

Honeythorne Notes Installed Outside Heritage Museum

In August the wrought-iron notes from Honeythorne on the Esplanade were installed on the new railings outside the Museum along Grove Road. Honeythorne was the home of broadcaster, lecturer and orchestral conductor Victor Fleming and his wife Molly, who came to Ventnor in 1948. Sometime in the late 1960s, they had the idea for the musical notes to decorate the front of their garden wall, facing the Esplanade.

When Honeythorne fell into ruin in the early 1990s, the V&DLHS, of which Victor was a founder member and vice-chairman for a time, managed to rescue one of the two sets of notes. It was held in the museum for many years, but not displayed due to lack of space and the need to repair the ironwork. Several of the notes had fallen off and been stuck back on randomly, making the actual music a bit of a mystery.

As part of the recent renovation and relaunch of the Heritage Centre, last year the Society launched a fundraising appeal to restore the notes. World-class violinist Richard Studdt, whose father owned the Gaiety arcade on the Esplanade, helped identify the music and Graham Potter of Bonchurch Forge did the restoration work.

Lesley Telford's short article on the notes in the *South Wight Chronicle* in early August came to the attention of Paul Davies, a former Ventnorian who had originally made the notes. Paul popped in to the Museum a few weeks later to fill us in on the early history of the notes – until then, we didn't know who had made them.

Paul told us he heard about the idea for the notes from the Flemings' son Peter, an old friend of his. A Design and Technology teacher at Nicholas Breakspear School in St Albans, Herts, at the time, Paul used the school facilities to create them.

A Note from the Editor

It's been a very busy summer for the Society, including the launch of the newly renovated museum and our high-profile involvement in this year's Carnival, among other things. It's also been a while since the last issue. So there's a lot to cover!

Now that I've been editing the newsletter for a year, I have a better feel for how much work is involved. Next year there will be four issues instead of three, coming out in January, April, July and October. This will spread things out a bit, so we don't have such long gaps between some issues. Notice of upcoming events should be more timely too.

Most people will be able to pick up their copies at Society talks (except in January), or at the Museum, and/or by e-mail. To save money, however, we will be sending out just two mailings a year for those who need



Paul Davies, maker of the Honeythorne notes, with his creation outside the Heritage Museum.

The music in the notes now installed at the Museum accompanies the lyric "Es gibt ein Wiedersehen" ("We'll meet again"), sung by Adele the Maid in Act I of Johann Strauss's operetta "Die Fledermaus" ("The Bat"). The music in the missing section is from the overture to Richard Wagner's "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg".

The other half of the notes are still missing. If anyone has information about what happened to that section, we'd love to hear about it. If it still exists, there is room for it next to its companion outside the Museum on Grove Road. Perhaps it is lurking at the back of someone's garage or hiding someone's basement?

– Jeffrey Mazo

to receive the newsletter by post. So you'll get two issues at once, twice a year.

I'd like to take this opportunity to invite readers to send me anything you think might be of interest to the Society membership – this can be info or reports on talks or publications related to our local history, even if they are by other groups. Or it can be personal reminiscences about aspects of our history. And if you want to write up Society talks and so forth, just ask – I'd be glad for the help, and it's more interesting if more people than just me are writing. I'd especially welcome questions or answers for the Notes and

Queries column. You can drop off anything for me at the Museum, or e-mail me at jeffreymazo@hotmail.com.

– Jeffrey Mazo



Launch of Refurbished Museum

On 30 June the V&DLHS held a launch at the Heritage Centre to celebrate the substantial Museum refurbishment that took place over the winter.

Ventnor Mayor Jason Mack, a Trustee of the Society, gave a short speech in which he talked about the value of the Museum to the town and the high quality of the the refurbishment.

V&DLHS Chair Janet Griffin congratulated Michael Freeman for leading the team of volunteers who contributed in many capacities from painting walls to making Victorian clothes for the new window displays. She also thanked those who sponsored panels for the new display screens which have brightened the Museum and allowed easier access for wheelchair users. The new, digitised displays will allow the content of screen panels to be easily changed.

Guests at the launch included representatives of local community groups, other Island local history societies, and individuals and local businesses who sponsored the display screens.



Above: Ventnor Mayor Jason Mack and Economic Development Officer Nick Cox examine one of the exhibits.

Below: V&DLHS Secretary Lesley Telford chats with David Thornton, head of Visit Isle of Wight.



Carnival Success

During Carnival week, when the town was also busy with the Fringe, entry to the Musuem was free. We had 246 visitors (115 holiday makers, 97 locals and 34 children) and made £203.36 from sales and donations. The previous week we had 43 visitors (34 paid and 9 free) and an income of £160.10.

Yvonne Hardy's slide show for the Carnival Association at St Catherine's church netted £63 in donations.

As part of the Fringe, Ventnor Arts Club screened two films from the Society on Wednesday 10 August. '150 years of

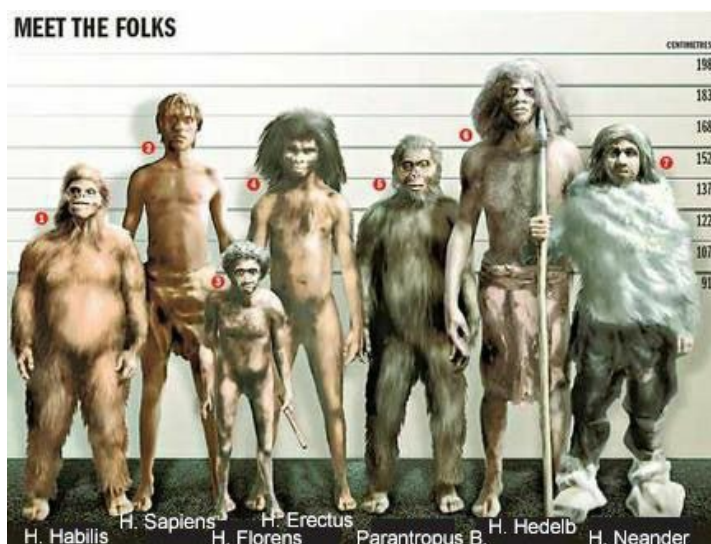
Steam' was presented by Roger Silsbury and included rare film belonging to the Isle of Wight Steam Railway. We see trains arriving out of the tunnel at Ventnor Station amid choking clouds of steam. 'Ventnor Unseen' showed film and video from the Society archives, including past carnivals, the great storm of 1987, streets, holidays and ordinary life.

Tim Callaghan Martin offered editing help, using the work of local musicians including Angelina Grimshaw, Plastic Mermaids, PC3 and Charming. Paul Armfield wrote a song to accompany images of the aftermath of the Great Storm of 1987, reliving his own experience as a teenager at that time.

After the screening, several of the audience wanted to share their own memories: one man told the story of firemen patiently sifting through the rubble in their house in October 1987 to find an engagement ring lost when the roof blew off and the chimney crashed into the rooms below. (It was found!)

The Society is now appealing for old video and film that could be shown and used in future collaborations with local artists. Cine film and video is often lying unseen and unwatched in cupboards and attics; it may not be of professional quality, but it can contain vivid evocations of the past as well as providing a record of streets, buildings and people now gone.

The event attracted so many people that some were turned away, so 'Ventnor Unseen' was repeated again on the Friday of Carnival Week, and both films were shown again on Friday 23 September. The Society collected no less than £198.76 in donations, and our total income for Carnival Week was £465.42!



Upcoming Society Talk: 'All Change, or Life Before Your Very Eyes'

The final Society Talk of 2016 will take place on Friday 28 October at 19:30 at the Masonic Hall on Grove Road.

Delian Backhouse-Fry from the Isle of Wight Natural History and Archaeology Society will speak on 'All Change, or Life Before Your Very Eyes'. 'We now know that at least ten different humans were alive and kicking on planet earth 75,000 years ago. It has taken 20 years for DNA and genetics to show us exactly who was living on our earth and where. It's not over: every day new discoveries unfold. I have always said "You can never say 'never' in Archaeology".'

**Copy Date for Next Issue
Friday 20 January 2017**



New Heritage Trail: Time Travel Ventnor

Readers may have noticed the heritage boards that recently cropped up all over Ventnor, including one just outside the Museum. They are part of a free heritage trail including nine boards from the Esplanade to the Downs. The board outside the Museum is no. 1, but you can start anywhere you like, as the walk is circular.

The nine boards are: Spring Hill (outside the Heritage Centre), the Winter Gardens, the Haven, the Esplanade, Belgrave Road, Steephill (outside the Park), the Botanic Garden, the industrial estate, and the downs, opposite the former radar station. Copies of the trail map are also posted at various points around the town.

The trail is the product of the Ventnor & Undercliff Heritage Partnership, a volunteer-run organisation. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund via the East Wight Landscape Partnership and Down to the Coast, its other sponsors include the Town Council and the V&DLHS. Many of the photographs used come from the Heritage Centre archives.

A leaflet for the trail is available at the Heritage Centre or by download from the Heritage Trail website.

Websites:

Heritage Trail: <http://timetravelventnor.co.uk/>

VUHP: <http://www.ventnorheritagetrail.co.uk/index.html>

– Jeffrey Mazo

Local History Walk

On Saturday 22 October Richard Downing will lead 'Ventnor's Health Heritage', a circular walk to key sites in Ventnor's development as a Victorian health resort exploring climate, health, medicine, sanatoria, hospitals and doctors. Meet at the Ventnor Esplanade pumping station (OS ref 563773) at 10:30am. The walk lasts 2.5 hours and covers 2.5 miles. Donations to Ventnor and Undercliff Heritage Partnership.

For further details contact Richard Downing (tel: (01983 856210).



Above: Natural cast of three-toed dinosaur (possibly Iguanodon) footprint, about 12 inches across, from the foreshore at Sandown. From Trevor Price, 'New dinosaur footprints exposed in rocks of the Wessex Formation, Lower Cretaceous, at Sandown, Isle of Wight, southern England', *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*, 2014, **113**, 758–769.

Society Talk: Dinosaur Footprints

On 29 April 2016 Trevor Price from the Dinosaur Isle Museum in Sandown, and a visiting academic at Southampton University, spoke about discoveries of dinosaur footprints in rocks underneath the beach opposite the Isle of Wight Zoo in Sandown. Dinosaur footprints have been known in west Wight since the nineteenth century, and others were discovered in 1979 on the beach at Yaverland, northeast of the car park. The new site was discovered in 2007, after storm waves scoured the beach down to the underlying bedrock, leaving it exposed between February and May.

The footprints come in many sizes and types, representing a wide range of possible species, including ornithopods such as Iguanodon, meat eaters, huge plant-eating sauropods, and smaller armoured ankylosaurs. The rocks in which they are found date to the Early Cretaceous epoch, some 125 million years ago. They suggest a river system and floodplain. The paleoenvironment in which the rocks formed suggests the possibility of crocodile prints as well; if found these would be a first for the Isle of Wight.

The footprints are important not just for what they tell us about the Island's past, but also because many involve an unusual preservation method. The buried trackways may extend further along the shore to the southwest, as well as inland under the sea wall and out to sea.

– Jeffrey Mazo

Society Talk: An Old Photo Album

Society member Colin Beavis presented a slide show to the Society on 27 May 2016 based on an old family album containing more than 50 photographs dating back to 1870 or earlier (some of the shots show the pier and other pre-1870 locales). The album includes pictures from Ventnor, other parts of the Island, and Portsmouth and Southsea.

Some of the most interesting and rarest pictures included Cook's Castle at Wroxall, built as a folly in the 1770s; the

wreck of the *Underley*, which ran aground off Luccombe Chine in 1871; St Catherine's lighthouse before its height was reduced in 1875; and Ventnor Harbour under construction in 1872. Further afield, there is a photo of HMS *Victory* afloat before it was put in drydock in 1922.

While all the pictures are of historical interest on their own, as a collection they are a valuable record of one person's, or one family's, interest in the Island and its environs in the Victorian period. It is interesting to speculate about why these photos in particular were taken, and preserved, especially in view of the effort involved in taking some of them.

– Jeffrey Mazo

Right: Sir Richard Worsley, 7th Baronet by Joshua Reynolds (1775/6) (Wikimedia Commons). Below: Elegant Edwardian women (perhaps a mother and her daughters) parade for a photograph on the western cliffs.





Society Talk: The Life and Loves of Sir Richard Worsley

Sir Richard Worsley is perhaps best known as the husband of Lady Seymour Worsley, rumoured to have had 27 lovers and the subject of the 2015 BBC 2 film 'The Scandalous Lady W'. But, as Dr Linda Bek put it in her talk on 24 June 2016, "there was more to Richard than his love life".

Worsley inherited Appuldurcombe House in 1768, at the age of 17. He made major improvements and extensions, swept away the formal gardens and employed Capability Brown to replace them. He had the obelisk and Cook's Castle built, and restored the Pepperpot on St Catherine's Hill. He also wrote the first history of the Island.

Worsley became MP for Newport at 23, and the Governor of the Isle of Wight in 1780. In 1783–88 he travelled in Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, the Crimea and Egypt, amassing a collection of antiquities including reliefs from the Parthenon. He was the first British traveller to bring back Greek and Egyptian antiquities. Appuldurcombe became a museum for his collection, which included paintings by Leonardo, Michelangelo and Titian. He spent his last eight years in a mansion-like 'rustic retreat' in St Lawrence.

Dr Bek described Sir Richard as 'arrogant, ambitious and obsessive in pursuit of art and antiquities; Lady Worsley was just another part of his collection'. He gave prestige to an island otherwise a cultural backwater. When he died in 1805, Appuldurcombe passed to his niece but his collection was broken up. An unsubstantiated rumour had it that Lady Worsley appropriated what she could.

– Jeffrey Mazo

Society Talk: Mayfair by the Sea or Ventnor as You Never Saw It

On 29 July 2016 Michael Freeman spoke on Ventnor's growth as a winter health resort after Dr James Clark (later Queen Victoria's physician) identified it in 1830 as ideal for consumptives. Entrepreneurs from London descended on the nascent town to build accommodation for wealthy invalids so that they might escape the trials of an English winter. Ventnor became a virtual "colony of the West End" and acquired an international reputation, especially with wealthy Germans.

At its peak, the town's shops were selling the latest and best West End styles, Sèvres porcelain and Dresden china, luxury foodstuffs and other up-market products. Ventnor's hotels rivaled those of the French Riviera and London, and virtually every building was a lodging house. All of this was advertised in the pages of the *Times*.

And of course there was a whole industry to tend to the invalids, with five or six chemists and around twelve physicians in town in the 1890s. A Medical Hall was established on the current site of Boots on the High Street as early as 1836. Ventnor also became a magnet for migrants from elsewhere on the Island and from the mainland, to fulfil the demand for servants. Most visitors were of independent means and could fill their time with coach rides, walking, sketching, shopping, concerts and an active social round.

Summer 1914 marked the end of an era: with the outbreak of war, international visitors dried up. By 1915 boarding houses and shops were closing up, and by 1919 the town was a shadow of what it had been. Although it experienced a bit of a revival between the wars, Ventnor never fully recovered its former glory.

– Jeffrey Mazo



Museum Volunteers: Stephen Day

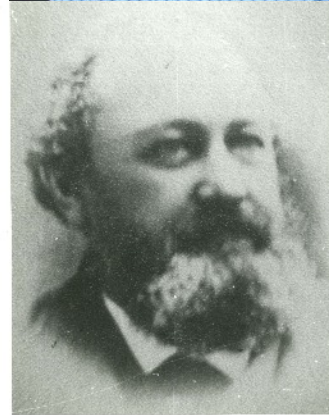
This is the first in a series of short articles about some of our 'backroom' volunteers whom you don't get to see in the Museum.

Stephen Day has been at work scanning our archives so we have electronic copies of key documents. He works two half days a week and in July 2015 he began scanning copies of the *South Wight Chronicle*, which began in 1991 when the *Isle of Wight Mercury* ceased publication. He is also scanning Fay Brown's contributions on local history and any other items with a local history focus. Having started from 1991 he is currently working on *Chronicle* issues for 2015 and has completed over 1,000 scans. We need another volunteer to index these for our database!

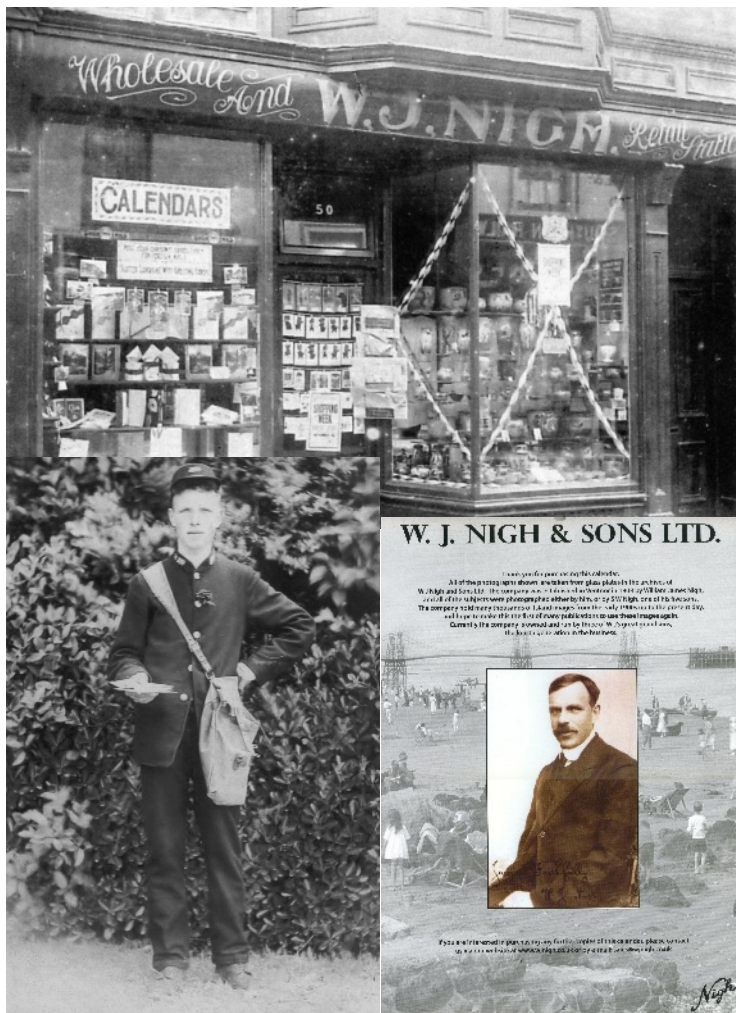
Stephen is interested in Bonchurch and Ventnor because some of his ancestors lived and worked here as builders. His great-great-grandfather, Stephen Day, built Cove Cottage in Belgrave Road in 1828 when John Hambrough employed him to build Steephill Castle. His great-great-grandfather Daniel built much of Spring Hill before 1840 when Henry Ingram started to build in Ventnor. Daniel then set up Daniel Day and Sons in Bonchurch.

Stephen has also been doing scanning work for the Carisbrooke Castle Museum – this is what led him to offer the same assistance to the Society. Stephen lives in Ryde and is a Committee member of the Ryde Social Heritage Group.

– Richard Downing



Above: Stephen Day, V&DLHS Archive volunteer. Left: Daniel Day, Stephen's great-great-grandfather.



Postcards from the Past

Society member Jenny Gardner has sent us these photographs of her grandfather W.J. Nigh's stationery shop at 50 High Street (currently the Turkish barbers), W.J. in his Post Office uniform as a boy, and a page from one of his calendars.

The firm was established in 1903 and moved to Ventnor High Street in 1919, using publishers from all over the country to print postcards using his own and other local photographers' work. In 1935 he added a printing works and produced cards not just of Ventnor but of many places around the country.

In 1965 the firm moved to Shanklin, where it is still trading under the fourth generation of Nighs. In fact Terry Nigh, another of W.J.'s grandchildren, is Archivist for the Shanklin and District Local History Society! Terry still has a collection of old material rescued from the cellar of 50 High Street. He gave a talk to the V&DLHS in February 2014 showing some of the Ventnor view glass plates he has been scanning from the cellar material. In our own archives we have a great many examples of W.J. Nigh's postcards, as well as some further photographs of his shop.

Jenny also notes that one of the pictures on display in the Museum shows W.J. Nigh driving his car with Bernard Nigh (Jenny's father) just peeping over the top of the door. In the back seat are W.J.'s two sisters, Harriet and Emma.

– Jeffrey Mazo

Notes and Queries

A column devoted to the asking and answering of member's questions about local historical facts and issues.

Q: I am trying to trace the history of the Blenheim Pub in Ventnor. How did it come by its name? How did Marlborough Road get its name? – Mike Pink, Blenheim, Marlborough, New Zealand

A: According to the Society's booklet *Inns and Ale from Bonchurch to Chale* (1985):

"Blenheim House is mentioned in a property deed of 1886 but probably was established earlier, in the possession of Frederick Corbould, Wine and Spirit Merchant, successor to James Coubould who had established a business in Ventnor in 1840. It was one of several properties, including the brewery, which passed into the ownership of John Burt in 1881. However, Corboulds continued in business in Blenheim House for many years, both Frederick and a second James, then James alone for some years until about 1925.

The property was apparently relinquished by Burts about the turn of the century as it then ceased to appear in the Burt property deeds.

A reminder of the early days, Corbould's name appears on the mosaic threshold at the front entrance. Below ground is an extensive range of cellars, extending some 50 yards back from the High Street, beautifully constructed with numbered bays for wine vats, and with a deep well. This is believed to have been a beer bottling, as well as storage, area."

Since this was written thirty years ago, some more information has come to light. We can trace Blenheim House back at least to 1852, when Frederick would have been 18 years old. None of this, however, answers the original question: how did Blenheim House and Marlborough Road get their names? We may never know, but James Corbould's home was in Speen, and Frederick was born and educated there. Speen is 30 miles from Blenheim Palace. The Corbould family history is well documented, and none of their forebears appear to have any other connection to Blenheim or the Marlboroughs. – Jeffrey Mazo

New Queries

Q: Earlier this summer, Paul Harman of the Old Clock Shop on the High Street brought this clock in to the Museum to see if we could tell him anything about it. (For scale, the clock is sitting on the admissions desk in the front of the Museum.) It was found by a customer in Southampton, who contacted Paul because it was apparently made in Ventnor. Paul suspected it was a railway clock, because the serial number began with 'SR' for Southern Railway.

We were able to put Paul in touch with a specialist with access to old railway records nationwide, who was able to determine from the serial number that it was originally in the ticket office in Bembridge. Southern Railway added the serial number when they took over in 1923.

Of more interest to us, though, is the clockmaker. Does anyone have any information about William Alford, who had a shop



at 26 High Street (the recently closed-down bookmakers), where you can still see the semi-circular iron bracket that probably held another clock. The shop was established in 1866, when Alford was 21 or 22 years old, and he gave up the business in 1908. In adverts in the Heritage Centre archives he variously describes himself as a clockmaker, watchmaker, silversmith and goldsmith. If anyone has further examples of his work we could photograph, that would be fantastic. – Jeffrey Mazo

Q: I've been told that the old canoe lake on the seafront was shaped like a bottle (see photo) because it was sponsored by Burt's Brewery. The Society archives don't shed any light on this. Does anyone have any evidence one way or the other? – Leigh Geddes

Send your queries and replies to jeffreymazo@hotmail.com or by post to the Society address (see back page).



Recent articles from the Society published in the *South Wight Chronicle*

In January 2015, the Editor of the *South Wight Chronicle* asked the Society to take on writing the weekly 'Local History' page. If you have a subject that you think would make an interesting story, please do let us know. The articles published since the last newsletter include:

- 'The Battle of the Flowers: 5 April 1894', Lesley Telford, *SWC*, no. 1268, 17/4/16, p. 8.
- 'Whitwell Schoolchildren in 1918', Lesley Telford, *SWC*, no. 1269, 21/4/16, p. 8.
- 'Georges Dennes, Hercules Langrishe, and a Mystery House', Lesley Telford, *SWC*, no. 1270, 28/4/16, p. 12.
- 'Up Soapsuds Alley', Michael Freeman, *SWC*, no. 1271, 5/5/16, p. 8.
- 'Past Ventnor Characters: Billy Flint's Parrot', Michael Freeman, *SWC*, no. 1272, 12/5/16, p. 8.
- 'Past Ventnor Characters: Holy Joe', Michael Freeman, *SWC*, no. 1273, 19/5/16, p. 8.
- 'A Corner of the Car Park', Evelyn Knowles, *SWC*, no. 1274, 26/5/16, p. 8.
- 'When Donkeys Ruled the Road', Michael Freeman, *SWC*, no. 1275, 2/6/16, p. 8.
- 'The Telephone Comes to Ventnor', Lesley Telford, *SWC*, no. 1276, 9/6/16, p. 8.
- 'Ventnor Exchange Part 1: Ventnor's Hello Girls', Margaret Gardiner and Lesley Telford, *SWC*, no. 1277, 16/6/16, p. 8.
- 'Ventnor Exchange Part 2: Hello Girls Say Goodbye', Margaret Gardiner and Lesley Telford, *SWC*, no. 1288, 23/6/16, p. 8.
- 'The Pacific Glory Disaster', Lesley Telford, *SWC*, no. 1289, 30/6/16, p. 8.
- 'Cycling around Ventnor in 1900', Lesley Telford, *SWC*, no. 1290, 7/7/16, p. 8.
- 'A Ventnor Boyhood in the 1940s', David White and Lesley Telford, *SWC*, no. 1281, 14/7/16, p. 8.
- 'Bonchurch National School', Lesley Telford, *SWC*, no. 1282, 21/7/16, p. 8.
- 'A History of Ventnor Carnival', Fay Brown, *SWC*, no. 1283, 28/7/16, p. 8.*
- 'Carnival Celebrations!', Lesley Telford, *SWC*, no. 1284, 4/8/16, p. 8.
- '1949 – "Novo Espero" (New Hope)', Lesley Telford, *SWC*, no. 1285, 11/8/16, p. 8.
- 'A Tale of Two Inns', Richard Downing, *SWC*, no. 1286, 18/8/16, p. 8.
- 'Chaplin's Corner', Lesley Telford, *SWC*, no. 1287, 25/8/16, p. 12.
- 'The Honeythorne Notes', Jeffrey Mazo and Lesley Telford, *SWC*, no. 1288, 1/9/16, p. 8.
- 'Ventnor Railway: 150th Anniversary', Michael Freeman, *SWC*, no. 1289, 8/9/16, p. 12.
- 'Express to Ventnor', Michael Freeman, *SWC*, no. 1290, 15/9/16, p. 8.
- 'Memories from a Railway Lost to Time', Michael Freeman, *SWC*, no. 1291, 22/9/16, p. 8.

*Reprinted from commentary Fay wrote to accompany one of her slide shows.

Co-op Members: Support the Heritage Centre

The Co-op Local Community Fund gives 1% of everything members spend on Co-op branded products or services to local causes. This year the Ventnor Heritage Centre is one of three causes members in the area can elect to receive their contribution. As of 22 September, including money from the Co-op to kick-start the process, the Heritage Centre has received £636.98. This will go towards upgrading the volunteers' office to make the working environment more pleasant as we educate the public and promote local history. Our income from entrance and membership fees is used to maintain our collection, and cover the running costs of the Heritage Centre.

If you or your friends are Co-op members, please set up or sign in to your account at www.coop.co.uk and go to 'See causes' under 'Support your Local Community' to select the Heritage Centre. Your help is needed, and much appreciated.