

West Wight: Portraits of a Landscape

Pop-Up Stories

MOTTISTONE WALK

Lovely narrative, imagining the past, like a tunnel through time to reach the Longstone, connecting to people in the past as well as lovely people on the walk.

Birdsong, ferns, sitting on the grass.

The views suddenly appearing through the woods – uplifting. The tunnels of leaves through the trees were so visually stimulating. First view of the Longstone gave feeling experienced by people hundreds of years ago – very spiritual.

Really felt the varying textures of the pathways stone to leaf mould trodden down.

A beautiful sunny day and the hollow way engendered a sense of calm. Approaching the magnificent Longstone gave a feeling of peace especially when touched.

Clean, clear air and the smell of wood and greenery. The special feel of the Longstone.

Started at the church before the ascent up. Loved the noisy birds and the mass of bluebells (I thought they had passed) under the trees. Loved turning the corner to see the Longstone and it got closer as we walked.

View of Longstone, sounds of the birds.

FRESHWATER MARKET

Cross-country running at Carisbrooke secondary school – started and then hid in the graveyard to smoke a cigarette! Also at Middle School – run to High Down and remember teacher at inn with cigarette and pint counting us in.

In 1969 my parents were wardens at Fort Albert Holiday Camp and we grew up there. We used to play in the coastguard station (and now you can't go in!). Our aunt said we had our own private beach between Fort Albert and Victoria. Left the Island when I was 19 and came back 2 years ago. It's like coming home.

Beach parties at Compton Beach when we were teenagers – all good fun and seeing the sun come up.

Barbeque and smells of the sea

When we first came to the Island we would live in Brighstone and pop over to Bembridge all the time. 30 years later we now say 'oh – that's too far!'

We are frequent visitors to the Island and Blackgang Chine is one of our favourite places to bring the children. Loved the dinosaurs – and it wasn't just the children!

I remember as a young boy I would visit friends who lived in the corner house of Dimbola Lodge. I remember having dinner in the dining room and being told stories about the ghost of a young boy, Archie; a spirit who dwelt in the dining room (now the shop at Dimbola!).

Felt the sense of something in the dining room

I was also told about another ghost story as a young boy – that at Fort Redoubt there are 2 soldiers who march and guard the entrance. They smoke a cigarette and pass it to each other.

Born and grew up in Freshwater (Clayton Road). Played as a child in the road – skipping, ball games, hopscotch – which we drew on the road in chalk. Quiet, no cars. Remember climbing an oak tree as a child, and policeman came by on his bike and said 'be careful'!

Remember as a child scrambling down the rocks to Totland Bay beach by lifeboat house before the promenade was built. Dad was in Totland coastguards for a time. Also remember paddle steamers arriving at pier and coaches waiting to pick up visitors and take them round the Island.

Born in St Mary's Hospital. Lived in Clayton Road until aged 3, then moved away from Island. Became a nurse. When I retired I came back to live on the same road I used to live on – Clayton. People who had lived there all their life recognised me/ my family name! I was the youngest of 6 children, so they had played with some of my older brothers and sisters. They all said 'welcome home'!

It feels to me so much like community, family!

Retired to the Island at Colwell Bay and love the green open spaces so close to home. Only wish more people would be locally motivated – support their local retail and other services. Shops are closing and businesses struggling.

I'm a long-term visitor with a place in Bramble Chine we come to once a month. Step off the ferry and a feeling of relief washes over me – made it to a change of pace and lifestyle, where we can walk everywhere. Such a change to home.

Feeling is an emotional one – 'phew' I'm here, immediately relax

Came on many holidays including with the children. Then aged 64 we moved to Freshwater area – our favourite country spot. Worked out we had 10 good years of walking. Planned and walked a mix of woodland and downland walks. Had a vision to walk all paths on the Island – an impossible task but we walked quite a few. Now my

wife has dementia so I continue walking on my own to fill gaps on the map we have on the wall! We both remember the cars being winched onto the ferries by crane!

CALBOURNE WATER MILL

Driving along the military road and seeing Highdown cliffs in the distance. The vast open space around me, before dipping into an overgrown country road.

The feel and sound of the wind

Immersing myself in nature with my best friend and our dogs. It's the simple things in life!

Salt, sound of the waves, sand between my toes

Compton Beach holds special memories for me, both as a child and as an adult. As a family we visited most weekends in the Summer, taking a BBQ and a picnic, often staying for a beautiful sunset. My dad also went fishing there and it is still my children's favourite place.

Ocean waves, coloured sands, sunsets

Remember driving into Ventnor downhill with bend at the bottom and the brakes failed on the car. A lot of panic 'what do we do?' But we coped – and had a lovely icecream to soothe our nerves!

Smell of fear and a lot of aargh!!

West Wight alpacas in Wellow. Nice quiet walks and feeding the alpacas and goats with glorious views across the mainland.

Fresh air

Heaven! Pace of life so different!

Remember as a child how we used to collect bird eggs from Freshwater Bay cliff by being dangled by our ankles over the edge!

I heard this story about in World War 2 – there was an attempted invasion at Compton Bay. The bells rang as a sign of invasion and oil pipelines that had been laid in defence were set on fire to prevent a landing. Apparently the glow could be seen from East Wight. Someone else I know said that bodies of German troops had been found floating in the sea off the south coast for weeks afterwards.

We love coming to the Island from Southampton which we do a couple of times a year. Particularly love West Wight and the area around Freshwater. Beautiful countryside and very peaceful.

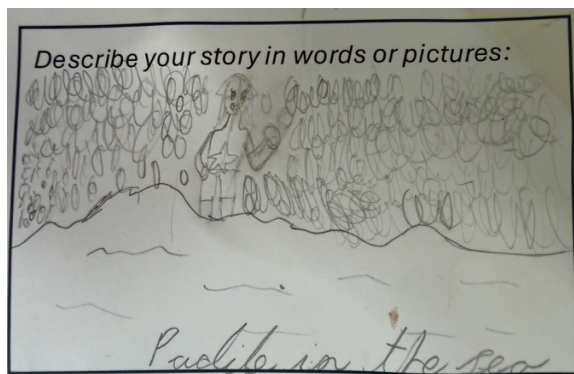
BHF walkers staying at Freshwater Bay – one came on his honeymoon 45 years ago. One came as soldier from Gib competing in small island games with his sister and stayed in a static caravan. One came with family as 8 year old, then walked coast path 4 years ago. We've all returned to walk again. We have been so lucky with the weather!

Garlic, skylarks, goldfinches, roses

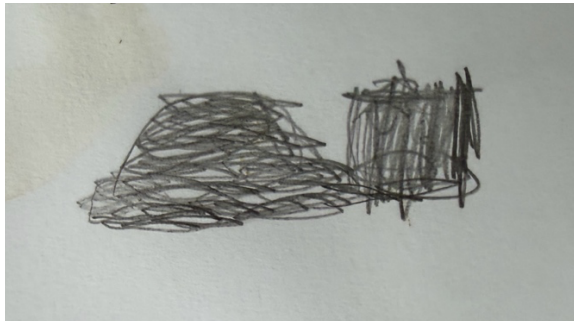
Escape from the norm. Relax, unwind, reset in thatch roof and beach life.

Salty air

Paddle in the ocean

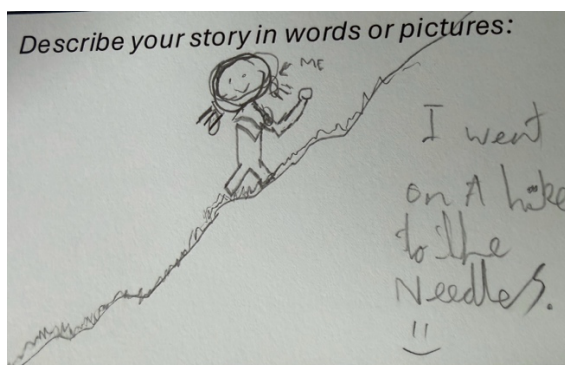


Fish, sea gulls, pebbles, rocks, salty



Seagulls, seawater, food

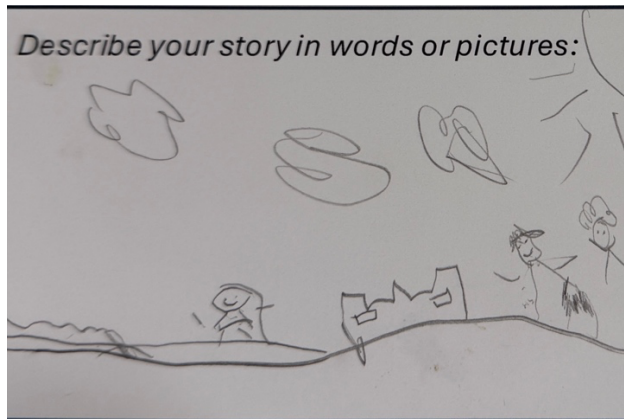
I went on a hike to the Needles.



Smells of the sea, sounds like waves, ice cream, sandy

We visited the beautiful Isle of Wight which sat just south of old Blighty. The beaches were sandy, the castles mighty, and spectacular sunsets were nightly.

The beach

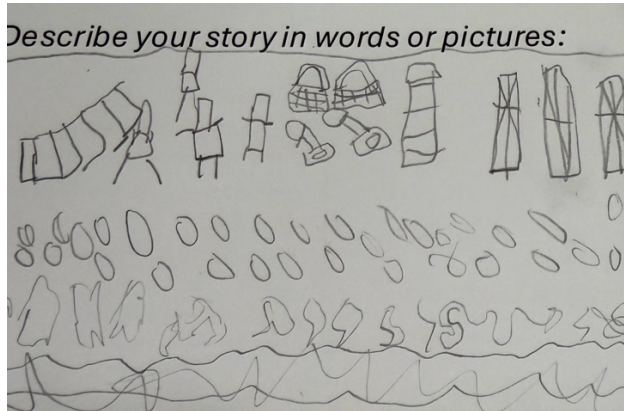


Soft sand

Waling along Tennyson Down reflecting on life with the words of the great poet echoing around my head: 'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all'.

The smell of the sea, with the bracing wind in my hair

Beach



I can smell fish and chips. I can hear the seagulls. I can taste the salty sea.

Stunning views of cliffs from military road – wow!

YARMOUTH POP-UP

We have recently moved to Highcliffe Dorset and find visiting the Island so easy now from Lymington. We love Yarmouth for its individual shops, eateries and the icecream. We have also visited Yarmouth Castle. Great day out!

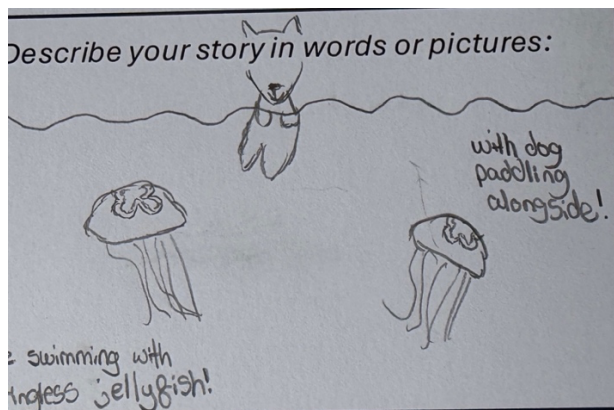
The sea, river, tranquility, icecream, fresh sea air

We've been coming to the Island for many years, first with our children and now with our grandchildren. It is an idyllic place for a family holiday and the beaches are superb.

Isle of Wight Festival – seeing Rolling Stones perform and camping in mud. Someone landing on my tent in the middle of the night. Cycling around the Island with a friend 10 years ago – remember the locals being very friendly. Now a family holiday – sandy beaches, pebbly beaches, the dog swimming, lots of jellyfish on the beach, quaint villages, icecream, relaxing, everything so nearby, crabs, cockles

Fish, cockles, sea salt, curry sauce

Totland beach



Smells salty

On holiday staying at Ocean View Hotel in Shanklin. Have room over-looking sea. View is fantastic. Sound of the sea. Views of the cliffs. Very relaxing and seems to take you back in time. Very beautiful scenery.

Waves, birds, children playing on beach, wind blowing

Memories of the Island are mainly wonderful as we had family living here so spent probably a third of our life here with parents and our 3 children. The children who are now adults still come over with their children. We were very lucky to have that family home here at Wellow. So came in all seasons. Our favourite beaches are Sandown, Colwell and Totland.

Smells of the sea, sounds of the hovercraft, taste of fish and chips, soft sand beneath your feet

First ever visit – 1960s-70s holidays, when the railways were still in full operation. Then walking through Ventnor tunnel after closure. Clear water at Totland, coarse sand at Ventnor, and Newport in the rain!

Smell of the sea; sound of light aircraft overhead, smell of soft tarmac – 1976

We are here for the day. Lovely weather. Enjoyed boat trip to Yarmouth. Nice to look around. Pity we did not have more time.

We visited the Needles today. It's amazing and we decided to visit Yarmouth and see the castle. I loved it.

Castle, waves, salty air

Mum and Dad came to the Island as children. We have now returned 30 years later with our own children. We love the beauty of West Wight, the coast, the history, the natural beauty, and the lack of 'obvious' tourism.

Coast, waves, icecream, clear water, pebbles.

We decided to come to Yarmouth to visit the Tudor Castle. I enjoyed it especially because I am a Tudor nerd and know everything (mostly!) about the monarchy.

Icecream, coast

Whitecliff Bay – walk up Culver Downs from caravan park to Sandown. We could watch farmers shearing their sheep on the way. Amazing views into Sandown Bay. So many memories in 60 years.

Walk to the Duver at St Helens across the bridges with water on both sides. If a high tide often have to paddle over. Then walk across disused golf course to the memorial tree with moving messages left by loved ones. Time to reflect.

Visitor to the Isle of Wight wanting to hike and experience the coastal path. So many beautiful views, but the stretch from Needles across Tennyson Down back to Freshwater Bay outstanding. Blessed with glorious weather. The sea strikingly blue, smooth against the chalk white cliffs.

Gentle lapping of the sea against sea/ harbour walls

CHOYD Event

A backdrop sound to life at the Bay (Freshwater) is always that movement of the stones being dragged in and out across the Bay. The intensity varies with the ferocity of the wind and the state of the tide. Always present. Accompanying this is the restless whispering of the longer grasses on the Downs and the reeds along the River Yar.

Salt, grit, pollen, the mewing of a buzzard.

I love to walk alone through Grammar Wood (Brighstone) listening to all the different contributions of the various birds. The rustle of the wind winding through the tree branches. Popping of the gun or could it be a bird scarer in the distance. Occasionally an aircraft soaring the heights above. Crunching of pine-cones and dry grass under my feet.

Dewy grass and leaves, rough bark, gnarled roots

In a bit of forced, desperate, manufactured joy between fruitless house hunts, I visited what became a favourite place, Newtown Estuary. There, coiled below a hedge, I saw a black adder. I knew then it was an ominous sign of shedding skin that had become too tight. But also a thing of dangerous beauty.

Cold wind, grey skies, spitting rain

The Yar scenery around the mill, in front of Off the Rails, with the cycle path and down to the harbour is full with the sound of people chattering whilst walking their dogs. The whistling of wind through the boat masts and the constant comings and goings of the excitable oystercatcher, or soothing curlews, the squealing swallows or screeching buzzards. It's a sensory overload and so relaxing on any day.

Smell of estuary at low tide, taste of coffee at Off the Rails, whilst feeling the wind sweeping over the reed beds.

Yarmouth beach – sea sounds – foghorn, scrunch of pebbles under foot, different sounds of the sea on the beach in stormy or fair weather, the cries of gulls.

Avocets nesting on the Yar this year. Waited 35 years for this! No doubt the avocets had waited much longer! Hope for the future.

Time passing – the C17th clock mechanism on St James Church