornamental ware.

The closure of Rookley Brickworks appears as an epitaph to the development of a 'county', rather than 'district', brickmaking industry on the Isle of Wight. While improving transport had broken down the fragmented nature of the Island industry, the growth of the national infrastructure had breached the economic boundaries between regions of the country. Thus the Island brickmakers were pushed into competition with mainland firms. Rookley was simply a minor casualty in the continuing development of a nationally based brickmaking industry.

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METEOROLOGICAL REPORT FOR 1984

Kenneth J. Hosking F.R. Met.S.

The following account and summary of the weather during 1984 has been compiled from Ryde's records during the year with comparisons and averages now spanning 67 years since 1st. January, 1918.

The account is reproduced by kind permission of the *Isle of Wight County Press*.

Rainfall

The total of 31.04 in. (788.9 millimetres) was close to the 65-year annual average there of 30.45 in. and compared with totals of 30.13 in. in 1982 and 24.23 in. in 1983.

During 1984, January (5.62 in.), March (3.20 in.), May (3.48 in.), October (3.57 in.), November (4.36 in.) and December (4.09 in.) had monthly totals in excess of their long-term averages.

February (1.69 in.), April (0.04 in.), June (0.37 in.), July (1.40 in.), August (0.97 in.) and September (2.25 in.) had below average monthly totals.

The wettest days of 1984 gave 1.00 in. of rain on March 23 and 1.14 in. on July 24 in 24 hour periods from 9 a.m. G.M.T.

On average a fall of 1 in. or more during this 24 hour period occurs about five times in two years, one inch of rain being equivalent of 101 tons of water to the acre.

During 1984 Ryde had 156 'rain-days', exactly equal to the annual average (a 'rain-day' is defined as a 24 hour period from 9 a.m. G.M.T. during which at least 0.01 in. of rain is recorded).

Sunshine

The 1984 total at Ryde of 1,764.2 hours (estimated on the basis of readings at neighbouring resorts) was very near to the 65-year average there of 1,739.1 hours and the 1982 and 1983 totals of 1,737.2 hours and 1,764.6 hours respectively.

During 1984 above average monthly totals occurred during January (88.5 hours), April (230 hours), June (285 hours), July (265 hours) and December (65 hours).

In contrast, March (87 hours), May (155 hours), September (133 hours) and October (96 hours) had below average totals.

During the other months sunshine totals were near to average – February (74.7 hours), August (215 hours) and November (70 hours).

Of the 70 sunless days (annual average 63), 12 occurred during December, 11 in each of January and November, nine each during March and May (a new record for this month).

Only three in total occurred during the four months from June to September inclusive.

A particular feature was an exceptionally sunny final eight days of a very dry April during which there were 87.5 hours of virtually unbroken sunshine.

Temperatures

The maximum shade temperature at Ryde reached or exceeded 70°F on 54 days during 1984 compared with an annual average of 39 such instances.

There were 18 days in this category during each of July and August.

The warmest day of 1984 gave a reading of 80.8°F at Ryde on July 28, the only occasion during 1984 that the 80°F mark was reached.

During 1984 minimum air temperatures at Ryde fell to 32°F exactly on only two days (February 15 and 16).

This proved in marked contrast to an annual average of 23 air frosts at Ryde and the record number of 69 during the year of the 'big freeze' in 1963.

From my researches into the Ryde records since 1918, 1984 is the only year during which a minimum temperature lower than 32°F has not at some time been recorded at Ryde Esplanade.

The coldest day of 1984 was on February 26 with a maximum of 39.2°F.

The 1984 mean maximum and mean minimum temperatures at Ryde of 57.6°F and 47.1°F were above the long term annual means of 57°F and 46°F.

Snowfall

Despite severe weather with blizzard conditions experienced in the north of Britain during January, the Island escaped without any significant snowfall during 1984.

Thunder

Thunder was heard on nine days during 1984 with a heavy thunderstorm and torrential rain during the night of July 24/25 as easily the most severe.

Gales

The year was not without its usual quota of gales – the most notable being from a SW direction on January 2, 13 and 16 and on February 6, November 22 and 23 and from a NW direction on February 8 and September 20.

This summary relates to Ryde's official meteorological records (except for sunshine estimates) and although some variations have naturally occurred at other Island resorts, the general weather pattern depicted broadly indicates that experienced throughout the Island and adjacent mainland coastal areas of central southern England.

Differences would be most marked in regard to rainfall intensities during thundery activity even between weather situations only a few miles apart (in this connection, 3.60 in. of rain was measured at Hayling Island during the heavy thunderstorm on July 25).

With regard to temperatures, Ryde's long term averages and extremes closely accord with those of other Island coastal resorts although inland, around Newport and district, minima on the coldest nights can be up to 6°F lower than those on the coast while maxima on the hottest days of summer might well exceed by 3 or 4°F those readings taken on Ryde Esplanade.

For example, Mr Denis Simmons, at Shide, recorded maximum temperatures of at least 70°F on six days in succession between April 21 and 26 although the Ryde readings were never above 66°F through the effects of a NE sea breeze.

Summing up, the most notable memories of 1984 will include another warm, dry and sunny summer to rival those of 1899, 1911, 1921, 1933, 1940, 1947, 1949, 1955, 1959, 1975, 1976 and 1983.

An exceptionally dry and sunny April followed a mild winter with an absence of snow and severe frosts.

The dry summer was countered by above average rains during January, March, May, October, November and December.

The four days of the Spring Bank Holiday weekend at the end of May proved duller, wetter and colder than the previous year's Christmas period!

MONTHLY SUMMARY OF WEATHER AT RYDE, ISLE OF WIGHT 1984

Month	Hours of Sunshine	Rain mm.	Screen Temperature		Temperature Extremes		Mean Monthly Temperature °C
			Mean Max °C	Mean Max °C	°C From	°C To	
January	88.5	142.7	8.8	3.8	12.5	0.4	6.3
February	74.7	43.0	7.6	3.4	12.1	0.0	5.5
March	87.0	81.4	8.4	3.4	12.1	0.6	5.9
April	230.0	0.9	12.8	5.7	19.2	0.8	9.3
May	155.0	88.4	13.9	7.7	21.5	4.1	10.8
June	285.0	9.4	20.0	11.8	24.9	7.4	15.9
July	265.0	35.5	21.3	13.9	27.1	10.3	17.6
August	215.0	24.7	21.5	15.1	24.1	11.3	18.3
September	133.0	57.2	18.2	12.7	23.0	9.0	15.5
October	96.0	91.0	15.5	10.1	18.1	3.1	12.8
November	70.0	110.8	12.4	7.9	16.2	2.4	10.2
December	65.0	103.9	9.8	4.9	13.2	0.2	7.3
TOTALS	1764.2+	788.9mm (31.04') 25.4mm = 1"	Annual means 14.2°C (57.6°F)	8.4°C (47.1°F)	Annual Extremes 27.1°C (80.8°F) 0.0 °C (32.0°F) July 28th Feb 15th & 16th	Annual means 11.3°C (52.4°F)	

Note ± From April to December the hours of sunshine were based upon local observation combined with the daily recordings from neighbouring resorts.

METEOROLOGICAL REPORT FOR 1985

Kenneth J. Hosking F.R. Met.S.

The following account and summary of the weather during 1985 has been compiled from Ryde's records. The comparisons and averages now span 68 years since 1st. January, 1918.

The account is reproduced by kind permission of the *Isle of Wight County Press*.

Rainfall

The 1985 total of 26.29 in. (668.2 millimetres) was below the 65-year annual average there of 30.45 in. and compared with totals of 24.23 in. in 1983 and 31.04 in. in 1984.

During 1985 only March (2.56 in.), June (2.19 in.), August (4.32 in.) and December (3.62 in.) had monthly totals in excess of their long term averages.

January (2.85 in.), February (1.64 in.), April (1.39 in.), May (1.65 in.), July (1.69 in.), September (0.84 in.), October (1.18 in.) and November (2.36 in.) all had below average rainfall at Ryde.

The wettest day of 1985 gave 1.38 in. of rain on August 4 in a 24-hour period from 9 a.m. G.M.T.

On average a fall of one inch or more during this 24-hour period occurs about five times in two years – one inch of rain being the equivalent of 101 tons of water to the acre.

During 1985 Ryde had 143 'rain days' compared with an annual average of 156 days (a 'rain day' is defined as a 24-hour period from 9 a.m. G.M.T. during which at least 0.01 in. of rain is recorded).

Sunshine

The 1985 sunshine total at Ryde of 1,832.3 hours was above the 65-year average there of 1,739.1 hours and the 1983 and 1984 totals of 1,764.6 hours and 1,764.2 hours respectively.

Surprisingly it was the sunniest year since 1976.

During 1985 only June (202.6 hours) and December (45.0 hours) had below average monthly totals.

In January (67.0 hours), February (84.0 hours), March (139.9 hours), April (189.1 hours), May (227.2 hours), July (262.1 hours), August (223.5 hours), September (164.1 hours), October (138.9 hours) and November (88.9 hours) monthly totals at Ryde exceeded – generally by a small margin – the long term monthly average.

Of the 64 sunless days (annual average 63), 13 occurred during December, 12 during January, eight during each of February and November and seven during March.

Only four occurred from April to July inclusive.

May 30 with 15.1 hours of sunshine at Ryde and July 6 with 15.2 hours each provided a new daily record there for their respective months.

Temperatures

The maximum shade temperature at Ryde Esplanade reached or exceeded 70°F on only 24 days during 1985 compared with an annual average of 39 such instances.

As many as 16 of these warm days in 1985 occurred during July.

The warmest day of 1985 at Ryde gave a reading of 78.8°F on July 5.

During 1985 minimum air temperatures fell to 32°F or below on 39 days – 16 of these during January and 12 during February.

On average there are 23 air frosts annually at Ryde Esplanade with a record number of 69 during the year of the 'big freeze' in 1963.

The coldest days of 1985 were on January 7 and 16 when the maximum reached only 29.3°F.

The lowest minimum occurred on January 14 with a reading of 22.1°F.

The year's highest minimum temperature came as late as October 3 when a reading of 63°F created a new October record.

A maximum reading of 61.5°F on December 2 gave Ryde its warmest ever December day.

The 1985 mean maximum and mean minimum temperatures at Ryde of 55.7°F and 45.7°F compared with long term annual means of 57°F and 46°F respectively.

Snowfall

Between January 5 and 18 all precipitation fell as snow estimated to have given a cumulative depth of 5 in. – the equivalent of 0.52 in. of rain.

Further snow fell on February 9.

Thunder

Thunder was heard on seven days during 1985 which included one heavy and severe storm on May 25/26.

Gales

While on several days during 1985 the winds approached or reached gale force none were noted as being particularly severe.

Fog

Fog often persisted during the last week of February and again on March 8.

This summary relates to Ryde's official meteorological records and although some variations have naturally occurred at other Island resorts, the general weather pattern depicted broadly indicates that experienced throughout the Island and adjacent mainland coastal areas of central southern England.

Differences would be most marked in regard to rainfall intensities during thundery activity even between weather stations only a few miles apart.

In this connection, while Ryde had only 0.03 in. of rain on June 19, Sandown recorded 1.24 in. during a freak hailstorm when a tornado affected the Arreton Valley.

With regard to temperatures, Ryde's long term averages and extremes closely accord with those of other Island coastal resorts although inland, around Newport and district, minima on the coldest nights can be up to 6°F lower than those on the coast while maxima on the hottest days of summer might well exceed by 3 or 4°F those readings taken on Ryde Esplanade.

Summing up, the most notable memories of 1985 must include the two severely cold spells from January 5 to 19 and from February 9 to 19; a rather cool and rainy summer except for the week ended on June 3 and the first 12 days of July.

A wet and cool August was followed by a pleasantly warm and dry September and October which included a record 22 days without measurable rain.

A cold fortnight during the second half of November was followed by a rainy December which remained exceptionally mild until the last few days of the year.

MONTHLY SUMMARY OF WEATHER AT RYDE, ISLE OF WIGHT – 1985

Month	Hours of Sunshine	Rain mm	Screen Temperatures			Extremes	
			Mean Max °C	Mean Min. °C	Mean Monthly °C	°C From	°C To
January	67.0	72.4	4.5	0.0	2.2	11.0	-5.5
February	84.0	41.8	5.6	1.4	3.5	11.8	-4.5
March	139.9	65.1	8.8	2.9	5.9	14.2	-3.6
April	189.1	35.4	13.1	6.2	9.7	19.0	2.8
May	227.2	41.8	15.9	9.3	12.6	21.0	7.1
June	202.6	55.7	17.6	11.2	14.4	21.5	7.7
July	262.1	43.0	20.9	14.0	17.4	26.0	11.2
August	223.5	109.7	18.7	13.3	16.0	21.1	10.8
September	164.1	21.4	18.6	12.5	15.6	24.0	8.5
October	138.9	30.0	15.0	10.7	12.8	20.7	5.6
November	88.9	60.1	8.9	3.8	6.3	16.0	-1.6
December	45.0	91.8	10.5	6.7	8.6	16.4	-3.1
TOTALS	1832.3	668.2mm (26.29) (25.4mm =1")	Annual Means 13.2°C (55.7°F)	7.6°C (45.7°F)	10.4°C (50.7°F)	Highest max 26.0°C 5th July	Lowest Min. -5.5°C 14th Jan.

PROLONGED COLD SPELLS IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT SINCE 1918

Kenneth J. Hosking F.R. Met.S.

Following the severe weather during January and February 1985, I have researched the meteorological records at Ryde, Isle of Wight – commenced in January 1918 – to compare similar arctic conditions there.

These are tabulated in Table 1 with notes giving the dates of significant snowfalls which invariably provided additional hazards.

Table 1: Cold spells at Ryde, Isle of Wight since 1918.

Dates	Duration days)	Mean Temp °C	Lowest Min. °C	Highest Max. °C	Dates of significant snowfall
Feb. 11th – 20th 1929	10	-1.6	-6.7	5.0	
Dec. 18th – 25th. 1938	8	-1.2	-5.0	2.2	22nd. Dec.
Jan. 10th – 25th 1940	16	-0.8	-6.7	6.1	
Feb. 10th – 18th 1940	9	0.2	-5.0	10.0	16th Feb.
Jan. 2nd – 18th 1941	17	0.2	-4.4	7.2	
Feb. 5th – 28th 1942	24	0.7	-4.4	8.9	
Jan. 24th – 30th 1945	7	-2.1	-9.4	8.9	
Jan. 24th – 31st 1947	8	-1.4	-6.7	1.1	29th Jan.
Feb. 5th – Mar. 9th 1947	33	-0.2	-7.8	8.3	30th Jan.
Jan. 26th – Feb. 7th 1954	13	-1.5	-5.6	6.1	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 8th Feb.
Feb. 1st – 26th 1956	26	-0.1	-6.7	9.4	25th and 26th Jan.
Dec. 23rd 1962 – Mar. 2nd 1963	70	-0.4	-8.3	4.4	
Jan. 11th – 20th 1966	10	0.4	-4.6	3.3	26th, 27th, 29th and 31st Dec.
Feb. 9th – 20th 1978	12	0.5	-5.0	6.2	
Dec. 30th 1978 – Jan. 6th 1979	8	-0.5	-5.9	6.8	15th and 18th Feb.
Feb. 14th – 21st 1979	8	0.7	-3.5	4.4	30th Dec.
Jan. 6th – 16th 1982	11	1.1	-2.5	9.1	
Jan. 5th – 19th 1985	15	-0.7	-5.5	4.0	7th, 8th and 9th Jan.
Feb. 9th – 19th 1985	11	-0.4	-4.5	4.0	17th and 18th Jan. 9th Feb.
Feb. 6th – Mar. 3rd. 1986	26	-0.3	-6.0	5.6	6th and 28th Feb.

The readings throughout the 67 years have been taken in Ryde's Eastern Esplanade Gardens on the Island's north-east coast a few feet above sea-level and only a matter of yards from the waters of the Solent, proximity to which accounts for the fact that the temperatures tend to be above those recorded in parts of the Island away from the coastal fringe.

Each of the fifteen successive days during January 1985's cold spell and the eleven during February had maximum and minimum temperatures lower than any recorded at

Ryde during the whole of 1984 – a year remarkable for the fact that the temperature there only twice fell to 0°C and never below.

The snowfall of 18th January 1985 came on the 104th anniversary of the great blizzard of 1881 which remains the most notable ever to have been experienced in central southern England. In addition to the dates of significant snowfalls listed in Table 1, notably heavy falls occurred on 26th December 1927, 15th December 1950, and 8th December 1967.

That the Island escapes much of the snowfall of mainland Britain is illustrated by the fact that at Ryde at any time between 24th and 27th December inclusive only the years 1927, 1938, 1962 and 1970 qualify as having provided a ‘white’ Christmas.

Footnote

This article was originally published in the *Journal of Meteorology* **10** (no. 99), May/June 1985. Since that date there has been a further period of prolonged cold weather:

NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

Galls on ash trees – with reference to my note in the *Proceedings* for 1983 (VII(8): 643) on the galls on ash trees caused by the mite *Eriophyes fraxinivorus* Nalepa, I had further sightings in both 1984 and 1985 on ash trees in the yard of West Mill, off the Carisbrooke Road, Newport, and on a single ash tree on the north side of Bowcombe Road, near Idlecombe Farm. The galls were formed on both male and female flowers at West Mill, while at Mottistone Mill they have all been on male flowers.
Dorothy Frazer, Brighstone.

Another record of the rare spider *Argiope bruennichi* – The rare spider *Argiope bruennichi* was rediscovered on the Island at Hampstead in 1979 (see *Proceedings* VII(4): 266). It has subsequently been found at Whippingham and Freshwater (see *Proceedings* VII(8): 645). In September 1984 a female of the species was photographed by Mr. T. Bullimore under the roof of the front porch of his house in School Green Road, Freshwater. It appears that this spider is well-established on the Island and further records of this spectacular white, black and yellow striped spider would be welcome.
Oliver Frazer, Brighstone.

The earliest red squirrel and dormouse in the British Isles – A recent paper describing the fossil faunas found in soils within the landslip debris in the Undercliff by Richard Preece records the presence of the oldest British fossil red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) and dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). The material came from soil horizons radiocarbon dated to nearly 4,500 years old.

From author's abstract.

Journal of Archaeological Science (1986) **13**: 189–200.

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