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Beacon

February/March 2021

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ISLAND LINE**

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THEATRE IN
THE SUMMER
OF '56**

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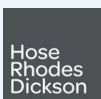
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Welcome from the EDITOR

Lighter days are coming. And hopefully so too, is the return of life as we once knew it. I'm looking forward to seeing loved ones in the flesh, visiting the Island's many fantastic eateries and leisure facilities and the return of grassroots clubs and sports — something which my children have missed very much.

It's been a very hard year for many, in so many different ways, but I've noticed the mood has begun to shift. People are feeling much more positive about the future, with vaccines now being widely distributed and hope on the horizon.

We've filled this edition of Beacon with your usual mix of history, news, recipes, gardening and interviews, plus a sprinkling of joy. Something which we all agree we really need, as we emerge from a cold winter.

Amy Shephard

Editor amy.shephard@iwbeacon.com



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Beacon

MAGAZINE

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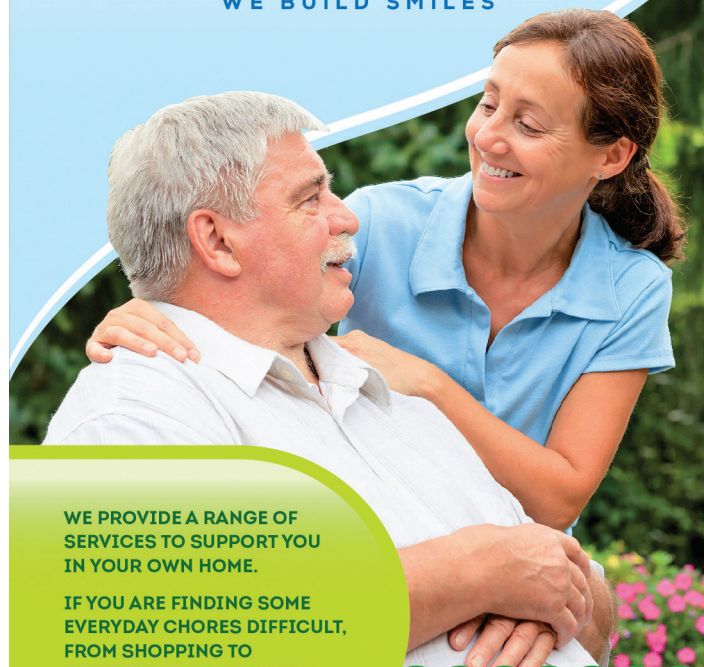
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Do Something Amazing in 2021 and **Walk the Wight** with **Mountbatten**

The Island's biggest fundraising event is back for 2021.

This unique and world famous walk annually sees thousands of people walking across the beautiful Isle of Wight countryside to raise money in support of Mountbatten. Passing through scenic countryside and picturesque villages, past famous landmarks and taking in stunning seascapes, Walk the Wight really shows off the Island in all its glory.

With a choice of walks and distances, people of all ages and abilities can take part, making this an event for everyone so get those walking boots on and take on the challenge!

Since it started back in 1991, Walk the Wight has become a staple of the Isle of Wight community's calendar and has raised over £5million to help ensure that no-one dies alone and that loved ones who are left behind will have the bereavement support to help



them cope with their feelings and emotions once someone has died.

Due to the Covid restrictions in 2020, Mountbatten asked you to get creative and Walk the Wight Your Way. Whilst unable to take part in the traditional walk, people came up with some brilliant ways to cover the miles they would have walked on the day.

You took to your running and rowing machines, back gardens and trampolines, covering the equivalent distance of the 26 mile route. Mountbatten was amazed at the level of support shown and humbled by the efforts people went to to raise over £200,000 to ensure Mountbatten can continue to do what it does. To see the community coming together in such a way was a display of positivity in such a difficult year.

This year, Mountbatten is confident that the walk will be able to go ahead on May 9th, while following all updated government guidelines. However, Walk the Wight Your Way is back by popular demand making this year's Walk the Wight more inclusive than ever before. With over 500 miles of footpaths on the Island, why not get out there, Walk the Wight Your Way, and discover somewhere new while knowing you're making a real difference to Island people.



Why will you Walk the Wight in 2021?

Some people walk to remember a loved one, while others simply want to take on the personal challenge of walking a marathon. So, whether you take part in Walk the Wight Your Way from April 1st, or join Mountbatten on the day on May 9th, the team love hearing your stories of why you are Walking the Wight and seeing pictures of your journey. Share them with the *Walk the Wight Your Way* Facebook community or share them on Twitter using **#iremember**.

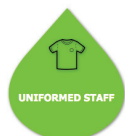


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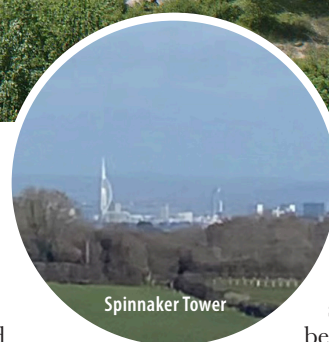
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Shide old quarry land from St George's Down

By Amy Shephard

Newport may be the Island's county town, but there's plenty of off-road walks waiting to be discovered just on the outskirts.

During the latest lockdown, I have been exploring these more than ever before, since the Government advised we only exercise within our local area. And boy am I glad I did — I've found so many hidden gems right on my doorstep.

This challenging walk takes you up on to St George's Down, giving you incredible views over Newport, Blackwater and beyond.

This challenging walk takes you up on to St George's Down, giving you incredible views over Newport, Blackwater and beyond

incline while you walk up on to the Downs — and don't forget your wellies!

Start on the bridge next to Matalan car park and join the pathway which leads along the River Medina. Follow the river until you get to Shide Trees. Carefully cross the road near

National Tyres, heading towards Burnt House Lane.

Take a right once on Burnt House Lane and head towards St George's Lane. Follow this steep hill all the way to the top, stopping at the entrance to the golf course to enjoy the beautiful views towards Blackwater.

You'll see Portsmouth in the distance on the other side.

Head back down the road, this time taking a right towards Shide Chalk Pit at the first

opportunity. Follow this lane all the way to the top, where you'll come across an interesting old building (can anyone tell me what this is?) — and fantastic views over Newport town and beyond.

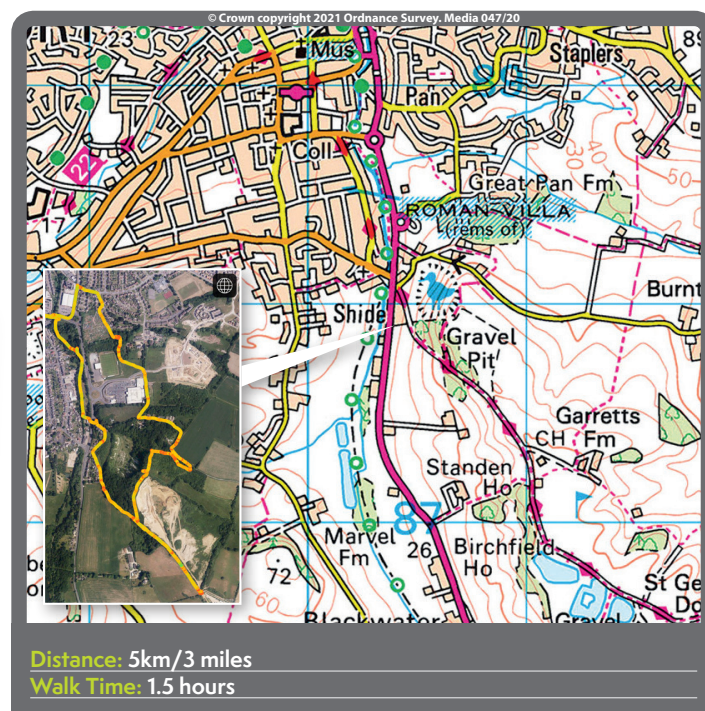
Venture down the hill on the other side, taking a right when the path forks and then a left when it joins the road. You'll see a woodland path on your right leading towards Pan Lane soon after. Take this turn, which comes out near the back

of Asda.

Cross the road and take a left (the old football stadium should be on your left)

across the field and back into woodland. Here we came across a makeshift campfire and a bridge, perfect for playing pooh sticks. My children were in their element.

The path eventually comes out on Homemade. Take a left along Furlongs and cross at the lights. You'll find yourself back in town where you started. ③



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When John Hannam did the...

◦ CORRIE TOUR ◦



Back in 2001 I took an exciting 21 hour day trip to Weatherfield. I was expecting to undertake a couple of interviews with two of Coronation Street's lesser known characters. Thankfully, it didn't go to plan. Once the two interviews were completed and the press office girls had left, I was told to sit tight for a few minutes and see who might come in. Over the next hour, six of the most famous faces in Britain came in and were all eager to chat.

The opportunity to visit the Granada set in Manchester had come in early summer. My good friend, Vic Farrow, who had taken me to meet Cliff Richard a few years earlier, knew Peter Shaw, a first assistant director on Coronation Street. He contacted their press office and my two interviews were confirmed.

The day before my visit, Peter rang with the final details and asked if all was well for the trip. Somehow, he must have sensed a slight disappointment in my voice when he asked who was I going to interview. He assured me all would be well.

Being a true Islander, I don't like spending nights away from home. On the Wednesday morning I was up at 2.30am and then drove to Osborne Cottage, East Cowes, where my mother was a resident, parked in their car park and walked down the hill to catch the 3.30am ferry to Southampton. With time to spare, I then walked to Southampton Central to catch an early train to Oxford. There I caught a Manchester-bound train that was due to arrive at 10.20am - and it did. Was that a lucky omen?

The first person I saw was Kevin Kennedy, who played Curly Watts. He said a quick hello and kept on reading his lines, as he was on set in five minutes.

Peter had suggested we did the two interviews in the children's room, as there were none on set that day. When they were completed and the press girls had gone I was left in the room on my own for a while and browsed through my secret notes I had made a few days earlier, about the actors who played main characters. Just in case, of course.

Apparently, in the nearby green room, when the actors were told they could also each choose a record, as it was for my IW Radio chat show John Hannam Meets, they could barely wait to volunteer.

First in was Sean Wilson, who played Martin Platt. He'd been in the show for 17 years. At that time his character was enjoying a new romance with Sally. I also discovered that away from the Street he was a very successful trout angler.

The next through the door was Les Battersby, from that notorious family always in trouble. Bruce Jones was nothing like the guy he portrayed. The previous year he'd been down to Cowes to compete in the Round the Island race. I did tease him about singing I'm Not In Love to Janice, his gobby screen wife, in one particular episode.

Jimmy Harkishin, who played Dev Alahan, confessed to loving the old style crooners. His father had once told him he

would probably end up running a shop. Little did he expect it to be in Weatherfield and seen by 20 million people.

I did get rather excited when Helen Worth popped in, wearing her peach dressing gown. She was en route to a workout before filming. It was her 26th year in the soap. Her surprising record choice was Elgar's Cello Concerto.

Last in were the legendary Jack and Vera. Bill Tarmey and Liz Dawn were a joy to meet and also great friends off stage. Both were very grateful for their

success in Corrie. Bill had been a builder for ten years before becoming a club singer and then a television extra. Liz had been unhappy in a factory before selling light bulbs in Woolworths. Knowing I'd come up from the Island, she eagerly told me Newport-born singer

Craig Douglas was one of her favourite singers and had performed at her 60th birthday party.

A few months later Liz invited my late wife, Heather, and myself to her Breast Cancer Charity night at the Leeds Empire. There I got another 13 interviews, including the lovely Sue Nicholls, the one and only Audrey. She told me how much she loved visiting Godshill.

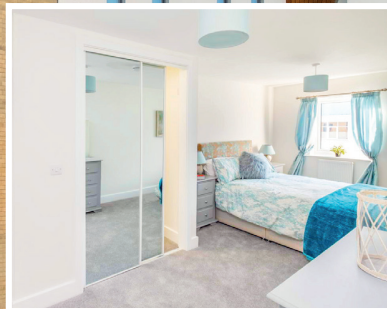
What time did I get back from my Weatherfield visit? The same day but with only an hour to spare. ☺

The lovely Sue Nicholls, the one and only Audrey, told me how much she loved visiting Godshill.

Hear John chat about his many incredible celebrity interviews in An Audience With John Hannam. Find out more on page 33.



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March
14th

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It's been a tough year — and being away from our loved ones has been particularly hard.

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Maybe your mum loves an afternoon tea — why not send her a special takeaway cream tea for her to tuck in to at home? Or perhaps she's more of a flowers or wine kind of mum, we've got you covered.

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INGREDIENTS

For the cornbread

60g pine nuts, toasted
230ml coconut oil, melted
300ml almond milk
430g cornmeal
100g plain flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
Pinch of ground sea salt & black pepper

For the sweet potato puree

1 medium sized sweet potato, cut into 2inch chunks
4 tablespoons soy milk

For the sun-dried tomato cream

80g sun dried tomatoes
2 shallots, roughly chopped
8 basil leaves
470ml almond milk
1 pak choi
4 tablespoons rapeseed oil

For the tomato salad

10 cherry tomatoes, cut into quarters
50g chives, finely chopped
Juice of half a lemon

Pine Nut CORNBREAD

Author of the new Plant Based Cookbook, Brad Roe, shares his delicious recipe for Pine Nut Cornbread with Sweet Potato Puree, Sundried Tomato Cream and Crispy Pak Choi.

METHOD

For the cornbread

1 Preheat your oven to 200°C/400°F then in a medium sized bowl mix the flour, pine nuts, cornmeal, baking powder, baking soda, salt and pepper together.

2 Using a separate bowl, mix the coconut oil & almond milk then add this to the cornmeal mixture and thoroughly mix. Grease a 9-inch square baking tin with olive oil (or use 6 mini moulds) fill with the mixture then bake for 30 minutes. If you insert a knife into the cornbread, pull it out the check to see if the knife is clean and hot then it is ready.

For the sweet potato puree

3 Place the sweet potatoes into a pot, cover with water and boil for 25 minutes or until soft, drain then add the soy milk and mash up. Season to taste.

For the sun-dried tomato cream

4 Place all the ingredients into a medium sized saucepan, bring to a boil then simmer for 20 minutes.

5 Puree in a standing blender on high speed for 40 seconds then season to taste.

For the pak choi

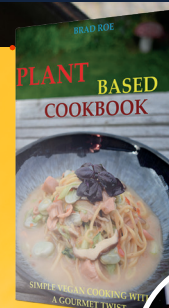
6 Using a large sauté pan on medium heat add the rapeseed oil. When the oil is hot, add 4 pak choi leaves. Cook for 10 seconds then turn over and continue cooking for another 10 seconds.

7 Place onto a baking tray, cover with parchment paper and another tray on top to weigh the leaves down. Bake at 200°C/400°F for 1 hour. Leave to cool down then carefully take off the paper. **B**



SERVES

4



WIN A COPY
of Brad Roe's
new Plant Based
Cookbook.

Brad Roe grew up in Essex, moving to the Isle of Wight when he was 13. At the age of 18, he emigrated to the USA, where he spent 17 years working as a chef in Vegas at five star hotels, including 11 years at Caesars Palace.

Brad has now settled back in Cowes with his partner and children. He won an AA rosette award in 2017 and published two cookbooks in 2020.

Want to get your hands on one? Simply email win@iwbeacon.com with your details by March 31st.

The Plant Based Cookbook can be purchased at www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B08RT31HL6



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It is well known that the Island has a history of great music and bands, whether it is Dancer, The Waltons or Reminder and of course there's Level 42 and Thin Lizzy's Snowy White.

It seems now that we are in lockdown once again that more Isle of Wight musicians and producers are using the time to make music. In fact, 99 Bears are a band who got together because of lockdown and their new album *Dances with Demons* was written and recorded on the Island last summer. It is an album that talks about mental health from all angles, as John from the band told me: "The track *Therapy* is a sneer at the underfunding in the NHS and the lack of individual care, it's a cynical look at what the doctors and nurses are having to deal with"

There are 13 tracks on *Dances with Demons*, all with a slightly different musical sound. The production and performance on the album are incredible and if you have a chance listen to the Vaudeville sounding *You Gotta Learn to Love Yourself*. You can hear more from 99 Bears in my Live and Local Podcast which is available now from your podcast provider.



The diversity in music that is being made on the Island is fascinating. Beth Brookfield is 17 years old and recently released the haunting Country track *The Journey*. Beth explained that she wrote the track when she was 15 years old and has been inspired by bands like *The Carpenters* through to Taylor Swift's new album. Beth also gave some tips on how to get into the music industry and its not just picking the right instrument, networking is the key and with a community of musicians that seems to be unique on the Island it seems there is space for anyone, no matter what the genre or style. 

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Book Review

AWAY WITH THE PENGUINS

By Hazel Prior

A beautiful story about a feisty 86-year-old, desperate to embark on one final great adventure.

Veronica McCreedy spends her nights watching nature documentaries alone at home in Ayrshire and has done for many years. Nobody ever visits her 12-bedroom home on the Scottish coast, except for the gardener and the cleaner — whom she finds increasingly annoying.

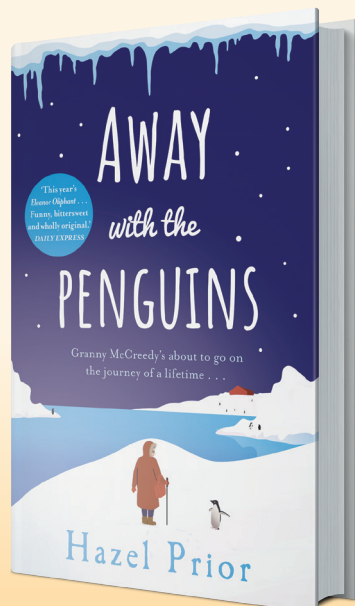
Mrs McCreedy keeps her past locked away in a little black box, hidden in the dusty spare room.

When she forces herself upon the Penguin Project and its scientists in Antarctica, it's not just her new surroundings that are icy. Many people find it difficult warming to the elderly Scot. All, that is, apart from one newborn bundle of fluff, who begins to open up her heart and mind. Then one day, while she's far away from home, her stories are unearthed and the reasons behind her solitary life begin to make sense.

A rollercoaster of emotions, which took me just three days to devour. A story of new beginnings, unconditional love — and a powerful reminder that nobody is ever too old to discover a new passion.

If you liked Eleanor Oliphant, you'll love this. 

A story of new beginnings, unconditional love — and a powerful reminder that nobody is ever too old to discover a new passion.



Review by Amy Shephard

You can purchase *Away with the Penguins* from Medina Bookshop, at 50 High Street, Cowes.
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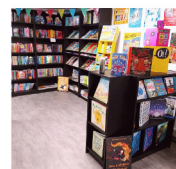
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4759 NBH 12/20 LF

SHANKLIN THEATRE IN THE SUMMER OF '56

Sixty years after spending the summer season acting at Shanklin Theatre, Janet Sandys-nee-Derry returns as a guest.

By Michael Beston

It was the summer season of 1956; Shanklin Theatre was home to Barry O'Brien's repertory company *The Shanklin Theatre Company* presenting a season of West End play successes. The Barry O'Brien company would put on repertory plays each week throughout the summer season, many of which brought famous faces of that era to the Isle of Wight.

Among the cast was a young 21 year old Janet Derry. Now 85 years old, Janet recently holidayed on the Island, and wrote a lovely letter to Shanklin Theatre.

"For me it was a special trip, I spent the summer season of 1956 acting in the Shanklin Theatre, a different play each week, I also celebrated my 21st birthday there."

"What a lovely surprise it was to see it was still up and running, we all came to see the show (Best of the West End & Beyond) and thoroughly enjoyed it."

The week commencing Monday 13th August 1956 saw the Barry O'Brien production of the play *Tabitha* written by Arnold Ridley & Mary Cathcart Borer, other plays for the summer season were entitled; *Something About a Sailor*, *Mad About Men* & *The Dashing White Sergeant* by Charles Gairdner and Rosamunde Pilcher.

"Impish, 21-year-old Janet Derry, "baby" of the company, took the acting honours at Shanklin Theatre on Monday evening, when Mr Barry O'Brien's company started a week's showing of *The Dashing White Sergeant*," wrote the Isle of Wight Guardian in July 1956. "Dark-haired Janet, with

For me it was a special trip, I spent the summer season of 1956 acting in the Shanklin Theatre, a different play each week, I also celebrated my 21st birthday there.

Below: The cast of the Barry O'Brien production company photographed in Daish's Hotel garden, Shanklin in 1956. Janet can be seen in the middle of the bottom row.



Janet Derry outside the theatre during the production of "Mad About Men."

Above: Shanklin Theatre 1956 summer season programme.

the Audrey Hepburn hair-style and a touch of Miss Hepburn's elfin-like charm, gave her best performance to date as Fiona Cunningham, the spoilt but likeable fifteen-year-old daughter of the Cunningham's of Keltie."

The Friends of Shanklin Theatre would like to say a special thank you to Janet for sending in the photos, programme and cuttings and hope to see her again soon at the theatre. ☺



Island Line has said a final farewell to its Class 483 trains, ahead of a three month closure and £26million upgrade.

Memories of

ISLAND LINE

Originally built in 1938 for the London Underground, the Class 483 trains have had a service life of 82 years and more than three million miles. They arrived on the Island in the late 1980s.

The fleet will be replaced by the new Class 484 trains, the first of which arrived on the Isle of Wight in November. The Class 484s re-use the body-shells, running gear and other small components from ex-London Underground D78 trains from the District Line, completely overhauled and refurbished with many new features. Five two-car trains have been ordered with the rest of the fleet due to be delivered by March.

The new carriages, built by Vivarail in the West Midlands, will replace the current trains on the line between Shanklin and Ryde Pier.

The Class 483 fleet departed for the final time at 11.17pm from Ryde Pier Head on Sunday, January 3rd, bringing to an end a career spanning over 80 years and an Island Line career spanning more than 30.

The network of trains on the Isle of Wight has a fascinating history, dating



A train leaving Ryde Pier Head



back much further than the Island Line name. A line operating steam trains from St John's Road in Ryde to Shanklin first opened in the summer of 1864, courtesy of Isle of Wight Railway. Two years later, the line was extended to Ventnor.

In 1880, further additions to the line connected the Island's trains with ferry services at Ryde Pier Head. This line, from Ryde's St John's Road was jointly owned by London & South Western Railway (LSWR) and London, Brighton & South Coast Railway (LBSCR).

In 1921, following the introduction of the Railways Act, the Island's railways became part of Southern Railway. Then in 1948, the company was nationalised and ownership passed to British Railways, later known as British Rail.

The Shanklin to Ventnor line closed in the spring of 1966, followed shortly by the removal of all steam trains from the line.

A year later, trains returned to the Ryde to Shanklin line, in the form of electric rail. Two new stations were opened in the years to follow, Lake Station in 1987 and Smallbrook Junction in 1991.

The line was officially branded 'Island Line' in 1994, and in 1996, Stagecoach Group took over the Island Line Trains franchise,

followed by South Western Railway, in 2017, who continued to operate under the Island Line brand.

The Isle of Wight's outgoing fleet have been operating on the line since 1990, following a lengthy service on the Northern Line with London Transport since the start of the Second World War. And now one of the Class 483 trains looks set to be preserved on the mainland.

Following their final withdrawal, the London Transport Traction Group has been officially informed by South Western Railway that it has successfully secured one of the trains for preservation at the Epping Ongar Railway in Essex.

An official from South Western Railway informed the group it "will have a unit for preservation" but "can't confirm which unit yet", but will most likely be offered to the London Transport Traction Group 483006 or 483008.

This is pending a final decision from the Science Museum's Railway Heritage Designation Advisory Board who is managing the disposal of some of the trains.

Unit 483007 is also set for preservation, but not by the London Transport Traction Group. This unit will be heading for the Isle of Wight Steam Railway for display in their

The fleet is estimated to have run for more than three million miles during its 82 years in service.



'Train Story' Museum. Steve Backhouse, Isle of Wight Steam Railway General Manager, said:

"The 1938 stock have been an iconic feature of the Isle of Wight for the last 30 years and we're delighted that a unit will be preserved at Havenstreet so that it can be enjoyed by future generations."

South Western Railway told the London Transport Traction Group that they should expect to be able to collect their unit from Island Line "around the end of the line closure in March". The unit will then be transported back to the mainland for restoration and conversion to battery operation.

Daniel Nash, Secretary and Founder of the London Transport Traction Group, said: "For us this is truly wonderful news, but it also represents only the first step in our journey that we hope will soon see a class 483 train, cosmetically restored to 1950s London Transport condition, running on the Epping Ongar Railway under its own power and visiting galas around the country. This will also enable us to take a tube train where none has ever gone before, allowing us to introduce the joy of the 1938 Tube stock to new audiences. ③

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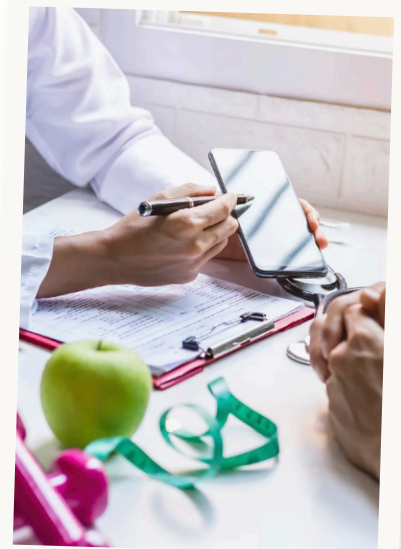
We have all tried diets that didn't work for us, or we can't stick to them, or we put the weight back on once the diet is over

to schools, care homes and other institutions to improve understanding of the impact our choices have and the importance of small changes. They specialise in disease management (like diabetes, cardiovascular disease and irritable bowel) as well as fussy or tricky eaters!

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STAYING ACTIVE IN YOUR HOME

As Lockdown across England puts an even greater emphasis on the health and wellbeing of older people in isolation, the Goldies Charity is increasing its weekly online content to include gentle chair-exercise at home.

When 'Goldies' were forced by Covid to cancel all their daytime sessions across England and Wales last March, they introduced online sessions through Facebook and YouTube. These sessions developed to become twice weekly, with Tuesday sessions taken by Rachel Parry and Thursdays by Cheryl Davies, who have both worked for the charity for a number of years as daytime session leaders.

With Cheryl's Thursday session based on the popular Goldies format of singing with well-loved popular songs and on-screen words, the weekly Tuesday 11am sessions led by Rachel have developed into a more magazine-style format.

Rachel records her sessions from



her home in Thornbury near Bristol. She said: "We have had a fantastic response from older folk across England and we feature different subjects each Tuesday. Many Age-Related organisations, local authorities and town councils promote the sessions.

The chair-based exercises encourage people to stretch as well as sing and we hope to develop these in the weeks ahead. We know that there is an emphasis this winter on preventing falls in the home and our gentle chair exercises encourage movement to those well-loved songs of the 60s and onwards.

"Singalong to Bring Me Sunshine, smile and stretch."

You can delay or reverse mobility limitations and maintain independence, and you can enjoy later life to the full

Dr Afroditi Stathi is Associate Professor in Physical Activity, Ageing and Health at the University of Birmingham and a Trustee of the Golden-Oldies Charity. She has been closely involved with the development of gentle active songs which have been introduced by Goldies, she said: "Evidence stresses that the barriers of having no reasons to get out and about and nothing to look forward to can be broken with the Goldies wellbeing sessions. The message is loud and clear: You can delay or reverse mobility limitations and maintain independence, and you can enjoy later life to the full. Loneliness in old age is not inevitable."

Goldies Founder, Grenville Jones, added: "When we were forced to cancel our live Goldies sessions last year this meant that our older folk could not come to us to enjoy a session in their community room, church hall or library. As they could not come to us, through the internet, we took Goldies into their homes and sofa-singing started!"

www.goldieslive.com is easy to access and is also freely available on YouTube and through Facebook.

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News from Central Wight

by Cllr Steve Hastings



Spring is on its way, gardens will be blooming and it's time to renew green garden waste subscriptions!

Over half of the council's customers have already switched to direct debit payments so their subscriptions will automatically renew. Those who pay annually by card should check their email inboxes for details of how to re-subscribe, before 18th March. Existing customers with direct debit are also asked to check that the bank details they previously supplied are still the same.

The popular green garden waste kerbside collection service collected 1,710 tonnes of garden waste since April 2020. As Cabinet Member for Waste Management I think the kerbside green garden waste service is hugely popular across the Island, with 10,000 residents benefitting – especially during 2020 with many more people getting out in the garden; saving trips to the tip, lowering people's carbon footprints and giving people more time to focus on gardening. All of the green waste collected is composted and goes back into gardens across the Island.

While the service is pretty full, there are a few spaces available, so people who've been on the waiting list who'd like to sign up are encouraged to do so. They should have received emails from the council too. Please do check your junk message folder just in case.

For more information on the scheme, visit www.iwight.com/greengardenwaste

Marker Buoys set to return

Marker buoys designed to keep swimmers safe from speedboats and jet skis look set to be deployed off Sandown as part of Isle of Wight Council plans to boost beach safety. The distinctive orange markers are to be installed in May, subject to budget approval.

The marker buoys were removed in 2015 but are set to be reinstated for the 2021-bathing season following unanimous Cabinet support earlier this month. Similar schemes are also being considered for other coastal areas, such as Compton, Colwell and Totland.

The decision follows an increase in reports of anti-social behaviour involving personal watercraft recorded last summer, and forms part of the council's newly adopted Beach Management Strategy Framework.

As the Cabinet member responsible for beaches, I take the safety of all water users very seriously. Beaches form an essential part of Island life, supporting the local economy through tourism and jobs. We need clean beaches, good water quality and a safe place to swim – that's what this new strategy is all about and I was pleased to agree the framework recently. The framework includes actions to improve our holiday tourism offer by enhancing beach safety, developing a voice for those living and working around our coast and building on the £40 million in government funding received to protect our coastal community.

In a further move to improve safety, the council is working closely with the RNLI to undertake a review of all council-owned and managed beaches. This will include a full review of safety equipment, signage, railings and slipways.

Meanwhile, I have also set up a new coastal community forum to work collaboratively with other authorities in the south on beach safety and enforcement policies in the Solent and we have had our first meeting to agree terms of reference and who will Chair going forward.

Council leader, Dave Stewart, said the forum, which held its first meeting earlier this week, would also ensure those living and working in coastal communities were given a voice.

He said: "I see this forum as a very positive step for the Island.

"It will provide a further opportunity to build on our plan to keep people safe when they come and enjoy all that the Isle of Wight has to offer – obviously when the time is right.

"The beach safety audits will also be crucial in determining safety requirements going forward and I would like to thank the RNLI for undertaking this work at no cost to the council."

☎ 07870127024 ✉ steve.hastings@iow.gov.uk

Dedicated centre for 'Long Covid' launches

By Oliver Dyer

A new centre designed to help deal with the long-term effects of COVID-19 is up and running on the Isle of Wight.

This service launched after evidence emerged showing that some people who contract coronavirus are left with longer-term symptoms of the virus, months after initially falling ill. These can include pain, a persistent high temperature, breathlessness, chronic fatigue, brain fog, anxiety and stress. However, many patients recover with support, rest, symptomatic treatment, and with a gradual increase in physical activity.

The Long-COVID service is available by GP referral only and appointments will be available both face-to-face and virtually. When referred into the Long COVID service, patients will undergo a number of physical and psychological assessments. Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) will then work alongside other health teams to develop a support plan

that will help improve their health outcomes and quality of life.

Dr Michele Legg, GP and clinical chair of NHS Isle of Wight Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "This new service not only gives us an opportunity to support those in need, but will also help us learn out more about Long COVID and find new ways to help people affected by it.

"It also demonstrates that the NHS is not forgetting about patients who are dealing with the longer-term effects of the virus. We are here to support you."

The service is part of a £10m initiative by NHS England who is funding 69 services across the country. You can find more information about Long COVID on the NHS website.

Anyone experiencing the symptoms of Long COVID are advised to visit www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk/ for more information.



Cycle loan scheme for key-workers

By Iona Stewart-Richardson

The free Key Worker Cycle Loan Scheme from the IW Council has reopened once again to help support key workers through the lockdown.

The aim of the scheme is to encourage key workers to choose cycling as their preferred mode of travel.

During the last two lockdowns, social workers, hospital staff, teachers, supermarket staff and prison officers were among those to receive free access to a loan bike for a month.

Four e-bikes are now also available as part of the loan scheme.

These will be provided on a first come first served basis. Applicants interested in borrowing an e-bike will need to write a short paragraph in their application form explaining how it will help them to start cycling to work. The



strongest applications will receive an e-bike as their loan.

The council is continuing to work in partnership with established Island cycle hire businesses, Wight Cycle Hire and RouteFifty7, to deliver the scheme.

The scheme forms part of the council's Connect2Work initiative, which promotes sustainable and active travel options to employees and jobseekers. That, in turn, is part of the authority's Access Fund programme funded by the Department for Transport.

All hire bikes loaned to key workers through the scheme include a helmet, a lock, lights and delivery.

For full details of the scheme, and to apply, please visit: www.connect2work.info/

Cycle lane and footpath plans in Newport

By Jamie White

Residents are being urged to have their say on plans to make it both easier and safer to 'get on your bike' in and out of Newport.

A public consultation has been launched about proposals to upgrade the footpath that runs behind Fairlee Road into the town centre.

Under the scheme, the former railway line between Mews Lane and Newport Quay would be upgraded with a smooth, all-weather surface, creating a safer route for cyclists away from the busy main road.

As part of the plans, the path would also be widened in places to enable shared use with

pedestrians.

Councillor Ian Ward said the scheme would provide greater connectivity to residential areas, schools, businesses and the town centre.

He said: "This plan will help more people to travel safely by bike or on foot, rather than in cars on their commute, all the while providing space to maintain social distancing."

The footpath was identified as a priority route to and from Newport in the council's Local Cycling and Walking Plan published last year.

It has since secured £235,000 from the government through its Active Travel Fund to deliver the scheme, should it receive support.

Councillor Ward added: "We expect works to commence in the spring following consultation with local people, road users and those who already use the route. You can complete our survey online."

To have your say on the plans, visit www.iow.gov.uk/Council/OtherServices/Sports-Development-Unit/Stay-Active-During-Lockdown/



Image courtesy of Graham Horn

All Island residents to be vaccinated by September

© Sky News

All residents on the Isle of Wight who are over 18 years of age will be offered a Coronavirus vaccine by September, the Foreign Secretary has told Sky News.

Speaking on Sunday, the Foreign Secretary said: "Our target is that by September to have offered all the adult population a first dose, if we can do it faster than that great but that's the roadmap."

The target is more specific than the government's vaccine delivery plan, which said that level of protection should be provided "by the autumn".

The foreign secretary refused to guarantee that everyone

will get their second vaccine dose within 12 weeks. He said only that the government "ought to be able to deliver on that".

Mr Raab also said that he hoped some restrictions can be lifted "gradually" by March so the country can "get back to normal". He said the things that put that "at risk" are the new variants and pressure on the NHS, as he urged people to follow the rules.



News from Cowes West

by Cllr Paul Fuller

Councillors Surgeries.

Surgeries are being held by phone 6-7pm on Mondays. On the last Monday of each month from 6:30pm I hold a surgery by Zoom. Please don't hesitate to call outside these times if you require my support, as I am usually free! With the easing of lockdown restrictions, I'm ever hopeful face to face surgeries can resume. For details and Zoom links please visit: paulfullercc.blogspot.com

Elections: Thursday 7th May.

Elections are pending for IW Council, Local Town/Parish Councillors and the Police Commissioner. Please register through the following link: www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Gurnard/Cowes Seafront Parking approved by IW Council.

As far as I, and most residents are concerned the fight against these charges continue. Please let me know, if you wish to join the campaign.

Green Garden Waste.

There are additional spaces for the

IW Council's green waste service for this year. New customers can join the council's green garden waste collection service for this year starting 1st April, at www.iwight.com/greengardenwaste. The subscription window remains open until 20th March and costs £72 per year.

Planning Updates: 77 Place Road: 14 dwellings (For first phase of two phased development).

A letter drop took place to 50 households. Concerns were expressed regarding coalescence, safeguarding wildlife corridors, vehicular access, highway infrastructure issues, speed limits and social/affordable housing timeframes.

Full Council.

I voted against proposals to reduce Council Tax support for those residents on low incomes. Mindful of how Council Tax debt is a real local issue, this reflected feedback I have received.

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News from Central Newport

by Cllr Julie Jones-Evans

Newport and Carisbrooke Community Council has set next year's budget and there's been a cut in the precept residents will have to pay, which will be welcomed.

I'm pleased to have finally opened the new toilets in Post Office Lane and I hope everyone will be pleased with them. It's our first major project at NCCC and next our sights are on purchasing an empty shop in the High Street for NCCC to use as its base and also create a local history centre.

The Post Office in Newport closed on 6th February leaving us with only Pan Stores, Carisbrooke and Central Gunville. Newport has to have a main post office which is 3-4 counters, so it's a big undertaking. I've been talking to the Post Office since November and I have regular meetings on restoring this vital service, with the IW Council.

Working with our Local Resilience Coordinator we've found out that there's still some children that don't have laptops to do their home learning from during this lockdown. If you have a laptop you no longer need you can donate it for reconditioning and passing on to the schools. Please email laura.jones@newportwight.org.uk if you can help.

☎ 521068/ 07886437688

✉ julie.jones-evans@iow.gov.uk

Swimming challenge to regenerate East Cowes seafront

By Iona Stewart-Richardson

A group of eight casual swimmers are attempting to swim the equivalent distance around the Isle of Wight — to raise funds for a seafront regeneration project.

The Shrape Swimmers in East Cowes will do laps up and down the beach — in a bid to raise money to improve the surrounding area and “sort out” the landslip — which is the second one in six years.

So far the group, whose oldest member is 80, have technically reached Gurnard and they are expecting the challenge to last until the summer.

It all initially started with East Cowes resident David Hill swimming in the sea once or twice a week — over time more and more locals joined in.

Now they have become the Shrape Swimmers — and meet up every day to embrace the elements at high tide and top up their mileage.

David says it is “more than just cold swimming” it is about sharing life stories, friendship, companionship and “embracing the seafront”.

“We need to bring our seafront home to the people of East Cowes and our Island and of course our visitors that come to us every year. At the moment it is in a



very sorry state as there are railings there and of course the landscape. We want the people of East Cowes and our Island to have some pride back to where we live — of course, we love where we live and we really need people to be supportive.

“We really need the community behind us and the Island community, so far we have raised £210 which is roughly the price of two gabions — so we are two gabions up — but we would really like to raise more.

“It's funny as well — the locals that walk past us and call out “You're mad!”

Liz, who is part of the Shrape Swimming group that is “passionate” about giving something back to the community, said: “Having enjoyed swimming all my life it is only now in my mid- 70s I have found a group of lovely people in East Cowes who to share the joy. I have always longed to try and swim all year round and now, at last, it is happening thanks to the Shrape swimmers.”

You can sponsor the Shrape Swimmers at Go Fund Me East Cowes Esplanade.

New skate park could be built in Freshwater

A new skate park has been proposed for Freshwater, as part of the parish council's 2021/2022 budget.

The current park located next to West Wight Sports

and Community Centre is becoming costly in its old age. A new skate park and pump track (the first on the Island), could be built near the play area at Stroud Recreation Ground.

If approved, the parish council would invest £60,000 in the build over the next two years.

A consultation period where residents were invited to have their say ended in January.



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Meet the Island's Free-Flying Macaw, Saffy

By Iona Stewart-Richardson

"Don't get a Macaw" - is the advice from an Isle of Wight woman who owns one - loves her and free flies her around the Island.

Katie Balmer from Sandown has owned her adorable female Macaw called Saffy since she was 12 weeks old and she is thought to be the only free-flying bird on the Island.

Training is particularly taxing - especially with a bird that's scream can be heard from 5 miles away - which is why Katie says the "bond" is crucial (and probably explains why she showers with Saffy every day!)

Saffy started free-flying inside for 6 weeks at first then after "a lot of commitment" she was able to free-fly outside.

Katie says "a stroke of insanity" led her to become the mother of a green-winged Macaw - and she chose the breed because of their "gentle nature" and ability to "bond" with their owner.

Katie, who when she isn't with Saffy, works for charity Ability Dogs For Young People, says green-wing macaws are also brilliant for free-flying because of their bright colour and ability to make lots of noise.

Speaking exclusively to Isle of Wight Radio Katie said: "I was always in awe of

Macaws and I went to Florida and saw a big free-flight show where they had about 80 Macaws flying in the sky - then I started to do a bit of research and that's how I originally got into Macaw ownership. I only wanted a bird if I was able to free fly it because I don't agree with keeping these big birds in cages with no enrichment".

Asked what advice she would give to anyone thinking of getting a Macaw, she said:

"Don't do it! These animals are big, they bite, they scream - which can be heard from

five miles away...

If you have got neighbours there is no chance - these birds need time, commitment and money and they are NOT good pets and I wouldn't recommend them to anyone!"

Whenever Saffy, who is harnessed trained, is taken out to free-fly - of course, there is the

risk that she may not return-but she always has.

Incoming weather, wind direction and birds of prey in the area are among the things Katie has to consider before she takes Saffy outside.

She says getting the "diet right" is vital not only for their quality of life but it is also key when training them for free-flight.

If you are out walking and you keep your eyes to the skies, you may see Saffy near the two places she likes to free-fly.

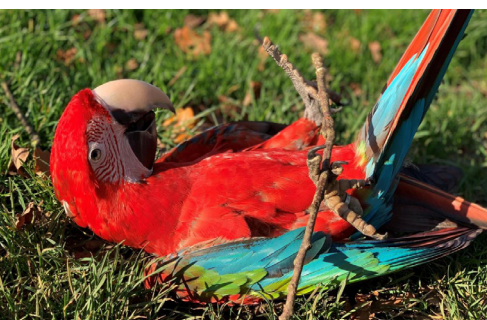
The pair go to a footpath in Rookley and fields adjacent to Borthwood Copse.

Katie hopes Appley Beach could be another place they go to free-fly in the future.

Watch a video of Saffy at iwradio.co.uk.



I only wanted a bird if I was able to free fly it because I don't agree with keeping these big birds in cages with no enrichment



News from Cowes Medina

by Cllr Lora Peacey-Wilcox

ELECTION: May 6th. Please register for a postal vote. Call 823380 or email electoral.services@iow.gov.uk and they can post a form out to you.

HELP: www.myliferaft.com is an Island produced website and device that can help both you and paramedics/NHS. It is a card and an app which rapidly tells those nursing you your health history and what medication you are on. This could be lifesaving.

HEDGES: Now is a good time to pop out and have a look at overhanging hedges and trees.

RECYCLING: The tip has a number of recycling facilities taking: Books and multimedia for reuse; Salvation Army Textiles, textiles 'bag it up' 75% reuse, The Storeroom, paint reuse. PLEASE don't just 'dump' this stuff. Keep it back for when charity shops are open.

CENSUS 2021: Sun 21st March. 'A snapshot' of Britain. Over 30,000 people are going to be employed to ensure the census goes well and all fill out forms. All information is for Office of National Statistics. Your Personal data is protected for 100 years.

COVID VACCINATIONS: Are being rolled out according to data of those most at risk of dying. If you are over 70 and have not received your vaccination please call: 119. Next is over 65s then all those aged

16-64 with underlying health conditions that puts them at risk.

LATERAL FLOW TESTS for frontline workers: This is hoped to be up and running shortly. I will keep you posted.

THRIFTY: Things are going to get tighter financially. Please seek help from Citizens advice. They can help with every eventuality and crisis you have. **0800 144 8848** or www.citizensadviceiow.org.uk

NHS DENTISTS: Many of you know I have been 'communicating' with CCG over dentists and lack of them for years. I continue to make MP and health individuals of the crisis we are in. I will continue to fight on your behalf. I am pleased health watch have taken up the battle too.

COWES WEEK: Is intended to go ahead beginning Saturday 31st July-Fri 6th, NO FIREWORKS, NO RED ARROWS.

ESSENTIAL WORKERS: I am indebted to you all. All those that have worked tirelessly throughout the entire pandemic. Please accept my sincere thanks for keeping the community going.

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4. No more tricky home maintenance

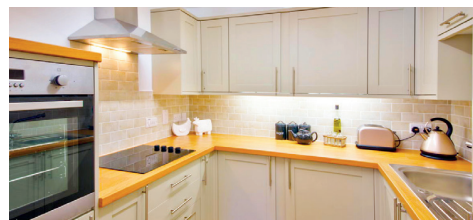
You may love your current house, but there's a lot of work that goes into maintaining it, from trimming the lawn to fixing leaks. You could have more time to do what you like.

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6. It's time to move on. Is it worth waiting?

It can be tempting to stay where you are until you are forced to make a decision about moving. Why wait, moving home once you actually need to can make the process more difficult or stressful.



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Planning for the Future After Coronavirus

2021 began in much the same way that 2020 ended; national lockdowns and advice to stay at home and keep safe. With the roll out of vaccinations across the country, it has been said that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and that normal life may resume later on in the year.

Despite this glimmer of hope, it is important to continue to consider what is important to us and to continue to consider worst-case scenarios so that we can make plans in case something were to happen to us, or our loved ones.

As solicitors, we often talk about making Wills and Lasting Powers of Attorney as this is the legal backup should your loved ones end up in situation where they cannot manage their affairs or if they pass away unexpectedly.

Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPAs) are documents whereby you appoint an attorney (or attorneys) to manage your affairs and make decisions on your behalf if you are not able. There are two types; one covers property and financial affairs such

as managing bank accounts, your property pensions etc and the other covers health and welfare decisions such as whether you can have hospital treatment or the arrangement of care at home or in a care home.

We have seen the importance of these documents during the pandemic with people being able to access their loved ones accounts whilst they have been unwell in hospital or at home. Without these documents, loved ones have been left in limbo because they cannot manage their loved ones' affairs.

Your Will determines what will happen to your assets after your death. Without a Will your family are left to follow the rules of Intestacy which may not be what would want to happen to your assets —

particularly if you have complex family arrangements. Furthermore, there are opportunities to consider tax planning and protective measures in your Will which are lost if your estate follows the Intestacy rules.

Even if you already have a Will in place, if you have not reviewed this for some time, it may be out of date and fail to reflect your current wishes and circumstances.

Even if your personal circumstances have not changed, the law changes constantly and so a Will prepared some years back may need to be revised. Tax planning Wills may no longer be suitable and it can cost several thousands of pounds to overcome this if you die without updating your Wills. A new Will or a Will update is much cheaper!



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Mr & Mrs Gibson, Portishead

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Karen Thomas, Chippenham

COOLER IN SUMMER

"You could have fried an egg on the table in there in the summer, I now look upon the conservatory as a new room. It is quiet, restful and cosy."

Carol Doyle, Surrey

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"I've already turned the underfloor heating down. Lovely job guys, thank you!"

Anne Bird, Bristol

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"For the first time in 10 years we do not have to close the door to the conservatory when it rains, as the noise is minimal and before I found it difficult to hear the TV over the loudness of the rain on the old roof."

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How does it work?

Direct cremation is an affordable alternative to a traditional funeral. It separates the cremation from the funeral ceremony. The cremation takes place without any service at the crematorium, and without mourners or a minister present.

What's the difference between a direct cremation and a traditional funeral?

A direct cremation separates the celebration of life from the cremation. The cremation takes place without anyone present allowing you and your family the freedom to celebrate your loved one at a time, place and venue of your choice. We carry out this service in the same dignified, professional way as we would do for any funeral that we undertake. The simple nature of a direct cremation is reflected in the price.

How much does a direct cremation cost?

We have two options to choose from:-

- Our 'Island Way' is £1,695.00, this is for a direct cremation at the Isle of Wight Crematorium
- Our 'Wessex Way' is £1,495.00, this is for a direct cremation at a mainland crematorium.

We offer this option for families that would like to take advantage of the savings that mainland crematoriums offer. We then pass this saving onto families. Both these options are all inclusive with no hidden additional costs; unlike mainland providers who charge additionally for ferry fares.

Can I get help with the cremation costs?

Yes if you are in receipt of benefits you may be entitled to a payment of up to £1,000 from the Department of Work & Pensions, so we advise contacting them to enquire.

Why Choose it?

- Less expensive than a traditional funeral
- It allows you the freedom & flexibility to focus on celebrating a life well lived.
- Freed up from the cremation it opens up the options for venues and times, even weekends, to hold your celebration.
- A simple and easy to arrange process

What's the difference between Isle of Wight Direct Cremation and a mainland provider?

- To start with we are based here on the Island. We can promptly take your loved one into our care without the need for travelling over by ferry involving lengthy and distressing delays.
- We usually meet you face to face either at our island offices or in the comfort of your own home, but due to current restrictions of social distancing we can make all arrangements on the telephone
- Mainland providers courier the ashes back to you whereas we provide a more personal service by returning them to you at home, or you can come into either our Bembridge or East Cowes office.
- We are locals too and understand the local community.

Who is Isle of Wight Direct Cremation?

We are independent family funeral directors based here on the Isle of Wight. We are the Isle of Wight's longest running established undertakers.

We have offices based in Bembridge & East Cowes so you can come in, or call us on **632598** or even visit us on line at www.isleofwightdirectcremation.co.uk. With over 190 years of experience we are on hand to make a difficult time easier.

Do you offer pre paid direct cremation funeral plans?

We get asked this question a lot and the answer is, Yes! Often people like to get their affairs in order to avoid expense being left to their loved ones at a distressing time. Our plan holders often tell us that this can be a big weight off their mind.

A pre paid funeral plan offers total security. There are flexible payment options too. We use Golden Charter pre paid funeral plans as they allow you to pay at today's prices and avoid rising costs.

Who is Golden Charter?

Golden Charter is the UK's market leader for providing pre paid funeral plans to Independent Funeral Directors since 1989. Your funds are safe and are placed into The Golden Charter Trust. The Trust will pay out for every plan that pays into it.



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When compared to the parks and gardens of stately homes, it's understandable if we regard our own gardens as insignificantly small, but we should take a collective step back and consider the bigger picture. When added together, 'ordinary' householders are, in fact, the greatest landowners in the UK. Our domestic gardens account for an area equivalent to Exmoor, Dartmoor, the Norfolk Broads and the Lake District National Park combined. Taking this view, it's easy to see how even the smallest plot can play a part in helping garden birds to thrive.

Late winter through to early spring is the time when nature's store cupboard is almost bare. Autumn's harvest of fruits, berries and rosehips have long been consumed. Seed heads, bleached by frost and wind, stand empty. Flying insects are scarce and worms semi-hibernate; burrowing deeper into the soil to escape winter's chill, making them out of reach for most birds.

Early-flowering shrubs can help fill the hungry gap. Witch hazel, daphne, viburnum and mahonia are real stalwarts of spring; providing nectar-rich flowers for birds and early-venturing insects. Neat-freak gardeners aren't generally fans of honeysuckle as its natural growth habit is to make a multi-stemmed tangled 'mess', but it's a plant that is invaluable to wildlife. Not only does it produce flowers and berries, its interweaving stems also offers great shelter and nestbuilding



Honeysuckle



Viburnum

Feed the BIRDS!



Gardening to help sustain our garden birds isn't just a philanthropic gesture. It's immensely beneficial to the health and biodiversity of your garden — and also to the wider environment, writes Flo Whitaker.



Witch Hazel



Climbing Ivy

opportunities — birds will strip off honeysuckle's papery bark for use as nesting material. Best of all is humble ivy. Like honeysuckle, its tangled growth makes a perfect habitat for all manner of wildlife and its fatty, high energy berries are carried throughout winter; blackbirds and thrushes seem to particularly enjoy them. Flower pollen from early bulbs will also provide a nutritious snack for wildlife, but be prepared for pesky pigeons to rip crocus blooms to shreds — bah!

Birds need a dependable source of ice-free water; not just to drink, but also for bathing to keep their feathers in tip top condition — a cold plunge on a frosty day holds no fear for them. Fancy bird baths are all very well, but a cheap plastic plant saucer is just the thing in winter; being frost-resistant it will flex and bend, allowing ice to be easily knocked out. Don't forget to give bird baths, bird tables and feeders a weekly scrub with hot soapy water to remove any harmful bacteria.

If you give the birds a helping hand at the leanest time of the year, they will repay your efforts many times over. One blue tit chick will eat approximately 100 caterpillars and insects per day - that's 100 less beasts to munch away at your summer cabbages and roses. Now, there's a thought.... ☺

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And now it's our chance to ask him the questions.

In our upcoming online event, we'll be asking him what they were really like and he'll share some amusing anecdotes from those meetings.

You can watch John speak live on Thursday, February 25th at 7pm. Simply visit Hidden Island, on our website to register to be at the event.

Missed it? Not to worry, there'll be an opportunity to watch it back after the event. Keep your eyes peeled on our website for more details.

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The closing date is 31st March - we'll pick a winner and post the following week! Best of luck!

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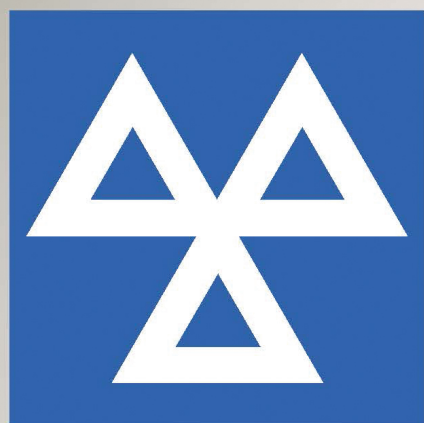
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