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**SHERIDAN
SMITH**

HISTORY

**ROCKING
THE ISLE
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Welcome from the Editor

Like everybody, I am really looking forward to welcoming 2021 with open arms and saying goodbye to a really difficult year. Although I know normality is still a little while away, little shoots of positivity are springing up here and there — especially now the vaccine is being distributed.

At Beacon, we look forward to bringing you more great content throughout 2021. Alongside our friends at Isle of Wight Radio, we're launching a very special online community which will bring you lots of exclusive competitions, money saving offers, priority events, webinars, e-zines, fascinating articles and inspirational ideas for your downtime.

What's more, it's completely free to join! Flick to page 17 for more details about Hidden Island.

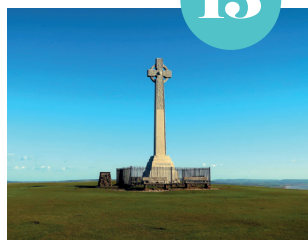
For now, enjoy our first print edition of 2021 — and have a very Happy New Year.

Amy Shephard

Editor amy.shephard@iwbeacon.com



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Beacon

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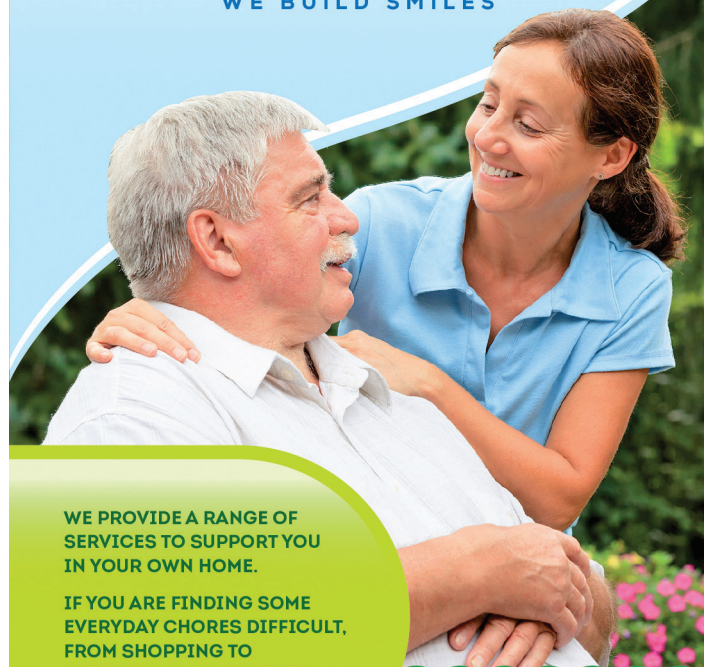
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A day to remember with



SHERIDAN SMITH

By John Hannam

Saturday June 30th, 2012, was rather special in my 47 year career as a showbiz writer and broadcaster. I still call it my Sheridan Smith day. I had breakfast with her, did a 35 minute interview, spent two hours in her company and we had a few photographs taken together. Originally, her agent had suggested I would even be lucky to get 15 minutes of her time. It all began the previous evening.



“In more recent years Sheridan has been in so many hit TV series and movies. These include Cilla, Cleaning Up, The Moorside, Black Work. The Widower, Love Soup and 7.39. On stage she was superb in Funny Girl.”



Sheridan was one of the stars of the new movie *Scapegoat*, made by Island Pictures, the company owned by two talented Islanders Sarah Beardsall and Dominic Minghella. They produced the movie and had persuaded Sheridan to come to the Island for the première showing at Newport's Medina Theatre. I was thrilled to be asked to host the post show Q & A and, luckily, Sheridan was on the panel.

After the session she came over to thank me and, apparently, although I never realised it, she put her hand on my knee whilst we had a friendly chat. One or two keen-eyed people in the audience had certainly noticed it. Boldly, I asked her if she could spare me a little time the following morning at her Ventnor hotel. She agreed instantly and invited me to join her for breakfast at the Royal.

Sheridan, who instantly fell in love with the Island, was the perfect host and went out of her way to be helpful. There was no time limit on the interview and she was delightful company. I was invited to stay on and we had a walk around the garden.

Just before our interview I asked Sheridan to solve a puzzle. The day before, I had seen her in a daily paper with red hair. Now here she was next to me as a blonde. The answer was simple. She'd been in Australia filming *Mrs Biggs*, who had red hair, and she had gone blonde again just the day before.

My immediate impression was that Sheridan was so grateful for the

chances she had early in her career. Like our own Laura Michelle Kelly, she never went to a posh drama school. In fact, they did work together as young teenagers. Sheridan joined the National Youth Musical Theatre and was spotted at the age of 17 in their London production of *Bugsy Malone*. That led directly to *Into The Woods* at the Donmar Warehouse.

“After being in a large cast of children I was suddenly in a show with Dilys Laye, Sophie Thompson, Anne Reid and Jenni Russell. It was quite a shock coming from a little village but they really took me under their wing and I learnt so much,” said Sheridan.

She admitted to being a workaholic and told me I was just the same – and she was right.

Apparently, when Sheridan turned up for her first appearance in *The Royle Family* she expected a proper living room. Then discovered it was just three walls in a studio. She admitted to being nervous among so many famous actors she had seen in the hit series.

When she was James Cordon's real life girlfriend they thought she would be perfect as Ruth, Smithy's sister, the girl from Essex, in *Gavin and Stacey*. They were spot on.

Sheridan also notched an incredible double. She won Olivier Awards two years running for *Legally Blonde* and *Flare Path*.

In more recent years Sheridan has been in so many hit TV series and

movies. These include *Cilla*, *Cleaning Up*, *The Moorside*, *Black Work*. *The Widower*, *Love Soup* and *7.39*. On stage she was superb in *Funny Girl*.

She almost cried with happiness when Dustin Hoffman visited her backstage after a West End show. He wanted her in his movie *Quartet*. Later when her phone rang she didn't recognise the number. It was Dustin offering her the part.

If all goes well Sheridan could soon be starring in a brilliant Bill Kenwright touring production of *Cilla The Musical*. It was a victim of Covid-19.

Sheridan, so often unfairly treated by the national press, loves a bit of fun. On the *Scapegoat* première night, on her own admission, the way she read out the raffle numbers was not quite an Oscar winning performance. I presented her with the list again just as I was leaving. She roared with laughter and promised to frame it. ☺

John Hannam has just released his very first set of DVDs. *The Television Years* features fourteen local guests that John interviewed on his television chat shows on both TV12 and Solent TV. In all, he presented over 100 shows. They sell at £9.99 and volume one features Oscar Stretch, John Hayward, Alby Payne, Sylvia Jones, Morris Barton, Stuart Peters and Hilary Hall. Volume two features Keith Newbery, Bernie Cullen, Derek Hunt, Fred Price, Henry Adams, Colin Smith and Wally Edwards. *Stockists include Farnsworth's, Newport, Glyn Morgan's Shanklin, Godshill Old Smithy and Dalverton Garden Centre, Lake.*

Photo courtesy of Island Pictures

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Bob Dylan, gave a press conference at the long gone Halland Hotel at Seaview. Alongside him is Ray Foulk.



Rocking the Isle of Wight

The remarkable story of three twenty-somethings from Totland

New book *Rocking The Isle of Wight* by Alan and Tom Stroud focuses on the original Isle of Wight festivals that were put on by three Totland brothers, Ronnie, Ray and Bill Foulk.

The book tells the story of the festivals which brought global superstars and hundreds of thousands of music fans to Godshill, Wootton and Freshwater between 1968 and 1970 but from the so far untold local angle. It is a fascinating day by day account of how locals from all walks of life helped the brothers to put on the festivals – and also how many others did not!

It tells how local landowners and a council full of brigadiers, admirals, commanders and generals, all strictly opposed to the festivals, were aided and abetted by the local MP and newspapers, who were firmly against the festivals.

In those far off days of the sixties, an outdoor gathering attracting hundreds of thousands was literally unheard of in this country. Pulling off such an event would have been a daunting undertaking for anybody, but three twenty-somethings from Totland, armed with little more than the confidence of

youth managed to carry it off. Almost overnight they became daring entrepreneurs who rose to every challenge that came their way. Along the way they sometimes got things wrong but mostly, they got it right.

Over 272 pages long, *Rocking The Isle of Wight* contains confidential official documents, interviews with locals, unseen correspondence, and over 60 superb quality colour photographs including previously unseen ones of the 1970 festival taken by Ken Box, who taught art at Carisbrooke Grammar at the time.

It is a remarkable story, involving a superstar cast, death threats, High Court battles, an Act of Parliament and huge amounts of money, and the fact that it all happened here on the Island makes the story even more remarkable.

Their first festival in 1968 was a small scale affair at

Godshill, attracting between seven and 10,000 fans, and encouraged by making a small profit, the brothers decided to hold a bigger and better event in 1969. Against all the odds the Foulk brothers persuaded Bob Dylan to perform in a field at Wootton and become part of the largest outdoor assembly ever seen in this country and literally invented the British rock festival. The event was a success and with their stars in the ascendant they announced a festival the following year. At that point they seemed invincible and it seemed the

Isle of Wight Festival was here to stay. But it was not to be.

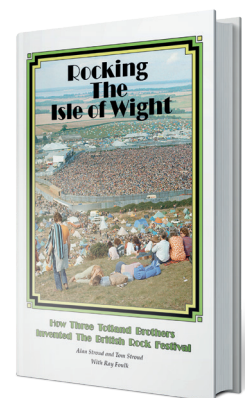
They were stopped dead in their tracks in 1970 just as their careers were about to take off.

Their downfall was being forced by the council to use the Afton site. Between 250 and 300,000 fans attended but many used the downs overlooking the arena to watch the performances for free rather than buy a ticket. Musically a huge success, it was a financial disaster and the brothers lost everything.

Rocking The Isle of Wight has a commentary throughout the

book by Ray Foulk, who says: “The book contains refreshing revelations after half a century of exaggerations, confusions and downright untruths. The Strouds are more than qualified to undertake this comprehensive examination of the original Isle of Wight Festivals.”

Signed copies of *Rocking The Isle of Wight* can be bought from the website rockingtheisleofwight.com. It is published by Now And Then Books at £13.95 and is available from Chivertons of Cowes, Farnsworths and Waterstones in Newport, Ryde Bookshop, Holdings of Yarmouth; Occasions in Ventnor and Glyn Morgan in Shanklin. ☺



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INGREDIENTS

450g (16oz) haggis with packaging (not casing) removed
600g (21oz) swede peeled and cut into rough 1.5cm chunks
600g (21oz) floury potatoes such as King Edwards peeled and cut into 2cm chunks
30g (1oz) butter
5 tbsp sunflower oil
50g (2oz) plain flour
200g (7oz) bag prepared kale or 225g whole leaves
4-6 duck eggs poached (see instructions below)

METHOD

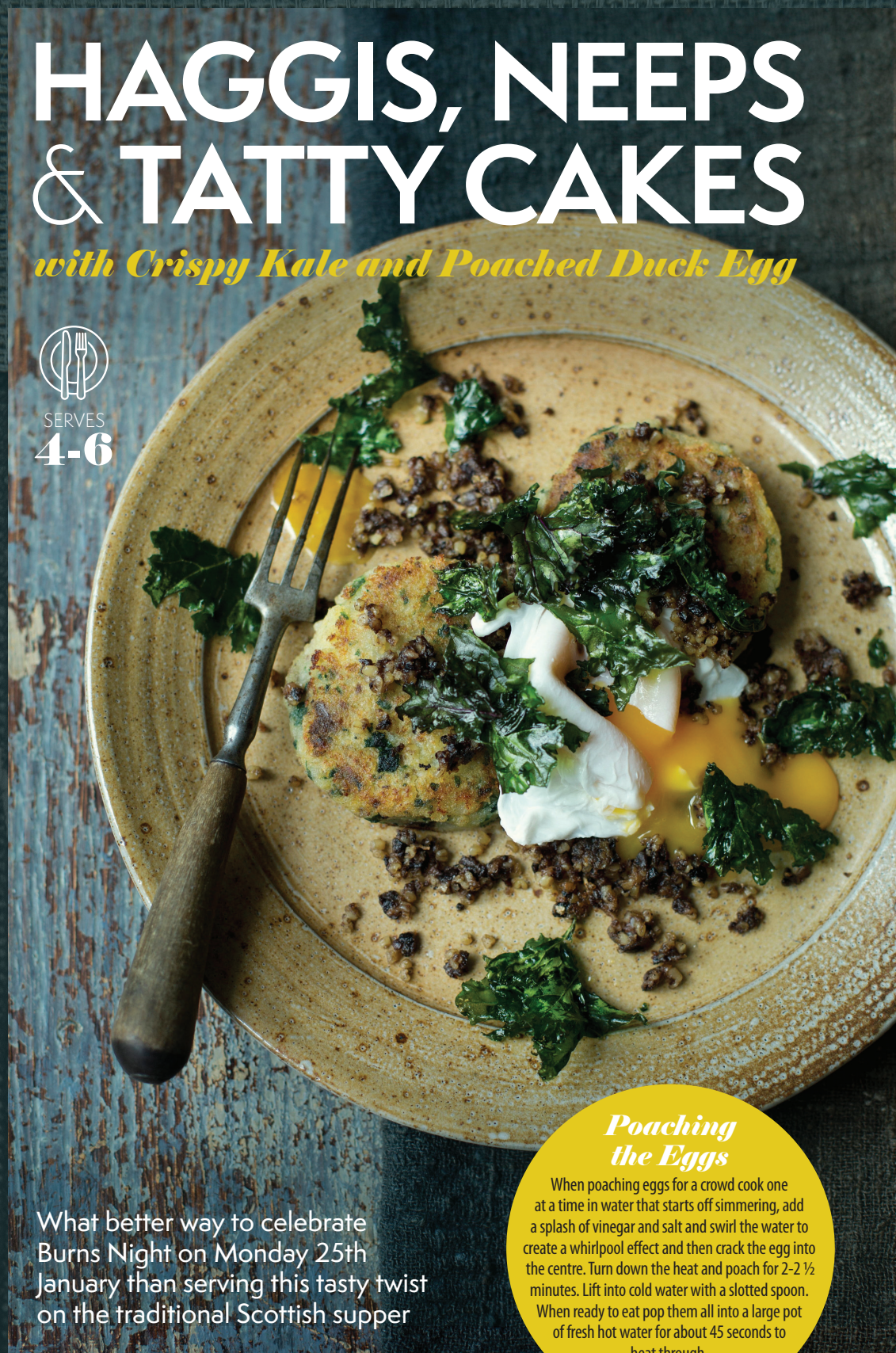
1 Steam the haggis in advance, prick the casing in about 6 places with a thin skewer and put into a steamer and when the water boils lower the heat and simmer gently for 40 minutes. Take out of the steamer and put to one side.

2 Meanwhile, put the peeled and chopped swede and potato in separate pans of fast boiling salted water and lower heat to a simmer until soft. Drain once they are ready and leave in the colander with kitchen paper over until both are cooked. Tip both into a bowl, add the butter and mash until smooth.

3 Preheat the oven to 180C/360F/Gas 4. Meanwhile take the casing off the haggis and crumble into a bowl. Add 150g (5oz) of the haggis into the potato and mix through.

4 Roughly strip the kale off any tough stems. Measure out 20g (1oz) of the leaves and put to one side. Spread the remaining leaves in a single layer on a large baking sheet toss with half a teaspoon of the oil and bake for 5 minutes until crispy but not brown. Put on a tray to cool.

5 Wilt the 20g of kale leaves you put to one side in boiling salted water for 5 minutes. Refresh under cold running water, drain well and squeeze out all the moisture and pat dry with



SERVES
4-6

What better way to celebrate Burns Night on Monday 25th January than serving this tasty twist on the traditional Scottish supper

kitchen paper. Chop finely and add to the potato/swede/haggis mixture, mix well and form into 8-12 cakes.

6 Put the flour on a plate and coat each cake and fry in a little hot oil until

golden and crisp on both sides (do this in batches). Keep them warm in a low oven until they are all cooked.

7 Heat the rest of the oil and fry the rest of the haggis until hot and

Poaching the Eggs

When poaching eggs for a crowd cook one at a time in water that starts off simmering, add a splash of vinegar and salt and swirl the water to create a whirlpool effect and then crack the egg into the centre. Turn down the heat and poach for 2-2 ½ minutes. Lift into cold water with a slotted spoon. When ready to eat pop them all into a large pot of fresh hot water for about 45 seconds to heat through.

just crisping up and serve scattered over the cakes along with the crispy kale.

You could make the cakes in advance, wrap in tin foil and heat in a moderate oven. **B**

HERBS *for* HEALTH

Herbs are a great natural way to help beat stress, boost the immune system and get your skin glowing as local herbalist Sarah Hillyer explains

Our stress-packed 21st century lives can quite literally make us ill. Stress in small doses is good for us – we thrive on the occasional adrenalin rush – but when this carries on day-in day-out, our adrenal glands become exhausted and our immune system weakened, and that's when nasty viruses can strike.

Adrenalin is our 'fight and flight' hormone. As it rushes through the body, the blood moves away from the gut to the heart and muscles, ready for action. Too much adrenalin will not only keep us awake at night but can lead to stomach upsets, ulcers and IBS.

Stress is also extremely dehydrating.

“Too much adrenalin will not only keep us awake at night but can lead to stomach upsets, ulcers and IBS”

Next time you reach for caffeine-containing drinks, alcohol or nicotine, make sure you also have a glass of water. The adrenalin 'kick' you're looking for will keep you going in the short term but plays havoc with the water content of your skin in the longer term. Drinking enough water will do more than any beauty product to hydrate your skin, keeping it supple and beautiful.

And what about the stress? A brisk daily walk in fresh air will reduce your adrenalin load. Yoga, tai chi and meditation may not be your thing, but finding your own way to relax is essential. And a large daily helping of green fruit and vegetables will do wonders to boost your immunity.

Food for thought? Try these three recipes and amplify that positive start to 2021. **B**

Golden Milk *(to boost your immunity)*

In a small saucepan, simmer half to 1 tsp of turmeric powder in approximately 120ml (4fl oz) of water for 5 minutes, then add about 200ml (7fl oz) of milk (or almond milk), a pinch of black pepper and 1-2 tsp of sweet almond (or coconut) oil.

Bring just to the boil and remove from heat, add honey to taste and drink hot. Research has shown that the curcumin in turmeric will also boost the 'good' cholesterol in the body, and it has anti-inflammatory properties and improves joint health.



CAUTION

Always consult a qualified health care professional if you are unsure of any medical symptoms.



Calming Herb Tea (to lift the spirits)

Put 2 tsp of mixed dried herbs (chamomile, rose petals, limeflower, borage, lavender, peppermint in any combination) into a mug with around 200ml (7fl oz) of boiling water and steep for 5 minutes. Strain and drink. This tea is good to have before bedtime as it will aid restful sleep.

Power Juice (to aid the immune system)

Blend 1 raw beetroot, 2 apples, 1 stick of celery and 1 carrot through an electric juicer and drink immediately. Beetroot is full of vitamins A, B and C and iron and zinc. It contains Betaine which cleanses the blood, liver and gallbladder and is used in naturopathic cancer treatment programmes.



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We all have times when we come across unexpected problems.

It might be employment issues, housing difficulties or worrying about money. And sometimes it can be hard to ask for advice.

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4759 NBH 12/20 LF



Walking the Island

Tennyson Down to the Old Battery

A dog-friendly hilly walk, with fantastic views along the way. There are many variants of this walk, which you can enjoy depending on how active you're feeling. Here we are taking a 6.5km circular loop. The views are breathtaking over the Channel. Stop for something to eat at one of many local eateries, including the tearoom at the Old Battery, The Needles or the Highdown Inn.

Start at the National Trust Tennyson Down car park, postcode PO39 0HY. As you come into the car park, take the path on the left, up the steep steps towards the Tennyson Monument. The steps veer to the right.

When you get to the Tennyson Monument, head right and keep to the left and stroll along the top of the cliff. But beware of cliff edges. You'll pass through a couple of gates, before heading back down off the cliffs towards the Coastguard Station. Turn right, towards the Needles Old Battery and Alum Bay.

Head through the West High Down gate, followed by a further gate and down some steps on to the road. Keep heading right.

When you get to the bend, take the steps on your right to Tennyson Down.

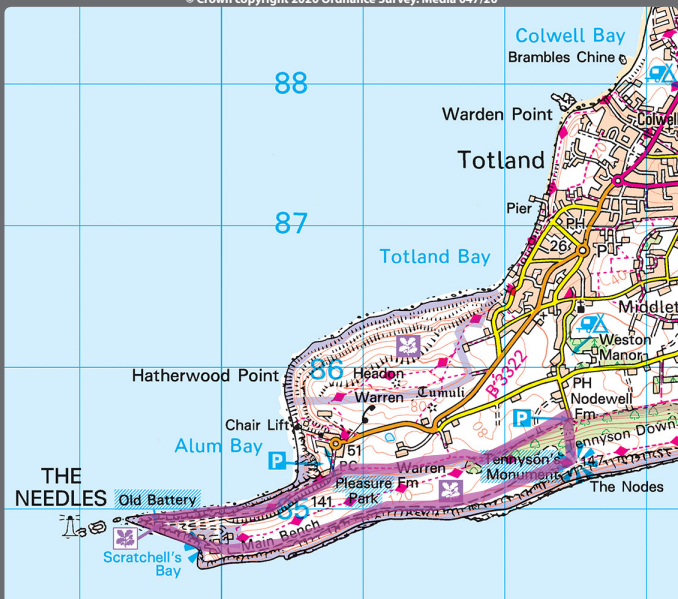
Walk through the field following the overhead power line. You'll pass Warren Farm on your left.

Go through two large gates along a bridlepath — and you'll find yourself back at the car park where you started.

Top tip: Wear wellies! 



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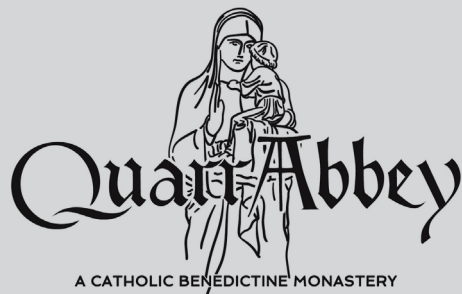
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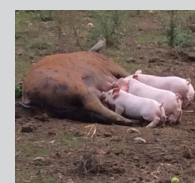
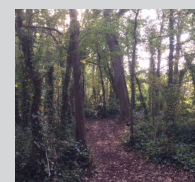
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- **Visitor and Exhibition Centre** interpreting the life and history of Quarr
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The Entertainment GUIDE

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Lost Voice Guy comes to Medina Theatre

Following the success of his sell out debut tour in 2019, Lee Ridley (aka Lost Voice Guy) is heading back out on the road in 2021 to put a smile on the faces of people up and down the country once again.

The Britain's Got Talent winner will poke fun at his life living as a disabled person in a post-apocalyptic world as he tries to cope with the fame and fortune since his memorable victory. From the highs of meeting 50% of The Chuckle Brothers to the lows of

being called "him off The X Factor", and everything in between.

Lee might not have a Geordie accent yet, and he might still sound like a posh version of Robocop, but his comedy is sure to leave you speechless.

Lee is the first stand-up comedian to use a communication aid. Lee is an Ambassador for the charity Scope and is also a patron of Smile For Life, Find A Voice, Communication Matters and The Sequal Trust.

LOST VOICE GUY

Medina Theatre, Newport
Thursday 13th May at 7.30pm
Box Office: 01983 823 884
www.medinatheatre.co.uk

Story Festival returns

The Isle of Wight Story Festival will come to a Newport venue during February Half Term.

The team behind the event have been working hard to plan fun workshops, trails and activities to entertain families from February 17th-20th.

Like last year's inaugural event, the festival offers an opportunity for children and families to engage with well-known authors and illustrators, and will be opened by the festival's Patron, Nicholas Allen. Nicholas is the author and illustrator of numerous bestselling picture books (including 'The Queen's Knickers') and promises that his session will not only include reading and illustration, but magic illusion and chocolate!

It is hoped that many of the sessions will run live, with small, covid-safe audiences and live streaming on Facebook to allow more families to join in the fun. Whatever happens, the organisers promise that there will be some special story-related open-air happenings around Newport for all families to enjoy.

Other authors appearing at this year's festival include Jennifer Killick, Neal Layton, Roopa Farooki and Tom Palmer. There will be sessions from many wonderful Island-based children's writers and illustrators too – including Blue Peter award-winner Kieran Larwood, Jules Marriner, Zoe Sadler, Kathryn Rossati, Debbie Webb and Peta Rainford.

Keep an eye on the website www.iwstoryfestival.com for up-to-date information, venue details and tickets.



2021 DATES for your Diary

Sunday, May 9th
 Walk the Wight

17th-20th June
 Isle of Wight Festival

Saturday, July 3rd
 Round the Island Race

Sunday, July 25th
 Rainbow Run Bubble Fun

July 27th-August 1st
 Ventnor Fringe

July 31st-August 7th
 Cowes Week

6th-8th August
 Jack Up the Summer

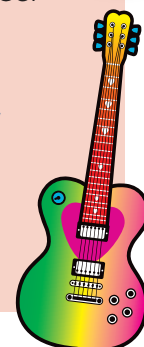
8th August
 Sandown Regatta

27th-29th August
 IW Scooter Rally Weekender

3rd-5th September
 Experience 1970

25th and 26th September
 Sweetcorn Fayre

Saturday, October 30th
 Fan TC Con 2



Isle of Wight Live and Local

The Island has a history of great locally made music – and IW Radio wants to showcase the best local artists and bands. Have a listen to the latest local talent and read DJ David Francis' Live and Local blog at iwradio.co.uk/features/blogs/liveandlocal

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Little **DONKEY** JOURNEY'S END IS NEAR

It's been a tough year for all Island charities, with vital fundraising events being cancelled left, right and centre — and the Isle of Wight Donkey Sanctuary has found it particularly tough.

But the team of staff and volunteers say what shines through the most is the dedication their supporters have shown in these troubled times.

Having to close to the public for four months during the first lockdown, followed by a further month shortly before Christmas, the sanctuary had been unable to welcome guests on to the farm, into the shop and café, through which they raise much needed funding.

As well as many popular events throughout the year, including Gaelic Day, Donkey Valentines, Concert in the Courtyard and Fun Dog Shows, the sanctuary usually raises funds through festive events such as Santa in a Stable, nativities, Christmas markets and their popular Christmas Carol Service. Sadly none of these have been able to go ahead in 2020 due to Covid-19 lockdowns

Despite a difficult year, the Isle of Wight Donkey Sanctuary are ending on a high, after completing their first international rescue — ten donkeys from France.



The newly built Grazers Cafe which is now welcoming guests



and restrictions, but the supporters of the sanctuary have stepped up, with their own fundraising efforts. One incredible supporter over the festive season was Luke from Binstead, who lit up his house for Christmas and put a charity donation box in place to raise money for the donkeys. Fab Fundraisers Packs are available from the sanctuary for people who are planning to organise sponsored events for the sanctuary in 2021.

Staff and volunteers at The Donkey Sanctuary have been working hard to continue to offer the same great level of care for their much loved donkeys — and to give opportunities to adopters to visit their adopted donkeys during the festive period.

Another truly heartwarming story to come out of this tumultuous year, is that of ten French donkeys, which became the sanctuary's first international rescue.

"Recently we were contacted by a British lady in France, Tracey Bradford, who had helped to rescue two families of donkeys from a slaughterhouse, where they had been destined for the Italian meat market," the sanctuary announced on Facebook in October.

"The donkeys had all been through a terrible time and needed a permanent home. The question was, could the Isle of Wight Donkey Sanctuary complete this rescue and give these beautiful donkeys a permanent home?"

"We looked at our land, we looked at

our stables and barns and we looked at our new woodchip barn. We thought about our staff and our volunteers. We all came to the same conclusion. We must help these donkeys.

"Operation 'Bring the French Donkeys to Wroxall' is being prepared! Passports, vet checks, transport, ferries, stabling all are being planned. The challenges are great — an English Lockdown, a French Lockdown and the need to beat Brexit by December 31st. If we achieve this it will be a wonderful Christmas for the donkeys and for the sanctuary."

At the time of going to press, Tracey had made all of the necessary passport applications, got the microchips sorted, arranged vet checks and was currently waiting for the authorities to return the completed information so they could travel across.

Donkeys Hope, Charity, Javette, Jiva, Jenny, Jumpy, Josephine and Junon and babies Koko and Kitchy are hopefully on their way in time for the new year.

Thankfully, exciting renovations which were planned for this year did go ahead, despite a number of set backs. And now the sanctuary is able to welcome guests into its beautiful newly built Grazers Cafe. Grazers is open for hot and cold food, cream teas and tasty seasonal treats.

The donkeys had all been through a terrible time and needed a permanent home.

The sanctuary was also thrilled to win Red Funnel's Isle of Wight Gold Award 2020 for the best place for families to bring their dogs. An award which reflects the beautiful countryside walks surrounding the sanctuary and the warm welcome received by all visitors.

The sanctuary will be open this year on New Years Day so people can burn off the previous night's excesses by walking around the sanctuary, meeting the donkeys and having fresh coffee and cake in Grazers café. The sanctuary's Browse and Brays gift shop will also be open, with a lovely selection of gifts and cards for sale. The donkeys will be mostly found in the barn, unless we get some bright frosty days. The barns will be open for people to walk round.

Moving forward in to 2021, the team at Isle of Wight Donkey Sanctuary are hoping for a less challenging year.

"We have been hard hit by the impact of Covid-19, but we continue to be grateful for the help from our supporters in making donations, buying items from our Amazon wishlist, and adopting donkeys. Without your help, it would have been extremely difficult to deal with the challenges of 2020. There may be further, difficult challenges ahead, but we are determined to remain positive and give our donkeys the best winter care possible." ③



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Spotlight on local organisations supported by RTC community grants - Wight Wave Beach Sports

In 2007 England Beach Soccer departed the Island. On leaving the Island it left behind around 150 senior mens team players and eight established mens teams, que Luke Kerr who as one of those players and coaches created Isle of Wight Beach Soccer Association (IWBSA) representing the teams and working alongside Hampshire FA to ensure the league could continue. Fast forward 13 years later and we have seen the development of the sport, its teams and opportunities for both boys and girls grow well beyond the 12 boys Luke Kerr started with his first ever youth coaching camp in the summer of 2008.

Today Isle of Wight Beach Soccer has over 800 members, represent youth teams from age six to 16 with leagues and cups, has taken both u16 and u18 teams to the World Youth Cup along continuing to support the growth of both mens events and the rapidly growing womens game making the Isle of Wight still the centre of growth and excellence for beach soccer in England.

In 2019 with more sports than ever we saw over 1,200 participants taking part in beach sports from all over the Island and from the mainland of all ages both boys and girls, men and women and despite Covid hitting in 2020 the team at Wight Wave were still able to deliver social distanced community beach sports via coaching and with a reduced capacity set of events engaging with youth players and tackle issues such as social deprivation, inclusion, health, obesity and mental health with providing low cost vibrant, safe and engaging events.

Luke Kerr explained more: "Today beach sports are accessible



to all the community across our natural beach resources on the Island, you don't need fancy footwear or expensive equipment, with all our events you can turn up bare footed and just play and by the end of the day playing beach sports you are not only challenged by the sand with your fitness but the wide open spaces and being by the sea this offers huge escapism and helps put people's minds at rest and escape those every day challenges we all face in life. Beach sports can play an important role in the community with health, the economy and its very unique to the Island with our beaches we have along our coastline and more importantly in Ryde".

Ryde Town Council are proud to be able to support local organisation like Wight Wave Beach Sports through community grants.

To get more involved with beach sports visit the Wight Wave Beach Sports website www.wightwave.co.uk or www.isleofwightbeachsoccer.org



Mayor of Ryde,
Cllr Michael Lilley

Ryde has an exciting year ahead! 2020 was a tumultuous year for us all and a year that we did not see coming. The good news is 2021 starts with the Covid vaccine being rolled out. My motive behind this new year message is one of hope. I want to reassure all Ryde residents that Ryde Town Council is starting the year with energy and a plan. We have appointed a Ryde business development manager who will be charged with instigating plans to revitalise the town including taking over the management of the Harbour from IW Council and develop sustainable plans to improve St. Thomas's Church, Vectis Hall, and the Town Hall/Theatre. Hopefully, with Covid19 and restrictions rescinding in 2021, Ryde will be able to go ahead with an exciting programme of events throughout the year from beach sports to opera on the beach, classic cars to IW pride, Ryde Carnival to Mardi Gras. I opened two new shops prior to Christmas, and I am thrilled by the development of the Ryde Historic High Street programme. We have some amazing facilities such as Waterside Pool and fantastic independent shops. Grace's Bakery on the High Street won national recognition as an incredible family business and Ryde won an award from South East in Bloom this year. Ryde Town Council's youth services, Network Ryde, hopefully will be moving into St. Thomas' Church and building on their amazing work. RTC have an incredible committed staff team ready to work with residents to make Ryde the place to work and live. Please have hope and join me in celebrating the Town on the Beach and the town we love.

Council Meetings Scheduled for January

Date	Meeting	Time	Venue
12/01/20	Finance Committee	7pm	Youtube link on RTC website under - Minutes and Agendas
14/01/20	Acquisition and commercial Management Committee	2pm	Youtube link on RTC website under - Minutes and Agendas
19/01/20	Planning Committee	7pm	Youtube link on RTC website under - Minutes and Agendas
26/01/20	Facilities and Assets Committee	2pm	Youtube link on RTC website under - Minutes and Agendas



Ryde Town Council would like to wish a very merry Christmas and a happy new year. This year has been tough on many but as a community we have come together. May the New Year bring happiness, peace, and prosperity. Wishing you a joyous 2021!



News from Sandown South

by Cllr Ian Ward

Let's look forward to 2021!

After an unbelievable 2020 which has delayed regeneration work in Sandown because of Covid, manpower shortages and financial difficulties. Hopefully 2021 will see projects restarting and getting back on track. Sandown has so much potential if we look forward rather than backwards.

Towns all around the country are suffering from changes in people's shopping habits and seaside towns have to deal with this on top of the changes in tourism. I believe that Sandown will overcome these difficulties, but it will take time. So, let's be positive and promote Sandown.

Update on progress with derelict buildings

I keep myself updated on all the sites within Sandown South. I am in contact with the property owners, council planning and enforcement officers and do arrange meetings between property owners and council officers to address problems. It is often extremely frustrating when I encounter a mountain of difficulties that delay progress.

Property owners have very strong rights and people's misconception that the council can simply force owners into taking action; unfortunately, it is just not that simple.

On the positive side I can say that all the Sandown South sites are being actively managed and progressing, even the Ocean Hotel!

Tackling vandalism

I have been in discussion with the Head of Community Safety about the increase of vandalism in Sandown during the summer months, in particular the frequent damage to our public toilets which have had to shut until repairs are done; and the play park in Sandham Gardens where complete play equipment has had to be taken out of use. Graffiti is also on the increase. Other IW Councillors confirmed that this is an Islandwide problem as they had also seen such increases. After my subsequent discussions with the Head of Community Safety he agreed to undertake an action plan with the co-operation of the police.

☎ 403193/ 07772559093 ✉ ian.ward@iow.gov.uk

Toy Appeal target reached

Thousands of less-fortunate children on the Isle of Wight were smiling this Christmas – thanks to kind-hearted Islanders.

More than 2,800 toys – with a value in excess of £28,000 – have been donated to the Isle of Wight Radio Christmas Toy Appeal.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic affecting almost all fundraising events, the Island has again come together to support the campaign to brighten up Christmas for young carers, children in hospital, children in care, sick youngsters, bereaved children or those challenged by poverty and housing problems.

The incredible amount was distributed to individuals, groups and organisations across the Island to make Christmas special for underprivileged youngsters.

Collection boxes at official supermarket drop off points across the Island were emptied and brought to Isle of Wight Radio in Newport, before being taken to partner agencies to be wrapped.

This year, the toy appeal was supported by helpers Karen Eeles

and Paddy McHugh, who played a vital role ensuring everything went to plan.

Since it was founded nine years ago by Daniel and Deborah Rooke, all gifts donated have stayed on the Isle of Wight.

IW Radio Programme Director and Breakfast Show host, Paul Topping, said: "Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the toy appeal very nearly didn't happen. But thanks to some great teamwork, it happened and we are so pleased it did."

"The Toy Appeal has become a tradition on the Island and is so important – this year more than ever. Once again, the Island came together in a way which is truly inspiring."



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Surviving Winter campaign helps people keep warm

The Hampshire and IW Community Foundation (HIWCF) has launched the Surviving Winter 2020-2021 campaign to help tackle fuel poverty for older and vulnerable people struggling to keep warm at winter time.

As temperatures begin to drop leading most of us to boost up our heating thermostats, many older residents in our communities need extra support. For people living within limited financial means, they simply may not be able to afford to top up their electricity meter to keep warm or they may be anxious about using their cooker to heat food, due to fear of the gas bill arriving on the doormat.

Surviving Winter grants are distributed through key partners Citizens Advice and The Footprint Trust IW to help vulnerable people to stay warm, eat well and remain mobile during the coldest months, including practical assistance to travel to medical appointments or assistance with shopping for essentials.

The Surviving Winter Campaign is asking those in receipt of the annual Government Winter Fuel Payment to donate their payment if they are able to do so. Families, individuals and businesses can make a donation online via: virginmoneygiving.com/fund/SurvWinter

For more information about the grants, contact The Footprint Trust by email on info@footprint-trust.co.uk.

Mince Pie Marathon raises thousands



The Isle of Wight Mince Pie Marathon 2020 has raised an impressive £6,415, more than doubling last year's total.

Last year, mince pie fever hit businesses on the Island with the event — organised by Brightbulb Design, raising funds for Wight Brainy Bunch charity — which supports families affected by brain tumours on the Isle of Wight.

This year it has been bigger and better than ever before, with headline sponsor, WightFibre and Isle of Wight Radio helping to deliver the goods. The event was also opened to both businesses and the public.

Organisers said: "Together we raised £6,415 for the Wight Brainy Bunch and pulled off the biggest mince pie extravaganza of all time with over 150 deliveries in a single day across the Isle of Wight. Thank you!"

Find out more about the fantastic appeal at www.mincepiemarathon.co.uk.



WightAid records bumper year but warns of difficult times ahead



WightAid has recorded a bumper year of charitable donations with over £138,000 given to good causes on the Island. But those behind the foundation warn that more support is required to help the community through difficult times ahead.

Established in 2016, WightAid was set up to help channel support from businesses to community groups, charities and voluntary organisations improving the lives of Island people. Now, as it marks its fourth anniversary, it has helped raise over a third of a million pounds for over 140 good causes.

This year alone, WightAid has supported 78 charities

and good causes with the fundraising support and donations the foundation has received.

With the stark arrival of COVID-19, the foundation also combined with the IW Foundation, Hampshire & IW Community Foundation, The Daisy Rich Trust, The IW Sports Foundation, The High Sheriff's Trust and The RYS Foundation to launch a Crisis Appeal.

The appeal helped raise over £103,000, helping charities like the IW Foodbank and Pan Together with food provisions, support for organisations like West Wight Covid Support Hub helping deliver food and prescriptions to the community, PPE for organisations like Embracing Age and iPads for care homes through Age UK to help keep residents connected.

Anyone interested in joining WightAid as a business partner or a charity seeking project funding can contact the charity on 555915 or by emailing admin@wightaid.org. www.wightaid.org



News from Sandown North

by Cllr Debbie Andre

I think it's fair to say we were all glad to say goodbye to 2020. We look forward to the fresh start that 2021 will bring. As many of you will know, I have called on the owners of The Savoy Site and The Grand Hotel and also Tarvic2 to engage in positive discussions with planning officers to agree ways forward to bring these sites back into use.

I'm pleased to see work progressing on the former Esplanade Hotel and look forward to seeing future plans come to fruition. I consider this a major part of the regeneration of our town after many years of neglect.

I will be continuing to progress plans for an 'Eden Community Project' in the area around Dinosaur Isle and Brown's and will be looking to recruit community support at a later stage. This is an exciting project that will need lots of community involvement. I'm thankful for the continued work of Sandown Green Town Volunteers in creating the beautiful plantings around our town for us all to enjoy. I know these displays are much appreciated and I'm looking forward to the spring flower displays.

This has been a difficult time both for individuals, families and for our local businesses. Thank you to everyone who is helping by shopping locally and to all our local businesses who have continued to serve us, always with a smile and going the extra mile.

The Island Line will be out of action from 4th Jan-31st March while works are carried out on the track. There will be a replacement bus service, but it will run along the main road as per previous occasions, so will not call directly at Lake, Sandown or Brading stations.

I will resume my councillor surgery at Yaverland Sailing Club on February 6th from 11am-12, restrictions permitting.

I am available via the usual means and will always try to respond in a timely manner. If you prefer, am happy to meet with you either virtually or in a Covid secure way.

Cllr Heather Humby will resume her weekly cllr Surgery, every Saturday from 11am until midday, when the restrictions at Sandown Library are lifted. She is available on 402024 or at heatherhumby@sandowntowncouncil.gov.uk

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News from Ryde North

by Cllr Karen Lucioni

I will start by wishing you all a very Happy New Year. My hope for all of us is that this year will see us return to some sort of normal and we can be together to enjoy each other's company again.

I am here to help, support or signpost if needed. It continues to be a worrying time for all. I would like to thank everyone who donated, gifts, food, money and toys to Aspire and other charities. I myself nominated worthy residents for Christmas hampers, bags of warmth and toys. I also want to thank the many volunteers who also helped to make this possible. Sainsburys for their support of Aspire raising £600 for Christmas dinners and £700 for the foodbank, also Pickle and Dill for collecting food for the foodbank. What a great community spirit we have here in Ryde.

Thank you for nominating me for Safer Award 2020 with the Police and Crime Commissioner for work I have done alongside Ryde residents and business during Covid to try and make a safer town. I am very honoured and humbled in being nominated.

The Respect Ryde project are pleased to be working with Gift to Nature and I would love Ryde residents help to look after Pig Leg Land nature reserve. This wonderful piece of natural wildlife habitat deserves to be appreciated. Clearing litter, spotting anti-social behaviour etc. Please help us to look after it.

Our hope is to work with Ryde schools doing nature walks, mini litter picks, education about wildlife and how to look after nature reserves.

Hopefully the world cafe on serious crime will be back on in the spring, date still to be decided. We still want to know what you all think. If you would like to know when this event will take place, email karen.iow@icloud.com and I will keep you up to date with relevant information.

We are a wonderful community I'm so proud to be part of it with you.

07506 930109 karen.iow@icloud.com

Residents see family at Christmas

St Vincent's Retirement Home in Ryde built a grotto for families to visit their loved ones over Christmas in a safe and secure way.

Turning a bedroom into a secure visiting pod by dividing the room in to two, the grotto, which was open throughout December, brought joy to residents over the festive period.

Jessica McGovern, who works at the home, said: "We have gone all out and the residents love it. I wanted to create some magic after this dreadful year!"

St Vincent's resident Rita said the grotto was marvellous and brought a tear to her eye. She also enjoyed sitting in the room during the evenings to watch the lights twinkle away.



Sandown will be turning purple in spring



A Purple4Purple campaign will raise funds and awareness for End Polio Now, a global programme to eradicate polio across the world.

In support of the campaign, Sandown Rotary generously gave Sandown Green Town Volunteers 3,000 purple crocus corms for planting across Sandown in autumn 2020.

Christine Jackson, Chair of Sandown Green Town Volunteers said: "We saw this as a great opportunity

to liaise with other groups across Sandown. Everyone we approached was delighted to join in. So crocuses were planted in the Willow Walk, thanks to the Common Space, in the Isle of Wight Zoo and at Battery Gardens, thanks to the Friends of Battery Gardens."

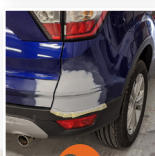
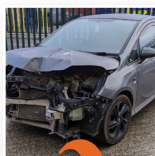
Polio is a viral infection that used to be common in the UK and worldwide. Cases of polio in the UK fell dramatically following mass-vaccination programmes in the late '50s. There has not been a case in the UK since the mid-80s.

Rotary first pledged to work for a polio free world in 1985 when there were 125 polio endemic countries and hundreds of new cases every day. In the past few years only two countries have reported cases of polio caused by the wild poliovirus, thanks to over 2 billion doses of oral polio vaccine still being administered to more than 400 million children in over 50 countries each year.



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Belgrave Road repairs to start in summer

Planned investigations are hoped to confirm the cause of Ventnor's Belgrave Road collapse, finally enabling remedial works to begin.

Last January, part of the retaining wall failed and wire netting had to be installed to help contain falling debris.

The results of the upcoming survey will allow engineers to safely repair and secure the wall. It is hoped works will be completed by October 2021.

Councillor Ian Ward, said: "It is important the next steps are based on sound evidence and the forthcoming survey work should give us

the information needed to implement the best possible solution.

"We would like to thank residents for their ongoing cooperation and understanding and we will ensure both they and the wider local community are kept updated with developments."



Foodbank receives generous donation of mince pies

Sandown-based business, Alpha Tech Solutions, has supported this year's Mince Pie Marathon, donating £270 and giving their mince pies to the Isle of Wight Foodbank.

"The Mince Pie Marathon is a great initiative set up by Brightbulb Design to raise such important funds for The Wight Brainy Bunch," said Alpha Tech Solutions founder,

George Brading. "We donated our order to the foodbank to allow the less fortunate

on the Island to receive a nice gift this Christmas — even if it is some mince pies. I believe a couple of other business

also donated their mince pies as well, which would mean that around £600 of mince pies were donated to the foodbank."

The Mince Pie Marathon is a great initiative



News from Ryde north East

by Cllr Wayne Whittle

Happy New Year. I hope you enjoyed a nice Wight Christmas. My doors were flung wide open at midnight on New Year's Eve to let 2020 out, here's hoping that things get back to normal in 2021 with the roll out of the covid vaccines.

We have much to be thankful for and look forward to in 2021 and beyond, for instance residents will have the opportunity to take part in public consultations on how they would like to see our High Street and Western Esplanade revamped as funding is available for the Esplanade works and part funding (hoping to get more) for the High Street where RTC & IOW are working in partnership with Historic England, on a public realm improvement scheme.

There is also funding available to help retail properties repurpose the upper and rear of their properties into residential accommodation along with funding to restore the shop fronts to their original glory.

Island Line should be closed down for engineering upgrade improvements that are to take three months starting not long before this report is published, the improvements that include five new trains are to improve connectivity, quality of journey and ridership, there is also to be Wifi available during journeys.

We are also supposed to get a new pedestrian walkway on the old tram track down the pier, I do hope Wightlink add funding to provide a covered walkway.

Ryde Town Council (RTC) will be leasing Ryde Theatre with a view to purchase, subject to winning a successful funding bid to bring our theatre back into community use. RTC now own the long time suffering Vectis Hall and will be seeking a way forward to restore our historic building.

Ryde Harbour's freehold should be passed to RTC this year for £1 paid to IW Council, giving the opportunity for local management and upgrade of the facility and associated areas future use and RTC are still in the process of acquiring and repurposing St Thomas Church. These projects will be opportunities for our HAZ officer and RTC officers bidding for future available funding streams like the levelling up fund.

Swans have been found dead on Canoe Lake in November and December. The last time this happened, I was worried it was bird flu so had one sent to DEFRA for examination, the results proved they had died from over feeding with seed, as if they eat too much it swells in their stomachs and kills them. I also now note a flare up of bird flu in our southern region, so if you find any dead wild birds such as swans, geese or ducks you should report them the DEFRA helpline on **03459 33 55 77**.

If you haven't already bought an IW giftcard, please get one and support our independent retailers, as an IW Giftcard is for three years, not just for Christmas!

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Ventnor Park

In a major step forward for the future management of the town's remarkable park a draft lease has been offered to the Town Council on a 30-year term at a current annual contract cost of £31,000 with the IW Council contributing £3,400 for its statutory responsibility for litter collection and bin emptying, leaving the town with a £27,600 cost. Three years ago the Town Council was told that the IW Council could no longer afford to maintain the Park at its current standard and was planning to provide only litter picking and bin emptying.



New Public Toilet

The Town Council's plans to build a new public toilet in the Central Car Park were advanced by the decision of December's Town Council meeting to apply to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for permission to borrow £150,000 from the Public Works Loan Board. A tender process for the work was completed in December and it is hoped this important new facility will be completed in time for this year's season.

Outdoor Gym

Following the Island's entry into Tier 1 our outdoor gym in Ventnor Park was able to have a much welcomed re-opening. After this year's annual maintenance inspection it was decided that the piece of equipment known as the Elliptical X Trainer had reached the stage at which it needed

replacement. The Town Council agreed to fund that replacement with an Arm & Pedal machine at a cost of £1,165 and the change-over was completed on the last day of November.

Filming In Salisbury Gardens

The filming of Britbox's five-part thriller *The Beast Must Die* took over our Green Room and other parts of our building for over a week at the end of October as TBMD Productions transformed them into film sets. They also needed to close Dudley Road and its car park for part of that time and provided local residents with letters and a visit to resolve any major issues caused by their work.

Partnership Working

At the invitation of Ryde Town Council, the Mayor and Clerk met virtually with Ryde's Mayor, Town Clerk and two of their Councillors

to discuss collaborative working across the range of our shared agendas. The discussion included Community Development, Youth Work, the Public Realm, Elections, Harbours and relationships with the IW Council.

South Wight Parishes

The latest meeting of the South Wight Parishes Health and Wellbeing Forum organised by our Community Development Officer was held virtually on 3 December. The two invited speakers at it were Dr. Oommen John from the Ventnor Medical Centre & Primary Care Network and Dr. Mark Rawlinson, Locality Manager.

More Information

The Town Council's website, with contact details for Town Councillors and staff, is at www.ventnortowncouncil.org.uk; our Twitter account is: @ventnorclerk.



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Community Award Winners 2020

What a year 2020 has been...! However, Bembridge is fortunate to have a number of people living in the village who give more than they take and these awards reflect, in a small way, the recognition and appreciation that the residents feel towards them. This year we had numerous nominations in each category and the decisions on the winners was difficult and thought provoking. Congratulations to all those nominated and we are sorry that not all could be winners. This year's winners were presented by Cllr Sheila Weedall with awards designed by Paul Critchley of Sculpture Glass and a certificate at the War Memorial Gardens or where was convenient to the recipient.

Champion Young Person - Daisy Warburton
Champion Neighbour/Friend - Kim Sotiropulo
Champion Volunteer Group - Bembridge Heritage Society
Green Champions - Bembridge Community Gardeners
Champion Volunteers - Lorraine Bevan and Tim Young
Champion Business - Jane Holman and the Farm Shop
Community Champion - Paul Wray
Chairman's Champion - Barbara Clough



Village Partnership

Working with resident Martin Woodward and Bembridge Heritage, the Partnership are currently working on the installation of the SS Empress Queen's anchor at the Coastguards Green. The Empress Queen was chartered by the Admiralty on the 6th February 1915, with the ship being fitted out as a troop carrier and within two weeks travelling to Southampton to begin transporting troops to Le Havre. While returning to Southampton, she ran ashore in a heavy gale on the Ring Rocks, off Foreland Ledge. The story of the rescue by the lifeboat Queen Victoria with Coxswain John Holbrook in command and local older fishermen, coastguards and local volunteers rescuing all of the crew including the ship's dog and cat is amazing.

More information will be available on an information board at the site and on the parish website.



Dragon's Den Winners

This year's Dragon's Den could not have an event, but the Dragons met up remotely to argue over the applications!

Windmills Pre-School were awarded £510 towards new play equipment in their garden.

Friends of Holy Trinity Church were awarded £380 towards building upgrades on The Cloisters

Bembridge Heritage Society were awarded £230 for a new cordless vacuum to keep their new home tidy.

Bembridge Scouts were awarded £430 for shelving which helps with the improvements that are ongoing at the Hut during lockdown.

Bembridge Community Gardeners were awarded £450 towards plants that will benefit the village for residents and visitors.

Well done to all those who pitched against the Dragons and won!



E-Newsletter

If you would like to sign up to receive a monthly E-Newsletter letting you know about local news, events and projects contact clerk@bembridgepc.org.uk

Full Council, Planning and other Committee Meetings are taking place remotely at present. For further details, agendas and documents, see the website www.bembridgepc.org.uk



Shanklin Town Council

Town Clerk RFO: Ms S. Janeway LL.B (Hons) CILCA MSLCC, 65 Landguard Road Shanklin Isle of Wight PO37 7JX

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Town Mayor's Address

*Councillor Steve Knight
Shanklin Town Mayor (2018-2020)*

On behalf
of Shanklin

Town Council may I wish you a prosperous, healthy and happy new year, as things are looking more positive.

I am pleased to report that the library is open although in a limited way through click and collect books. Maria and our volunteers are doing a splendid job under difficult circumstances although members of the public are not allowed inside the library yet, not too much longer we hope.

At last, I can let you know that the new town office is completed and the Town Clerk

Stella Janeway has moved in and still getting the last touches finished, it looks very professional. This marks the end of an era. We the Town Council enjoyed sharing the old library building for some ten years, it had quite a history built in 1800s. It started life as Shanklin School House, and part of the building was Shanklin fire station where the local board (council) funded the Shanklin Steamer - a horse drawn fire engine. The station remained open until the start of the Second World War.

Once again Mayoral duties were very quiet.

Remembrance service was kept to a minimum due to COVID-19 restrictions, we were very pleased to be able to lay a wreath at the Shanklin war memorial. We were joined by the Isle of Wight High Sheriff Caroline Peel, the service was taken by Reverend Tony from St. Blasius Church Old Village.

We attended Apse Manor airfield in November to remember RAF Spitfire pilot Archibald Patrick Lyall who lost his life after conflict over

Portsmouth and IW 80 years ago. His aircraft was recovered and flew again! In attendance were Retired Air Vice Marshall Tony Stables C.B.E. IW Councillor Ian Ward, local historian John Holmburg, Town Councillor Richard Priest. Let's We Forget.

The town received a Silver Gilt Award from South &

South East in Bloom 2020 and from the Royal Horticultural Society and South & South East in Bloom a certificate of Recognition 2020.

We hope you enjoyed the

Christmas break and we soon get the country back to normal.

The library is open although in a limited way through click and collect books.



Nettlestone & Seaview Parish Council

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Puckpool Park Flower Beds

The parish is indebted to Lynn Stack of the N&S Community Partnership for all of her work in helping the council to coordinate with 'Care in the Garden' as the Parish Council takes over the management of the Puckpool Park flower beds from the Isle of Wight Council. 'Care in the Garden' have coped wonderfully with the challenges of working through the pandemic and were able to provide an attractive array of summer flowers in the raised baskets this year. They have now completed the next phase of the remodelling work and the beds have been restored to their previous layout and more

paving has been allocated for wheelchair and buggy users. The council looks forward to working further with 'Care in the Garden' to provide a new and sustainable selection of flowers in the beds next year.

Festive Lights

For those of you fortunate enough to be reading this in the run up to Christmas, Cllr Hardie has been working hard and coordinating with representatives of the Nettlestone & Seaview Community Partnership to arrange Christmas lighting this year. The popular lights at St. Peter's Church are the same as previous years, the fairybell tree is back on the smaller green opposite St. Helen's Church,

the 8m tall LED tree will be in Sophie Watson's Garden and a 'real' tree purchased from Shide is illuminating Nettlestone Green. It may have been one of the more challenging years in recent memory, but the parish has been spreading some festive cheer... try to take in the lights before they go by the 6th January!

Parish Council Meetings

Monday January 18th 2021 at 7pm, Online via Zoom

In line with national guidance, Parish Council meetings are being held virtually at the moment and the council have chosen to host their meetings via Zoom. Please look at the Parish website for details/

updates. All meetings are open to the public and agendas available to view on the website seven days prior. All Councillors' details are available on the parish notice boards and the parish website or by contacting the Clerk.

The staff and members of the Parish Council would like to wish everyone a merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous 2021.





— | LEGAL & FINANCIAL | —

End of Life Decisions

As we step forward into a brighter 2021 and a take a leap away from the shadow cast by 2020 it is important that we take stock of last year. It was a year like we had never known before where we all had to confront the reality that life can be cut short and not to take the simple things for granted. As we walk forward with a renewed optimism for the future it is important not to lose sight of the need to discuss important issues such as our wishes for end of life care with loved ones.

The coming year will rightly bring with it an ongoing review of how many matters were handled and managed during the pandemic, so that lessons can be learnt for the future. We of course already know that vulnerable people have been the hardest hit by the pandemic, having to shield to protect themselves for months, away from family and friends. It is also very concerning to hear that Do-Not-Attempt-Resuscitate (DNAR) orders, that being a document which tells your medical team not to attempt cardiopulmonary

resuscitation (CPR), have been wrongly applied for vulnerable people.

Sadly the Care Quality Commission's review into the application of DNAR orders during the pandemic has shown that they have been incorrectly used as they have been applied to groups of people, particularly care home residents. This isn't how they should be used and this kind of treatment of older people cannot be tolerated going forwards.

There are best practice guidelines set out by the Resuscitation Council, but unfortunately they aren't being followed everywhere. Too often these are ignored or treated as a tick box exercise with people often accepting a DNAR to avoid feeling like a burden. Consultation on DNAR orders should prompt meaningful consultation with patients and loved ones and consider their wishes and their general health, not focus purely on age. All of us should talk to our loved ones about whether we would want to be resuscitated and our other wishes for care should we have an accident or serious

illness. Once we are in an emergency situation it can be too late. There are many legal tools at our disposal to guarantee that our wishes are carried out by our loved ones, including Advance Directives (Living Wills) and Lasting Powers of Attorney for Health and Welfare.

Interestingly research shows that only 59% of those aged 70+ have talked to loved ones about their care wishes. And whilst 81% of us think planning ahead for later life is important, only 22% of us have a Lasting Power of Attorney in place, setting out our wishes in writing in a legally binding way.

So whilst it is good to live in the present, we can only truly do that with the peace of mind that whatever the future may hold, we have the right support in place. We really do need to start talking about our wishes should we lose mental and/or physical capacity or require emergency medical treatment. This recent investigation into the use of DNARs must encourage us all to have those difficult, but vital conversations, no matter our age.

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For Deborah, the most rewarding aspect of her job is helping a family in bringing a successful Medical Negligence claim. She enjoys working hard for her clients and achieving compensation and helping them rebuild their life. She also enjoys assisting them throughout the whole process to get through a very difficult time.

In her spare time, she enjoys riding scooters and is a member of two vintage scooter clubs. She also spends time walking her two Spaniels (Harriet and Joshua).



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Red Berry

Hangin' out WITH HOLLY

There's a lot more to holly than spiky green leaves and a few red berries. Peter Erridge explains all things historical and prickly.

Fossils indicate ancestors of holly existed around 50 million years ago. The Druids considered holly to be a sacred plant with a strong place in their belief system; as a symbol of fertility, eternal life, and protection against lightning strikes.

Holly is found in hedgerows, usually grown from seeds dropped by birds; and is left as markers of footpaths, old boundaries or sightlines for ploughmen. A group of hollies is called a 'hollin' and appears in place names such as Hollingbourne in Kent.

The name holly comes from an old English word meaning prickly and has nothing to do with 'holy'. Christians associate holly with their religion; the spines on the leaves representing the crown of thorns and the berries the drops of blood shed at the crucifixion.

According to Churchwardens' records, holly and ivy were used to decorate churches from the 15th century. The association was strengthened in the early 19th century when German members of George III's household brought Christmas trees indoors. In 1841 the press reported Queen Victoria had a Christmas tree and

brightened the scene with glossy leaved, red berried holly. Thus, a tradition was born, although it was initially seldom seen outside wealthier families.

The holly genus is widespread in temperate and sub-tropical regions of the world, but large holly woods thrive mainly in Britain. There are over 450 species of holly, including trees, shrubs and climbers. They occur in temperate and tropical climates and grow in most

Golden edge
HedgehogIlex Aquifolium
Aureo marginata

Silver margin

soils except wet and poorly drained, preferring acid soils. Hollies are hardy and adapted to the shade of woodlands, creating an understory.

Being rich in nutrients holly is often grazed by animals and until the early 18th century farmers used it as a feed. Above grazing height leaves tend to be smooth. The larger shrubs and trees with dense foliage provide shelter from harsh weather for cattle and birds. Few diseases or pests affect hollies although the caterpillars of Holly Blue butterflies feed on the leaves.

Folklore relates a heavy crop of berries to a forthcoming hard winter, when in fact the density

of berries depends on the number of pollinating insects at flowering time.

Readers should know of *Ilex aquifolium*, the English holly, with dark green spiny leaves. However, there are many cultivars some with a variable number of spines, or no spines, and some with yellow or silver leaf colouring. Most hollies are either male or female with only the latter bearing berries. A word of caution – some varieties have misleading names such as Golden Queen, which is actually a male holly!

Although most berries are red, they can also be yellow, white, or black. They contain poisonous

substances affecting people and animals. With children, eating as few as two berries can lead to stomach upsets. For birds, they're more palatable after being frosted when the berries soften and have a milder taste. Germination of holly seeds can be slow taking from 6 to 16 months.

Things have gone full circle since the Druids and these days it's considered unlucky to bring holly indoors before Christmas Eve, but good luck should ensue if this holly is burnt in the garden after Christmas. ☺

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