

ISLE OF WIGHT STEAM RAILWAY



Getting to grips with Collections Care
Heritage & Learning Manager – Sarah Girling

Who are you?

Heritage and Learning Manager at IW
Steam Railway since Nov 2021.

Previous experience:

Freelance cultural educator & project manager –
University of Southampton, IW Music Hub,
IWCEP

Cultural Access, Participation and Learning
Officer at Essex County Council

Heritage Access, Learning & Participation,
Heritage Learning Officer

Education and Marketing Officer at Chelmsford
Museums

Primary School teacher



What is the Isle of Wight Steam Railway?



Tourist attraction



Educational charity



Museum



Caterer



Engineering company



Retailer

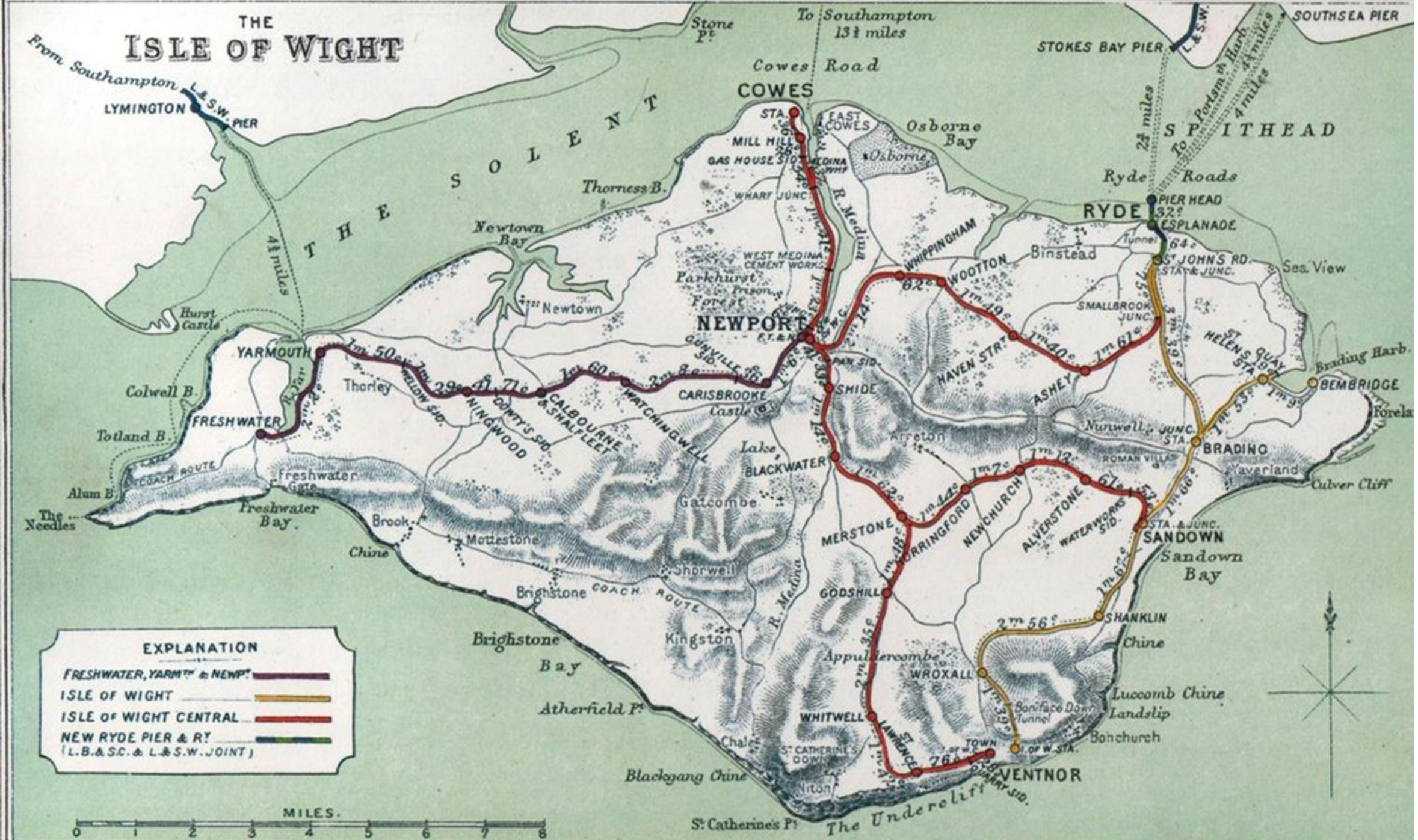


Events organiser



Operational railway

THE ISLE OF WIGHT





Victorian & Edwardian Era

1862 – 1923



Southern Railway & British Railways

1923 – 1966



Preservation

1967 onwards

ISLE OF
WIGHT
STEAM
RAILWAY

What kind of objects do you think we have in the Museum collection?



Existing resources

- Heritage and Learning Manager
- Museum Curator
- 2 experienced but voluntary Conservators

More generally:

- 40 staff and 400 volunteers
- Lots of buildings and spaces but spread across the site
- Independent and accredited Museum
- Board of Trustee/Directors

Previous storage conditions

- Artefact store
- Archive store
- Train Story - storage of large signage
- Across the site including fields – larger machinery
- Offsite storage facility



Collections Care Grant

Awarded £1K from SEMD in July 2022

Aims:

- To assess the general condition of the stored collection.
- To identify immediate priorities for Conservation first aid care.
- To ultimately ensure that the collection is stored in better condition and is safely accessible.

ISLE OF WIGHT
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MUSEUM COLLECTION

AUDIT REPORT

EMILY KELMENDI CONSERVATION

Conservation of Decorative Arts & Objects
Collections Care & Conservation Management

Main findings:

- 24% of the total assessed collection has condition code 1, which means objects are in good condition and suitable for immediate use or display with only superficial cleaning or none.
- 27% has condition code 2, which means objects are in fair condition and suitable for use or display with minor treatment, further inspection and treatment should be made within 1-2 years.
- 32% has condition code 3, which means it is not suitable for immediate use or display without extensive treatment and will deteriorate/ needs remedial treatment as soon as possible.
- 17% has condition code 4, which means the condition is unacceptable and not suitable for immediate use or display without extensive treatment. Remedial treatment as soon as possible to avoid further deterioration.

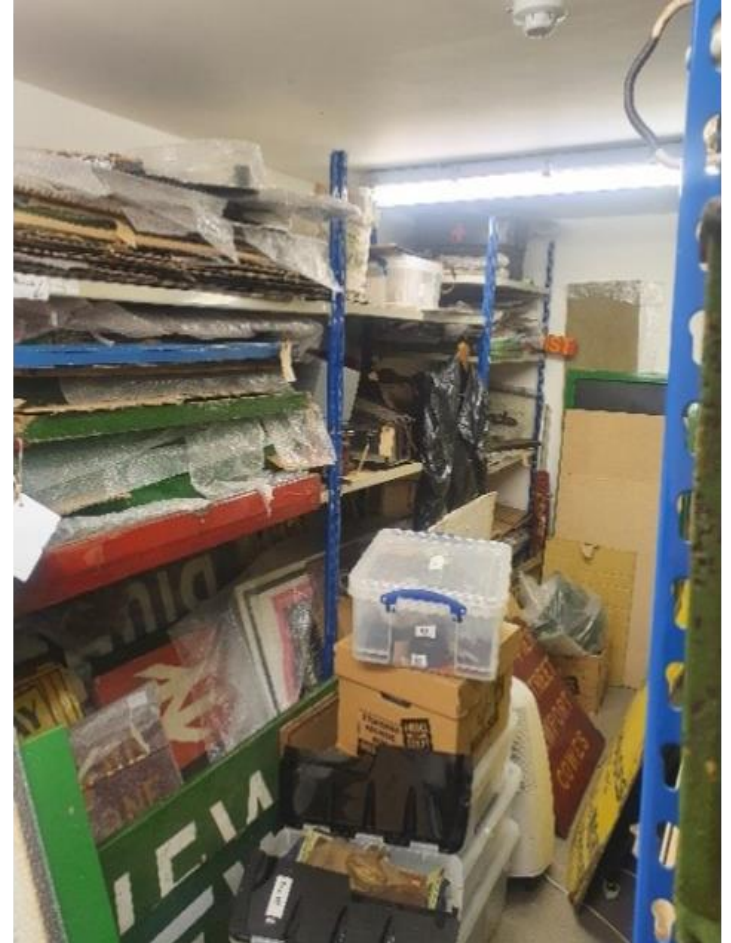
Areas of concern:

- Dust and surface dirt
- Inappropriate packing materials potentially causing more damage (plastic, plastic, plastic...)
- Active Red Rot on leather objects
- Active Bronze Disease on bronze objects
- Unaccessioned items
- Overcrowding



Recommendations:

- Clean objects, stabilise where necessary
- Repack in conservation grade packing materials such as Tyvek, Plastazote etc.
- Treatment of leather objects
- Treatment of bronze disease
- Accession objects
- Utilise new storage space as best as possible, keep a rota of inspection and put general house keeping plan in place



What were the key outcomes?

- The volunteers now have a greater understanding of how to assess the objects in our care.
- These volunteers also have a better understanding of conservation challenges our particular set of objects come with, meaning we can better care for them in the future.
- Once objects receive the treatment and care they need, visitors will be able to handle them, giving them more access to our collection.
- Other volunteers have seen the work that the Conservator has done and are more open to a conservation audit of paper archives, so that work can be mirrored.

New storage...

February 2023

- The new Xpanda stores :
 - insulation fitted in the floor
 - Lino flooring put down
 - New melamine coated shelving in place
 - Artefacts being transported down
 - TinyTag measurements every 2 weeks to check environmental factors



New storage...

Freelance Conservator will train our volunteer Conservators in some remedial first aid conservation.

Repacking of artefacts will be an ongoing project with volunteers.

Extra melamine shelving will be used to replace old chipboard shelves, in old artefact store, if needed



What's next?

- Accreditation coming up for renewal
- Ensure all Forward Plans, policies and documentation is up to date, reflecting what we have achieved more recently.
- Planning for a 'New museum facility' and what that means for our Collections and team of volunteers – what are our needs?

Contact

Sarah Girling

Heritage and Learning Manager

Sarah.girling@iwsteamrailway.co.uk

01983 882204

