

Over these years many varieties of crops have been raised in the fields around this area and the electrically charged fencing is regularly set up either side of this one, where the public footpath runs, to contain either the Friesian herds or flocks of fattening sheep ~ and keep people and their dogs out ~



The fields down Quay Lane

N. HUNTER

This used to be two fields before the high growing hedgerow which grew across it about halfway along was grubbed out, during the 80's drive for larger cereal crops. Now only a lone oak tree is left to indicate the original line of growth, near the boundary hedge on the far side. *





Some of the new crops introduced in recent years for their oils



The vivid yellow rape flowers - so harsh against the soft tones of our countryside - cause unpleasant allergic reactions in some people - and the delicate blue shade of the linseed-flax flowers - is difficult to convey in a photograph.

Memories of George

I KNEW George Toms for a long, long time (61 years). I was a lad of 17 when my family moved to Nunwell to live alongside the Toms family, and for four years I spent most of my leisure time in his company.

Mostly in the garden, sometimes exploring Eagle Head Copses, maybe watching a vixen with her cubs or again searching for the nesting place of a pair of golden crested wrens.

It was his expertise and his knowledge of, and dedication to the country life, which made him such an interesting man, such a valuable member to the community during his working life, and by his helpful advice and weekly contributions to the Weekly Post, such a good friend and joy in his later years.

He did indeed give a lot of pleasure to a lot of people. I read his articles with a special pleasure. I could go back with him to the early 1920's. I could see him with the horses he loved, subservient then to his Dad and brother Fred, and who could have tutored him better?

I can see him with Shep Miles, hoping always to extract another gem of a story from him, told in that dear old chap's peculiar style, and in his own inimitable vernacular.

George and I played cricket together for the then newly-formed Ashey Cricket Club. Happy days, and what a grand lot

of chaps! Bert Warne, George Plumbley, Hector Salmon, Harry Whittington, "Biddy" Gould and George's cousin Bill Toms, to name some of them.

I met George a year or two ago, he was fishing from St Helens beach - quite successfully too. We had a good old natter and as always went back over the years.

He asked if I remembered Jack Seely coming onto the cricket pitch at East Ashey, asking us all to vote for him at a forthcoming General Election, and did I remember the laughter that the aforementioned Biddy Gould caused by telling him: "No zur, I ain't votin' for you. You zaid over Havenstreet afore last election, that if you got in parliament you'd put farm labourers wages up - and you never done it! No, I be finished with you!"

We all enjoyed that trade, the great J.B.S. most of all. The prevailing sin of the world (and of this country, in particular) is the desire to get all you can out of this life, instead of putting what you can into it.

It was the reverse with George. He put all he had into life, and as a result, he got so much more out of it. We shall all lose something by his passing, but by golly, all those who knew him must be for ever thankful for all he was during his lifetime. Cheerio George. — Frank Crockford, Lake.

Birds in Brading

Since my late husband and I moved to Brading 30 years ago there have been great changes. We could then hear a nightingale in our bottom hedge. Swifts nested in a neighbour's roof and swallows in another neighbour's cellar. Three nest boxes we put up in the garden regularly housed blue tits, great tits and robins. A count of house martin nests in High St. Bull Rye & New Rd. varied between 38-46 nests each year. I even found mud stuck to my front door.

Now, since traffic has built up and Station Rd. estate extended all this has altered dramatically.

Only one house martin nest (Bull Rye) last year - no nightingales, Swifts or Swallows - many fewer garden birds (no greenfinches or chaffinches) only one nest box used occasionally.

WJG. High St.

Fears big cat could attack

THE mysterious big cat-like creature that has been stalking the Island - and evading photographers - for years has been spotted in Sandown.

Now some Yaverland residents are living in fear that the animal could pounce and attack someone.

The latest reports of a sighting came from Culver Way couple Ted and Josephine Carpenter who claim that the creature - which they believe to be a puma - has been tearing the bark off trees in their garden, prowling the area late at night and early in the morning.

Mrs Carpenter said they first came across the creature on New Year's Eve when her coach driver husband left the house for work.

She said, "His bus was parked just outside the house but he was too frightened to leave while this creature was sitting in the street and walking up and down the road."

"I thought he could pounce on Ted who didn't leave for work until the thing had

scampered off."

After the festive sighting Mr and Mrs Carpenter say they visited the nearby I.W. Zoo to see if they could match the beast to one of the caged animals.

She said, "We pointed out an animal that looked similar to the big cat we had seen and we were told it was a puma."

Mrs Carpenter said the creature had long pointed ears and was a dark tan colour - and it had returned to the area last week.

A shocked neighbour telephoned her to say that the beast was back.

"She rang to say it was prowling around but by the time I'd gone out to see it it had run off towards the Brading fields at the back of our houses."

"The people here are a bit worried in case it attacks somebody."

Mrs Carpenter said her garden trees had been torn to shreds by the beast.

An Island police spokesman said they had received no recent reports of sightings.

Dog fright signals big cat encounter

A CAMP Hill prison officer has become the latest person to encounter the Island's big cat.

Mr Mike Allsop, a civilian instructing officer of Mall Road, Brading, said the animal was either a black leopard or a puma, following his confrontation at about 8 pm on Christmas night.

It happened as he went to feed two horses he keeps in a rented field adjacent to Brading Town Football Club, at Vicarage Lane.

The first sign something was odd was when his mongrel dog Poppy refused to go anywhere near the field, said Mr Allsop, 51. As he stooped to put down some hay, his two horses, a gelding and a colt, suddenly became agitated.

"Then I noticed these two eyes peering out from a hedge-row. Then the animal bounded out, across the field and straight out over a barbed wire fence," Mr Allsop said.

He claimed the beast was much larger than an abbaton - perhaps four feet long excluding the tail - and jet black.

The whole incident lasted about a minute and the scene was illuminated by a bright street lamp lighting up Vicarage Lane.

Though he returned the following day to look for tracks, none were visible because of a heavy frost.

"I had previously been a bit sceptical about the existence of a big cat on the Island but not now," said Mr Allsop.

"But my eyes do not lie and that was definitely what I saw."

Mr Allsop's sighting was the third of its kind on the Island within a matter of days. The creature, or something similar, had previously been reported in Market Hill, Cowes, and near Rookley Stores.

Brading house martins gathering for autumn departure



It certainly seems worth preserving this view

MR. WITHERBY may be aware that the area around Brading Haven was one of the chief Druidic sites on the Island; perhaps White Oaks Channel got its name from a sacred oak grove where worshipped white-robed Druid priests.

Nearby on the Duver is the remains of the Norman priory church of St. Helens, its tower face bricked up and whitewashed as a scamark by Trinity House in the 18th century.

There is a story that it was deliberately sited so perilously close to the sea because that particular spot occupied a corner of a necromancy (consecrated land apportioned to the Druid gods) enclosing a rotive shaft (St. Urian's Well), oak groves and an altar.

The dedication of the church to St. Helens may be significant, as she was the mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine; he made official the Christian religion throughout the Empire but who also, until just before he died, worshipped pagan gods.

To protect the church from the sea, the Christian consecration was reinforced by a Druidic ceremony as extra insurance.

This seems odd, but the early Christians were quite prepared to accept pagan defences against the Powers of Darkness.

However, in 1290, Abbot Aymo was discovered conducting unholy services in the church which eroded the spell.

Aymo's Bishop cursed him by bell, book and candle, but it was

too late: the sea was at last able to destroy St. Helens.

As Sheila White (CP Jan. 3) points out, the Duver is redolent with history.

Stand there with the eye of imagination and one can go back to 896AD and watch King Alfred (whose mother was an Islander) successfully direct his nine ships against six dragon-headed long boats full of barbaric invaders stuck fast on the

... **CRESCENT**

Drake was snapping away at the southern horn of a mighty crescent of 130 close-packed Spanish ships which "filled the sea."

To maintain his impregnable formation and to aid his ships under attack, Medina Sidonia swung the whole armada to the south, a manoeuvre not completed until the IW had been left astern.

The battle Dunne Nose was claimed as an English victory and so it was, as it saved the Island from invasion — an option granted secretly to the Spanish commander by Philip II, but afterwards the armada was still intact and sweeping majestically down the Channel

Bembridge mud — the first recorded English naval victory. . .

On the 11th of July, 1346, one could have looked out at the 700 ships assembled in St. Helens Roads by order of Edward III.

who was to sail that day for France and six weeks later to win the battle of Crecy — where 13,000 English utterly defeated 40-50,000 French, the French losses 11,500 and the English just 40.

A total of 220 Islanders served with that army, part of a diversionary force that invested and took Calais.

As it had been defended by the rules of war, Edward was entitled to sack the town but his Queen Philippa and the chief citizens of Calais pleaded with him for mercy and he relented.

In Westminster Gardens, London, Rodin's magnificent bronze group of the self-enchained Burgurers of Calais tells the story.

On a memorable Thursday, 13 days and 242 years later, the splendour of the Spanish Armada could have been seen in action.

Frobisher, in the largest of the Tudor ships, the 1,100 ton Champion, had sailed to within a mile of Ventour in order to discourage a Spanish landing of their 6,000 troops on the Island.

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It took the chaos caused by the eight fire-ships at Calais to tip the scales, the "bell-barriers" invented by Gianabelli, the Italian military engineer who, a dozen years later, was to transform the obsolete medieval castle of Carnbrooke into one of the strongest fortresses in Europe.

The Duver could have seen the smuggler Dicky Daws after whom the first channel and sandbank was named, and his daughter, Sophie.

When Dicky died Sophie went first to the Forest Hill workhouse and then on to considerably better herself by very nearly becoming the Queen of France.

If Sophie, aged about seven, had looked up from her winkle-picking, she might have seen a very small, slight man (he never weighed more than five stone), his chest ablaze with stars, orders and medals on the full dress uniform he invariably wore, came ashore in his admiral's launch.

This was the darling of the Fleet and the nation, Horatio Nelson.

Still suffering from the pain of his recently amputated arm, he sailed from St. Helens on April 10, 1798.

His sailors also knew St. Helens, a favourite victualling station with its fresh water staying sweet after a six-month voyage.

And they would come to plunder the holy stones of the old sea-wrecked church: "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thou art able, and on the seventh, hobystone the decks and scrape the cable."

Sophie would also have seen the Bembridge windmill sails set at a certain angle and heard the boom of guns that warned Islanders the press-gang had landed.

A 90-gun First-rater, only 200ft long, needed a crew of 800 or more, 200 alone to winch up the anchor.

The press was a necessary form of conscription which in theory, embraced the whole male population but in practice, inevitably, was restricted to working men.

A man might serve for 15 years or so and come home with perhaps an arm or leg missing and his share of bounty money.

But what of his family? With the bread-winner gone, the wife and children usually went to the workhouse or in many cases, simply starved to death.

Although in abeyance, the law is still on the statute books: today, any able bodied man can still legally be pressed into Her Majesty's navy.

... **SANDBANK**

St. Helens Fort, sited within yards of the Duver on the old Myxon sandbank — two other attempts at its construction on other sites had slid into shifting sands — was a masterpiece of Victorian engineering.

Those four sea forts strung across the Solent had 148,616, thick granite walls sheathed with three thicknesses of steel plate on shock absorbers.

Originally painted with black and white squares to conceal the gun fort positions, the two floors and roof mounted the largest guns of their day.

They were never fired in anger.

Before St. Helens Fort was completed in 1878 it was already obsolete.

The forts were, however, built at a time of great danger for this country: La Gloire, the world's first iron-clad warship, was cruising the Channel under its French flag, able to make mincemeat of the British wooden hull, and the newly-invented Armstrong rifle-barrelled cannon with double the previous range had made obsolete the existing Portsmouth defences.

Gladstone objected strongly to the cost of the forts and threatened to resign, which provoked Palmerston to remark to the Queen that it was better to lose Gladstone than Portsmouth.

In 1926 a light on St. Helens Fort to warn shipping off Bembridge Ledge was served by the Langton family.

Cut off by a storm, Mr. and Mrs. W. Langton were forced to row ashore for food supplies, leaving their daughter Ethel, but once on land they were prevented from returning by tumultuous seas.

The storm continued; but every night the beacon, reached by a 30ft ladder, was lit as usual by the frightened little girl, alone and starving.

In 1944 the largest armada in the history of the world assembled in the Solent: it is said one could walk from St. Helens to the mainland on the decks of the packed ships waiting to sail for the Normandy beaches.

The view from the Duver, or Dover (simply meaning a boat landing place) seems certainly worth preserving.

... **R. MORRIS.**

Bayview Road, Gurnard.



Green-veined White

THE PATH selected by the IW Ramblers for a work party was Brading 24. The footpath goes from the downs road through the attractive Eaglehead Copse and Blossidstone Copse to Warwell Farm Lane and it is one of the 12 paths the ramblers have undertaken to maintain on a regular basis.

Extra work was involved for the nine members as several trees were found to have fallen in the recent storm, blocking the path. The work was therefore being carried out at an opportune time to enable the prompt removal of the obstructions.

96/07/71



Small Skipper



© Bourton

Demand for more wardens to stop damage to downs

By LEWIS GRANT

MORE volunteers are needed to train as wardens to patrol the Island's "damaged and despoiled" downs, Mr. John L. Hunter told a meeting of Brading Town Council.

Mr. Hunter said he and Mr. Rowat, the county countryside officer, had recently walked across Brading and Bembridge downs and were appalled at what they saw. "Litter was scattered everywhere and topsoil was scarred and rutted by car tracks. Tourists cannot be blamed at this time of year. The downs are being damaged and despoiled by Islanders," he declared.

Calling for an urgent meeting of the downs committee, Mr. Hunter added, "We should make it clear that people throwing litter about or otherwise damaging the downs will be prosecuted."

Councillors praised the local school's production Tarla and the Trolls at Brading Town Hall in connection with the business association's community carols event, led by the Salvation Army.

Mr. Brian Walters and Mr. Gordon Macdonald said local comment on the town council's Christmas decoration of a tree outside the town hall was that residents would have liked more lights.

It was suggested that more coloured lights and tinsel should be used next year.

Acoustics problems at the town hall were considered, and before the start of the meeting there was a demonstration of a public address system featuring table microphones. Townspeople invited to comment agreed it was extremely difficult to follow discussions and that an amplifying system would be welcomed," she said.

Mrs. Marianne Sullivan, the mayor, said she had received complaints from residents over the thoughtless scattering of rubbish in the townships.

One had been rightly upset by litter being tossed into her garden hedge by passers-by.

It was all very well to claim that more litter bins were needed. "But if a bin is not handy then surely it is a simple matter for people to take their litter home with them for disposal in their own bins," said Mrs. Sullivan.

In relation to the Island Pride scheme, town councillors are planning a brighter Brading and the mayor reported that residents looked favourably on council proposals to create an attractive garden area on land opposite the Bull Ring.



Footpath B27 to BRADING DOWN



Large Skipper



Small Heath



BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

Brading Marshes



Original sketch made in summer of 2070 when the skylark still sang overhead - ceased about the end of '90s.

The stone gate bridge after removal and reconstruction by 2000



(MAY 2005)



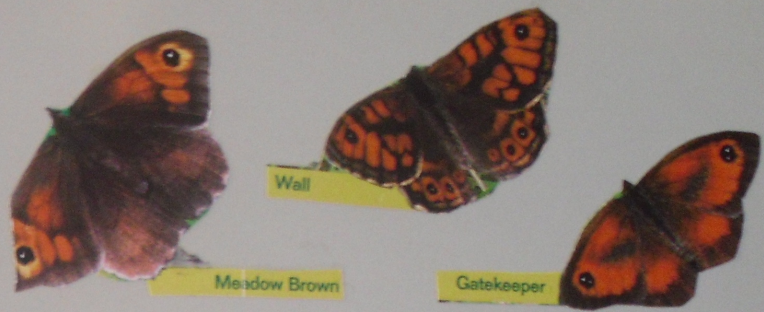
C. 2000



Fields by entrance from Quays Lane



From Culver



Meadow Brown

Wall

Gatekeeper



C. Durbin

From sluice gate towards St. Helens



From Brading Down



From the road to St. Helens



From New Road
Kerbridge end



Purple Hairstreak



Small Tortoiseshell



Common Blue



Green veined White



Speckled Wood



Peacock



Comma



Brown Argus



Up and down over the Downs
via Ashley and back again
through different years
and seasons ~



Red Admiral

The Elms ~ once more, in springtime.



Small White



Marbled White



Orange-tip

The suckers of some old elms were safe underground when the parent trees were being destroyed by the bark-stripping disease. New shoots emerged not long after in many places where the old elms existed - mostly in the hedgerows - to once more bulk out the other bushy lower growths. Gradually saplings strengthened into trees which now - in 1994 - are in many places almost as tall as the younger trees which died. (Demolished by order of the Council 1995)



Large White



Painted Lady



White Admiral

After they had all gone the experts informed us that the Elms of England would rot in some degree, eventually - and although it is certain they will never achieve the great age and elegance of our old elms - let us hope they will grow on well beyond the 500 years or so those experts predicted then. Also let us hope that many dire warnings about all our other beautiful trees never come true -----



Holly Blue



The floods of December
1993



Bradford-on-Sea



H. HULLER

Winter sunrise over
Marshcombe Woods

AROUND THE HORTICULTURAL SCENE

Echoes of past unearthed on eve of Brading show

AGED Island names such as *Epandera*, *Mums*, *Astril*, *Pacock* and *Plandy* grace the pages of a 50-year-old ledger that records the entries in the first Brading Women's Institute (bryanthemum) show.

The ledger, which was an excision from a dusty site on the eve of the year's show, reveals the entries, their entry fees and prize awards.

Most of these horticulturalists are today gone, but the show remains — last week attracting 427 entries, 129 of which were from 115 exhibitors.

The show, staged at Brading Town Hall, is now the Brading WI's bryanthemum. Fruit and vegetable shows had to give to suit WI interests and children from Brading, Ventnor and Alton.

Mr Hugh Brown, former high sheriff of the island, opened the show and, following the tradition, some of the entrants donated their produce for an auction.

The proceeds of the sale went into the show funds.

Clay
Among entrants was the late Mrs. M. J. Brown, who had been a member of the show for many years. She had been a member of the show for many years. She had been a member of the show for many years.

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Mr Gordon Trot and Mrs Phyllis Habberley with their tropiles.



SWALLOWS, OPPOSITE HOPE COTTAGE WEST ST. 1985

Day active

Moths

Burnet Companion

Scarlet Tiger

Six spot Burnet

Maggie

Blair sets sights on political strength of the WI

By THE SULLOON POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

TESA RAWELL, one of Labour's leading modernisers, has been charged with turning round the party's "dull and dispirited image which put off thousands of potential women voters."

The special target is women aged over 40, particularly those who have voted Tory all their lives and failed at securing votes from Middle England, middle-aged women. The election the whole country but large marginal seats, many of which are in the South.

Ms Rawell is getting out to meet the heart of rural Britain by meeting members of the Women's Institute to lunch and tea in an effort to secure their support for Tony Blair at the next election.

Ms Rawell, 48, the party's speaker for an women, will invite members of the Institute, the National Council of Women as well as the townswomen's guilds to discuss a range of issues including crime, health, education and family services.

She proposes to write articles in women's magazines to show that Labour is now attuned to the concerns of middle-aged women. She plans to hold one meeting a week starting over three or four months from March to early summer. The format will be a question-and-answer session similar to the "Close and Open" sessions which Mr Blair organised last year. She emphasised that the meetings would encourage people to meet each other, rather than to hear a "political diatribe."

Mr Blair has told his colleagues that the party's success in attracting older female voters could make the difference between electoral victory and defeat. While New Labour has attracted young female support, older women have still to be convinced.

Falling figures show that while many young women vote Labour the figures dwindle once women reach 40 and fall even faster with older women. In 1992 nearly 10 per cent more men voted Labour than women. If the same number of women as men had voted Labour in 1992, Neil Kinnock would have made it to Downing Street.



DOCTOR'S LANE 1995



WEST STREET 1995



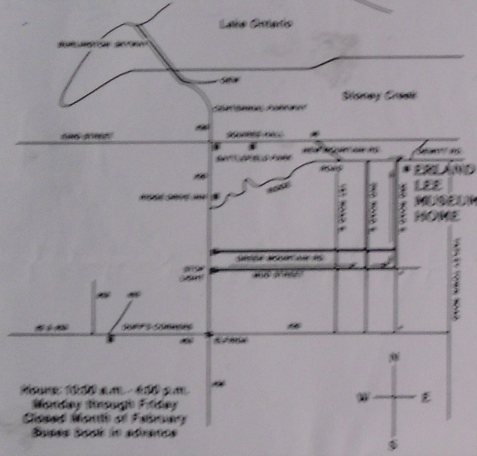
THE BULLRING 1985



WEST STREET 1985

VISITED BY MARGO BROOKER 1992.

Directions to the Home.



Erland Lee (Museum) Home

R.R. #1, 552 Ridge Road
Stoney Creek, Ontario, Canada
L8G 3X4
Telephone: (416) 662-2691



Erland Lee (1864-1926)

Of United Empire Loyalist stock, Erland Lee had a reputation as a good farmer, and had a keen interest in the welfare of his fellowman. On the Lee farm, he raised Jersey cattle, was one of the first to grow grapes commercially, and he shipped carloads of R.I. Greenings apples from his orchards to the British market. He was one of the first maple producers in the area to use an evaporator.

He served many organizations: secretary of his local Farmer's Institute for 19 years, Township Clerk for 20 years, first president of the Wentworth Seed Fair, president of the Wentworth Agriculture Board, and Secretary-Treasurer of the Saltfleet Agricultural Society. But it was his work with Mrs. Adelaide Hunter Hoodless to found the first Women's Institute in the world that gained him most acclaim. The organization was his idea originally; he convinced Mrs. Hoodless of its merit and proceeded to develop the Constitution and By-Laws and carried out the necessary negotiations with the Minister of Agriculture to secure the Charter.

The Erland Lee (Museum) Home is now an historic site at Stoney Creek, preserved and maintained by the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario in memory of its co-founder, Erland Lee.



Inside view of pioneer kitchen, including original hand-hewn pine cupboard.



Walnut dining room table where the Constitution of the Women's Institute was hand penned by Janet Lee, wife of Erland Lee.



Displays of farm related implements and tools. Quilts and other interesting artifacts can be seen here.

1st.

BRADING DAY 1995



Nigel's Milk Float!



W.Z. Stall

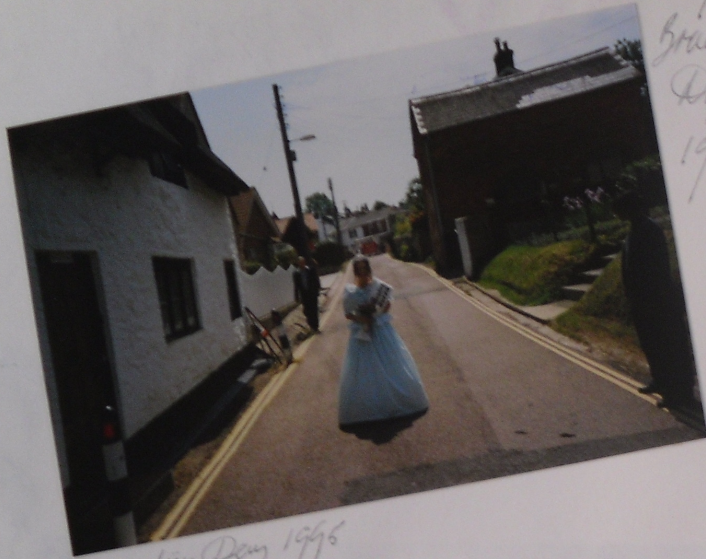


W.Z. Stall



W.Z. Stall





Brading Day 1996

1st
Brading
Day
1995

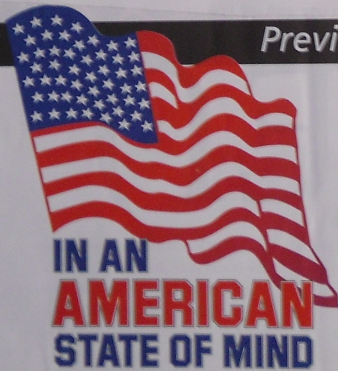


Sylvia
Greville

Margo
Butler

Miriam
Turner

Mary
Humber



Preview of a big community event...

Don't be surprised if you see the Stars and Stripes fluttering over Brading on July 4 - the town will be celebrating American Independence Day. Well, almost! The occasion will actually be Brading Day, a big annual community event, but this year it will have an American theme.

First held in 1995, Brading Day has previously been organised solely by volunteers. But for the 1999 event, the town council has become involved for the first time, providing administrative support, and it promises to be the biggest Brading Day celebration so far.

"The date of Sunday July 4 was chosen first for this year's event and because of the Independence Day connection, it was decided it should have an American flavour," explained Brading Town Clerk Cathy Mills. "We want to get the whole of the local

community involved to put Brading Day well and truly on the Island's list of popular annual events, and we're hoping to attract charity and other stalls from other parts of the Island."

Planning is at an early stage, but all manner of American-type attractions are being discussed, including quick-draw displays, marching majorettes and country and western music.

The event has previously been held in the new Town Hall and in West Street, which has been closed for the occasion, but this year, the plan is to hugely expand its potential by also using the local primary school playground and playing field, plus the nearby Beechgrove recreation ground.

The cost of Brading Day '99 is being met partly by a £1,000 voluntary projects grant from the Isle of Wight Rural Community Council. But taking advantage of this grant means matching funding has to be raised by the local community, and with this in mind, a series of car boot sales is being arranged on Tuesdays in the Town Trust car park between the end of March and July.

If Brading Day '99 is financially successful, all proceeds will be ploughed back into community projects. This could include the town's planned millennium event in which the year 2000 Brading Day would become an historical pageant. A 16-strong committee now meets to develop the concept of Brading Day. It includes representatives of Brading Town Council, Brading Town Trust and other local organisations. ♦

For more information, or details of stall pitches, ring Mrs Mills on 401770, or Pauline Humber on 407510. Mrs Humber is vice-chairman of the organising committee and a leading light in Brading Day since the event's inception.

Flamingo Park 1993

page 97

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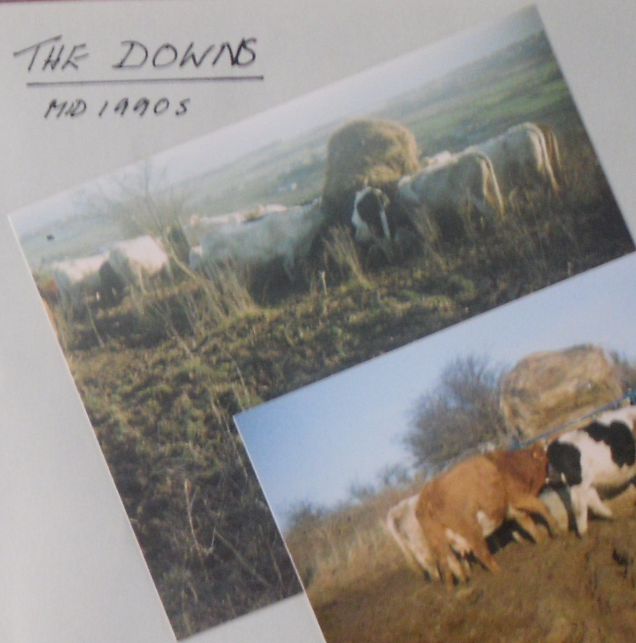
Ann Barton, Eva Carter, M. Pettifer, Leslie Scott, Maribel,
Mrs. Green, Ethel Brooks, Marion Turner



THE DOWNS
MD 1990S



FENCING OFF DOWNS



CONSERVATION?



TREE FELLING
(SEE PAGE 79)



ATROCIOUS HEDGE
CUTTING

