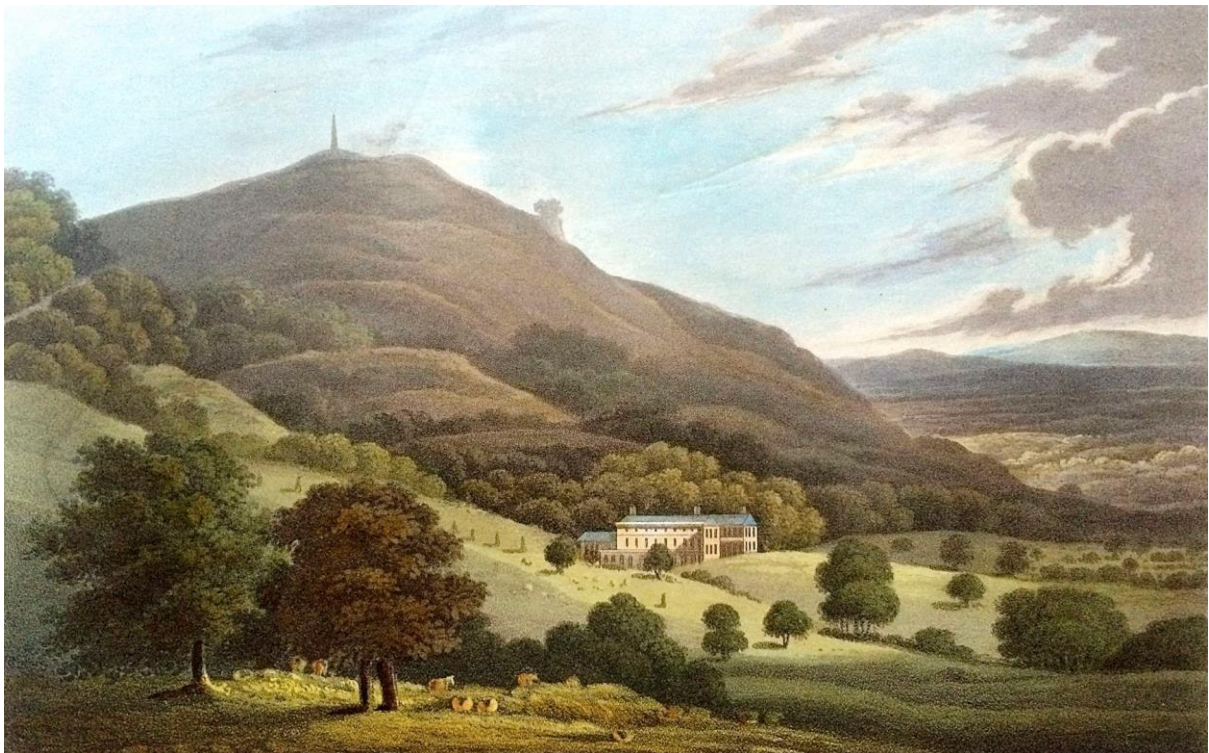


‘Fine Mansions and Fair Villas of the East Wight’

An Architectural Overview of the East Wight



Professor Robin McInnes OBE FICE FGS FRSA



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'Down to the Coast'
Project: 'Fine Mansions
and Fair Villas'

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Figure i.1: *'Osborne House – The Marine Residents of Her Majesty'*. Steel engraving by George Brannon, 1849.

Front Cover Image: *'Appuldurcombe'* by Frederick Calvert. Aquatint, 1843.

Title Page Image: *'Bonchurch'* by James Briddon. Lithograph, 1858.

‘Fine Mansions and Fair Villas of the East Wight’



Figure i.2: ‘Upper Bonchurch, Isle of Wight’
James Briddon, 1858



Figure i.3: *'Brading from the Downs'* by Clarkson Stanfield RA. 1834. Watercolour. Image courtesy of Agnew's

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Figure i.4: 'Stenbury Manor House – The Entrance Front' by Percy Goddard Stone. 1891. Pen & Ink.

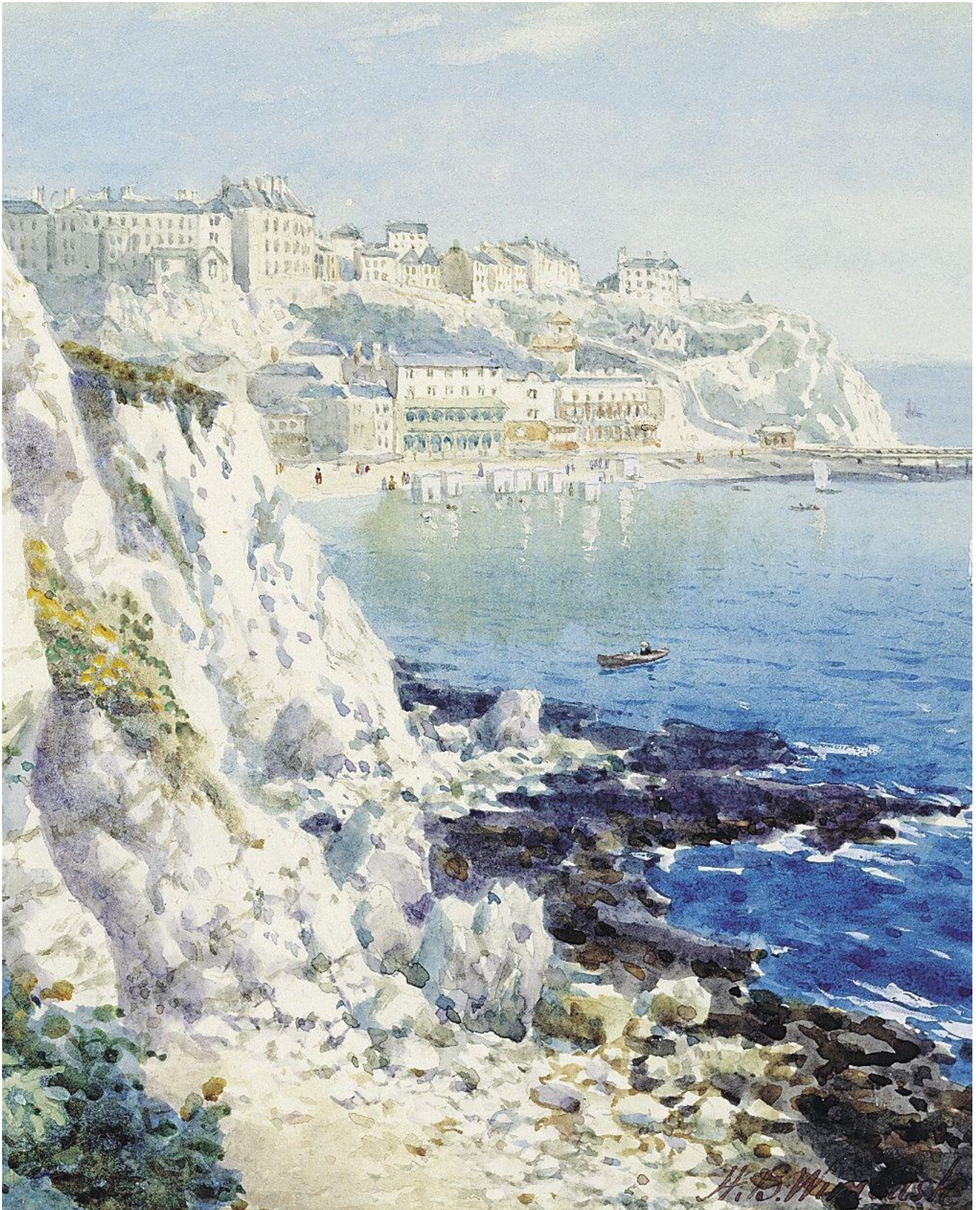


Figure i.5: Marine villas and hotels rise up from the Esplanade at Ventnor in this watercolour by Henry B. Wimbush painted in 1895 (Detail). Image courtesy: IW Council Heritage Service.

Executive Summary

The East Wight occupies nearly half of the geographical area of the Isle of Wight, and its landscape is recognised for its tranquillity and scenic beauty, as well as for its vibrant tourism economy. The significance of the East Wight countryside and coast is demonstrated by the designation of over 80% of the landscape as an *'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'*, whilst part of the Undercliff coastline is also designated as *'Heritage Coast'*.

The marine influence on the East Wight environment is particularly strong, being surrounded by sea with the English Channel to the south and to the east, and the Solent and Spithead to the north. The connection between this landscape and its geological part is emphasised by topography, especially the central chalk downs, which terminate dramatically at Culver Cliff, the Southern Downs, and the remarkable landscape of the Isle of Wight Undercliff.

'Down to the Coast', which has been supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) through its Landscape Partnership Programme, is being delivered in the East Wight by the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership (AONB Partnership). This particular project activity is entitled *'Fine Mansions and Fair Villas of the East Wight Countryside and Coast'*. The purpose of the project is to raise interest and awareness of the rich architectural heritage of the East Wight built environment from the sixteenth century to the present day. The project is creating a visual record of the architectural styles of residences in the towns, villages and countryside highlighting how the built environment contributes to the wider landscape of the East Wight and its *Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty* (AONB).

This report illustrates the rich heritage of domestic architecture in the East Wight spanning, in particular, the period from 1600. It demonstrates, effectively, how local building materials have been used aesthetically to construct mansions and villas, often in harmony with their countryside and coastal locations.

Professor Robin McInnes OBE FICE FGS FRSA
May 2017



Figure i.6: Elegant marine villas line the cliff top in the detailed engraving of *'Sandown'* by Alfred Brannon, published in 1855.



Figure i.7: *'View near Niton'* by George Brannon, 1821. This early engraving shows (from left to right) The Buddle Inn, the Sandrock Hotel and *'Westcliff'*, the residence of R. Holford, Esq. The view is taken from Undercliff Drive approaching Niton from the east.

Figure i.8: *'The Keys'*, 29 Church Road, Binstead. This Listed thatched cottage possibly dates from the seventeenth century. It is built of stone rubble in a half H plan. This house, formerly known as *'Thatched Cottage'*, was once the parsonage and stood in the grounds of Binstead House.



Figure i.9: *'Berwick Lodge'* in Augusta Road, Ryde, is a mid-nineteenth Century castellated villa in the Free-Gothic style.

Introduction

Descriptions of different aspects of the landscape, environment and architectural development of the Isle of Wight have been provided by numerous authors and illustrators since the late eighteenth century. The confines of the surrounding seas, the Solent to the north and the English Channel to the south, provide the opportunity to discuss the Isle of Wight, and the East Wight in particular, as an entity, separated from the influences of mainland England. The intention of this report is to provide an illustrated guide to the mansions, manor houses and villas of the East Wight including those within its '*Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*' (AONB), highlighting the diversity of architectural styles from the sixteenth century to the early twentieth century.

Although the East Wight does not contain hard rocks, there are both limestones and sandstones which, over the centuries, have provided suitable building stones. In fact, these materials have been used extensively to construct public buildings, manor houses, villas and cottages, which often blend suitably with their natural surroundings. Natural building stone, particularly the Upper Greensand from the Southern Downs, a greenish-grey sandstone, provided the material for the construction of many of the important properties in the southern Wight. Supplies of the Bembridge Limestone, which still forms distinctive features within the cliff lines and foreshore at Bembridge, Seaview and elsewhere, were extracted from quarries at Binstead. The more durable horizons of the Bembridge Limestone, sometimes known as Quarr Stone, are characteristically yellow to grey coloured limestones, which are packed with fossil shells and debris. The nature of this material was much favoured by stonemasons for centuries from Roman times onwards. Important buildings including Porchester Castle, Winchester and Chichester Cathedrals, parts of the city walls of Southampton and, later, some of Henry VIII's coastal fortifications, were constructed of this stone.

Elsewhere the more durable chalk horizons were used for construction of cottages, often in combination with brick or the richly stained ferruginous nodules, which form an attractive contrast in a number of the rural cottages. In a few locations flints from the Upper Chalk were used, in combination with brick, for example at Upper Ventnor. The lack of available supplies of Bembridge Limestone were, to some extent, compensated for by a dramatic increase in quarrying activities within the Upper Greensand, to cope with the rapid development of the East Wight's coastal towns that took place from the early 1800s. Quarries were opened up at Ventnor and Bonchurch to cater for the demand for sandstone to construct elegant villas and gentlemen's residences at Bonchurch, Ventnor and along the Undercliff coast.

The use of local building materials has, therefore, over the centuries, generally provided a built environment that is in keeping with the East Wight landscape. Elsewhere from the 1600s brick was becoming much more widely used and extensive clay deposits such as those at Rookley provided the suitable raw materials for the brick-making industry. Increasing development in the Georgian, Regency and Victorian periods saw the construction of important properties and whole streets of brick buildings, many of which display evidence of skill and imagination in terms of the use of brick as a material; elsewhere a combination of brick and stone and stucco complete the street scene. There are few examples of the use of stone from the start of the twentieth century, although elaborate combinations of stone, brick, rendering and timber are a feature of late nineteenth and early twentieth century gentlemen's residences and villas.

This text is not intended to provide a comprehensive description of the architecture of the numerous churches, manor houses and other charming residences to be found across the East Wight as these are well described elsewhere (Stone, 1891¹; Lloyd & Pevsner, 2006²; Winter, 1984³; Jones, 1987⁴ & 2000⁵). In addition, the full record of Listed Buildings is held by the Isle of Wight Council's County Archaeology & Historic Environment Service, which also maintains the Island's '*Historic Environment Record*' (HER) (Isle of Wight Council, 2017⁶). A further particularly valuable new resource is the '*Isle of Wight Parks, Gardens & Other Designated Landscapes – Historic Environment Action Plan*' (IW Gardens Trust/Basford, 2015⁷). This report highlights the variety of architectural styles which, it is hoped, will provide an additional dimension of interest

to the reader, taking advantage of the wide range of works of art and photographs available for what must be one of the United Kingdom's most extensively illustrated counties.

The Isle of Wight is renowned for its diverse range of coastal and inland scenery within its relatively small area. The Island's geological history including structural change and the processes of weathering and erosion have created our present day landscape which includes nearly all the key landscape components which are characteristic of the scenery of this country; hence the Island's description '*an England in miniature*'. These landscape types include uplands, comprising the chalk downland, gentle valleys within the sandstones providing rich soils for agriculture, and extensive areas of clay soils covering the northern half of the Island extending down to the Solent shoreline. In the East Wight the River Medina and the Eastern Yar formed part of the ancient Solent River system, which divided the Island into what early historians described as the East Medine with the *Isle of Bembridge* at its eastern extremity. The creeks and inlets penetrate inland from the northern coast, a characteristic of both the Hampshire and Island Solent shorelines.

The striking feature of the Island's landscape is the central chalk ridge, which extends as a backbone from west to east across the Island, from the Needles to Culver Cliff, and which forms a division between the geologically more recent Tertiary sands and clays lying to the north of the chalk and the broad stretch of older mainly Greensand countryside which extends from the south-west coast of the Island across to Sandown Bay including the Arreton Valley. To the south lies the Southern Downs, a second chalk mass, from which flow the headwaters of the rivers Medina and Eastern Yar, finding their way northwards and incising through the central chalk ridge on their course towards the Solent. The northern side of the Southern Downs is steep whilst the southern side forms an abrupt rear scarp extending from Bonchurch in the east to Blackgang in the west, from which the massive landslide complex of the Undercliff has detached itself over the last 30,000 years. Geological history has, therefore, provided a dramatic and beautiful scenic backdrop including a number of locations suitable for development for both defensive and residential purposes. Situated midway along the central south coast of England, the Isle of Wight benefits from the climatic conditions of both east and west providing a climate that is neither too cold nor too wet. The Island's southern coast, the Undercliff, benefits from its south-facing position and relative shelter, protected as it is from the north by the rear escarpment.

A description of architecture and the East Wight landscape can commence with consideration of domestic architecture including manor houses, farms and their settings within the rural landscape. Bearing in mind that many early buildings were constructed of timber, wattle and daub, and thatch, it is not surprising that the earliest buildings that still exist are those built of traditional Island stone, although there are relics of the earliest architectural periods found in some of the East Wight's ancient buildings. The context for fine mansions and fair villas necessitates a brief account also of the churches, castles and other distinctive landmarks. The church, alongside the manor house, formed the centre for life within many medieval villages and the East Wight is particularly fortunate in benefiting from an outstanding range of ecclesiastical buildings. The Island's parishes, which ran mainly in north-south strips across the Island, sometimes comprised a '*mother church*' such as that at Newchurch (for Ryde) together with other outlying churches and chapels. Such buildings still form the focal point of many of our most attractive streets and squares in villages and hamlets across the East Wight.

The street scenes containing Georgian, Regency and Victorian town and village architecture illustrate the evolution and expansion of the towns and villages. The most dramatic changes took place in the Victorian period both in terms of the expansion of the coastal towns from fishing villages to prosperous seaside resorts; this development being encouraged by an efficient railway and ferry system to and from the Isle of Wight, and on the mainland linking the industrial areas to the coast. The most favoured situations for development, particularly along the Solent shorelines between East Cowes and Bembridge were occupied by grand mansions constructed from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. Some of these residences were originally cottages, which were later enlarged or redeveloped in the style fashionable at that time. Examples of



Figure i.10 (top left): 'Map of the East Wight' (part) by Nicholas de Fer. 1762.

Figure i.11 (top right): 'Map of the East Wight' (part) showing topography by Sir Henry Englefield Bt. 1816

Figure i.12 (bottom left): 'A military, marine and topographical survey of the Isle of Wight' by James Clark, 1812. The map illustrates how some of the parishes ran in north-south strips right across the Island. This was for both defensive and commercial (trade) reasons.

important existing coastal residences include Norris Castle and The Priory at Seaview. Many landmark buildings were demolished in the 1950s and 1960s after changes of use, or neglect, partly because of the impracticality of converting such large properties for present day use. Prevailing architectural tastes also played a considerable part in terms of decision-making on the future of such buildings in the 1960s, in particular, as to whether they should be preserved or be demolished to make way for residential development.

The period from the 1890s, described on the continent as the '*Belle Epoque*', and later the '*Art Deco*' period of the 1920s and 1930s, presented an opportunity for architects to create elaborate designs to suit the tastes of their wealthy Victorian, Edwardian and early twentieth century clients. Although not achieving the degree of elaboration to be found in villas within the French coastal towns fine examples of such styles as well as designs reflecting the '*Arts and Crafts*' aesthetic movement, can be found in Seaview, Sandown, Shanklin and the Undercliff. Furthermore, residential roads in many East Wight towns contain individual character properties where great attention has been paid to detail in terms of roof decoration, fenestration, and other architectural embellishments. Although more limited in the East Wight there are also notable buildings of the *Art Deco* period, such residences being characterised by white walls, green tiled roofs and stained glass windows.

The second half of the twentieth century was a challenging period for Island architecture. In some cases architects reverted to the popular historical styles such as the Baroque, Classical and Gothic Revival. There are a number of outstanding landmark buildings from this period, although also there are extensive residential developments, which are often of limited architectural quality; this will no doubt be reflected in terms of their durability and longevity. This report represents a choice of East Wight buildings, particularly taking advantage of illustrations from the past. It demonstrates how well many of the East Wight's key buildings sit within their natural landscapes forming part of the landscape itself, and forms a tribute to a number of outstanding architects and designers, both past and present.

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Figure 1.13: '*Norris Castle*' engraved by George Brannon in 1844.

Chapter One

Manor Houses, Farm Houses and the East Wight Rural Landscape

During the Medieval period, the East Wight was a very rural community with agriculture being by far the most important industry. Following the Norman invasion an administrative system was put in place whereby the manor house formed the basic economic and administrative unit of land for taxation purposes (Winter, 1884¹). A record was provided in 1086 through a remarkable survey of the whole country, known as the Domesday Book, which revealed that, at that time, the key landowners on the Isle of Wight were, first, the King; second, the Bishop of Winchester; and then the Church of St Nicholas, the Abbey of Lyra in Normandy, the Abbey of Wilton, and William FitzOsbern's most loyal followers William Fitz-Stur, William Fitz-Azor and a number of other Norman chiefs. The arrangement of parishes, together with the considerable number of manor houses located within the relatively small area of the Island formed the 'Feudal system' on which the local economy was largely based.

There were no towns (only villages and hamlets) in the East Wight during the Medieval period. To the west Newport had been founded by Richard de Redvers in 1180, Yarmouth, also known as 'Eremue' or 'Eremouth', and Newtown or 'Francheville' was founded in 1256. There is no doubt that Richard de Redvers and his son, Baldwin, who succeeded him as Lord of the Island, formed a major influence on the development and economic wellbeing of the Isle of Wight, in which he possessed a great interest. Richard had been granted the Lordship of the Isle of Wight by the King and, with his son, commissioned various extensions and improvements to Carisbrooke Castle as well as granting privileges to the nearby Priory of Carisbrooke. Baldwin was also founder of the famous East Wight Abbey of Quarr, which was named after the limestone quarries located in the vicinity. He encouraged a group of monks of the Cistercian Order to come to the Isle of Wight from Savigny in Normandy to establish the abbey. In order to provide an income to support the Abbey he gave them the Manor of Arreton, a prosperous landholding, as well as land at Haseley. With the nearby church at Arreton the communities at Quarr and Arreton were closely linked for centuries. The church was one of those given after the Norman Conquest to the Abbey of Lyra; it is likely that monks from Quarr supervised the stonemasons who improved Arreton Church in the late thirteenth century, including re-modelling the chapel, adding the south chapel and the beautiful arcade of Purbeck marble pillars inserted between them (Roberts, 1973²). The Abbey of Quarr was to grow in importance and prosperity, exerting a significant influence over the Island until the dissolution of the monasteries. The interests of the Island were safeguarded during the life of Baldwin and, following his death in 1262, by his sister, Isabella de Fortibus, who inherited the landholdings. Isabella, who was reputed to be the richest woman in England, made further improvements to Carisbrooke Castle and other important Island buildings including Quarr Abbey and the church of Arreton.

Taking account of the construction methods used during the Medieval period, it is not surprising that there are virtually no vernacular buildings of that time and, indeed, relatively few from the Middle Ages. The Island population has been estimated at only 1,000 at the time of the Norman Conquest (Winter, 1984¹). The ongoing threat of invasion, particularly during the Hundred Years War, and the severe consequences of the Black Death, which affected the Island most seriously in the middle of the fourteenth century, resulting in deaths of about a quarter of the Island's resident population, combined to give considerable uncertainty to life on the Island. The Island's natural landscapes provided many advantages in terms of the quality of its soils for farming. The chalk downs provided grazing for sheep, whilst the rich soils to the south of the central downs and extending eastwards through the upper reaches of the Eastern Yar to Sandown Bay, was most important for the growth of corn. In fact, the quantities were so large that they contributed towards the supplies of the army of Edward I who took his soldiers to Scotland at the beginning of the fourteenth century (Jones, 1987³). More efficient farming methods and the enclosure of fields led to a strengthening of the farming industry and investment in farm buildings and the improvement of the manor houses, many of which were situated south of the central chalk downs.



Figure 1.1: *'The Village of Godshill'* by Charles Tomkins, 1809. Watercolour. Private Collection.

Figure 1.2: *'Brading (from the South)'* by Charles Tomkins, 1809. Watercolour. Private Collection.



Figure 1.3: Reputed to be one of the oldest houses on the Island, this property stands opposite Brading Church in Quay Lane.

The manor house at Yaverland was built by Jermyn Richards, a wealthy and well-connected businessman, who lived in this medieval house (once part of the Wax Museum). He ran a brewhouse at Brading and according to Sir John Oglander 'by vending his beer to ships at St Helens – grew rich and purchased Yaverland'.

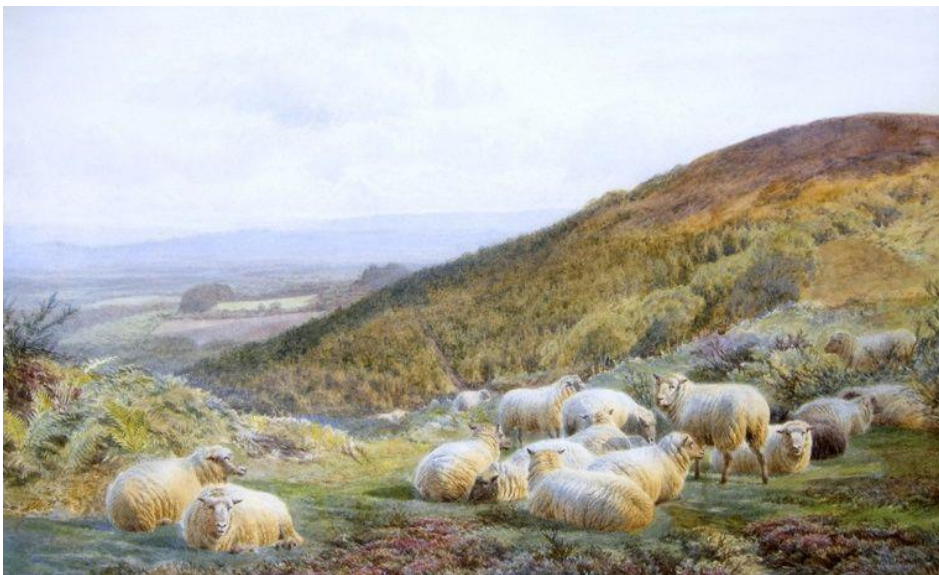


Figure 1.4 (left): *On the Southern Downs, IW* by Frederick Williamson. 1878. Watercolour.

Figure 1.5 (below): *Harvesting at Shanklin* by William Burchett. 1858. Oil on canvas. Courtesy: V. & A. Images, 2016.

The Island's natural environment provided many advantages in terms of the quality of its landscape and soils for farming. The chalk downs provided grazing for sheep, whilst the rich soils to the south, extending eastwards through the upper reaches of the Yar to Sandown Bay, was most important for the growth of corn. In fact, quantities were so large that they contributed towards the supplies of the army of Edward I who took his soldiers to Scotland at the beginning of the Century. More efficient farming and the enclosure of fields led to a strengthening of the farming industry and investment in farm building, and the improvement of the manor houses, many of which were situated south of the central chalk downs.





Figure 1.6 (left): 'Arreton Manor' by Percy Stone. 1891. Pen & Ink.



Figure 1.7: 'Haseley Manor, Arreton' by Percy Stone. 1891. Pen & Ink.



Figure 1.8: 'Merstone Manor' by Percy Stone. 1891. Pen & Ink.

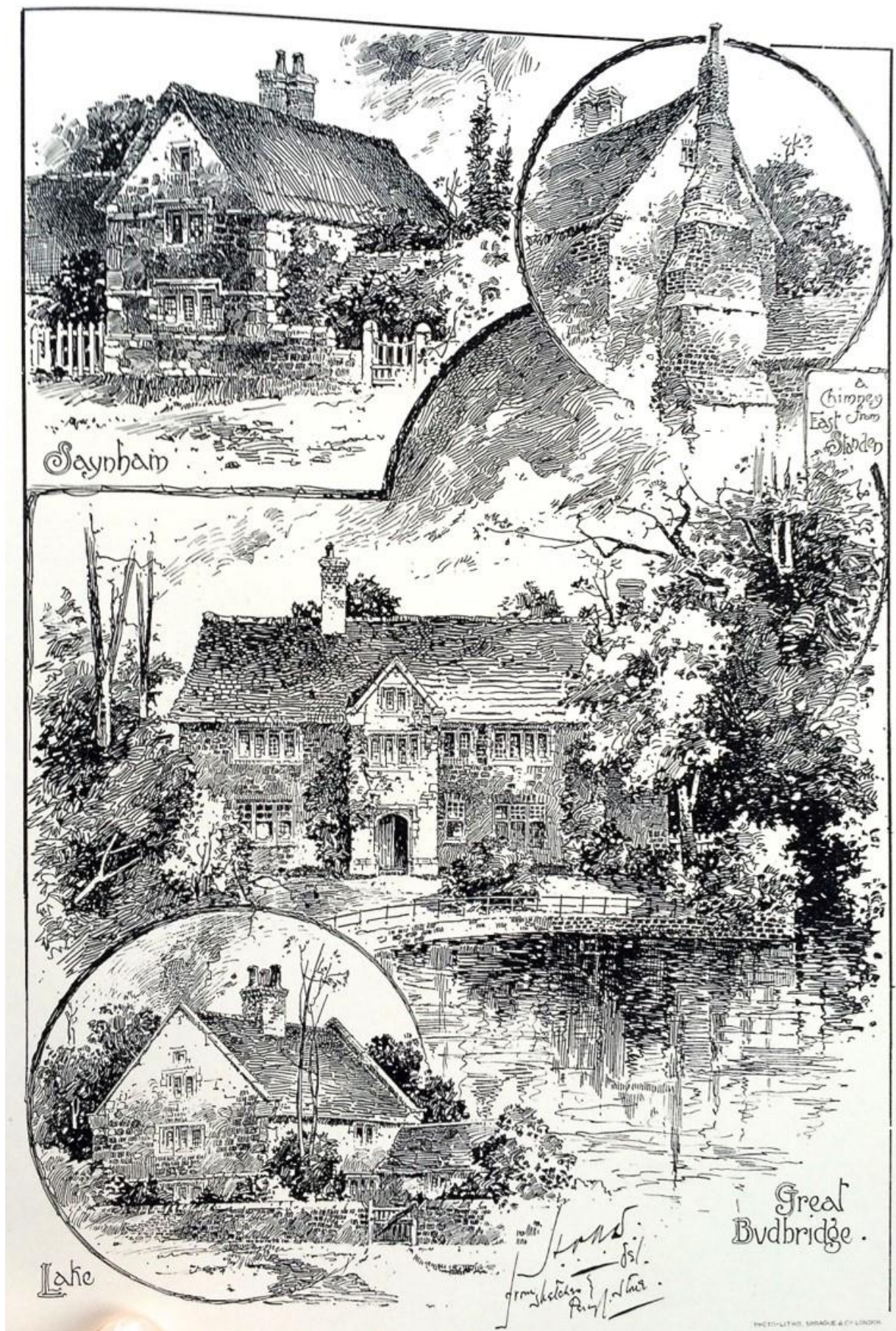


Figure 1.9: 'Smaller East Wight Manors' – Composition in Pen & Ink by Percy Stone. 1891.

French attacks led to a necessity for improvements to the coastal defences, particularly during the reign of King Henry VIII. This provided an increased feeling of security and wellbeing and encouraged landowners to improve their properties. As a result, many of the finest manor houses, constructed of Island stone, and later brick, were improved during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One of the largest of these is Merstone, which, although built by Thomas Cheke; in this case built of brick, using stone as the dressing. Nearby Haseley Manor was also one of the properties that fell under the control of Quarr Abbey. At the time of the dissolution of the monasteries the manor was brought by John Mills, a construction and building merchant from Southampton, for his personal residence whilst supervising the dismantling and sale of building materials from Quarr Abbey. From the seventeenth century onwards Haseley underwent an almost continuous process of extension and adaptation leaving few remains of the Medieval manor. Other important Island houses were soon to follow, including the early seventeenth century Sheat Manor near Gatcombe, which belonged to the Urry family, Yaverland and Arreton, all being constructed in the first half of the 17th century.

The manor house at Yaverland was built by Jermyn Richards, a wealthy and well connected businessman who lived in a medieval house opposite Brading Church (later part of the Wax Museum). He ran a brewhouse at Brading and according to Sir John Oglander 'by vending his beer to ships at St Helens – grew rich and purchased Yaverland'. The manor is a fine example of a late Elizabethan or early Jacobean manor. A particular feature is the fine oak staircase with a handsome carved and decorated entrance arch with reeded pilasters. Elaborate turned balusters are decorated with acorn finials and grotesque corbels. It was clearly a golden age in terms of architecture on the Island, with an increased feeling of security following the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the strengthening of the coastal defences at Yarmouth, Cowes and elsewhere.

In contrast to the large manor houses, smaller manors and residences of yeoman farmers are also found across the Island, often constructed of Bembridge Limestone, or freestones, thus distinguishing themselves from the more humble cottage residences often built of less resilient stone or chalk strengthened with quoins of brick or stone. Good examples of medium-sized properties include Stenbury, Bridgecourt, Budbridge, Writtlestone at Brading and Redway at Merstone. Other more rural properties of interest include West Standen (c.1690), Standen House (1750), Great East Standen, and Little East Standen followed.

Images of rural life from the Middle Ages are difficult to portray. However, we are able to obtain a feel for life in the rural East Wight by examining early photographs from the Victorian period which give a flavour of living conditions at that time. The work of Victorian photographers is described in detail elsewhere (Turley, 1992⁶), but sometimes these images give us a stylised picturesque view of rural life ignoring the hardship and basic living conditions that were encountered, especially in the more remote and inhospitable locations. The portrayal of rural life and the images sought by those who lived in towns and cities was, in fact, one of scenic beauty rather than reality!

Up until the eighteenth century, the use of natural materials, including stone, tiles and thatch, complemented the natural landscape of the Island. Such use of materials is well illustrated, for example, in the villages of Brading, Godshill, Newchurch and Bonchurch. In the Arreton Valley the manor houses sit grandly surrounded by the farmlands from which their wealth was derived. The Undercliff was barely developed with most of the area occupied as a hunting park, extending between the rear scarp of the Undercliff and the sea cliff. The only signs of habitation were a small number of fishermen's cottages, a corn mill and inn at Ventnor, and ancient farms, churches and abbey buildings in Chale, Niton, St Lawrence and Bonchurch.

North of the chalk downs are Nunwell, the site of Knighton Gorges and near East Cowes is Barton. Of these manors, both Nunwell and Knighton played influential roles in the history of the Island dating back to Norman times and earlier. The Manor of Knighton belonged to Earl Godwin, King Harold's father, before passing to the de Morville family; Eudo de Morville was involved in the murder of Thomas à Becket, guarding the horses of the attackers. He was later pardoned and his sons paid for the north chancel of nearby All Saints Church at Newchurch as penance (Arnold, 1975⁷).



Figure 1.10 (above): *'Entrance to the Village of Niton'* by Charles Raye. 1825. Aquatint. Early artworks describe the development of Island towns and villages over the last two centuries.

Figure 1.11 (below): *'Brading'* by S. Barth & J. King. 1813. Copperplate engraving showing the extent of the original Brading Harbour before its reclamation.



Sir Henry Englefield's fine copper engraving shows the Knighton Manor situated prominently on rising ground with a lake surrounding it; nothing remains today except the stone gateposts. Nearby Nunwell, grandly situated overlooking the town and estuary, has been associated with the Island's history since the Norman Conquest. An account of the house and Oglander family is provided in 'Nunwell Symphony' (Aspinall-Oglander, 1945⁸). The house was extensively reconstructed by the diarist Sir John Oglander, from 1607; this work included providing the fashionable Jacobean south front and wings. However, it was the eighteenth century improvements, creating the principal façade in brick and giving the house a Queen Anne style flavour, that remains the distinctive feature today.

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Figure 1.12: 'Newchurch' by Alfred Heaton Cooper. C.1915. Watercolour. A typical inland village of the rural East Wight.

Chapter Two

Castles, Churches, Follies and Land Marks

The necessity for defences against invasion of the Island, taking account of its vulnerable position overlooking the Channel, alongside the need to protect the great maritime ports of Southampton and Portsmouth, amply justified the need for an ongoing programme of improvements to fortifications on the Isle of Wight. The strategic importance of the Isle of Wight was recognised by King Edward I, who sought to regain the Isle of Wight, which represented a vital asset in terms of defence of the nation from French attack. It was not until the year 1293 that the Island eventually reverted to the Crown, following a payment of 6,000 marks at the time of the death of Isabella de Fortibus, the sister of Baldwin de Redvers.

Following the disastrous attacks by the French in the fourteenth century the demand for improving coastal defences to protect the Island's key ports increased. However, it was not, in fact, until the Tudor period that a general programme of upgrading coastal fortifications was approved by King Henry VIII. The Solent benefited from a number of improvements, including Southsea, Hurst and Calshot Castles on the mainland, and construction of two small fortifications, called the West and East Cows at the mouth of the River Medina, together with Yarmouth Castle on the north-west coast. Evidence of some of the fortifications have long since been lost, including the East Cow and the fort commissioned during the reign of Henry VIII at Sandham, where defences were provided under the direction of Captain Worsley to reduce risk of attack from a landing on the more gentle and low-lying south-east coast of the Island.

The building that provided one of the greatest influences on medieval life in the East Wight, was the Abbey of Quarr. The Abbey was founded by Baldwin de Redvers in 1131, during the reign of King Henry I. The monks came from the Benedictine monastery of Savigny near Avranches in Normandy with the Abbot supervising the construction of the new Abbey. Following the endowment of the manor of Arreton, the prosperity of the Abbey was ensured. Its wealth was enhanced further by numerous other bequests from benefactors over the next 100 years. The manors of Arreton, Haseley, Combley and Newnham, together with the tithes of Luccombe and lands at Wroxall, Whippingham, Bonchurch, Niton and rents from other farms, added to its prosperity. Concerns about the value of the Abbey and the risk of attack by the French encouraged King Edward III in 1340 to grant a licence to the Abbot to fortify the Abbey with stone walls and towers and other defensive measures. The influence of the Abbey continued until the dissolution of the Monasteries in the reign of King Henry VIII.

Sir Richard Worsley, writing in his *'History of the Isle of Wight'* (Worsley, 1781³), provides a description of the dilapidated state of the abbey with only one part of the building remaining in its entirety. He also referred to the remains of a church or chapel of the monastery at the western end, a gate towards the sea that had been armed with a portcullis, and just above the high-water mark there appeared to be the ruins of a fort built in the reign of Edward III. A few years later Tomkins (Tomkins, 1796¹) said "*the outer walls, a great part of which are now remaining, contained thirty acres of land. These walls had two gates, one on the north side, and another on the south, each of the gates defended by a portcullis*". Over the intervening period the buildings were used for farming and the stone salvaged for use elsewhere; the site now remains as a picturesque ruin alongside the new abbey.

The East Wight is fortunate in the range and quality of its churches, which date from the Norman period. However, although there are no complete Norman churches a number do contain good examples of Norman architectural features such as the doorways at Wootton and Yaverland, and the arcading in some of the more historic churches, such as those at Brading, Arreton and Whitwell. The East Wight is particularly well represented with examples of the Early English style of church architecture, including those at Brading and Newchurch. Further evidence of thirteenth century work can be seen in the historic church of Arreton.



Figure 2.1: *'St Blasius Church, Shanklin'* by Alfred Robert Quinton. Watercolour, c.1916. The church was enlarged from the former chapel of the Shanklin Estate.

Image courtesy of J. Salmon Limited of Sevenoaks.

Figure 2.2: Obelisk in the grounds of *'Mount Cleeves'*, Niton Undercliff. An engraving by George Brannon, 1835.



Figure 2.3: *'Medina Hermitage showing the Alexandrian pillar on St Catherine's Down'* by Philip Brannon, 1837.

As well as providing the focus for many of the Island's most historic villages, the churches also form notable landmarks, particularly the towers of churches such as Chale, which stands in splendid isolation against the backdrop of St Catherine's Down. Constructed of Island stone, usually Greensand, many of the churches also display historic decorations in the form of wall paintings, others are notable for their longevity and small size, such as the old churches at Bonchurch and St Lawrence. Most churches show evidence of change, alteration and extension over the centuries with enlargements and improvements taking place to cater for the growth in population between the 16th and 19th centuries. Many of the historic churches, such as Brading and Godshill, contain elaborate decorations, tombs and other features, which are exquisitely illustrated in the magnificent publication '*The Architectural Antiquities of the Isle of Wight*' (Stone, 1891⁴).

Island churches were the subject of numerous illustrations by engravers and artists over the centuries. Aquatints by Tomkins in the 1790s and, later, the commission from Earl Yarborough of fifty-eight watercolours now in the possession of the Royal Yacht Squadron (McInnes, 1993⁵), provide an insight into Island life, whilst, later, the work of Charles Raye (Raye, 1825⁶) illustrates churches and other buildings in their village and landscape settings. The '*Picturesque*' style is exemplified further by George Brannon, the prolific self-taught artist and engraver from Wootton on the Isle of Wight, who, with his sons Alfred and Philip, over half a century, provided us with an extraordinary record of changing town and village scenes and prominent buildings between 1820 and the 1870s (Brannon, 1821-1860⁷).

Taking account of the Island's exposed position off the central south coast of England, facing the Atlantic and the English Channel, the need to provide warning for mariners through the construction of lighthouses and beacons has been a necessity since medieval times. Shipwrecking along the south-west coast of the Island, in particular the incident in 1314 with the wreck of the Sainte Marie (Medland, 1986⁸; McInnes, 2006⁹), led to the construction of the ancient lighthouse on the top of St Catherine's Down by Lord of the Manor Walter de Godeton as a penance. In the mid-19th century lighthouses were constructed at St Catherine's Point and the Needles, replacing ancient structures. In the centre of the Island on Ashe Down, the seamark and signalling station provided a clear view of shipping coming up the Channel, allowing signals to be transmitted to the Admiralty in Portsmouth with relative ease.

At other vantage points, such as Appuldurcombe Down, Sir Richard Worsley constructed an obelisk, whilst a 22 metre high tapering Tuscan column was erected on the summit of St Catherine's Down in 1814 by Michael Hoy in honour of the visit by Tsar Alexander I. A selection of these interesting structures were illustrated by the Brannon family in some editions of the publication '*A Pleasure Visitors' Companion*' (Brannon, circa 1960¹⁰) also appearing as decorative vignettes on the margins of his elaborate map contained within later editions of the folio volume '*Vectis Scenery*' (Brannon, 1865⁷).

Other notable landmarks include the St Helens old church tower on the water's edge at the Duver which was abandoned when the newer church was built in 1717; since then it has fulfilled the role of a seamark. Elsewhere along the seawall between Ryde and Puckpool there is Appley Tower, which was built in the early to mid-19th century. This unusual building is in the form of a miniature fortress and bears the coat of arms of the Appley family.

At Brading the Town Hall includes a lock-up, stocks and whipping post dating back to the seventeenth century. The first floor of the building was used as a meeting room for the town's burgesses and bailiffs. Nearby, the gun shed was built in about 1700 and housed the town gun, which was last fired in 1832 following the passing of the Reform Act. Bembridge Windmill was built in about 1700 and was in continuous use until 1887; it was sketched by the artist, J M W Turner, on his tour in 1795 and is remarkable for the completeness of its wooden machinery.

Although the only surviving windmill on the Island is at Bembridge we can observe from Brannon's engravings that during the Victorian period they existed on high ground at a number of prominent locations including Ryde and Cowes. Waterpower was used to grind corn at Ventnor Mill using the Cascade stream and at

Alverstone on the Eastern Yar. Much use was also made of tidal power with tide mills located at Wootton Bridge (demolished 1962) and St Helens (Whitehead, 1975¹¹).

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Figure 2.4: *'Appley Tower, Ryde'* by Alfred Robert Quinton. c.1915. Watercolour. The tower was a folly in the ownership of the Appley Towers estate, which was located on the slope behind and was demolished in c.1960.

Image courtesy of J. Salmon Limited of Sevenoaks.

Chapter Three

The street scene – Georgian, Regency and Victorian town and village architecture

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many of the towns on the Island started to expand as the population rose. The most important industry was still agriculture and the rich soils together with steadily improving farming practices helped maintain the prosperity of the Island during this period. The locations and development patterns of the main towns were dictated by the topography. Ryde developed on a favoured coastal location opposite Portsmouth and the Mother Bank, an important anchorage for shipping. The East Wight coastal towns and villages developed from fishing villages, expanding with the advent of bathing and the arrival of the railway.

Charles Tomkins visited the developing town of Ryde, the ancient name being La Rye. It comprised two distinct upper and lower villages, separated by several acres of meadow, which gradually merged over the period 1820-1830. Of Ryde he said *“this village consisted formally of a few fisherman’s cottages; but it is increasing yearly; owing to being much frequented by company. The prospect from this shore is extremely interesting as every vessel which leaves Spithead, Portsmouth and the Mother Bank is seen from it. On the left of the road ascending from the shore to Upper Ryde stands the chapel, the village being situated within the Parish of Newchurch”* (Tomkins, 1796).

Writing a few years later William Cooke noted that Ryde was expanding considerably. *“Buildings have multiplied here with astonishing rapidity. Shipping at Spithead and Portsmouth are in sight and their continual movements resemble the scene in a magic lantern – ever changing their position and gratifying the taste of the beholders. As a bathing place, Ryde, in the opinion of some, claims preference to Cowes. Here are several machines for the purpose and it is frequented by the nobility and gentry during the season. The town is divided into upper and lower. The lower, or Old Village, is built along the shore, chiefly inhabited by pirates and other sea-faring persons. It has several wooden jettys or quays for the convenience of landing at high water and of shipping goods and livestock and filling water casks for the shipping. At low water, as the tide ebbs to a considerable distance over a long flat of soft sand, the operation of landing from boats, which convey passengers as far as they can from the vessels, is performed in small carts drawn by a single horse. Seated on each side of this machine, and driven by a man who sits in front; thus a ludicrous journey is performed before you reach the town”* (Cooke, 1808³)

Apart from the Georgian architectural heritage there are excellent examples of Regency and Victorian street architecture particularly in Ryde. As the towns extended out from their Georgian centre to cope with the increasing demand for housing, elegant avenues were constructed. Elsewhere, whole estates were set out with plots for sizeable Victorian villa developments at St Johns at Ryde. An avenue of handsome Victorian stone villas each with elaborate verandas was built at Park Avenue in Ventnor. Architects such as Major Theodore Saunders in Ventnor, the developer Dr Henry Beaumont Leeson at Bonchurch, and Thomas Hellyer in Ryde, helped to transform the Island’s towns into fashionable Victorian resorts.

We are fortunate in that there is a comprehensive illustrated record of the East Wight’s towns and villages from the late eighteenth century. The delicate sepia aquatints provided in Tomkins’ *‘Tour of the Isle of Wight’* (1796²), the watercolour drawings by Thomas Rowlandson that were acquired by the Isle of Wight Council from the Longleat sale, together with the later collection of Tomkins watercolours contained in the Royal Yacht Squadron, provide a wealth of images which illustrate the Island’s towns and villages before the rapid period of Victorian development. Later, from the 1820s, a succession of engravers and artists, most notably Brannon,

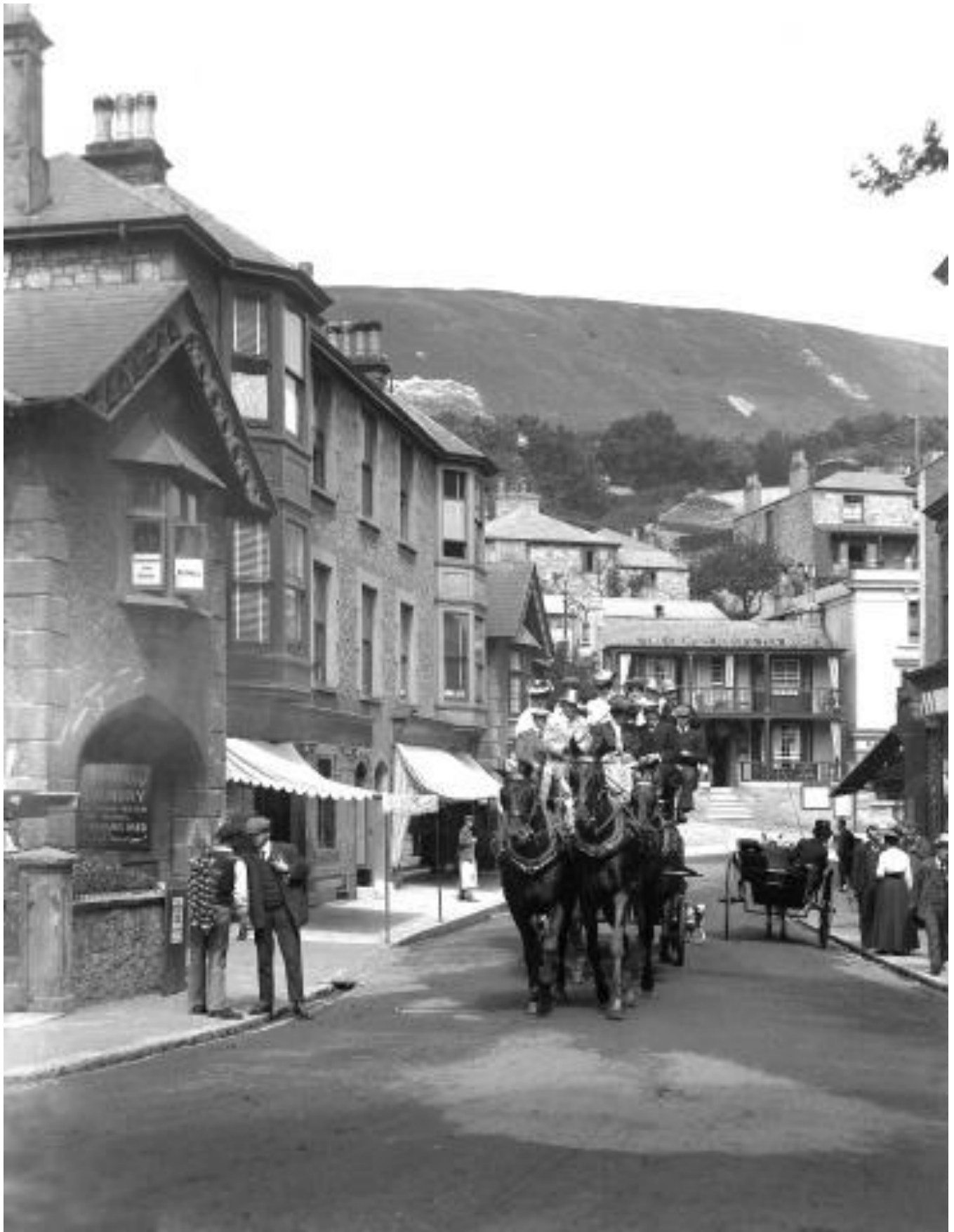


Figure 3.1: Ventnor High Street, c.1900. The Victorian street architecture in this view has changed little over the last century.



Figure 3.2 (left): *'George Street, Ryde'* by William Daniell RA. 1823. Aquatint. The view shows the developing Union Street and the recently constructed pier.

Figure 3.3 (right): *'Ryde, IW'* by Charles Gregory. 1860. Watercolour. This detailed view shows the scene from Brigstocke Terrace looking over the pier to Spithead and the mainland.



Figure 3.4 (right): *'Osborne House – The Marine Residence of Her Majesty Queen Victoria'* by William Leighton Leitch. 1847. Watercolour. Image courtesy of the Royal Library, Windsor Castle © Her Majesty The Queen.

Barber, Raye, Rowe and Calvert, have provided us with a complete chronology of the development of the coastal towns. Indeed, the Brannon family sometimes engraved up to six successive plates of towns such as Ryde and Ventnor over the period from 1830-1860.

In addition to increasing residential development, particularly following the arrival of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort at Osborne, the Island towns contain some good examples of public buildings and Victorian church architecture. In Ryde there are some of the finest buildings including the Royal Victoria Arcade in Union Street, which was designed in the Italianate style by William Westmacott and built for the sum of £10,000 in 1835/6. James Sanderson designed both Brigstocke Terrace in St Thomas' Street (1826/29) and Ryde Town Hall (1829/31); the handsome Royal Victoria Yacht Club (now the Prince Consort) followed in 1845 with its elaborate entranceway flanked by Corinthian columns. Elaborate hospital buildings were provided at the Royal National Hospital, Steephill (Laidlaw, 1990⁵; Laidlaw, 1994⁶; McInnes, 2005⁷) by Thomas Hellyer from 1868 and, at East Cowes, the Frank James Hospital in 1893. The town hall in Albert Street, Ventnor, was designed by Major Theodore Saunders and built in 1878; the classical design with its double Ionic columns presents a fine façade to Albert Street.

In terms of churches, the early to mid-19th century was a particularly active period for building on the Island. St Thomas' Church, Ryde, was built in 1827, St Catherine's in Ventnor (1836/7) was endowed by John Hambrough and originally had a tower surmounted by a spire. However, the 100 foot spire was removed in 1921 for stability reasons. The Ryde architect Thomas Hellyer was active in the 1840s, designing St John's, Ryde, in 1843, followed by Holy Trinity in 1846 and Holy Trinity in Bembridge the same year. In 1847 a new church of Norman style was provided in Bonchurch based on a design by Benjamin Ferry. The church is romantically situated in a rocky setting adjacent to the Shute.

One of the more unusual designs is that of St Mildred's Church, Whippingham, which replaced an earlier design by Nash. The new church design resulted from collaboration between the architect, A J Humbert, and the Prince Consort between 1854 and 1862. The 1860s saw the construction of more substantial churches including Holy Trinity at Ventnor (1860/62), St Michael's at Swanmore, Ryde, to an elaborate design by Richard Jones (1861) and St Saviour's, Shanklin, (from 1867). One of the Island's most impressive churches, All Saint's, Ryde, was designed by the important Victorian architect, Sir George Gilbert Scott (from 1869), who also designed the new church at St Lawrence, which was built in 1878.

The age of photography has contributed views from the middle of the nineteenth century, which also give us an insight into life in the rural parts of the Island in the preceding centuries. The story of photography, which was also very much part of life in resorts and at the seaside, means that the Isle of Wight has an unparalleled record of views, of its developing coastal towns as well as its inland villages.

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Chapter Four

Fine Mansions and Fair Villas

The natural beauty of the East Wight drew writers and artists in the late eighteenth century who wished to study and record its scenery and antiquities. Artists and writers such as Thomas Walmesley, Thomas Rowlandson, Charles Tomkins, and later Charles Raye and George Rowe, have provided us with a comprehensive illustrated record of the Island at a time when wealthy families and antiquarians were returning from visiting the classical landscapes, art and architecture of Europe on the Grand Tour. Impressed by the classical styles and influences, they wished their own country seats and landscaped estates to be modelled in a similar style, accompanied by furnishings and works of art that they had collected on their travels. The Isle of Wight was just one of the more remote parts of the British Isles that were being explored at this time and proved to be a particularly important and interesting venue for those in search of picturesque scenery.

Apart from the historic manor houses described previously most of the other great houses were constructed in the late eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. Many were located in commanding positions overlooking the Solent, whilst others were situated grandly within their landscaped estates. For visitors arriving at Cowes and crossing the River Medina as part of a circular tour of the Island, one of the first sights as they rode up the steep hill from East Cowes waterfront was East Cowes Castle. Overlooking beautifully landscaped water gardens, the castle was designed and built by John Nash, the leading architect of the time. In 1826 Nash commissioned the Island engraver George Brannon to produce six large views of the castle from different perspectives. Nash gave sets of the engravings to visitors as well as potential clients.

Lord Henry Seymour built his even more imposing residence, Norris, on the site of a farm. His extensive grounds ran from the Whippingham Road down to Old Castle Point. Both of these residences were beautifully illustrated in aquatint by William Daniell in his *'Voyage Round Great Britain'* (Daniell & Ayton, 1814¹).

Adjacent to the Norris Castle estate stands Osborne House, the former summer palace of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Following the purchase of the Osborne estate by the Queen in 1845, the Prince Consort commissioned the builder, Thomas Cubitt, who at that time was working on many important commissions in London, to design a villa in the Italianate style. Construction of the villa was watched with great interest and recorded in engravings and drawings by William Leighton Leitch and others, whose images are contained in the Royal Collection. Set in a commanding position overlooking Osborne Bay, many of the staterooms offer extensive views across a range of terraces and landscaped grounds towards the Solent. The interior of the house is equally magnificent, with decorations and objets d'art reflecting Queen Victoria's position as Empress of India, alongside more traditional Victorian styles. Detailed descriptions of the building, its grounds and interior can be found elsewhere (Lloyd & Pevsner, 2006²).

The favoured setting of Ryde, with its extensive views across the Solent, resulted in the construction of a number of important mansions. At the top of the hill beside the road leading from Ryde towards Seaview was St John's which had been built by Colonel Amherst but was occupied in the 18th Century by Edward Simeon. His estate abutted Appley with its magnificent grounds, which had been laid out by Humphrey Repton, the celebrated landscape gardener. The wooded grounds extended down towards the shore where "the inhabitants of Ryde, whose promenade on Sunday evenings through these walks was enlivened by a band of music from The Marina, affording an exhilarating scene of innocent recreation". Nearby St Clare was a castellated Gothic revival mansion that was designed by James Sanderson, who also designed Steephill Castle for John Hambrough.



Figure 4.1: *'St John's'* at Ryde enjoyed fine sea views over its extensive landscaped grounds. This view, unpublished in *'Vectis Scenery'* was engraved by George Brannon in about 1824.

Figure 4.2: *'Yaverland Parsonage'* a Gothick style residence inspired by Strawberry Hill at Twickenham, c.1823.



Figure 4.3: *'The Tower House'*, Zig Zag Road, Ventnor, was built in the mid-nineteenth century with a fashionable flag tower in the manner of Osborne House.



Figure 4.4: *'Norris Castle, East Cowes'* by William Daniell RA. 1823. Aquatint. The Island's largest private coastal mansion occupies an outstanding location overlooking the Solent.

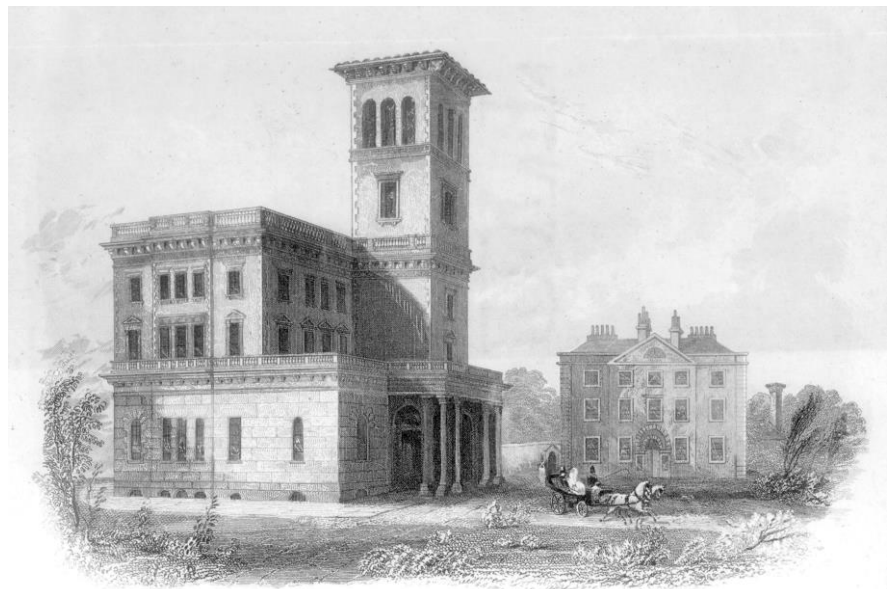


Figure 4.5: *Osborne House in the course of construction'*. c.1840s. Steel plate engraving. This view shows the original Georgian house prior to its incorporation within the new house.



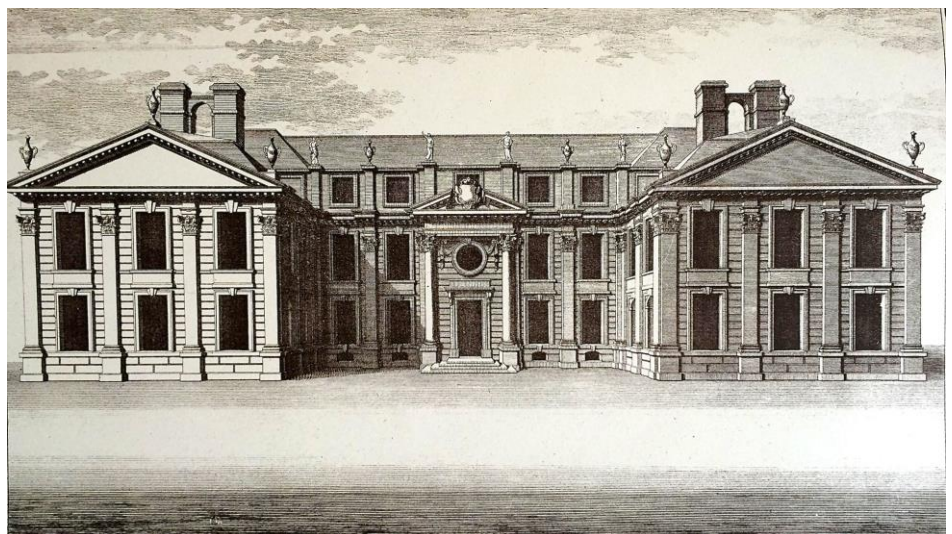
Figure 4.6: *'Barton Manor, Whippingham'* by Percy Goddard Stone. 1891. Pen and Ink.

Figure 4.7: *'Nunwell House, Brading'* by Percy Stone. 1896. Pen and Ink drawing. The house was extensively reconstructed by Sir John Oglander from 1607 when the Jacobean wings and south front were added and remodelled.



Figure 4.8: *'Bembridge'* (from *St Helens*) by George Brannon. 1836. Copper plate engraving. Elegant villas line the edge of the harbour.

Figure 4.9: Appuldurcombe is regarded as the most important mansion to be constructed on the Island. It was built on the site of a rambling Tudor mansion which was demolished by Sir Robert Worsley to make way for the new house. The new house was extended substantially by Sir Richard Worsley following his return from the Grand Tour in 1772; this allowed space to accommodate his magnificent collection of art and sculptures. The house was designed by John James, an associate of Christopher Wren, with the gardens and estate landscaped by 'Capability' Brown. The illustration from Colen Campbell's *'Vitruvius Britannicus'* (1723) shows the grand façade.



Whilst, in the past, some owners preferred to stay in London and not venture to their 'primitive' country estates, with improved services and accessibility the 'country scene' became more inviting. Owners upgraded their country seats and refurbished them with treasures such as marbles and paintings brought back from their European tours and filled elaborate collector's cabinets with antiquities and curios.

One of the most beautiful of the gentlemen's residences along the north-east coast was Fairy Hill, the home of the Reverend Henry Oglander. With its views over the hamlet of Seaview and across the Solent, it shared a similar setting to that of The Priory, illustrated in the aquatint by Thomas Walmesley as "*A cottage near Ryde*". Built on the site of an ancient Clunian priory in the Middle Ages it was the source of revenue for Eton, and later Windsor College, until its dissolution by Henry VIII. The owner of The Priory, Sir Nash Grose, converted and embellished the cottage farmhouse, which succeeded the monastery. From its elevated position rolling lawns with luxuriant shrubberies and majestic trees extended down to the curving, sandy beach of Priory Bay.

Brading was an important town at this time, particularly with its quay at the end of the lane past the church. North-west of the town was the Nunwell estate, which belonged to Sir William Oglander; his family had owned the manor since the arrival of Hugh D'Oglandres with William the Conqueror. An extensive woodland surrounded the estate, which was the largest provider of oak on the Island, principally for the construction of Naval vessels. The present house was built in the early seventeenth century and subject later to various alterations and improvements. The property is grandly situated overlooking Brading and the haven, which was once an open harbour comprising 800 acres of water.

From Brading a track ran south to Yarbridge and then via Marshcombe to Yaverland Manor and church, before petering out on the edges of the marshes at Yaverland. Yaverland Manor was built in 1620, the date is confirmed over the doorway, and remains very much in its original condition. The adjacent small church dates back to Norman times and the elaborate south doorway with its zig zag decoration was well-illustrated by Percy Stone (Stone, 1891³).

Apart from the larger historic Island manor houses, such as Northcourt and Woolverton, the grandest building on the Island is, without doubt, Appuldurcombe House near Wroxall. Located in a sheltered eastward-facing position below the downs, Appuldurcombe was built on the site of a Benedictine monastery, later occupied by an extensive Tudor mansion, which is illustrated in Sir Richard Worsley's '*History of the Isle of Wight*' (Worsley, 1781⁴). The construction of the new house took place after Sir Richard returned from the Grand Tour in 1772 (Lloyd and Pevsner, 2006²). The landscaped grounds were laid out by the famous gardener of the period, Capability Brown. During his extensive travels Worsley accumulated a magnificent collection of works of art, which were displayed at Appuldurcombe and catalogued in his monumental work '*Museum Worsleyanum*' (Worsley, 1824⁵).

Appuldurcombe, the largest mansion to be constructed on the Island, was built largely of Greensand from Bonchurch, although it was enhanced with the use of Portland Stone. Designed by John James, the magnificent elevation is well illustrated by Colen Campbell in the publication '*Vitruvius Britannicus*'. Taking some elements of design from Chateau Vaux-le-Vicomte in France, Chatsworth in Derbyshire and Thoresby Hall in Nottinghamshire, the original house was completed by Sir Robert Worsley in 1713. During that century the house was extended considerably under the direction of Richard Worsley on his return from the Grand Tour in 1772. With the assistance of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown the grounds were carefully landscaped to give informal views in marked contrast to the 'set-piece' formal gardens of the previous century. A notable feature of the grounds is Freemantle Gate, a grand archway supported by Ionic columns that has been attributed to the important architect, James Wyatt, and dating from the 1770s.

To complete the scene a mock building, Cook's Castle, was constructed on the summit of St Martin's Down facing the house and an obelisk was provided on Stenbury Down to the rear. When Earl Yarborough took over the estate after the death of Sir Richard in 1805 he undertook further works to the house and grounds.



Figure 4.10 (above) and 4.11 (below): Following the construction of East Cowes Castle and Norris Castle both set in their extensive landscaped grounds, the next major development was that of Osborne House for Her Majesty Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort following her purchase of the Georgian Old Osborne House.

In East Cowes, a major speculative development was undertaken by George Eyre Brooks comprising grand villas surrounding a botanic garden and bordered by York Avenue, Victoria Grove and Adelaide Grove with an extension down to the waterfront. In fact, the scheme was not a success and only a small number of properties were built. The plan for the development and a lithographic impression are illustrated here.

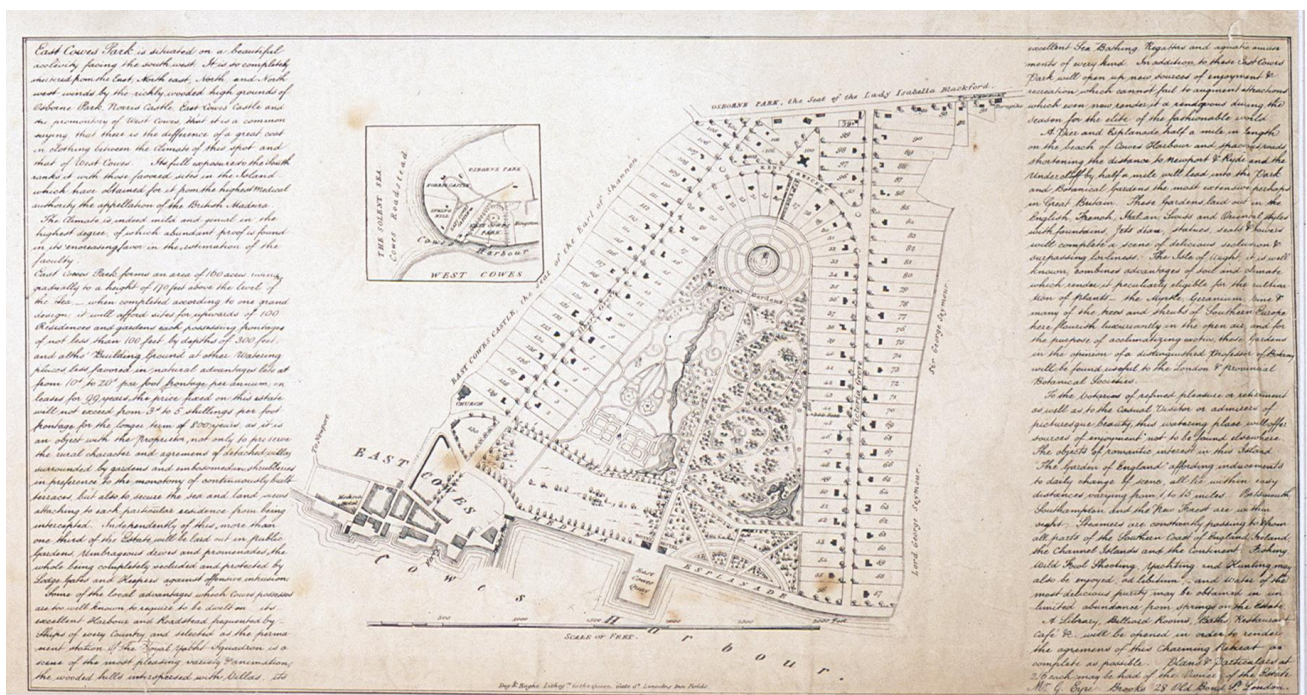




Figure 4.12: 'Albert Cottage, East Cowes' was constructed for the Queen from York House and the site of Kent Lodge in 1868. The royal crowns can be seen around the eaves of this building, and a long tiled corridor linked Albert Cottage to Osborne Cottage next door. Princess Beatrice used both buildings after her mother's death.



Figure 4.13: Kent House, East Cowes, was one of the Gothic Botanic Gardens houses. This was constructed in 1843 on a double width plot for Thomas Cattlin, a London Lawyer. In 1864 Queen Victoria purchased the house and had extensive improvements carried out, creating well over forty rooms. It then became known as Kent House and was used for accommodating various people visiting Osborne. In 1884, the Queen's grand-daughter, Princess Victoria, eldest daughter of Princess Alice, married Prince Louis of Battenburg and they were in residence at Kent House for Christmas that year, with his brother, Prince Henry, staying with them. Henry later married Princess Beatrice. The Duke of Argyll and Princess Louise lived at Kent House until the Duke's death in 1914, whereupon Louise gave it to Prince Louis and Princess Victoria.



Figure 4.14: 'Victoria Cottage, East Cowes' was built in 1842. Thomas Cubitt stayed there while the building work at Osborne was taking place. This view was originally the rear of the building, facing onto the private East Cowes Park carriage way. The old East Cowes Road ran behind the property, as we see it today, but was bought into the Osborne Estate in 1898; Queen Victoria bought it in 1851.



Figure 4.15 (above): 'Westmont House', the former residence of Dr Lind, was completed in 1821 and forms an elegant centrepiece for the Ryde School complex in Queens Road, Ryde. The impressive portico emphasises the taste and status of the original owner.

Figure 4.16 (below): The ornate villa on the corner of George Street and Melville Street, c.1825.





Figure 4.17 (top) and 4.18 (centre): Elegant villas line Melville Street, Ryde.



Figure 4.19 (left): ‘Stratford House’ in St Thomas’ Street, Ryde, with its elaborate, decorative porch.



Figure 4.20 (left): Westfield Park, formerly Westfield, was built around 1811 as a Villa for the 2nd Earl Spencer. It has a porch tower with three rounded windows similar in appearance to Osborne House. It is the stone gateway that is best known by Ryde residents for its size in relation to the adjoining lodge and the stag laying down on top of the arch, which forms part of the gateway to the house.

Figure 4.21 (right): 'View in the Gardens of Westfield House, the seat of Sir Augustus Clifford'. Publ. 1857. Lithograph. From 'The Gardens of England'.



Figure 4.22 (left): 'St John's Park, Ryde' by William Carpenter. 1857. Lithograph. Fine villas were built along the roads surrounding the Park.



Figure 4.23 (top left) and 4.24 (middle left): Showing the frontage to Vernon Square, Ryde and the garden front of elegant Gray Lodge. The Regency style continued into the reign of Queen Victoria with the curved ornate veranda being a feature of the rear elevation (c.1840).



Figure 4.25 (left): Vernon House, Vernon Square, Ryde is grandly situated overlooking the Square with its central garden (1833).



Figure 4.26 (top): Seafield House, Seaview, was built in 1815 and presents an attractive symmetrical façade to Bluett Avenue, Seaview. Constructed by the owner of the saltworkings on the nearby Seaview Duver, the house is perhaps the most elegant of this period on the Island.



Figures 4.27 (above left) and 4.28 (above right): The Mall at Brading is an ancient street that leads from Brading town centre up onto the downs and on to Newport. A number of distinctive villas are set in commanding positions, including The Manse (middle left) and Ovington House (bottom left).



Figure 4.29: *'Seagrove Bay, Seaview'* by Alfred Robert Quinton. c.1920. Watercolour. Elegant Edwardian marine villas line the seawall. Many of these have since been lost as a result of coastal instability or redevelopment. Image courtesy of J. Salmon Limited of Sevenoaks.

Figure 4.30: *'North Wells'*, Bembridge, was built in the Strawberry Hill Gothick style characterised by arch-topped windows and crenellations.



Figure 4.31: *'Broadland House'*, The Broadway, Sandown; a substantial stone mansion c.1900.

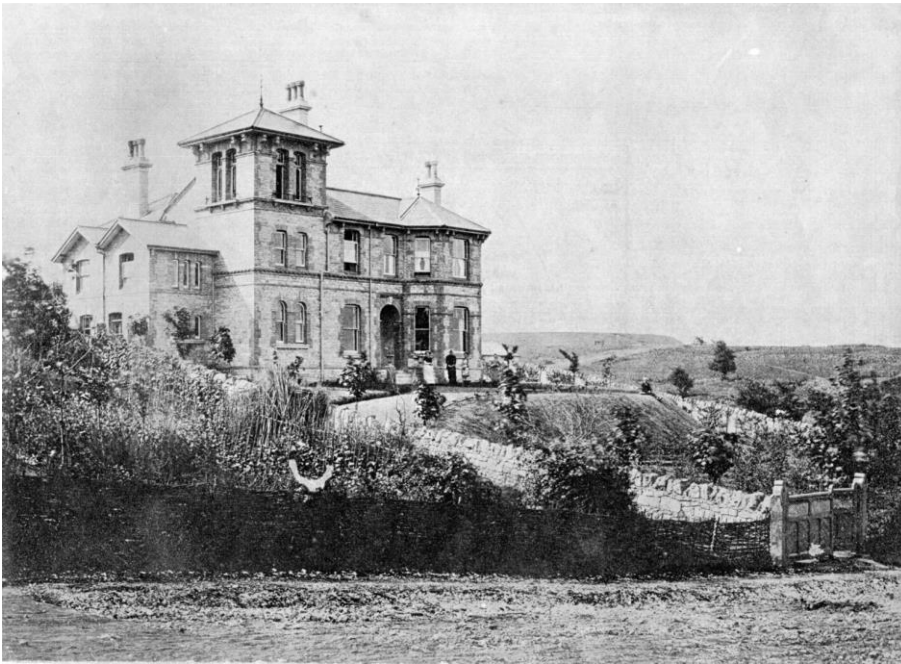


Figure 4.32: *'Summer Hill'*, now Melville Hall Hotel, Melville Street, Sandown. c.1870s.

Figure 4.33 shows *'The Rangers'*, a stone and tiled residence located at the top of Lake Hill.



Figure 4.34: Numerous Victorian villa residences in this style can be found in Sandown and Shanklin's avenues and residential roads.



Figure 4.35: 'The Manor House', Lake, constructed c.1930.



Figure 4.36: Brick villas in Victoria Road, Sandown, with their ornate porches.



Figure 4.37: 'St Arvan's', Cliff Road, Lake, is a mid-Victorian seaside villa with a most attractive Regency-style veranda.

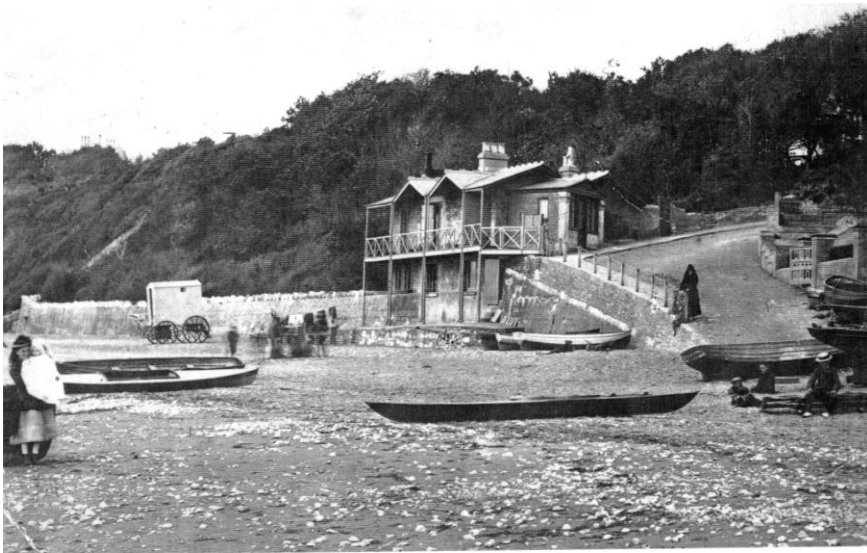


Figure 4.38: *'Swiss Cottage'*, Sandown Esplanade in c.1870. The road on the right is Pier Street.

Figure 4.39: *'Orchiltree House'*, Victoria Avenue, Shanklin, is constructed of Greensand, quarried locally, with yellow brick decoration and window dressings.



Figure 4.40: *'Rylstone Manor'*, located within its Gardens adjacent to Shanklin Chine, was the home of the Spartali family. Marie Spartali was an artist, and model for Julia Margaret Cameron and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

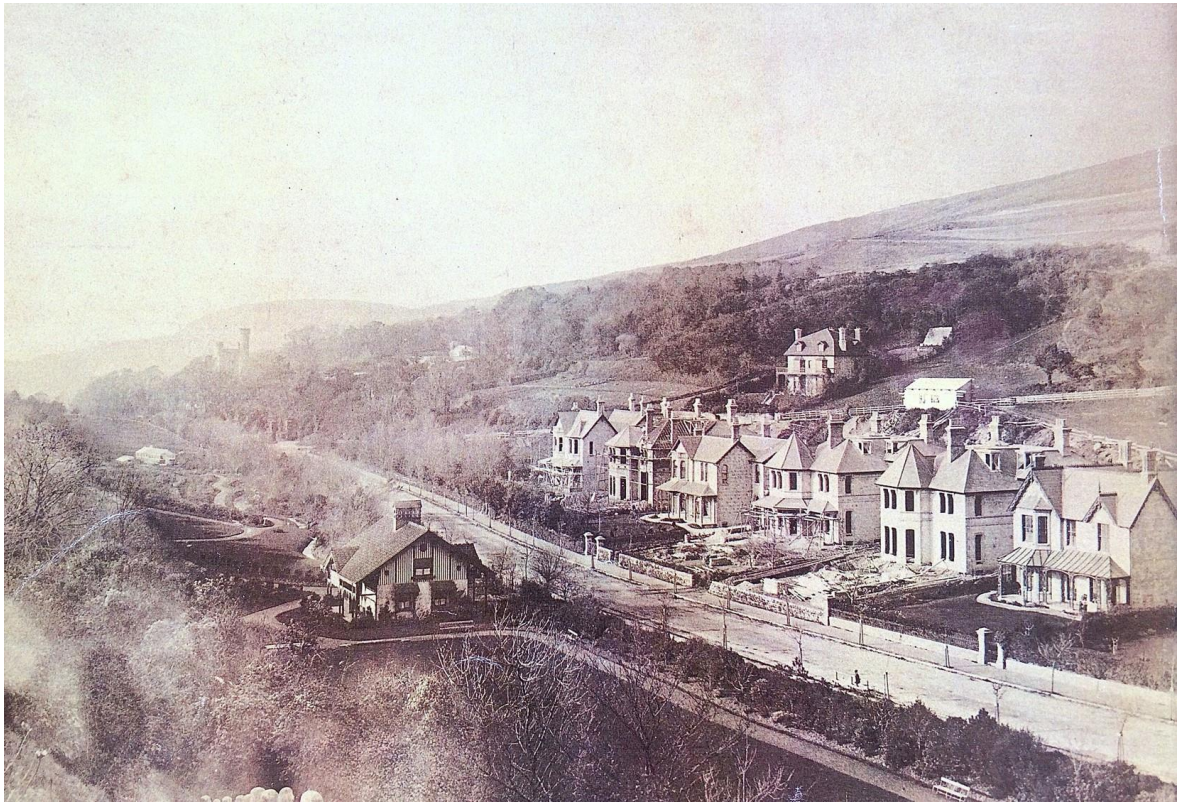


Figure 4.41 (above): *'Park Avenue, Ventnor'* in the 1860s. The Victorian period saw the rapid expansion of Ventnor to cater for the demand for large family houses. Park Avenue was constructed to help meet this demand. Behind the new houses can be seen St Maur in Castle Road, with Steephill Castle in the distance; in the foreground is Park Lodge in Ventnor Park.

Figure 4.42 (below): *'Upper Bonchurch'*, by George Elgar Hicks. 1849. Lithograph. Many of the important mansions in Bonchurch were built by Dr Henry Beaumont Leeson from the 1840s. The rocky terraces of the Bonchurch Undercliff, with panoramic views of the English Channel, proved popular with wealthy Victorians as the sites for their marine residences.





Figure 4.43: '*St Augustine's*' on The Cascade, Ventnor, was constructed in the late 1830s.

Figure 4.44: '*Yarborough Villa*' a classic Regency design of about 1850, high up Grove Road, facing south-west, and conforming to exactly the kind of spacious resort development that the physician, Dr James Clark, hoped would prevail throughout this portion of the Undercliff. Unfortunately, it never did. The density of building intensified as land prices soared.



Figure 4.45: '*Macrocarpa*', Mitchell Avenue, Ventnor, is magnificently situated overlooking Ventnor and the English Channel.



Figure 4.46: *'Alexandra Gardens'*, Ventnor, a terrace of substantial Victorian marine villas, was designed by Ventnor architect, Theodore Saunders, in about 1880.

Figure 4.47: *'The Lawn'*, Zig Zag Road, Ventnor, is a typical Victorian seaside villa with an ornate conservatory.



Figure 4.48: *'Cliff Cottage'* in The Pitts, Bonchurch. The site was named after the extensive stone quarries.



Figure 4.49: *'Regatta Day, Ventnor', c.1910.* Victorian hotels and villas line the Esplanade and coastal slopes.





Figure 4.50 (above) and 4.51 (below): Handsome Victorian marine villas were constructed on the coastal slopes at Blackgang in the late nineteenth century. Most of these have since been lost as a result of coastal erosion and landslip.



However, in 1855, Appuldurcombe was sold and much of the magnificent art collection was transferred to the Yarborough Estate at Brocklesby Park in Lincolnshire. Appuldurcombe passed through a succession of owners, becoming a school and then a monastery at the time of the re-building of Quarr Abbey. In 1943 the empty house was partially destroyed by a land mine and it remained a ruin until the Historic Building Commission took it over. English Heritage had the great foresight to re-roof and re-glaze the principal rooms of the house in 1986.

A smaller version of the classical mansion is well-illustrated by Gatcombe House to the south of Newport. The symmetrical, classical façade faces west across the rolling countryside to the south of Newport. Gatcombe was also owned by a member of the Worsley family, the house being built in 1751 for Sir Edward Worsley in the fashionable style of that time with its three storeys and rows of windows a prominent feature.

A description of mansions would not be complete without mention of two properties located within the Undercliff. The older of these is Old Park at St Lawrence, which was enlarged from a farm building to create a comfortable residence by General Sir John Cheape, in 1865. The stone mansion was decorated in the fashionable '*Gothick*' style, its exterior and interior containing elaborate decorations using materials of the highest quality. The house was later the home of William Spindler, a German industrialist, who was also a local benefactor. A more detailed description of the property and the work of Spindler can be found in '50 years along the Undercliff of the Isle of Wight' (McInnes, 2005⁶).

A mile to the east, at Steephill, a Gothic Revival castle was constructed for John Hamborough between 1833 and 1835. The castle replaced the earlier cottage that had been built originally by the Rt. Hon. Hans Stanley, Governor of the Island, between 1770 and 1780. Steephill Castle was a landmark along the Undercliff for 130 years, its flag towers providing panoramic views of the southern coastline. The home of an American, John Morgan Richards, in the early 1900s, the Castle was demolished in 1969 (McInnes, 2005⁶).

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Figure 5.1: 'Puckaster Cottage, Niton Undercliff' by Matthew Dubourg. 1828. Aquatint. An illustration from 'Architectural sketches for cottages, rural dwellings, and villas, in the Grecian, Gothic, and fancy styles, with plans; suitable to persons of genteel life and moderate fortune. Preceded by some observations on scenery and character proper for picturesque buildings' by Robert Lugar.

Figure 5.2: 'Niton Undercliff' by Susan Kirkpatrick. 1864. Watercolour. This view shows (from left to right): St Catherine's Lighthouse (before being reduced in height), Puckaster Cottage, The Orchard (seat of General Sir Willoughby Gordon), Beauchamp House (demolished after the 2001 landslide) and in the distance the Buddle Inn, Westcliff and the Sandrock Hotel. This part of the Undercliff is designated as 'Heritage Coast'.



Figure 5.3: 'The Swan's Nest', St John's Road, Ryde – a Cottage Ornée.

Chapter Five

East Wight Cottage Architecture

During the mid-to-late eighteenth century wealthy gentry, having returned from the Grand Tour, took a much greater interest in the picturesque scenery of the British Isles. Scenic and relatively remote locations such as the Isle of Wight proved to be of increasing interest to travellers, writers and artists who wished to explore and record the landscape and coastal scenery. For the aristocracy at that time it was a fashionable necessity to own a seaside cottage in addition to a country estate or a London home and locations around the Isle of Wight coastline held a particular attraction on account of the spectacular scenery and mild climate.

At many locations around the Island's coast former rustic cottages were restyled in what became known as the picturesque cottage orné; larger buildings sometimes being called Maisons ornées. Advice on architectural styles was provided in a number of publications and pattern books such as 'Essays on the picturesque' (Price, 1794¹), '*Ferme ornée*' or '*Rural improvements*' (Plaw, 1795²) or '*Villa Architecture*' (Lugar, 1828³). A characteristic of these early cottages were their elaborate decorations which usually included ornate fretwork to the bargeboards, elaborate thatched roofing, overhanging eaves often supported by rustic timber posts, leaded lights, oriel windows and ornate chimney pieces. Popularity of this style had been influenced by the Regency architect, John Nash, who lived at East Cowes Castle, and who had created a village of such ornate properties at Blaise Hamlet near Bristol.

Throughout the Isle of Wight examples of the cottage or maison orné are to be found, particularly in the coastal towns and along the Undercliff. Some of the most interesting examples include Puckaster Cottage at Niton (Lugar, 1828³), Lisle Combe at St Lawrence, Fountain Cottage at Bonchurch, Vernon Cottage (Plaw, 1795²) and Tower Cottage at Shanklin and the Swan's Nest at Ryde. When the early writers and artists visited the Island many of these remote properties represented the only civilised point of contact and, as a result, they are extensively illustrated by Cooke, Tomkins and others (Tomkins, 1796⁴; Cooke, 1808⁵). Descriptions of the properties are provided by many of the early writers including Tomkins, Hassell, Wyndham, Cooke, and later Brannon and Barber. The cottage orné provided an attractive retreat for wealthy gentry and a venue for summer entertainments. However, the traditional cottage fulfilled a much more utilitarian function home for farm labourers or, on the coast, for fishermen. The stone cottages of the rural villages and more isolated individual properties located in charming rural settings contribute much to the character of the countryside. Many have been converted into comfortable residences for Island residents or as second homes. However, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries conditions were extremely basic and many of these properties were left to fall into a serious state of disrepair.

Around the coastline the numerous small coves also supported fishermen's cottages, many with thatched roofs. These existed for example at Steephill Cove near Ventnor and at the foot of Luccombe Chine. Over the decades a number of these have been lost to the effects of coastal erosion and landslip. Other examples of cottages along the coastline include the Fisherman's Cottage built in 1817 by Mr W. Colenutt, at the foot of Shanklin Chine, where from 1845 his son-in-law, James Sampson, operated hot brine baths, whilst the isolated Orchard Bay House at St Lawrence was a former victualling coastguard station. In Belgrave Road, Ventnor, Cove Cottage was built in 1828 by the stonemason constructing Steephill Castle; he was killed by a block of masonry falling from its flag tower.

Larger cottage or maisons ornées were constructed based upon the 'picturesque' principles. Lisle Combe at St Lawrence was built in the 1830s by Captain Pelham, son of Earl Yarborough, who owned the adjacent Marine Villa. Other properties including Dunnose Cottage (now Dunnose Magna) and later Victorian villas continued to reflect the picturesque influences particularly through their ornate bargeboards and chimneys.



Figure 5.4: '*Sophie Dawes' Cottage*', Upper Green Road, St Helens, dates from the early eighteenth century. Brick and chalk block construction.



Figure 5.5: '*Tollgate Cottage*', St Lawrence, on Undercliff Drive. Constructed from locally quarried Upper Greensand.



Figure 5.6: The highly decorated '*Coburg Cottage*' at Whippingham, c.1872 displays a Germanic influence in memory of the Prince Consort.

The country cottage has been the subject of considerable interest to both engravers and artists over the last century and a half. In fact, the deteriorating state of many country cottages was the principal reason for the execution of numerous detailed watercolour drawings by the celebrated Victorian artist, Helen Allingham. Mrs Allingham was wife of the poet, William Allingham, who was part of the Tennyson circle of writers and artists. On her numerous visits to the Island she recorded a wide range of such buildings comprising cottages and farmhouses, in total over a hundred watercolours. Whilst they may give us a rather idealised portrayal of cottage life, they do also provide an interesting record of many such buildings including a number that have long since disappeared. Views of country cottages in both coastal locations and inland locations feature in the work of the associate and tutor of Helen Allingham, the celebrated Victorian watercolourist Myles Birket Foster. Birket Foster knew Tennyson, and later lived at Winterbourne, Bonchurch to recuperate from Tuberculosis in the early 1860s. His images of the Undercliff coastline and cottages such as those at Monk's Bay, Bonchurch are typical of his precise work.

In some of the Island villages groups of cottages form terraces where landowners carefully considered the aesthetics and as a result enhanced the character of their estates. Elsewhere cottages were functional with coastguard cottages being constructed in stone or brick, such as those at Woody Bay, St Lawrence and on Culver Down. Other functions of the cottage included estate lodges and also toll houses; a later example is Woodlands Vale Lodge at Springvale by Stephen Salter (1900). Tollgate cottages still exist at the St Lawrence entrance to the Undercliff Drive and at Church Road, Shanklin. At Seaview the Salterns Cottages near the Duver were inhabited by those working on the adjacent salt flats. With their tiled roofs, gables and dormers they form an attractive group.

A large number of cottages have been converted sensitively and maintained over many years and this aspect of the Island's architectural heritage has been well preserved. Many cottages have been adapted to cater for the Island's tourism economy, particularly for holiday accommodation. At Brading are Little Jane Squibb's Cottage in The Mall and Linden Terrace nearby. In Shanklin Old Village, the assemblage of Cottages Ornées, including the largest group of thatched properties on the Island, with the adjacent cottage villas including Edward Vernon Utterson's Vernon Cottage (1817) and Eastcliff, which was built for Francis Pittis in the same year, this form a fascinating assemblage of character residences.

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Figure 6.1 (left): Craigie Lodge at St Lawrence was designed by the Ventnor architect, Theodore Saunders, in the Arts and Crafts style. The house was commissioned by John Morgan Richards of Steephill Castle for his daughter, Pearl Craigie. It contains original wallpaper by William Morris, together with ornate tiles and fireplaces in the Arts and Crafts style.

Figure 6.2 (below): *'Tanglewood'*, Steephill near Ventnor, was a cottage on the Steephill Castle Estate.



Chapter Six

From Arts and Crafts to Art Deco - Private homes of style and character

A number of factors contributed to the East Wight becoming an increasingly prosperous location for wealthy Victorian residents and visitors in the mid to late 19th century. The presence of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort at Osborne House since the middle of the century had been a particularly important factor in terms of encouraging society to the Isle of Wight. The increasing popularity of sailing and the growing fashion for sea bathing, together with the benefits of the Island climate, all encouraged more and more residents and summer visitors. Alongside this, improved rail communications and ferry services as well as the extension of the railway network on the Isle of Wight made the Island's towns and resorts increasingly accessible from all parts of the country.

The special qualities of locations such as the Undercliff and Shanklin had long been realised by early visitors, who appreciated the beautiful landscape, coastal scenery and the health-giving benefits of the climate. The outstanding locations of coastal towns and villages including Bonchurch, St Lawrence, Seaview and Bembridge and elsewhere encouraged the prosperous Victorians to invest in substantial properties often commissioned from leading architects of the time.

The Victorian period coincided with a time of significant wealth allowing the employment of craftsmen of an exceptionally high standard. Companies such as William Morris and Co encouraged a careful and thoughtful design of fixtures and fittings and it became fashionable for property owners to embellish their new residences taking advantage of the latest styles and decorations. The expansion of some of the towns with new residential roads being laid out as attractive avenues or parks provided an opportunity for the Victorians to demonstrate a clearly visible display of their wealth and stature.

In some areas, the construction of new Victorian residences was random, for example in Ventnor, where a haphazard form of development took place largely as a result of the topography. Elsewhere, such as at Bonchurch, careful consideration was given to the siting of fine stone mansions constructed of local materials. As some of the quarries became worked-out these sites also provided level and sheltered plots for the construction of magnificent villas offering panoramic views over the tumbled landscape of the Bonchurch Undercliff.

More formal arrangements were planned at East Cowes where a spectacular park and botanic garden provided the centrepiece for a proposed development, which was bounded by Victoria Grove and Albert Grove (now York Avenue) and extended down to the waterfront of the River Medina. The developer, George Eyre Brooks, had originally planned to construct some one hundred properties in a grand arrangement providing a suitably fashionable neighbourhood to the important adjoining estates of East Cowes Castle, Norris Castle and, later, Osborne House. Some properties were developed according to the original plan but the project eventually ran into financial difficulties and was abandoned.

Elsewhere, at Ryde, streets of Victorian properties, a number of them of Italianate design echoing the style of Osborne with turrets providing views across the Solent, were developed in Easthill and Westhill Roads, known as St John's Park. A fine prospect over this area is well illustrated in George Brannon's engraving of '*Ryde from St John's*'. Other elegant streets were laid out as tree-lined avenues, including Victoria Avenue at Shanklin, Park Avenue at Ventnor and the Broadway at Sandown.



Figure 6.3 (above): 83 St John's Road, Sandown, was built in the 'Old English' style reminiscent of Tudor domestic architecture. 75 St John's Road (**Figure 6.4 below**) is another of several fine residential properties in this road.



The popularity of sailing was increasing and was becoming more popular with gentry rather than just the aristocracy. This encouraged developments at Seaview, where the unusual chain pier was constructed in 1881, the promenade and handsome villas at Seagrove Bay, and the development of fine mansions at Bembridge, often discretely hidden by hedges or high stone and brick walls. The late Victorian period was influenced both by leading architects and also influential art critics and inspiring thinkers, for example John Ruskin (1819-1900) and William Morris (1834-1896). Ruskin was a respected critic and lecturer on both art and architecture, whilst William Morris was more a designer of interior fittings, fabrics, glass and tiles. He founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877 and the Art Workers' Guild in 1884.

This was a time when the high Victorian styles such as the Gothic Revival, so much favoured by Sir George Gilbert Scott and his followers was giving way to the Arts and Crafts Movement and 'Art Nouveau', a decorative movement that was spreading across Europe. The '*villa architecture*' influence of Art Nouveau can be found in the more expensive residences of the 1890-1910 period but domestic properties generally exuded a more simple quality and style that can be found in select residential areas in many Island towns and suburbs. The use of red brickwork, leaded lights, distinctive chimneys and tile-hung facades are characteristic of the period together with an increasing use of black and white (Tudor style) decoration providing a striking contrast. Many examples of these styles are provided in this chapter.

With one or two notable exceptions (Lloyd & Pevsner, 2006¹; Jones, 2000²) the development on the Island since the 1870s has received very little attention. In fact, the Island has a rich resource of handsome Victorian and Edwardian villas lining residential streets, many of which are taken for granted by residents who are familiar with living within these Victorian and Edwardian environs. Emphasis has been placed in this chapter and the following chapter on modern architecture, to highlight the quality and importance of many of these more recent residential properties, a large number of which have, in the past, been demolished and replaced by blocks of flats or new houses which sometimes sit incongruously within a line of much more handsome properties.

The late nineteenth century also saw the construction of important municipal buildings including the Town Hall at Ryde, and the Royal National Hospital at Steephill, which was designed by eminent architects as funding became available from private donations. Apart from the striking design of the Royal National Hospital, with the blocks of cottages lining the south side of Steephill Road, the interior of St Luke's Chapel and a number of other churches benefited from designs and embellishments by Morris and Company from 1877. Theodore Saunders from Ventnor designed Ventnor Pier and a number of other buildings in the town. Saunders also designed two ornate villas, Craigie Lodge at St Lawrence for William Spindler of Old Park, (the house later being occupied by the novelist, Pearl Craigie, who was daughter of John Morgan Richards of Steephill Castle), and Cliffdene at Steephill Cove.

In addition to their work on public buildings and church architecture, the Island had a number of resident architects who made a significant contribution through the quality of their domestic building designs. These included, for example, Stephen Salter who designed a number of villas in the Ryde and Seaview areas including the attractive row of timber, brick and flint cottages named after famous public schools at the entrance to Nettlestone from Ryde.

The most important ecclesiastical building of the turn of the century was, without doubt, the new Quarr Abbey, which was constructed of Belgian brick from 1908-1912 based upon a design by Paul Bellot. An imaginative use of brickwork created a feeling of space and style for the interior reminiscent of Catalan and Moorish architecture, quite apart from its striking external appearance.

During the early 20th century Bembridge School was built in 1919 based upon a design by M. H. Ballie Scott in what has become known as the 'Old English domestic style' (Lloyd & Pevsner, 2006¹). Scott also designed three cottages ornés at St Lawrence in 1936/7, the whitewashed and thatched cottages provide an attractive



Figure 6.5: The entrance lodge to Woodlands Vale, Springvale near Ryde, was designed by Stephen Salter in 1894.

Figure 6.6: A number of ornate properties by the Island architect, Stephen Salter, can be found in this area. His designs follow the Arts and Crafts style, with elaborate use of materials in complex combinations; Sandlands, Steyne Road, Seaview.



Figure 6.7: The elaborate use of brick, rendering and decorative gables combine magnificently at Duver House, St Helens, by architect, Stephen Salter.



Figure 6.8: Three thatched cottages designed by the architect, M. H. Baillie Scott, at St Lawrence.

Figure 6.9: '*Horestone Point*', Seaview, was designed by Oliver Hall in 1928, and has an Art Deco influence.



Figure 6.10: The elegant '*Marine Villa*' on the cliff top at Littlestairs Road, Shanklin, is a fine example of Art Deco architecture.

group adjacent to the Undercliff Drive and opposite Craigie Lodge. A number of individual architect designed properties were constructed in the late 1920s including, for example, Horestone Point at Seaview, which was designed by Oliver Hill in 1928.

By the 1930s the influence of Art Deco was starting to appear on the Island. The best known example is the Winter Gardens at Ventnor, based upon a design for the De La Warr Pavilion at Bexhill-on-Sea in Sussex. Elsewhere private properties including Marine Villa at Cliff Path Lake, Ferrodock in Luccombe Road Shanklin and Broadview House in Steephill Road Ventnor. They were characterised by green tiled roofs, white walls and metal window frames. Of the same period was the Grand Hotel at Sandown, one of few purpose-built hotels constructed on the Island, elaborately fitted out in the art-deco style. It forms a distinct contrast with the adjacent fort on one side and the recently constructed Dinosaur Museum on the other. In 1938 the Royal York Hotel was opened in George Street, Ryde, in the style of the Modern movement.

During the late 1930s a new village was created at Luccombe where some thirty-seven properties were built, some of which have since been lost as a result of landslip; a further new village was created at Alverstone, known as Alverstone Garden Village, in the 1960s.

In the late 1920s McFarlane's of Glasgow erected a pavilion on Ryde seafront; a rare example of cast-iron seaside decoration architecture. In the 1930s the 'Old English' or Sussex farmhouse style proved popular with well-built properties being constructed along the main Ryde-Newport road at Kite Hill, Wootton, and Elenor's Grove. Constructed of brick, sometimes with the stone quoins, the properties featured tiled roofs and tile-hung facades, and attractive porches with substantial oak doors and, together with their interior fittings, reflecting very much the Arts and Crafts style that had been made fashionable by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

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Figure 6.11: 'Broadview House' Steephill, c.1930s.



Figure 6.12: The Art Deco style Winter Gardens at Ventnor, c.1934.

Chapter Seven

Modern architecture

A steadily rising Island population saw the expansion of many of the East Wight's towns and villages with new estates appearing on their outskirts during the 1950s and 1960s. Previously individual developments and infilling formed ribbons running alongside the main roads, but this was sprawl controlled through legislation. In the villages the stone properties that formed the original core of the ancient villages were difficult to replicate in style and quality because of the shortage of natural stone and for reasons of cost. The invention of 'simulated island stone' in the form of concrete blocks, sometimes coloured and sometimes using natural aggregates, proved a popular alternative to Island stone. In some cases this worked relatively well but elsewhere it was clearly very much a compromise.

For the most part the second half of the twentieth century was not a great period in terms of the design of residential properties. Whilst there are some excellent examples of individual properties designs together with sensitive restorations and conservation projects, overall estate developments were often utilitarian rather than attractive. The durability of many of these estate houses and bungalows is questionable when compared with buildings constructed before the Second World War and during the 1950s.

The 1960s was a period when architects were seeking new designs and styles rather than falling back on the Gothic Revival and classical styles so much favoured in the past. Use of steel and concrete or concrete blocks resulted in some unusual constructions, some more successful than others. Some prominent rows of individual properties were erected and estates laid out where the natural beauty of the location helped make up for any shortcomings in architectural style. In the Undercliff along the former railway line extensive development took place, as well as on the site of the former Steephill Castle. In Castle Court a property called *Chert* was constructed in 1970, which is marked by a simplicity of design allowing full advantage to be taken of its superb natural location set against the rear escarpment of the Undercliff with panoramic views across the English Channel and the Undercliff coast.

The most significant architectural influence was the design of several landmark buildings by the practice Rainey Petrie Johns, led by the former County Architect, Michael Rainey; these have included the Lord Louis Library and new Court Rooms in Newport, Adelaide Court at Ryde and the Visitors' Centre at Ventnor Botanic Garden. Other important buildings by this Island firm of architects include the Dinosaur Museum at Sandown, the Brading Roman Villa Heritage Centre and the Lion Point pumping station at Ventnor, which forms a new focus for the Esplanade following the demolition of Ventnor Pier in 1993 after it had become a dangerous structure. Lion Point formed a suitable site for developing an extension to form a small fishing and pleasure boat haven on the seafront, which has contributed significantly towards the regeneration of Ventnor.

Following a study by the Civic Trust in 1994/95 Ventnor has benefited gradually from a regeneration strategy. This has allowed the designation of a Conservation Area for the town centre including a number of interesting late Regency style and Victorian shop fronts. The study also recommended that a distinctive feature of many Ventnor buildings, the iron balconies, should be restored or replaced wherever possible.

Other new developments to take place in Ventnor in recent years in contrasting architectural styles include Algernon House in Alpine Road which sought to match the row of late Victorian villas on either side; a new house constructed in Park Avenue replicating its neighbours in terms of design and quality of construction; new apartments on the site of the former Metropole Hotel on Ventnor Esplanade; and a pair of seaside houses on the site of the former Monte Carlo Hotel which was demolished following ground movement in 1960/61. Other prominent buildings include Kingsview, developed on the site of the former Rex Cinema overlooking



Figure 6.1 (above): '*Chert*' at Castle Court, Steephill, was designed by Ventnor architects, Gilbert and Hobson, in 1969. It is a striking property set against the rear escarpment of the Undercliff; the house is now in the ownership of the National Trust.



Figure 6.2 (left): '*Haddon Lake House*', Old Park, St Lawrence, overlooks the lake that formed part of William Spindler's estate in the nineteenth century. The design maximises the beautiful natural setting.

Figure 6.3 (below): '*Acorn Gardens, East Cowes*' – the use of yellow and red bricks reflect the Victorian properties within the town.





Figure 6.4 (above): *'King's View'* on the site of the former Rex Cinema, Ventnor.



Figure 6.5 (above right): Residential development in Nunwell Street, Sandown.

Figure 6.6 (right): *'Oak House'* in Priory Road, Shanklin.



Figure 6.7 (below): Flats on the site of the former Metropole Hotel, Ventnor Esplanade.



Ventnor Bay and the fishery in Ventnor Haven designed by Andrew Hitt. The fishery, and a number of other new developments, are reflecting a 'New England, east coast of America' style with overlapping timber facades, painted in pastel colours.

Elsewhere individual developments have taken advantage of their natural or historic settings. A number of fine properties were constructed on land formerly in the ownership of Upper Chine School at Shanklin, whilst Haddon Lake House at Old Park, St Lawrence by Michael Rainey took full advantage of its setting within the former Old Park estate. Aesthetically pleasing but more expensive apartments and individual homes are increasingly common, particularly on the more valuable sites; no doubt reflecting the demands of discerning clients for properties with real architectural style. It is very much hoped that these imaginative designs will set a standard for architecture in the years to come, taking account of the public's greater interest and concerns about the built and natural environments, history and sustainability.



Figures 6.8 & 6.9 (above): Lion Point, Ventnor and the '*Fishery*' designed by Rainey-Petrie (2000) and Andrew Hitt (2007).

Figures 6.10 & 6.11 (below): '*Ventnor Botanic Garden Visitor Centre*' (2000) and '*Dinosaur Isle*' (2000) both by Rainey-Petrie Design.



Analysis

The purpose of this particular project, which is entitled *'Fine Mansions and Fair Villas of the East Wight Countryside and Coast'*, has been to raise interest and awareness in the rich architectural heritage of the East Wight built environment from the sixteenth century to the present day. The aim of this project and its deliverables, has been to create a record of the architectural styles of residences in the towns, villages and countryside of the East Wight, highlighting how the built environment contributes to the wider landscape of the East Wight and its 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB).

A notable feature of the East Wight is the almost complete record of English architectural styles from the late sixteenth century onwards. This is a reflection of the relative wealth of the Isle of Wight, arising from the export of wool and corn which generated such a great income for landowners. This wealth enabled the large number of manor houses and farmhouses to be constructed in the countryside. Later, the wide publicised benefits of the Island's climate for health resulted in the rapid expansion of the coastal towns and villages in particular, to become fashionable seaside resorts for the wealthy and, later, holiday destinations.

On the Isle of Wight, as in a number of other mainland locations, the links between the landscape, the art world and architectural heritage are closely entwined. The 'discovery of the Isle of Wight' in the late eighteenth century by early writers and artists, including J. M. W. Turner, Thomas Rowlandson, George Morland, John Nixon, Charles Tomkins and, later, William Daniell, and many others, raised awareness amongst the aristocracy of the special qualities of the East Wight landscape and coastal environment. Bearing in mind that the art world was centred in London, and artists, on returning from the Isle of Wight, showed their works to wealthy patrons, this inevitably raised interest in the Isle of Wight coast as a location for the construction of a marine villa.

The initial construction of major properties such as Norris Castle, and East Cowes Castle by the celebrated Regency architect, John Nash, led to a rash of substantial villas being constructed, particularly along the Solent shorelines. Whilst along the south coast, particularly within the Undercliff, the designs and publications of architects such as Robert Lugar, whose style was also promoted by Nash, led to the construction of some of England's finest cottage ornés.

The arrival of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort and the subsequent construction of Osborne House was an impetus for architectural design in turn bringing further wealth to the Island, as indeed was the founding of the Royal Yacht Club (later the Royal Yacht Squadron), bringing many more wealthy visitors to the Island to enjoy.

Writings by the physician, Sir James Clark, on *'The Influence of Climate in the Prevention and Cure of Chronic Diseases'* (Clark, 1829¹) in which he stated *"I have certainly seen nothing along the south coast that compares to the climate of the Ventnor area"* further encouraged well-to-do Victorians to develop or buy properties at Bonchurch and Ventnor. Wealthy landowners, such as Earl Yarborough and John Hambrough, constructed or expanded properties along the Undercliff coast, occupying extensive tracts of the coastal frontage; this was similarly the case along the north-east coastline of the Island between East Cowes and Bembridge.

The arrival of the railways, together with improved ferry communications, brought huge numbers of holidaymakers to the Island, and this resulted in the expansion of the east coast seaside resorts, which changed from hamlets and fishing villages into prosperous holiday destinations. During the mid-to-late Victorian period, handsome villas, often laid out within parks or avenues, were constructed to cater for wealthy Victorians, their families and servants who would buy or rent a villa for several weeks during the summer season.

Wealthy visitors brought with them new architectural styles with Art Nouveau, the Arts and Crafts Movement and Art Deco, all being represented in the East Wight.

For the most part, the second half of the twentieth century was not a great period in terms of the design of residential properties in the East Wight. Whilst there are some excellent examples of individual property designs, together with sensitive restorations and conservation projects, overall, estate developments were, for the most part, utilitarian and not particularly attractive. The durability of many of these estate houses and bungalows is questionable, when compared with buildings constructed before the Second World War and during the 1950s.

The 1960s was a period when architects were seeking new designs and styles rather than falling back on the Gothic Revival and classical styles so much favoured in the past. Use of steel and concrete or concrete blocks resulted in some more unusual constructions, often alien to their surrounding landscape environments.

Whilst residential properties may have been lacking some architectural merit from the 1960s to the 1980s, a major influence on the landscape was the design of several landmark public buildings, which often occupy important sites within the wider East Wight environment. These include several important buildings by the practice Rainey Petrie Johns, for example the Ventnor Botanic Garden Visitors' Centre, Brading Roman Villa and the Dinosaur Museum at Sandown.

The last two decades have seen a steady improvement in architectural design and detail with demanding clients often seeking higher specifications.

Overall, there are large parts of the East Wight countryside where changes to the landscape as a result of development have been almost unnoticeable. Many of the historic manor houses, farm buildings, yeoman's properties and village cottages have been well maintained or restored. These properties have often been constructed of native materials, in particular the Bembridge Limestone from the north-east Wight, and the Upper Greensand from the south-east. In some locations locally made bricks, sometimes in combination with flints from the Upper Chalk, form attractive decorative features to facades of smaller properties.

In terms of the seaside resorts, their influence on the landscape can sometimes be best perceived from the sea, where the grandeur of Ryde and Ventnor for example, with their striking architecture and layout, can be appreciated most easily. Equally, landmark buildings, such as Norris Castle, Osborne House, Quarr Abbey and some of the larger Undercliff mansions, blend well with within their coastal landscape settings.

It is apparent from this particular project, that there is enormous interest in the Island's landscape, history and architecture; this is evidenced from the very positive feedback received from the heritage groups and societies, Island residents, visitors and school pupils who attended or participated directly in this project. The preparation of a sixteen page colour booklet on the '*Fine Mansions and Fair Villas*' project, together with the this project report, which is being made available to all the participating heritage organisations, will provide the opportunity to further raise interest and awareness in the East Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its architectural heritage. This project has also had the effect of raising interest in the Isle of Wight landscape and its art heritage more widely. In particular, the previous '*Down to the Coast*' project '*Vistas and Panoramas of the East Wight Landscape*' for which a sixteen page booklet was also produced, has been also read and enjoyed by those attending the very successful '*Fine Mansions*' exhibition held at Bembridge in May 2017.

This particular project examined the landscape and built environment of the East Wight, however, part of the central Island has not been covered by this project and neither was it included in the earlier West Wight Landscape Partnership study. It would certainly be beneficial to ensure that the built environment and landscape of the central Wight corridor is examined and included possibly in a further project.

Project Conclusions

1. The *Fine Mansions and Fair Villas 'Down to the Coast'* project has demonstrated the rich architectural heritage of the East Wight countryside and coastline including its *Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty* and its *Heritage Coast*. Residential properties dating from the sixteenth century to the present day are particularly well represented.
2. The availability of building stones quarried on the Isle of Wight (Limestone, Greensand and Chalk, sometimes used in combination with Flints and brick) has meant that traditional buildings often blend well with the natural AONB environments and contribute to their overall character.
3. The East Wight contains fine examples of Jacobean manor houses, eighteenth and nineteenth century coastal mansions, and numerous marine villas and cottage ornés.
4. The *Project Report* and the sixteen page *Project Summary Guide* provide illustrated records of the wide-ranging styles of domestic architecture to be found in the East Wight. Participating heritage groups and societies have made important written and photographic contributions to this project, and their support is gratefully acknowledged.
5. Pupils from the Isle of Wight Free School have contributed written and illustrated contributions on their favourite East Wight buildings. Their work and that of their teacher provides an added dimension to this project for which the author is most grateful.
6. A striking feature of this study has been the number of important residences that have been lost for various reasons since the mid-twentieth century in particular. This subject will be investigated a further project '*Paradise Lost – Lost Buildings of the East Wight*' commencing in Autumn 2017.
7. A number of important properties and landscapes lie to the west of the boundary of this East Wight study, but also were not included in the previous West Wight report. It would be beneficial to undertake a similar architecture, landscape and imagery review that covers this part of the central Isle of Wight, thereby providing complete Island coverage.



Figure C.1: 'Gatcombe and the country between Newport and St Catherine's Hill' engraved by George Brannon in 1836.



Figure A.1: 'Woolverton House' St Lawrence, the residence of the Twining tea family, is located on a ledge of rock overlooking its own grounds and the Undercliff coast. The house is built of local stone in the Isle of Wight marine villa style.

Appendix 1 – Fine Mansions and Fair Villas: Additional properties of interest highlighted by local heritage societies and other consultees as representing the architectural character of the East Wight (not already included in main body of report)



Figure A.2 (left): ‘Powys House’. Built as part of the Botanic Gardens development of 1842, Powys house shows the Gothic stone design suggested by the entrepreneur George Eyre Brooks. The plots leased were at least 100 feet wide and 300 feet deep, and surrounded central botanic gardens. Wide carriage ways were laid out, which were gated to keep out lesser mortals, although a ticket to visit the gardens, laid out by London landscape artist David Ramsey could be purchased. Powys House, named after the MP for Newport 1859 – 1865 who lived there, was originally built by Mr Chiesman, a developer. Today it is a care home, and one of the only two Gothic houses to survive of the twenty or so homes built in the Botanic Gardens scheme, also known as East Cowes Park.

Figure A.3 (right): ‘Kent House’. Next door to Powys is Kent House, another of the Gothic Botanic Gardens houses. This was constructed in 1843 on a double width plot for Thomas Cattlin, a London Lawyer. In 1864 Queen Victoria purchased the house and had extensive improvements carried out, creating well over forty rooms. It then became known as Kent House and was used for accommodating various people visiting Osborne. In 1884 the Queen’s grand -daughter Princess Victoria, eldest daughter of Princess Alice, married Prince Louis of Battenberg and they were in residence at Kent House for Christmas that year, with his brother, Prince Henry staying with them. Henry later married Princess Beatrice. The Duke of Argyll and Princess Louise lived at Kent House until the Duke’s death in 1914, whereupon Louise gave it to Prince Louis and Princess Victoria. When Prince Louis resigned at Admiral of the Fleet he had the top room of the house converted into the bridge of a destroyer. He died in 1921 and is buried at Whippingham. The building became accommodation for Saunders Roe workers and is now apartments in 2017.



Figure A.4 (left): ‘Osborne Cottage’ was built in 1856 by Albert and Victoria. The adjacent stables were completed in 1869 with staff accommodation. The Queen’s private secretary Sir Henry Ponsonby lived there until his death in 1896, when it became Princess Beatrice’s home until she moved to Carisbrooke Castle in 1914. It was she who added the orangery. The next owner was Mr Burbridge, of Harrods. Subsequent uses were as a hotel and then a night club – the Blue Parrot – during WWII. The County Council turned it into an old people’s home in 1952, and it remained in this use until 2015. In 2017 it is being converted to apartments. Many of the beautiful original features remain intact.



Figure A.5 (left): 'Sovereign's Gate'. The Queen's own entrance at the corner of New Barn Road and York Avenue remains as the 'Sovereign's Gate', only opened for Royalty (and the Olympic Torch!). These two cottages were converted in 2015 to holiday lets by English Heritage.

Figure A.6 (right): 'St Thomas' was built for the Sheddon family, who lived at Springhill House, East Cowes and who also owned 'Millfield House' (A.7 below). St Thomas' became a hotel and holiday camp in the 1920s and remains as such today with some residential caravans.



Figure A.7 (left): 'Millfield House' was converted into apartments and extended soon after the year 2000.

Figure A.8 (right): 'Cambridge Terrace', Cambridge Road. Built in 1870 in a style reminiscent of those built on the mainland forty years before, number three was described by an auctioneer as "a genteel modern residence" in 1899. That year it was sold for just under £400. The "fine drawing room" is on the first floor, having a balcony. Number three actually has a frieze mural painted around the drawing room depicting the Solent coastline, probably painted shortly after 1900.





Figure A.9 (left): *'North Lodge'*, East Cowes – an entrance lodge to John Nash's East Cowes Castle and the only remaining Castle feature; built 1798-1802.

Figure A.10 (right): *'Whippingham Almshouses'* – Listed Grade I. Built in 1875 for "Aged retainers of the Queen's Estate", these were still in Royal ownership until 1935. They were given to the Council then and are now under Housing Association management. The southernmost bay window was part of Queen Victoria's rooms and cloakroom. She would meet parishioners whom she wanted to see here.



Figure A.11 (left): *'The Coastguard Cottages'*. These were constructed in 1881, replacing the earlier Coastguard accommodation in the town centre. The easternmost property was the Officer's house, and to the west were the boat houses, since converted into accommodation. The whole group of houses were sold to the County Council in 1921.

Figure A.12 (right): *'The Albany Barracks'*. These barracks were constructed in 1872 for the Queen's Lifeguard when she was in residence at Osborne. They remained in use by the Army until sold to Saunders Roe in the 1960s. Because of this, the railings were not taken for recycling for the war efforts in WWII. Plans have been approved for the building to have a new use as a bar, restaurant and hotel rooms.





Figure A.13 (left): 'Clarence Road'. This Listed terrace, and the one on the opposite side of the road, were constructed in the early 1850s for accommodation for the Queen's Lifeguard. This, the eastern side of the road, was for officers and on the opposite side was accommodation for lower ranks. Behind the corner was the stabling, replaced in 1914 by the Liberal Club. Shops occupied the ground floor, with accommodation above. The large corner room above the shops became the Albert Reading Rooms when it was no longer required by officers, and that on the western side a meeting room.

Figure A.14 (right): 'The Stilts Building'. Uses for this have included a directors' dining room and design offices for Saunders Roe. It was built on stilts as a covenant stated that no building was to be erected on the green. Instead, this building gave space for sheltered seating to watch the harbour.



'The Columbine Shed'. Built in 1935 by Saunders Roe, the main purpose of this shed was to build seaplanes. Saunders Roe saw that there was a need to rearm the country, and having a contract to build more planes for the RAF went ahead with this forward-thinking construction. It has little Art Deco touches and set the company up with a building that was at full stretch throughout WWII. After the War, other planes to leave this factory included the Princess flying boat – the largest metal hulled seaplane in the world, and the SRA1 jet seaplane. The first and, later, the largest hovercraft were constructed here. Plans in 2017 are for the northern galleries to be converted into hotel accommodation.



Figure A.15 (left): 'The Gridiron Shed'. This Listed shed was built on the site of earlier boatbuilding slips, and adjacent to the ferry boat landing steps. Boats had been built there for hundreds of years. The first of J. S. White's seaplanes were built here and flew in 1913, the first of many built throughout the First World War.



Figure A.16 (left): *'Brigstocke Terrace'*, Ryde. This very imposing building was built in 1833 by architect, James Sanderson. It dominates the view from Ryde Pier and, again, is a well-known building to Ryde residents. It has five storeys including basements and attics. It is the only example of a grand classical Urban Terrace on the Island.

Figure A.17 (right): *'2 John Street'*, Ryde – a handsome family house with Italianate influence. John Street was laid out in the 1830s and this property was built in 1941.

Figure A.18 (below): George Street, Ryde, contains a fine range of villas and family residences such as the substantial No. 107.



Figure A.19 (bottom): *'Prince Consort Building'* was built in 1846-7 as the Royal Victoria Yacht Club. It is a two-storey building of Italianate design. It is built in stone and stucco with arch windows. It has a pair of Corinthian columns at the entrance. The rear of the building facing the Solent has a Tuscan colonnade which supports a broad balcony which nine windows open onto. This building is an imposing feature on Ryde Seafront and is of interest due to the history of its usage.



Private, Public and Other Character Buildings in the East Wight



Figure A.20 (left): 'Ryde Town Hall', Lind Street, Ryde. Built in 1829-31 for The Improvement Commissioners, it has been added over the years. A tower with cupola was added in 1867. The basement was intended for markets and has a short open frontage with Doric Columns. This municipal building currently has a very shabby appearance and many Ryde residents feel sad that this well-known and formerly well used building is currently in this state of repair.

Figure A.21 (right): 'Royal Victoria Arcade' in Union Street was designed by William Westmacott and opened in 1836. It is one of England's finest Neo-Classical shopping arcades.



Figure A.22 (left): 'The Royal Esplanade Hotel' built 1866-67 is a good example of a Victorian hotel. It is built in brick, but this is painted. It has iron balconies overlooking the seafront. This is the first main building that visitors see when leaving the Ryde transport links. It is an iconic hotel still in use.

Figure A.23 (right): 'Ryde Pavilion', Ryde Esplanade, built 1926-7 is an example of cast iron seaside architecture. It was built by Vincent and West using iron from Walter McFarlane's Saracen Ironworks. It now has a change of usage as part of it is a bowling alley. A well-known iconic building on Ryde Seafront.





Figure A.24 (above): Entrance lodge at 'St John's', Ryde, built in 1871.

Figure A.25 (right): 'Lodge to Appley Towers'. The main residence in Appley Road was demolished in about 1960 to make way for residential development.



Figure A.26 (left): 'Royal York Hotel', George Street, Ryde, built in 1930-1938. This former hotel was built by J. B. Harrison and H. P. Gilkes and is a good example of the Modern Movement Style of architecture. It has white painted walls with curved corners, parapet windows set in banded stripes in three tiers. The most noticeable feature is its oval entrance tower containing staircase windows; people often liken its appearance to an ocean liner.

This building is in a very bad state of repair, but is popular with locals who have happy memories of dances there. It is an iconic building which is clearly visible from the pier.

Figure A.27 (right): 'Nat West Bank', Ryde High Street. This stands on the former site of a theatre and is striking due to its design. The windows reflect the buildings around it.





Figure A.28 (left): Sussex farmhouse style period residences, built in the 1930s, line Kite Hill and Eleanor's Grove at Wootton.

Figure A.29 (right): The 'College Cottages' on Nettlestone Hill have attractive facades of brick, tile, pebbledash and timber beams.



Figure A.30 (above): The former bank building in Seaview High Street was built in the nineteenth century with two storey bow windows.

Figure A.31 (right): 'Seaview Hotel' has a grand façade with two bays of contrastive coloured bricks.





Figure A.32 (left): 'Quarr Abbey' 1907-1914. It is built of Belgian bricks in a mixture of bond patterns. It is a good example of expressionism, the movement that favoured artistic architecture. It was designed by Bellot. This building is popular due to its striking red colour and decorative appearance.

Figure A.33 (right): The Binstead and Havenstreet War Shrine, Newham Road. This shrine was built using stone from the local quarry owned by the Flemming family. The stone roof was salvaged from a boathouse on Binstead hard. It was erected 1917-18 as a memorial to second Lieutenant Richard Willis Flemming.

It is a rare example of a shrine built during the war as opposed to after the war, and it and its twin at North Stoneham Hampshire are thought to be the last buildings ever to be built from Binstead Stone.



Figure A.34 (left): 'Ferncliff House' and gardens, Sandown. Victorian families gather for an afternoon concert at Ferncliff Gardens, Sandown.

Figure A.35 (right): 'Los Altos' (now the Broadway Park Hotel), Melville Street, Sandown, viewed from Los Altos Park, c.1860s.





Figure A.36 (left): 'Yaverland Manor' was built in 1620 of Island stone and has remained virtually unchanged over the centuries. It fits well within the surrounding rolling countryside of the East Wight close to the valley and floodplain of the Eastern Yar.

Figure A.37 (right): 'St John's' in St John's Road, Sandown, was built in 1882. Its striking appearance results from the contrasting red and yellow brickwork. There are several fine late nineteenth and early twentieth century properties in this road.



Figure A.38: 'Springfield', Arthur's Hill, Shanklin, is an example of a well designed and built family house. The quoins and window dressings contrast effectively with the brickwork.



Figure A.39 (left): 'Priory Manor Hotel', Priory Road, Shanklin.

Figure A.40 (right): Luccombe Road at Shanklin contains fine Victorian residences and hotels, which enjoy panoramic views across Sandown Bay.





Figure A.41 (left): '*Keat's Inn*' overlooking the cliffs and beach from Keat's Green. It was built in 1885 as the '*Shanklin Club*'.

Figure A.42 (right): '*The Chalet*' in Rylstone Gardens was built in 1880 close to Rylstone Manor (c.1864). It is stylistically similar to the Shanklin Club (A.41 above).



Figure A.43 (left): '*Vernon Cottage*', Shanklin Old Village is a good example of a Cottage Orné. Built in 1817 for Lord Vernon it has been altered little except for a mid-Victorian addition.



Figure A.44 (left): '*The Clock Tower*', Esplanade, Shanklin, 1897.

Figure A.45 (below): '*Sun Shelters*' on Shanklin Esplanade are facsimiles of the Victorian originals and were replaced in about 1990.





Figure A.46 (left): *'Mirables'*, Niton Undercliff was a small marine villa set within the coastal landslip scenery. After Brannon engraved this view for Mrs Arnold in 1823 the property was enlarged substantially.

Figure A.47 (right): *'The Orchard'*, Niton Undercliff, just to the west of *'Mirables'*, was the marine villa of General Sir Willoughby Gordon. This view was engraved in 1821.



Figure A.48 (left): *'Puckaster Cottage'*, Niton Undercliff was designed by Robert Lugar in the Cottage Orn  style (c.1824). This property and A.46 and A.47 (above) show romantic villas in this natural setting constructed of local materials, which blend effectively within the surrounding landscape.

Figure A.49 (right): *'The Ventnor Family Hotel'* (later the Royal Hotel) in Belgrave Road, Ventnor, from an engraving (1830). Constructed of stone quarried from the slopes behind, the hotel was extended to cope with growing numbers of visitors who came for holidays or convalescence.



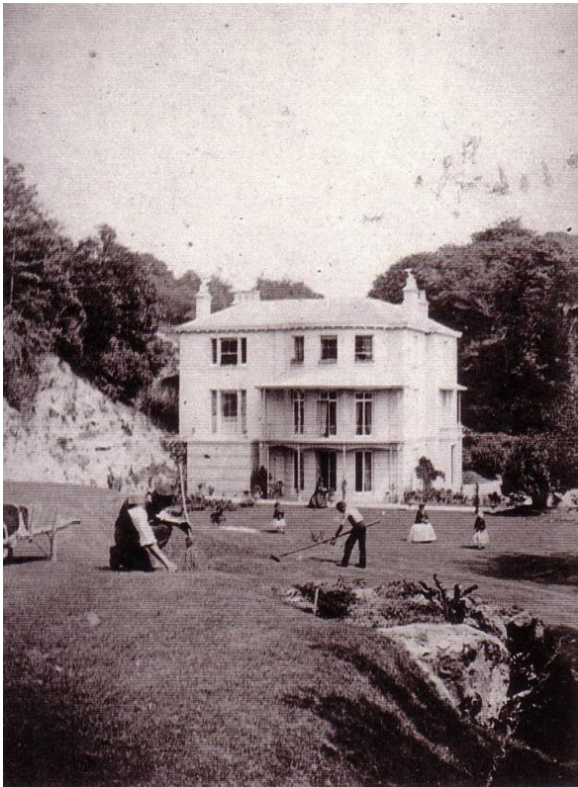


Figure A.50 (left): '*Combe Wood*' – one of Bonchurch's most elegant mansions. Built as Upper Mount Cottage in the 1820s, it was extended later in the nineteenth century when it became home to a wealthy American family. With its own gatehouse and a high perimeter wall, it conformed to a pattern that became commonplace in this part of the Undercliff. Land was sold in large plots according to a design by a London architect, the intention being to preserve the exclusive character of the area.

Figure A.51 (right): '*Pulpit Rock*', Upper Bonchurch (c.1840s) is an elegant residence built in The Pitts, which was the site of quarries where the Upper Greensand building stone was extensively quarried.



Figure A.52 (left): '*Orchardleigh*', Bonchurch is a large early Victorian marine residence in lower Bonchurch. The property is currently being returned from an hotel to a private house.

Figure A.53 (right): '*Hillside*', one of Ventnor's oldest hostelries, located at the bottom of Mitchell Avenue and still a hotel today, though much modified and extended. It was first known as the New Inn and at one time had a taphouse lower down on St Boniface Road.





Figure A.54 (left): *'Richmond Boarding House'* on Ventnor's Western Esplanade, one of a line of Victorian seaside villas, built for visitors. All had elaborate verandas at ground and first floor levels, served by French doors, intended for use by visiting invalids during the winter season.

Figure A.55 (right): *'Southgrove Terrace'* – a distinguished line of boarding houses completed in 1868, facing almost due south on one of Ventnor's higher rock terraces. The properties at either end were larger than those in the middle, as the positioning of the bay window implies.



Figure A.56 (above): *'Eglinton'* at top of Spring Hill, Ventnor, is a substantial marine villa, c.1850s.

Figure A.57 (right): *'Wellington Hotel'* (today an amalgamation of Worsley Villa, Grosvenor Villa and Wellington Villa/Boarding House) – best viewed looking up from the Esplanade where the lines of Regency tent-roofed verandas cannot fail to catch the eye.

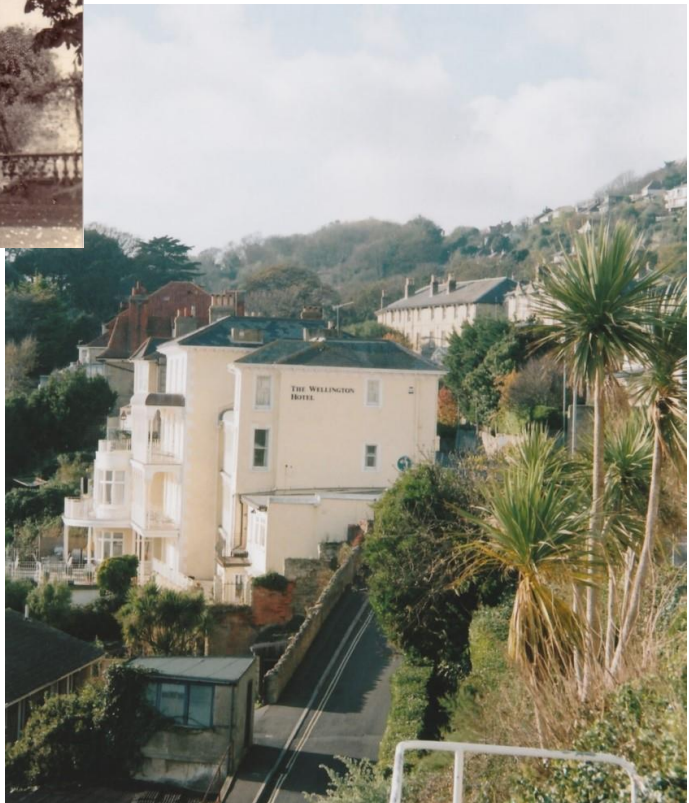




Figure A.58: '*Huish Terrace*', Mitchell Avenue, Ventnor, (c.1860s) is composed on local stone, yellow brick and locally obtained flints.

Figure A.59: '*Park Lodge*', Ventnor Park is one of several chalet buildings in the East Wight (see also A.42). This Grade II Listed Lodge has ornate timber decorations.



Figure A.60: '*Fernbank*', Bonchurch Shute has typical features of a small marine villa such as ornate bargeboards, veranda and flint chimneys.



Figure A.61 (left): Elegant villas in lower Zig Zag Road with wooden balconies, c.1870s.

Figure A.62 (right): '*Grange Cottage*' in Bonchurch near the Pond has a half-timbered upper storey with decorative black scrollwork to the front elevation.



Appendix 2 – Abbreviated Summaries of Isle of Wight Free School Student Projects

ROWAN COTTAGE

Francis White-Popham



30/3/1861

Leased land to:



Francis White-Popham

Rowan Cottage, formerly Salem Villa, is on the border of the Old Village in Shanklin. It was built in 1861, now 156 years old, which makes it in the Victorian style.

1864

Charles Denning

17/4/1899

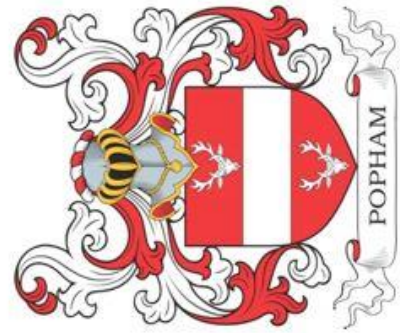
Eliza Denning
Deed of gift

24/4/1912

Frederick Ernest Cooper



In 1861 Francis White-Popham, the Lord of the Manor in Shanklin, leased the land to six men for £150 who then built the house and sold it for £150 again, making no profit. It was built for residential purposes and is still a residence now. Underneath one room of the house builders found old slates, on which children from the Old Village would have written on as that room was used as a schoolroom. The house, for most of the 20th century, was inhabited by the Secretary of the Wardens of Shanklin.



Popham
family
crest

I like the house because it is in a great location with lots of amenities including the theatre and beach nearby. It also has original features inside like fireplaces and on the outside has a bay window. As well as this it is a substantial size inside and out and has a great history which can be traced.

18/7/1947

Winifred M Asher
Deed of gift

26/12/1975

Executors of estate:
Andrew F Asher
John S Preston

30/3/1984

Melvin J Orton
Anita Orton

22/7/1985

Kenneth N Giblin
Susan P S Giblin

21/12/2006

Blue L Brown
Sunny L Brown

20/8/2010

Robert D Bransom
Jacqueline A Darnell



Then

Now



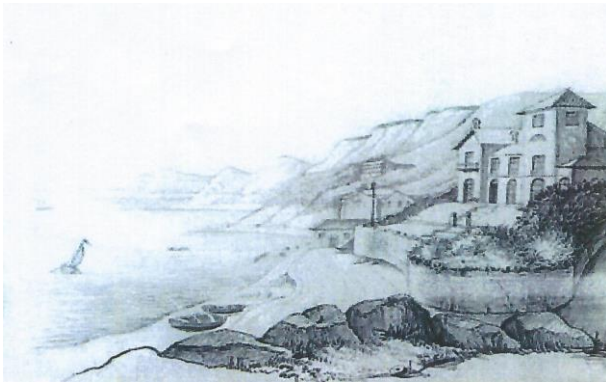
St Augustine Villa, Ventnor

The house I have chosen to write about is St Augustine Villa, which has also been known as The Chalet Hotel and, more recently, The Harbour View Hotel.

St Augustine Villa sits on Ventnor's Cascade Road and has amazing views in all directions;

The coast and beach to the west, the harbour and then open sea to the south and the gardens and waterfall of the Cascade to the east.

It was built in the early Victorian era, in 1846, by the Reverend Richard John Shutte (1800-1860) who had earlier been a minor canon at St Paul's Cathedral and by 1855, shortly before his death, had become a rector at Halden, Kent.

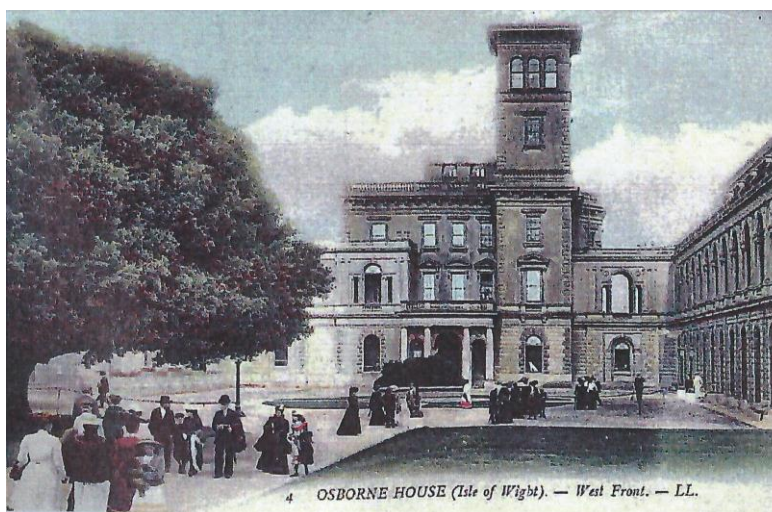


1855



2016

The villa is probably one of the most photographed buildings on the Island because of its stunning seafront location, and it is even said to have inspired Prince Albert in his design of Osborne House. The front square tower is reminiscent of the square towers at the entrance to Osborne House.



The history of this house is interesting and makes it unique.

There have been many inhabitants and some famous people who have stayed here, including Alexander Herzen (1812-1870) (an exiled Russian political thinker) and Malwida von Meysenbug (1816-1903) (a German writer).



It bears the blue plaque to mark the stay of Alexander Herzen in 1855 – known as the father of Russian Socialism, he was an illegitimate son (hence his German surname) whose father came of an ‘ancient family distantly related to the Romanov dynasty’. He was brought up as a ‘rich and well-born member of the Russian gentry’.

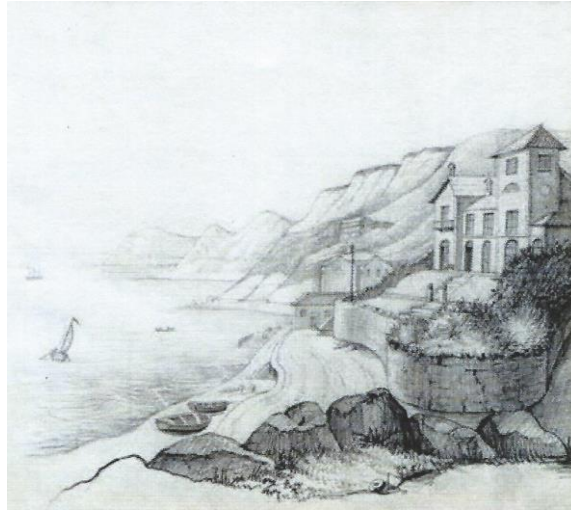
Alexander visited the IOW twice, staying with his family at St Augustine Villa in September 1855.

One member of his party was Malwida von Meysenbug who was a German writer and trained artist.



Malwida von Meysenbug (1816-1903), lived in London from 1852 to 1862. She was a teacher of Herzen’s children in 1853-1856, and remained a lifelong friend of his daughter Olga.

This sketch of Ventnor beach and St Augustine Villa has been attributed to von Meysenbug.



I like this house because it is set in a beautiful location near Ventnor beach.

The size and style of the house is great and detailed and hasn't changed much since it was built.

It has many windows which were probably added to take advantage of the beautiful views all around, but could also have been to impress the Reverend Shuttes neighbours, as they implied wealth. Window tax was also common in these times and people used to brick up their windows to allow them to not pay the fine as the more windows they had the more tax they had to pay. As none of the villas windows have been blocked up, this implies that Reverend Shutte and subsequent owners have had visible wealth.

Another reason that I like this house is because it is so unique. What other house could have inspired Prince Albert to design and have built Osborne House in the same Italian, Mediterranean style?

To conclude I think that St Augustine Villa is a very interesting and beautiful house in a stunning location and I have really enjoyed writing about it.

Alma (My House)



I find my house really interesting because I like the style of the stone and the time period it was built in. It was built in the time period of the Georgians. My house does not have any stained glass windows which is the only feature my house doesn't have which was a feature in the Georgian times.

Outside the front of my house is a cycle path which used to be a railway track. My house used to be the sleeping quarters of the people who worked at the railway station.

My house address is St Johns Road, Wroxall, Ventnor, Isle of Wight. Also my house was built in the 1800s. My house has two chimneys and a very long garden.

I chose this house because it is my house and I have always wanted to know more about my house. The style of this house really interests me because I really like the stone brick on the outside of the house. It really brings out the Georgian look to the house.

The garden is thin and long which I think is a good addition to the house. The front of the house has a front garden which is mainly stone and gravel.



Where I have circled this was my house in 1900s.

Fine Mansions and Fair Villas

The house I will be basing this essay on is located on the Ventnor Esplanade, opposite the Spyglass. The house is modern, being built within the last decade. It is also semi-detached. Because it was built in this time period it has features like symmetry, and has blue stained glass windows and panes of blue glass on the balconies. The house has a small driveway, which could hold up to two cars.

The exterior seems simplistic, but it looks nice, and the interior is very intricate and modernised.

I prefer more modern houses because of the patterns and art styles of the interior and exterior, like art deco for instance. Also, I like open, large houses, with a big garden. This house doesn't have a garden and is quite small, but it looks very visually appealing with the mixture of blue glass and white frames, with a navy blue roof contrasting with the white and complementing the blue glass. The sea view is also a key factor for liking it, especially that the balcony faces straight out towards it.

The house is an award winning beach house, because of its close proximity to the lovely beach, yet closeness to the town. It is an ideal family home for summer.

To conclude, the visual appearance is great, with the colours work really well together. The location, being on the esplanade and the beach, makes it brilliant to live in, and practical for most occasions, giving easy access to most of Ventnor. The front of the house looks really good, and would let in a lot of warmth on hot days, however not being that practical on cold days when it'd release much of the heat. However, the aspect of the building is South, and having a huge hill behind it blocks out the cold Northern winds and the buildings on either side would protect them from Eastern and Western winds. The house would only be susceptible to warm, Southern winds making it generally warmer. Due to all these attributes, I have chosen this property to write this essay on, as it is, for me, the nicest house on the island.

