



News and information from the Isle of Wight
Area and Groups

walkTALK is sponsored by

WIGHTLINK
PART OF ISLAND LIFE

Season's
greetings to all
our readers



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Fifty years of outstanding natural beauty

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ramblers
at the heart of walking

THE ISLE OF WIGHT Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will be 50 years old in 2013 – and IW Ramblers will be celebrating.

The AONB is part of a national family of designated landscapes cherished for their special qualities. The complex and diverse character of the Isle of Wight AONB provides a huge asset for people living and working here, as well as providing many with enjoyment that in turn contributes to a strong rural economy. The richness of our wildlife and historic environment also forms a valuable and integral part of this special area. About half the Island is designated as an AONB and this has the same protection as a National Park.

The Island's AONB partnership is an independent body funded by DEFRA and the Isle of Wight Council. It is made up of representatives from a wide range of local organisations and groups, which has been its great

strength. IW Ramblers is a member of the partnership and attends meetings and forums.

The Isle of Wight is unusual in that its AONB is made up of five different sub-areas which together consist of 11 distinct types of landscape. This diversity is the special attraction of the Island. So, during February, March and April 2013, IW Ramblers will be holding four walks – a total of 11 over the year – which will explore this diversity. Each walk will also be published in the County Press.

The first walk will be held on Friday 22nd February, starting at 10.30am from the car park at Ningwood, heading out to the coast to explore the northern coastal cliffs. There will be birthday cake on the return to the car park for a double celebration – not only is it the AONB's fiftieth, but it's the IW Ramblers' chairman's 65th birthday as well!



**More walks to
mark the AONB's
fiftieth birthday**

Southern Coastal Farmland

Friday 22nd March 10.30am
Whale Chine car park

The Undercliff

Friday 5th April 10.30am
Steeptill Down Road, Ventnor

Intensive Agricultural Land

Friday 26th April 10.30am
Newchurch car park

• Further details can be found in the walks programme included with this edition of walkTALK, or log on to the website iowramblers.com

Find out more about the Island's AONB from its website

wightaonb.org.uk

You can download the current management plan (pictured right) from here.



Welcome...

... to **walkTALK**, the newsletter from the Isle of Wight Ramblers. If you're new to walking, or if you've not seen walkTALK before, why not join us? Benefits include:

- 260 led walks on the Island each year;
- talks and discussions about Island features and heritage;
- walking holidays;
- national Walk magazine and walkTALK;
- discounts from leading outdoor suppliers (eg Cotswold; Blacks) and HF Holidays;
- support for an organisation campaigning for greater access to the countryside.

Joining us couldn't be easier. And if you pay by direct debit, there's £10 off the price! Just go to www.iowramblers.com and click on the membership link.

A WARM WELCOME to new members:

Main Group	
Mrs C Hughes	Shalfleet
Miss G Brown	Cowes
Mrs C Ginsberg	Ventnor
Mr J Rowe	Ryde
Mr R Hanman	Cowes
Mrs J Hanman	Cowes
Mr S Winter	Newport
Mr A Culley	Ryde
Mrs V Culley	Ryde
Mr P Lewis	East Cowes
Mrs C Lewis	East Cowes
Mr J Caunt	Ventnor
Ms M Speller	Bembridge
Ms S Bradley	Yarmouth
Mrs N Cummins	Brighstone

Wightsole	
Mr A Hilson	Ventnor
Mrs C Hilson	Ventnor

Total membership for the IW Ramblers **554**
Main Group 525; Wightsole 29



Isle of Wight Ramblers annual general meeting

ALL MEMBERS OF the IW Ramblers are invited to attend this year's Group and Area AGM which will take place at 11.15am on Saturday 9th February 2013 at Arreton Community Centre. The out-going committee will present a report of last year's activities, including the annual accounts, for approval of the membership and a new committee will be elected. Attendees will be asked to

- consider the annual report,
- consider the income and expenditure and the balance sheet,
- appoint office holders and the committee,
- nominate representatives to the General Council,
- appoint an independent examiner for the accounts,
- discuss and consider motions submitted in writing.

It is important to note that if certain office holders or an independent examiner cannot be found, the AGM can authorise the committee to fill these vacancies at their discretion at a later date.

The AGM agenda is as follows:

- welcome,
- apologies for absence,
- approval of last year's AGM minutes and any matters arising,

- presentation and approval of annual reports and accounts,
- election of committee members and independent examiner,
- discussion of motions,
- close.

Arrangements for the day are as follows:

9am	Local walk
11.15am	Group 1 AGM
12.00pm	Area AGM
1.15pm	Lunch
2.30pm	Talk by Janet Davies
3.15pm	Tea/coffee

Please note the following essential information

Nominations/motions to **Group** must be submitted in writing to the Group Secretary Rio Bellgore-Gulit, please call her on 07800 528626 to get her address, whilst those for **Area or General Council** must be submitted in writing to David Howarth, Area Chairman, 4 Woodlands, Totland Bay, Isle of Wight, PO39 0FE, in both cases **no later than 12th January 2013.**

- Appointment of a Rambles Secretary, Social Events Secretary, Area Council Representative and a Footpath Sub Committee Representative, will be made at the first Group Committee Meeting after the AGM.

Isle of Wight Ramblers AGM lunch booking form

Please send lunch bookings (£5.50 per person) to **Ann Wellings, Group Treasurer, 66 Silver Trees, Shanklin, IW PO37 7ND**

I/We wish to attend the IOW Ramblers AGM

Name(s) _____

I/We enclose a cheque for £ _____ payable to the IW Ramblers.



Look out for this leaflet from the Isle of Wight Council. *Bikes, Boots and Hooves* gives sensible advice on how the Island's shared paths should be used.

Over 50 successes for Donate-a-Gate

DURING 2011-12 IW Ramblers has received twenty more footpath gate donations, bringing the total number to 55 since the scheme started, and we're planning a special opening ceremony early in 2013 for the 50th gate, once it has been installed.

Gate donations have also helped to provide matching funds on two footpath access improvement projects this year.

Initial difficulties meeting the Inland Revenue's criteria for gift aid on gate donations were resolved by a simple revision of the design of the plaque attached to each new gate and we are now on track to claim gift aid on the latest ten eligible donations.

Ramblers' groups in Derbyshire, Norfolk and Sussex have expressed an interest in instigating their own donate-a-gate schemes, based on the Island model.

We "Leica" Mike's picture!

IN FACT, WE'RE not sure what make of camera Mike Slater uses, Leica or otherwise – but whatever it is, he certainly gets results. This image was taken at Godshill Model Village and is the winning photograph from the spring 2012 photo competition in which entrants were asked to send in pictures of Island scenes. Mike was presented with his prize – a framed art print valued at £28 – by competition sponsor Brian Gilbert (*pictured inset, left*) of Art Frames in Freshwater. Well done, Mike.



Yachties, a heathen – and a murderer

IT'S OFTEN SAID that one of the best ways of making new friends is to join a Ramblers walk, and here at walkTALK we're intrigued by some of the characters who may be encountered at next year's Isle of Wight Walking Festival. As usual, the festival will be enriched by a wide range of walks lead by some of our local members, many of whom have given their walks interesting titles. So, who would you like to meet? Yachties? Yes, certainly. A heathen? Well perhaps that would be an acquired taste. But a murderer? OK, why not?

You'll learn about many an old sea salt if you join Howard Duffus's walk *Yachties of Yore*. Howard will also introduce you to a heathen, in his *Heath or Heathen* walk, while brave walkers will come face to face – figuratively speaking, of course – with a killer on his *Murderer Michal Morey* walk. All of these promise to be entertaining and fun, but there's more. Why not join Tim and Jackie Hough on their *Whirling Around Whitwell* walk, perhaps via

Secret Wootton or *Coastal Corner*, both lead by Carol Hamilton? *Variety is the Spice of Island Life* after all, as participants will discover on this walk lead by Iris Fay. And then there's the mysteriously titled *Snakes and Ladders – the Revival*. What's that about? Join leaders Jenny Mitchell and Brian Ould to find out.

Satisfy your curiosity by joining Rio Bellgore-Gulit and meeting up with *Ros, Lin and Ivy*. And if that's not enough, try Rio's walk *The 39 Steps* – an intriguing but understandable misnomer if ever there was one!

- Keep an eye on the Isle of Wight Walking Festival website for emerging information about the event next May.

A huge thank you to all Ramblers members who have once again offered to lead walks in 2013, not only during the main festival, but also the autumn weekend event which will be held in October. You can see the full list of Ramblers walks at www.iowramblers.com

Path improvements on the way

THE ISLE OF WIGHT Council has been successful in obtaining a £3.95m government grant to improve tourism and sustainable travel.

With match-funding from the council, this will bring the total to over £5million, most being spent on providing new tourist "pods" at Cowes, Ryde, Yarmouth, Sandown and Shanklin where information on attractions, accommodation and so on can be accessed. Visitors will be able to use smart phones to get information about walking and cycling on the Island. New bus services will also be introduced. The improvements will take place between 2013 and 2015.

There will be better facilities for walkers and cyclists to encourage tourists to visit the Island, with new walking and cycling routes, both filling in network gaps and

creating circular routes. Increased access to tourist and leisure destinations is also planned as well as improving access for mobility impaired.

There will also be recognition of operators who provide facilities for cyclists and walkers.

The IW Ramblers is being consulted on the detail of these proposals which could include new multipurpose routes on the east Medina, and a new Newport to Ryde route. A circular walk linking Island villages is also proposed.

A key feature of the project is the development of a mobile phone app showing routes, destinations, facilities, public transport links and general information.

- See the spring edition of walkTALK for an interview with the new Island head of tourism, David Thornton



Cutting the ribbon on steam railway commemorative footpath gate



Main picture Brian Ballard (left) cuts the ribbon as Peter Vail looks on
Inset, left to right Ramblers meet up with the line-side maintenance team; the line-side team with the new gate

UNDER THE ISLE of Wight Ramblers "Donate a Gate" scheme, a footpath stile near the IW Steam Railway has been replaced with a gate carrying a plaque to celebrate the Railway's 40th Anniversary last year. On Friday 26th October representatives of the Steam Railway joined the IW Ramblers on a six-mile walk. On reaching the gate volunteers from the Railway's line-side maintenance team met the 49 walkers as the new gate was formally opened by Wootton

Bridge Parish Councillor, Brian Ballard.

General manager of the IW Steam Railway, Peter Vail said, "Generous donations received during a series of walks of the former Island railway lines organised between the IW Steam Railway and IW Ramblers last year funded this gate. We are delighted to work with the IW Ramblers in providing a gate that will benefit all walkers."



Wight Sole walks winter/spring 2013

For younger ramblers – friendly welcome guaranteed! Latest details: www.wightsole.org.uk

Sunday 6th January *New Year Resolution*

Meet 10.30am at Priory Car Park, opposite Carisbrooke Castle. Dodge the asylum/luxury flats, up some Downs and through the Froglands. Six miles. Allow three hours. Packed lunch. GR 489875

Dave and Suzanne 282322

Sunday 20th January *Bishop's Finger*

Meet 10.30am in Brighstone village car park behind the Three Bishops pub. Seven miles. Allow 3.5 hours. Packed lunch. Possible drink in Three Bishops afterwards. GR 427827

Alison 810220

Sunday 3rd February *Chale and Whale?*

Meet 10.30am at the shop on Chale Green for a walk towards Niton and back. Eight/nine miles. Allow four hours. Packed lunch. GR 486798

Gary 299511

Sunday 17th February *River Ramble*

Meet 10.30am by the sculpture opposite the Quay Arts in Newport for a walk along the Medina to East Cowes, over on the floating bridge and back along the cycle path. About nine miles. Allow 4.5 hours. Packed lunch. GR 501895

Michael 565301

Sunday 3rd March *Firestone, Quarr and Beach Ramble*

Meet 10.30am at Firestone Copse main car

park. Nine miles. Allow 4.5 hours. Packed lunch. GR 557910

Kerrie 07883 040120

Sunday 17th March *Making Tracks*

Meet 10.30am at Shanklin Railway Station for a seven/eight mile walk along the coast and back via woods and railway line. Bring a packed lunch. Allow four hours. GR 581819

Tracey 867603

Sunday 31st March *The Easter Bunny Meets Quentin Tarantino Walk*

Meet 10.30am at Newchurch car park at GR for a nine mile walk. Bring a packed lunch. Allow five hours. GR 562854

Toby 249629

Sunday 14th April *Ticket to Ryde Revisited*

Meet 10.30am on Ryde Esplanade to walk round the coast to Shanklin. Either park at

Shanklin station and train to Ryde at the start, or start in Ryde and train back at the end! About 14 miles. Bring a packed lunch. Allow seven hours. GR 594929

Hilary 299511

Sunday 28th April *Rookley Ramble*

Meet 10.30am at Rookley Green for a 12-mile walk in preparation for WTW. Bring a packed lunch and allow six hours. GR 507842

Alison 810220

Sunday 12th May *Walk the Wight*

Sign up online for the whole thing or relax with just a half!! <http://www.iwhospice.org/walk-the-wight.aspx>
Registration open early January 2013.

Walk the Wight

Want to be on our email list for walks?

Contact Gary 299511
or email
wightsole@yahoo.co.uk

Lost or running late?

Gary's mobile number is 07804 856249



Sundays at Three

IW RAMBLERS HAS teamed up with West Wight Marketing Group which promotes businesses that encourage walking and cycling activities in West Wight.

West Wight Marketing Group also arranges entertainment events each month on Sunday afternoons at 3pm. There is a donation of £3 per session, and profits from these events, in 2013, will be given to IW Ramblers Donate a Gate scheme.

We are arranging walks prior to the entertainment – the first three walks in 2013 all start from HF Holiday Centre at Freshwater Bay at 1.30pm. HF Holidays are partners of The Ramblers.

There are nine events planned throughout the year – make a note in your diaries of the first three this coming spring:

20th January

Island Writers

A talk by Paul Armfield of Waterstones bookshop in Newport; also a short talk about Isle of Wight Pearl, previewing its 25th anniversary

17th February

Catherine and Friends

Musical entertainment

17th March

Celtic Hands Across the Sea

Celebrate St Patrick's Day with the Isle of Wight Scottish Fiddlers

A £3 donation is requested for each event and refreshments are also available to purchase.

There is no need to book – just turn up on the day!

www.westwight.com



Towards a complete Wight Coast Trail

The journey so far...

IN 2009 THE Marine and Coastal Access Act was passed by Parliament to improve coastal access and set up a footpath around the English coast. This Act has the potential to solve the many shortfalls of the existing incomplete Isle of Wight coastal path. Unfortunately the Act will only apply to the Island if a special Order is signed by the environment minister.

This has been a major campaigning issue for the IW Ramblers during 2012. Our Coastal Access Campaign Team has worked to raise awareness across the Island, to encourage people to lobby government and to gain support from the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce and the Isle of Wight Council for a complete Wight Coast Trail. This has involved the distribution of 6,000 leaflets, social media activity, articles in the local press, interviews on local radio, country show displays, publicity walks and meetings with several organisations and Andrew Turner, our local MP.

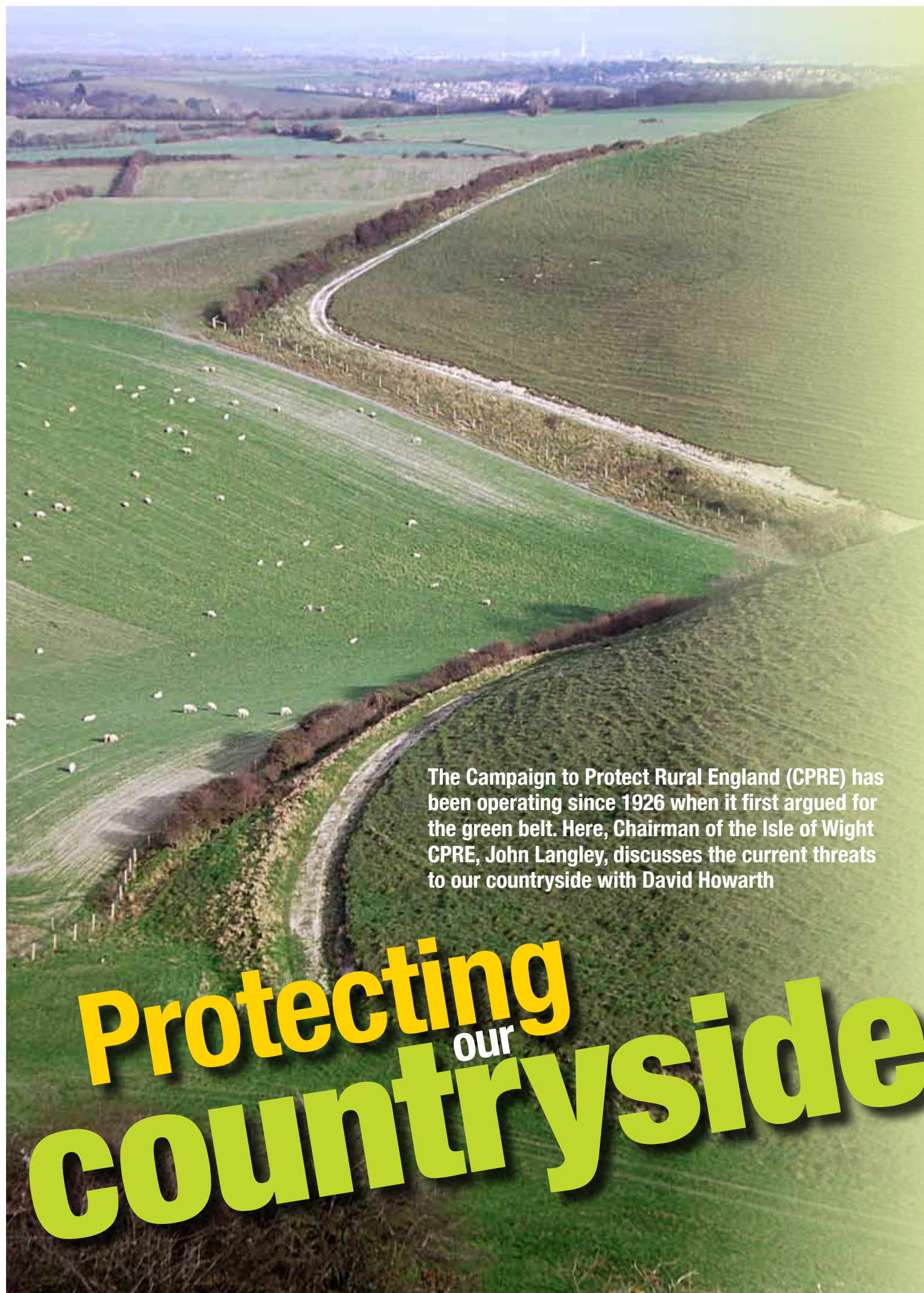
In July, DEFRA responded by setting up a consultation on both whether the Island should be included under the Act and what priority Natural England should give to implementation on the Isle of Wight. With help from Ramblers HQ we succeeded in encouraging more than 2,000 individuals and organisations both on and off the Island to make submissions to the consultation by the time it closed on 16th November.

DEFRA will publicise a summary of the consultation on their website. If a decision is made to include the Isle of Wight, an Order will be signed in April 2013. Natural England will then decide when to programme implementation work on the Island.

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to our campaign success so far.

Mike Slater
Access Officer





The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) has been operating since 1926 when it first argued for the green belt. Here, Chairman of the Isle of Wight CPRE, John Langley, discusses the current threats to our countryside with David Howarth

Protecting our countryside

David What are the main issues endangering the Island's countryside?

John Housing development, traffic, waste management, changes to farming, climate change and energy production.

David What concerns have you for housing?

John The planners insist on creating development envelopes and the like, but there has to be a demand for housing. The danger lies in the lack of infrastructure to support housing development – before you know it, our Island will be covered in creeping concrete.

David We have seen many changes recently affecting how we deal with waste including much more recycling.

John Well you can't just dig bigger holes and bury the stuff. CPRE nationally are trying to reintroduce the deposit scheme on drinks bottles although the Government is opposed. On the Island we have a comprehensive litter collection scheme which has attracted national awards. We give cheques from a legacy fund to suitable youth and other charities and we educate them about the dangers that litter causes.

David Farming has changed dramatically, with mechanisation and creation of large fields. What concerns do you have?

John Food production is essential, and all land should be used for this purpose. The construction of solar farms should be limited to those farms with poor soil.

David Is the countryside safe in the hands of the next generation? We do not see many young people on our walks.

John Many youngsters seem to have little regard for the countryside. Take-away packaging appears all over the countryside. The outlets do clean up around their own premises but this is just not enough. The younger generation seem to favour the construction of wind turbines which will have a damaging effect on the beauty of our landscape. We favour more research into tidal power. This is predictable and reliable power production. The feed in tariffs for wind turbines create money for the developers but not much power. Subsonic noise from turbines is a real concern and this needs to be properly investigated. We need to reconsider the mix of renewable energy schemes that are needed on our Island. The proposed biomass plant on the Medina could produce sixty per cent of the Island's electricity needs. It would be a large plant but perhaps this should be built substantially underground and so not affect the landscape. The waste heat should be utilised, so a better location for this type of plant would be nearer the hospital and prisons. We need younger

The green belt was intended to prevent ribbon development around towns and to resist the carving up of our countryside.

In town planning, the green belt is now a policy for controlling urban growth. The idea is for a ring of countryside where urbanisation will be resisted for the foreseeable future, maintaining an area where agriculture, forestry and outdoor leisure can be expected to prevail.

members to join us, but everyone is busy at work and with other activities and don't seem to make time for helping out. We need to engage with children to get their participation. We were pleased to support a scheme at Chale to get children involved with a garden project. This has been so successful that local vandalism has reduced to negligible levels.

David What can be done about transport on the Island?

John We have reached gridlock in Newport. There has been a massive increase in traffic over the last 15 years. More education is needed to ensure drivers make the best use of our roads and enforcement is essential. The new developments at Penny Feathers, Pan

Meadows and East Cowes will generate even more traffic on our roads. So many people have to travel daily to the mainland to find work. There are too many cars per household. Signage should be rationalised – there are too many and we should be recommending a reduction in unnecessary signs. There are too many illegal "pop-up" signs. The area opposite Morrisons at Lake is particularly grim.

David I know that you are concerned about our dark skies. What is being done?

John We object to planning applications if they involve upward lighting schemes. We give awards for good light and now we are being asked for advice for new schemes such as the IOW Steam Railway. LEDs are very efficient and are being used more frequently. A scheme at St Mary's Hospital car park won our top award this year. LEDs are controllable so that road lighting could be varied according to its needs. The Island has some of the best dark skies in the country – this is a valuable tourist attraction. An area in West Wight, near Brighthstone, might become a designated dark skies park.

David How does CPRE work with other organisations on the island?

John We are proud of the work of our Island Steering Group. We work with The Ramblers, Isle of Wight Society, Solent Protection Society, NFU, Wight Nature Fund, Isle of Wight Women's Institute and National Trust. In this way we can debate common issues and campaign to make improvements. This approach is the envy of many mainland CPRE areas. We may be a small branch but our ideas are appreciated, as is our commitment to supporting CPRE nationally from this somewhat remote location.



Main picture The view north from Garstons Down towards Carisbrooke
Above John Langley (far right) at the CPRE with previous president Bill Bryson (centre). The new president is Andrew Motion. Second left is Patricia Almond, winner of the Marsh Award for organising litter picking on the Island



Carol Hamilton reports on an organised walk from Mottisfont to Romsey in the Test Valley last June

ON THE DRY but rather overcast morning of Thursday 14th June this year, some 50 or so members boarded a coach at the Red Funnel terminal in Southampton, having made their way across the Solent.

We were destined for Mottisfont Abbey, north of Romsey, in Hampshire's Test Valley. The intention was to walk some six miles, from Mottisfont to Romsey, following part of the Test Way, on a route that I had devised. Jackie and Tim Hough and myself had recce'd this walk a couple of weeks before. Thanks must go to my husband, Robin, who had kindly given up golf for the day, to drive us to Mottisfont, drop us off there and to collect us from Romsey later in the day.

At Mottisfont, several members left the walking party, as they wished to visit

the Abbey and its wonderful rose gardens. The coach remained there and was to transport them to Romsey later in the morning. Jackie and Tim led the walk and I was very happy to be back marker. The sun was shining at that stage so it looked to be a perfect day.

A couple of miles later we stopped for coffee at Annie's tearoom at Kimbridge. Although the proprietor had been given notice of our intended visit, the staff seemed rather overwhelmed by the forty or so hungry and thirsty Ramblers. Eventually all were served and fortified, we resumed our walk. What we had not realised, was that in the weeks since our recce, a lot of rain had fallen! Returning to the footpath, which previously was dry and firm, we were met with a path that resembled a river. Trying to negotiate this, without getting excessively



Main picture Ramblers congregate at Mottisfont Abbey
Inset top Lunch time! **Inset bottom** Linda Sheasby and Ann Parker

wet feet, was difficult and progress was slowed. I'm afraid sodden boots were the result, but everyone took it in good heart.

Another result of the wet weather was the excessive growth of nettles. Although the Test Way is a major walking route, Hampshire's rights of way team hadn't been very busy on the path clearance work. Fortunately, we had Tim "the Slasher" with us! He was very active with his walking pole, clearing a path through the head high nettles. We also came across dozens of stiles

en route (someone should tell the local Ramblers about our "Donate a Gate scheme") and cows, which just wanted to make friends!

We stopped for a pleasant picnic lunch and then soon after walking through the lovely "Squab Wood" and through the very wet water meadows, we found ourselves in Romsey. There was then time for a visit to the Abbey (where an organ practice was taking place), a walk round the town and a nice cup of tea before returning to the coach. It was a grand day out.



Joan Deacon was a founder member of the Isle of Wight Ramblers. She died in July 2012, aged 76. **David Howarth** pays tribute

JOAN DEACON SPENT most of her life on the Island and was a member of The Ramblers for some 50 years.

Following a spell as a committee member for the Southampton group, she formed the Isle of Wight Group in March 1968. The rights of way were in need of much care and Joan campaigned to improve the Island network. Ninety cases of obstruction were reported in the first year alone. Joan became Area Footpath Secretary in 1974 and continued in that role until 2000. She wrote three local walking guides which have sold tens of thousands of copies, and all proceeds from the sale of books have been used to benefit our footpaths.

In 1997 she led a march at East Cowes in support of coastal access through the Osborne estate and this was followed by a petition to the Isle of Wight Council. This is a cause that we are still fighting, but now making some real progress to

meet Joan's aspirations.

President of The Ramblers, Kate Ashbrook, said "Joan was a pillar of the IW Ramblers for nearly half a century. When she started her work, the Island's paths were in a parlous state but thanks to her quiet determination and tireless efforts over the decades, they are now in excellent order and are promoted as a tourist asset".

Joan received a Certificate of Achievement from The Ramblers in 2009.

She remained on the Area Council until January 2012 when she was presented with paintings given by our grateful membership.

David Howarth, Area Chairman said "Joan achieved something very special for the Island. What she did was inspirational. Today, we have many members who volunteer in a variety of ways. But it is vital that more members join in this work as a lasting legacy to Joan."



Main picture Joan takes a break near Downcourt Manor Farm
Inset top to bottom Joan receives a Certificate of Achievement from chairman David Howarth; Joan chats with Brian Ould at The Ramblers' 75th anniversary exhibition at Newport Minster, in June 2010

Tunnelvision...restored

A popular south Wight path had been closed for four years until the Isle of Wight Ramblers rolled their sleeves up and reopened it – in two days



Main picture Left to right Charlie Peach, Jeff Doolan and Chris Miles
Inset The wall takes shape

AN IMPORTANT LINK path, the Niton Tunnel Path (NT30), from the Undercliff to the coast path, has been reopened. The Isle of Wight Council had imposed a temporary closure order some four years ago.

A wall along the path was leaning, and the council deemed this to be unsafe. They commissioned an engineer's report which stated that repairs would cost well over £10,000.

The IW Ramblers has been campaigning to reopen this path using volunteer labour to make the path safe. A team of nine ramblers assisted local builder Charlie Peach to rebuild the wall. In just two days a new lower wall was built. An excellent job well done – where there's a will, there's a way...

Do you still want a walks programme?

WE'RE SURE YOU'LL agree The Ramblers is a successful and influential charity on the Island. We adopt a professional approach and are blessed with a small team of extremely knowledgeable volunteers from our membership of 550. We'd like to thank every person who makes such a valuable contribution.

There is one important area where we're particularly short of volunteers for next year – a Walks Programme Organiser. This is a critical part of the Group's work and could result in there being no programme of walks. The organiser coordinates the walks sent in by leaders and submits rambles for the

Walking Festivals (May and October), Winter Walks and others.

The Group is short of committee members for specific tasks and in the near future existing volunteers will wish to step down. We are already in the position where there will be no more evening socials due to lack of support. Our walks programme is also at risk if we do not find a volunteer to become the new Walks Programme Organiser.

So our plea is for volunteers to join the Group committee now with a view to taking on this specific task.

Every assistance will be given to new volunteers and in particular the

present Walks Programme Organiser, Carol Hamilton, is willing to help a new member/members in the post in any way possible.

This year we're pleased to say 65 new members have joined the Isle of Wight Ramblers and we're always pleased to see these new members on the organised walks and at the social events. Even if you don't join us for the walks, you could perhaps help on the committees.

We hope you'll contact us and volunteer for this important post so that we can maintain an ongoing walking programme.

David Howarth, Area Chairman

Tel 759823

Pam Dana, Group Vice Chairman

Tel 863189

Walk the new Tapnell Trail



From the 1970 Isle of Wight Festival of Music, to a pioneer Victorian photographer – via the Common Blue and Pyramidal Orchid – the Tapnell Trail is now open for your rambling enjoyment

A THIRD ACCESSIBLE trail has been created by IW Ramblers.

The 6.5 mile Tapnell Trail starts at Freshwater Causeway and reaches Tapnell before returning via Wellow and Afton Downs. The walk passes the site of the famous 1970 Music Festival and was made possible by the creation of a new footpath which avoids the use of the busy Newport road.

The route crosses open

farmland where stiles have been replaced by gates. Three of the gates were provided by our Donate a Gate scheme. A further three gates were funded by West Wight Landscape Partnership.

A new leaflet describing the Trail and giving background information has been produced by the IW Ramblers and is being distributed across the Island. West Wight Landscape Partnership

also funded all costs for the leaflet. It can be downloaded from our website www.iowramblers.com

The trail is suitable for people who enjoy a long walk but would rather avoid stiles, steps and steep hills. It also links with the easy access trail around the Yar estuary to form a 10.5 mile route exploring much of the West Wight countryside.



Main pictures top to bottom Great panoramic views from the Tapnell Trail; a detailed map forms part of the Trail leaflet Inset The Trail has no stiles



A big thank you to all our summer show volunteers



Isle of Wight Ramblers were present at various events in 2012. We attended the County Show and National Trust Bembridge Fort Day – two new events for us which attracted a lot of attention from countryside enthusiasts.

Pam Dana and her team also attended the two-day shows at Chale, Wolverton and the Garlic Festival and would like to personally thank the following people:

John Gurney-Champion (storage of equipment); *Howard Duffus* (setting up our stalls); *Ann Wellings* (secretarial help); *Bryan Chatting* (overnight security); *Danny Siegal* (St Mary's Hospital – badge making); and all volunteers for giving up their time at the shows. Most people find this an enjoyable task with the opportunity to explore the show. Thanks also to West Wight Landscape Partnership who donated tables, stands and a gazebo, and to all volunteers who helped at the shows this year.

West Wight's strange sights!

As anyone who is apt to go for a regular wander will tell you, one of the great things about walking is that you never know what you might see while you're out and about on your travels. As if to prove the theory, these two curiosities were seen on a recent ramble around the south west coast. One wonders whether the council's Rights of Way department knows something we don't – and whether the (thankfully false!) limb has anything to do with those extraterrestrials...



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Squeeze stile's not quite our style



Here's another left-field view of life in the countryside from Island cartoonist Rupert Besley. This is called a "squeeze stile". We can see why... Perhaps these stiles aren't quite in The Ramblers' spirit of access for all!

Contact information

Area Council		
Area Chair	David Howarth	759823
Area Secretary	David Howarth	759823
Treasurer	Liz Brammall	741022
Footpath Secretary	Mike Marchant	564909
Membership	Bobby Carlin	740332
Access Officer	Mike Slater	752997
Countryside Officer	David Howarth	759823
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Wight Sole Group		
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Items for the next edition of walkTalk

Thank you to those who submitted material for this edition. If you would like to contribute to the next edition, published in April 2013 please send to:

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By 8th March 2013 at the latest.

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