University of Southampton

The Railways of the Eastern Isle of Wight, 1845 to 1901; the financial, social and economic aspects examined.

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Doctor of Philosophy

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September 2003

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF ARTS

HISTORY

Doctor of Philosophy

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The purpose of this thesis is to examine the railways that were proposed, financed and built in the Eastern Isle of Wight in the Victorian period and to describe and evaluate their impact on local communities with respect to population growth, urbanisation, tourism, agriculture and trade.

The histories of railways on the Isle of Wight have multiplied during the last ten years and the value of what has been researched great. Yet not one of these studies is devoted to discerning what the railway did in, and for, the country it crossed or served. This thesis sets out the evidence, with all the limitations indicated, to see how the Isle of Wight, a small island some 28 miles by 18 miles, situated off the south coast of England, became transformed by the building of the railways and their associated developments.

The synoptic approach has been developed with chapters on agriculture, trade, urban growth and tourism and the relationship between the railway and the village. In the later chapter the impact of the railway on the village of Bembridge during the Victorian period has been assessed and deals with such diverse topics from the purchase and the running of a steamer fleet to the provision of a water supply for the village.

The railway needs to be seen not only as a means of transport but also as an instrument of social and economic change, both in its growth in the nineteenth century and in its contraction in the middle years of the twentieth century.

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Acknowledgements.

I would like to acknowledge and thank all those who helped in the research and writing of this thesis. In particular I would like to thank the staff of both the Isle of Wight County Records Office and Lord Louis Library in Newport, and the Curator and staff of the Isle of Wight Steam Railway Museum at Haven Street. Due thanks are also offered to my tutor Professor John Rule whose advice and encouragement was very much appreciated.

This thesis was submitted for examination in September 2003. It does not necessarily represent the final form of the thesis as deposited in the University after examination.

Chapter 1

Introduction.

There is a large literature on the railways of both Great Britain and of the Isle of Wight. Most writing concentrates on the operation of individual railway companies, their construction, services, locomotives, carriages and signalling. Two excellent examples of this type of literature are Maycock and Silsbury's railway history, *Isle of Wight Railway*[1] and Paye's *Ventnor West Branch.*[2] However, like many of their genre, their emphasis is not on the effect or impact the company had on the communities that they served. In a national context Simmons wrote in 1982:

> We are now copiously informed about what railways were, and to some extent about the ways in which they were run. We cannot claim to know very much about what they did.[3]

This is especially true of the Isle of Wight. It is easy to say that the opening of a railway produced an effect, perhaps economic or social, and so brought about change, such as an increase of population or trade. However, it is very difficult to demonstrate the effect with hard evidence. That evidence is often difficult to find and if it exists at all is often discontinuous. For example the minute books of the Isle of Wight Railway Company exist in the Public Record Office at Kew but the records of the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company, with which it was closely associated and which it later took over, do not. The annual returns made by the railway companies to the Board of Trade are also discontinuous. Census returns, an important source of primary data, show not only the absolute growth or decline in population but also the occupations of householders living within each parish. For example in the Parish of Shanklin there is no evidence of railway employees in the census records of 1861. However, in the census of 1871, seven years after the railway arrived, there is evidence of Isle of Wight Railway employees in residence. The census, by its very nature, only gives a 'snap shot' of the structure of the population on the census day and consequently there is limited information on the comings and goings of railway workers.

The effects that the railway companies had on the communities that they served has therefore to be gleaned from a host of different sources such as the papers and correspondence handed down by the land owning aristocracy, such as the Hammond-Graems of Yaverland and the Oglander family of Nunwell, and the contemporary reports

in newspapers such as *the Isle of Wight Observer* and the *Isle of Wight County Press.* Here, the Isle of Wight County Record Office has a large collection of relevant sources. This lack of direct evidence on the effect a railway may have had is typical of many areas of Great Britain during the period under consideration.

Terms of reference.

This study aims to add to our of knowledge of the effect the railways had by describing, analysing and evaluating the impact of the railways in the eastern part of the Isle of Wight in the Victorian period. In particular the study will show the reasons why railways were promoted and the nature of the opposition to them, how they were financed and constructed and the impact that they had on settlements, agriculture, trade and tourism. The Eastern Wight is an ideal area in which to undertake this study as it is a small discrete area, which can be examined in isolation without the additional complication of the main trunk routes of the large mainland companies. Also this is the part of the Island where the major settlements are located and it is here that the majority of railway building took place. This thesis will add to the history of the Isle of Wight in the Victorian Period and allow the impact of the railways on the Island to be compared with other relatively isolated rural communities such as Cornwall, East Anglia or West Wales. Although a detailed comparison is not within the terms of reference of this work, comparisons have been made, where relevant, to put developments on the Island into a national context. Nationally, three railway-building periods, or manias as they are referred to in railway literature, have been recognised; the first in the 1830s, the second in the mid-1840s and a third in the mid-1860s. The promotion and construction of the first lines on the Island come broadly into this last period, the first line being opened in 1862 and the last in 1901. During this period of 39 years 55½ miles of line were built and operated, initially by ten companies, which later reduced to four as amalgamations took place as economies necessitated.

Rapid changes in population growth and urbanisation in the major centres of the British Isles were already well established by the end of the first half of the nineteenth century. Barker and Robbin's *History of London Transport*[4] describes the impact of the railways in London and Kellett describes the impact of railways on the large cities of Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow.[5] Few authors, with the notable exception of Simmons,[6] examine the role that the railways played in the changes taking place in the rural counties of the British Isles. In these areas not only was population growth, or in some areas decline, an issue, but also great changes were taking place in tourism,

agriculture and trade. The socio-economic processes that had been initiated in the urban cores were rapidly radiating outwards to the rural periphery, including the Isle of Wight. This thesis aims to contribute to the general debate by describing, analysing and commenting on the role that the railway played in bringing about socio-economic changes in a rural context. The task then is to link, either directly or indirectly, cause with effect and thus add to the understanding of the impact of the railways on a largely isolated and rural community.

The basis of the research for this thesis has been the written word - letters, articles, documents and books have been widely consulted. In addition non-written sources have also been analysed. The period under research was over 100 years ago and it was difficult to find contemporary oral evidence. However, in 1990 Bill Langworthy, then aged 93, was interviewed.[7] His father came to Bembridge as a labourer, to work for the contractors Scott and Edwards of Melmerby, Yorkshire, building the harbour and railway. From his memories of his childhood at the turn of the century Mr Langworthy was able to describe, in some detail, the railway and harbour, corroborating many of the facts already established. Contemporary photographs are also available for interpretation and have proved a very valuable source of information. The collection of the Isle of Wight Steam Railway was especially useful. These were discussed with various railway colleagues and local historians to try to establish the factual detail that they contained and how they could be interpreted. Maps and plans, largely deposited at the Isle of Wight County Record Office, Newport, were more straightforward to interpret being attached to legal documents such as the relevant Acts of Parliament. Early Ordnance Survey maps were also useful, being an accurate record of what existed on the ground, as they corroborated evidence from the plans attached to the Acts of Parliament and from contemporary written sources.

Even though the Island is relatively small it would be difficult to provide an exhaustive description, analysis and evaluation of the impact of the railways on all aspects of their influence on the Island. This thesis has therefore concentrated on the promotion of and opposition to the lines, their finance and construction and then, using a thematic approach, an evaluation of their impact on urbanisation, population, tourism, village life, agriculture and trade. The scope of this thesis has been largely dictated by the documents that still exist, with all the problems that this entails. Within this basic framework exemplars have been used to illustrate the general impacts and processes at work.

Review of literature and sources.

The minutes of the proprietors and directors of the Isle of Wight Railway Company (July 1860 - June 1916), deposited at the Public Record Office, Kew, provide factual information of the dealings of the railway in their monthly meetings. For example, the opening of the Bembridge line can be cross-referenced to articles in the *Isle of Wight Times* and with Col. Yolland's report on the condition of the line for the Board of Trade. However, the information contained in the minutes cannot always be taken at face value as the decisions taken by the board would be based on the subjective views of the individuals concerned, who were also shareholders in the company. Problems can occur when the board resolved to action a resolution but the reporting back on its implementation is not recorded. Newspaper articles of this period help to expand the factual detail as they tended to report the human-interest stories; for example the *Isle of Wight Times* describes the building of Ventnor tunnel.

There may have been many reasons why few letters or documents belonging to the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company have come to light. The company, in its early days, went through a number of financially difficult periods. There were also the financial irregularities of Jabez Balfour, Chairman of the Liberator Building Society, to consider, culminating in the collapse and failure of the Liberator Building Society in 1895. It might have been that the papers, documents and minute books of the company were deliberately lost. Traditionally documents relating to railways were stored by the companies concerned. The Bembridge branch had a number of owners; from 1882 the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company, from 1896 to 1920 the Isle of Wight Railway, from 1921 to 1947 the Southern Railway before finally passing into the hands of the nationalised British Railways in 1948. Here there is plenty of scope for the destruction or the loss of documents. In 1948 the archives of the railways of the British Isles were stored at the Clapham Railway Museum, largely unsorted. In the 1970s this collection was moved, some items going to the Public Record Office at Kew but the majority going to the National Railway Museum at York. It is therefore no wonder that documents were mislaid or lost. There is a possibility, albeit remote, that the records of the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company may still be found.

The letters and reports contained in the files of H. M. Inspector of Railway (1882-1898) held at the Public Record Office, Kew, provide a reliable factual source of information on the opening of a railway company. This information is largely objective, giving detail of

the size of sleepers, weight of rails etc. and can be taken at face value and be corroborated by the minutes of the railway company and contemporary press reports.

The Oglander papers (1874-1916), deposited at the Isle of Wight County Record Office, provide information on the dealings of the Oglander family, who owned Brading Haven, and early railway developments in the Eastern Wight. A series of letters document the thoughts of the Glynn brothers and other members of the Oglander family on developments in the area. As they are private letters and not legal documents they must be treated with caution with regard to their factual reliability. As private letters it could be argued that they give an insight into the motives of the individuals concerned and as they were not for public consumption it makes them a potentially very valuable source. Together, as with other sources, such as the minutes of the board of the Isle of Wight Railway, they help to piece together the details of the period when the Isle of Wight Railway was constructed and when the Brading Haven was sold to the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company. J. W. Fardell, solicitor to the Oglander family, wrote to John Glynn detailing the provisions of the Brading Harbour Improvements, Railway and Works Bill that was before Parliament and the impact the Bill would have on the Oglander estate.[8] He further went on to make recommendations regarding the purchase of Brading Haven from the family by the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company. This was extremely important as it helped to explain why the transaction was considered and completed.

The papers belonging to the Hammond - Graeme family, Lord Yarborough and Lord Heytesbury are kept in the Isle of Wight County Record Office. They provide a rich source of information. During this period the major landowners were primarily concerned with preserving their rights with regard to the development of the railways. The letters and legal documents have to be seen in this light and only provide one side of a considerable argument. Few letters or documents of the railway companies have come to light to give the opposite views. The bias of these letters and the motives behind the people writing them need to be clearly understood when they are interpreted. It is clear that interpretation, understanding and motivation go alongside each other in this instance. Legal documents relating to a claim for compensation against the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company are a useful as they present, in detail, the contemporary situation and give an excellent account of the working of the farms under the Hammond-Graeme family's ownership.[9]

Articles from national, regional and local newspapers provide an interesting source of information on the Island's railways and their associated developments. A wide variety of sources are available; local sources such as the *Isle of Wight Observer* (1872-1882), *Isle of Wight Times* (1870-1885), *Isle of Wight Chronicle* (1876-1897) and the *Isle of Wight County Press* (1885 onwards); regional sources such as the *Hampshire Independent* (1883-1884) and *Hampshire Telegraph* (1885); and national sources such as the *London Gazette, Morning Post,* and *London Echo.* The articles, especially if contemporary, provide supportive comment on the developments taking place at the time. However, these sources do show bias and are not always reliable depending on the position and motives of the authors. The provenance of more recent articles relating to the history of the area is more difficult as original source material is not quoted and there are many problems with the accuracy of the data. This is true of the *Isle of Wight County Press's* articles relating to the opening and construction of both the Freshwater and Bembridge branch.[10] Other sources of information have also been used as evidence to piece together the history of the railways. Maps and plans stored at the Isle of Wight County Record Office have been a valuable source of information. As the period under consideration is over 100 years ago it was difficult to collect oral evidence although the childhood memories of Mr Bill Langwothy were valuable in piecing together a picture of the times.

The Isle of Wight: A geographical summary.

The Isle of Wight became separated from mainland Britain during the Flandrian Transgression when rising sea levels after the Pleistocene Ice Age drowned the Solent River. A chalk ridge runs across the middle of the Island from the Needles in the west to Culver Cliff in the east. To the south was a second outcrop of chalk with the resultant unstable 'Undercliff' between Blackgang and Shanklin. Between the two areas of chalk was a fertile area of cretaceous sandstones. To the north of the main chalk ridge the geology consists of cold and wet clays and Plateau Gravels. The climate was, and still is, equable, when compared to mainland Britain, due to the surrounding sea and enables the Island to gain its well-deserved reputation as the 'Garden Isle'. For centuries the economy of the Island was based mainly on agriculture, much of the land being owned by a small number of gentry with tenanted farms on their estates. The main towns are Cowes, Newport and Ryde. The smaller towns of Ventnor, Shanklin and Sandown grew only after the arrival of the railways. In the period before the building of railways road transport was slow, uncomfortable and expensive. Nearly every aspect of Island life changed with the building of the railways. This thesis aims to describe, discuss and analyse these changes.

Figure 1.1 Map of the Isle of Wight.

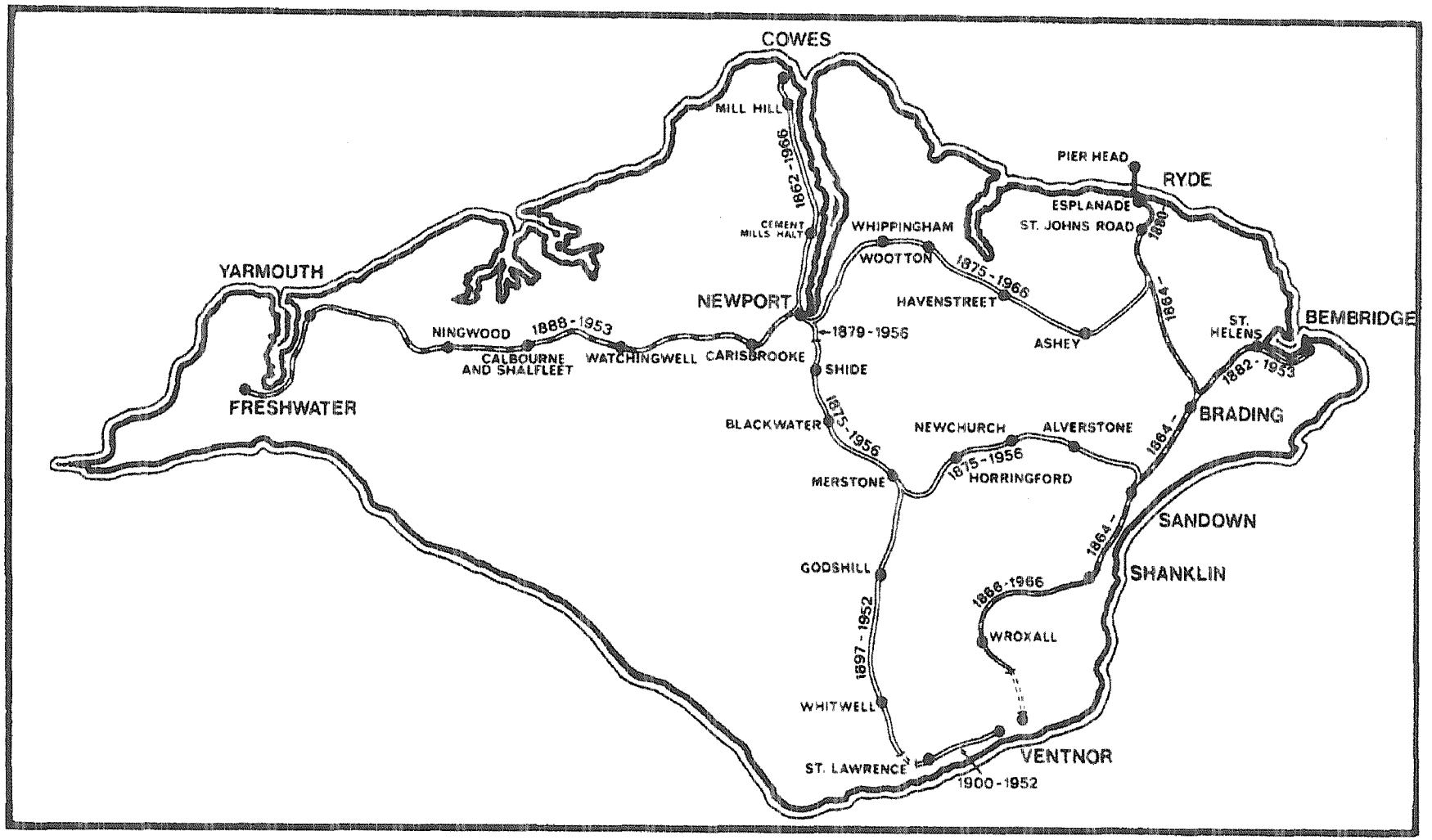


Table 1.1: Dates of opening and closing of railways and tramways for passenger traffic in the Isle of Wight.

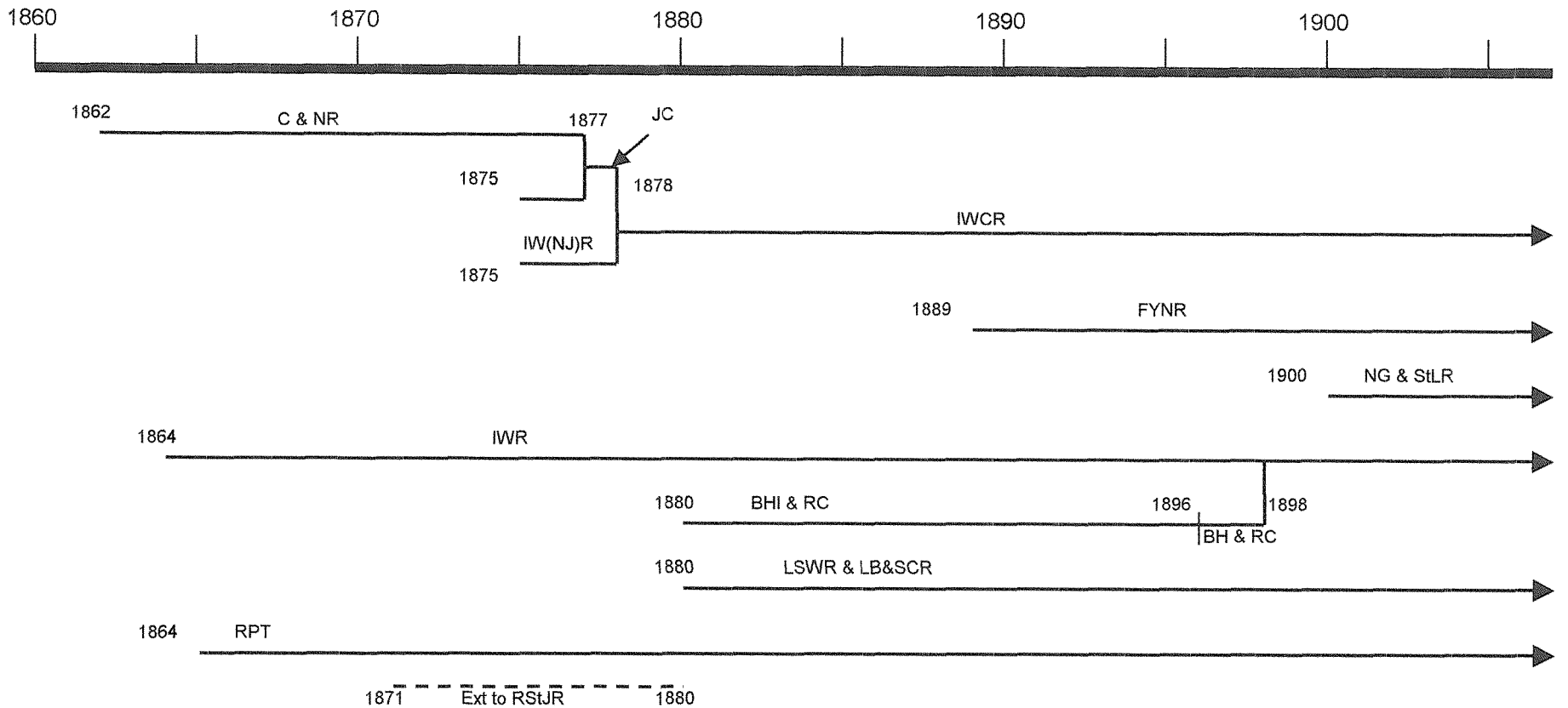
Railway	Company	Distance (miles)	Date Opened	Date Closed
Cowes to Newport	C&NR	4¼	16 June 1862	21 February 1966
Ryde St John's Rd to Shanklin	IWR	7¼	23 August 1864	
Ryde Pier Gates to Ryde Pier Head *	RPC	½	29 August 1864	26 January 1969
Shanklin to Ventnor	IWR	4	10 September 1866	18 April 1966
Ryde Pier Gates to the Castle *	RPC	¼	28 January 1870	5 April 1880
The Castle to Ryde St John's Rd *	RPC	½	7 August 1871	5 April 1880
Sandown to Shide	IW(NJ)R	8¼	1 February 1875	6 February 1956
Shide to Pan Lane (Newport)	IW(NJ)R	½	6 October 1875	6 February 1956
Ryde St John's Rd to Newport	R&NR	10	20 December 1875	21 February 1966
Pan Lane to Newport	IW(NJ)R	¼	1 June 1879	6 February 1956
Ryde St John's Rd to Ryde Esplanade	LSWR & LB&SCR	¾	5 April 1880	
Ryde Esplanade to Ryde Pier Head	LSWR & LB&SCR	½	12 July 1880	
Brading to Bembridge	BHI&RC	2¾	27 May 1882	21 September 1953
Newport to Freshwater	FYNR	12	11 July1889	21 September 1953
Merstone to St Lawrence	NG&StLR	5½	20 July 1897	15 September 1952
St Lawrence to Ventnor Town	NG&StLR	1¼	1 June 1900	15 February 1952

Key

* denotes the Ryde Pier Tramway.

Abbreviations – see Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2 : Railway companies of the Isle of Wight, 1860 – 1900.



Key:					
C & NR	Cowes and Newport Railway	BHI & RC	Brading Harbour Improvement & Railway Company	IWCR	Isle of Wight Central Railway
R & NR	Ryde and Newport Railway	BH & RC	Brading Harbour and Railway Company	LSWR	London and South Western Railway
JC	Joint Committee	IW(NJ)R	Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway	LB & SCR	London, Brighton & South Coast Railway
IWR	Isle of Wight Railway	FYNR	Freshwater, Yarmouth and Newport Railway	RPT	Ryde Pier Tramway
		NG & StLR	Newport, Godshill & St Lawrence Railway	RStJR	Ryde St John's Road

Organisation of the thesis.

This thesis is organised in a specific way so that the development of the railways and their impact on the Eastern Wight can be studied in a temporal setting with specific topics, such as agriculture, developed in a thematic manner. Case studies illustrate the general and specific points that are made. Chapter 2 deals with the introduction of railways to the Island and describes the promotion of and opposition to the building of these railways throughout the period under discussion. Case studies focus on the railway companies concerned from first proposals until opening for passenger traffic. This chapter not only introduces the railway companies but also focuses on the geography of the Island, which had such an influence on their development. Figure 1.1, a map of the Isle of Wight, and Table 1.1, showing the dates of opening and closure of railways introduce the basic geographical and historic data relating to railways in the Island. Further geographical data, including topography can be found on *Ordnance Survey Outdoor Leisure Map 29 (Isle of Wight)* and *Ordnance Survey Landranger Map 196 (Solent and the Isle of Wight);* both are standard references. Figure 1.2 shows, as a time line, the relationship between the various railway companies concerned with the building and operation of lines in the Isle of Wight. Chapter 3 concentrates on the financial aspects of these railway companies. Topics such as the raising of capital and their financial success are analysed where data is available. Chapter 4 describes the practical aspects of constructing a railway. Here contemporary information from newspapers is used to describe the construction processes involved. There was railway construction in process in some part of the Island in each year from 1859, when the first line was started, to 1900 when the last line was completed. In Chapter 5 the impact of the railways on population growth and change is analysed along with the specific impact on tourism and urbanisation. The case study of the Isle of Wight Railway will be used to show the influence that a railway could have on the towns, namely Ventnor, Shanklin, Sandown and Ryde, that it served. In Chapter 6 a small area of the Eastern Wight, the area surrounding and including the village of Bembridge, will be examined in detail to establish the influence a railway might have on an isolated rural area and village community. Chapter 7 concentrates on agriculture and the impact that the development of railways had in the Eastern Wight. Case studies using the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway in the upper valley of the River Eastern Yar and the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company in the lower valley serve to illustrate the influence that the railway had on agricultural improvements. Finally, in Chapter 8, the influence of the railway on trade is discussed with regard to the Isle of Wight Railway and the Bembridge branch. Chapter 9, the conclusion, draws together the threads of this thesis.

Notes: Introduction.

1. Maycock, R. J., & Silsbury, R., *The Isle of Wight Railway,* (Usk, Oakwood Press, 1999).
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3. Simmons, Jack, The railways in Cornwall, 1835 – 1914, *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall*, Vol. IX, Part 1, 1982, p.11.
4. Barker, T. C., and Robbins, R. M., *A history of London transport, passenger travel and the development of the metropolis,* (2 vols., London, Allen and Unwin for the London Transport Executive, 1974).
5. Kellett, J. R., The impact of railways on Victorian cities, (London, Routledge & K. Paul, 1969).
6. Simmons, Jack, *The railway in town and country 1830 – 1914*, (Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1986).
7. Langworthy, Bill, personal communication, 1990.
8. Fardell, J. W., letter to J. H. O. Glynn, 21 May 1874, Oglander papers, Isle of Wight County Record Office, Newport, OG/CC/720A.
9. Hammond-Graeme, (1882), report on the fencing, Hammond-Graeme Papers, IWCRO, HG/2/509.
10. *Isle of Wight County Press*, report on the history of the Bembridge and Freshwater branch lines on closure, 26 September 1953.

Chapter 2

Promotion and opposition.

By 1854 nearly all of the major towns and cities in England, Wales and Scotland had become rail-connected: the trunk routes were in place. Birmingham was reached from London in 1837, Bristol in 1840 and Southampton in 1842. However, the railway companies had paid scant attention to the smaller towns and rural communities, including those in the Isle of Wight. It was in the years between 1854 and 1876 that the railway network was extended, taking in the rural areas and small market towns, to give the country a truly national system. By this time a railway had become desirable for a well-run town similar to the provision of a clean water supply, sewerage works and gas works. However, there was the question of whether or not a town would really gain by being rail-connected. Would the town benefit from closer links with the larger towns and cities and their shops, markets, new industries, large producers and suppliers, or would the town be damaged? In every town groups and individuals would emerge, putting forward their views for and against the promotion of a railway. This was as much the situation in the Isle of Wight as in any other rural area of Britain. However, on the Island there was an added dimension. The links with the ferry ports and their connections to the communities of Portsmouth and Southampton, and in turn their connection to the main railway arteries of the country, became crucial. In addition, at this stage, no large mainland company had become directly involved with the promotion of railways on the Island.

This chapter examines the promotion of, and the opposition to, the building of railways in the Eastern Wight from 1845, when the first railways were proposed, to 1900, when the last line was completed. It will focus on the groups and individuals who were involved, examining their viewpoints in terms of the economic and social arguments that they put forward. The main premise that will be examined is that the motive of the promoters for building a railway was largely financial; some owned land that the railway would need, some had skills that would be needed, others wanted links to the mainland and with other parts of the Island. After the parliamentary procedures that were required to build a railway are described, the promotion of railways on the Island will be placed in a national context before the various schemes are analysed with respect to the basic premise that they were built for financial gain.

Parliamentary procedures.

Before a railway could be built an Act of Parliament was required and to achieve this it was necessary to promote a Private Bill.[1] In practice, a Parliamentary Agent would be employed to draw up the Bill and carry out all the necessary actions on behalf of the promoters of the railway concerned. To allow people with opposing interests time to object it was first necessary to give 'notice of intention' to promote the Bill by local newspaper advertisements, and by a notice in the *London Gazette*. A petition praying that the Bill be heard by Parliament, and the Bill itself, had then to be deposited by the Agents in the Private Bills Office of both Houses of Parliament before 27 November of the year preceding that in which the Bill would be enacted. If anyone wished to oppose the privileges that the Bill sought, they had to petition against it by 30 January. Opponents of the Bill had to show that their interests would be badly affected by the building of the railway. If the promoters could prove that their opponents' interests were unaffected by the Bill then the objection became invalid.

Once deposited, the Petition and Bill were printed and available for inspection. At this stage the Bill would be examined to see if it complied with the Standing Orders of Parliament and if it did not it was referred to the Standing Orders Committee whose members were empowered to reject it. Many Bills failed at this stage. If a Bill passed Standing Orders it was then placed on the table of the House of Commons and was deemed to have had its first reading. After this formality it would then be referred to a Standing Committee as an unopposed Bill and a date for the second reading would be fixed. If petitions against the Bill had been lodged then time had to be allocated for debate. The House of Commons then had the power to accept the Bill, amend it, or reject it altogether. If the Bill was passed, either in its original form or in an amended form, it was then moved forward to a Select Committee for further examination. The Select Committee, if it wished, could call evidence and make more amendments to the Bill before reporting it to the House as available for the third reading. It was then debated again and it could be further amended or rejected. If it passed the third reading it was then passed to the House of Lords where it would undergo a very similar process. It was not uncommon for the Lords to reject Bills. When the Bill had successfully passed the Lords it would finally receive the Royal Assent, being signed by the Lords' Commissioners acting on behalf of the Sovereign. This was a formality and from that moment the Bill became an Act of Parliament.

A railway company, on obtaining its Act, was only empowered to carry out the works cited in it. If the Act had been amended significantly in its passage through Parliament, as quite often happened, the railway company would not have the powers that it originally sought. An Act dealing with new works usually contained a clause stating that the construction had to take place within a certain time period. If the work was not completed by then, the powers were deemed to have lapsed. However, these could be revived by another Act authorising an extension of time. If an Act specifically 'required' that the works be carried out, proceedings could be taken against the company if they failed to complete it on time. Most Acts, therefore, only 'empowered' those powers to be exercised. If the promoters found it difficult to raise the capital for a line they often let the powers lapse. However, if there were specific 'requirements' in the Act then the promoter would need to obtain a further Act to authorise abandonment of the powers conferred in the earlier Act. These Acts were particularly common.

The wider debate.

It is quite clear that while many people expressed their views both for and against the building of railways, wealthy landowners had more influence than most. Their attitudes, revealed by family and personal papers, varied from person to person, from place to place and time to time in the life of one person.[2] For many landowners the railways symbolised everything they most disliked and presented a formidable economic and political challenge. The enemies of railways are well documented; Squire Samuel Heathcoate of Wymondley in Hertfordshire was 'insanely violent' in his opposition to railways throughout the railway mania between 1844 and 1846, Lady Suffield always drove up to London from Blickling in her own carriage 'rather than rub shoulders with other people in trains.'[3] There were also those less passionate landowners who, while regarding railways with distaste, kept their feelings under control. Lord Stanley opposed the Liverpool and Manchester Railway in 1825 but came round to respecting its achievements. Later in his life in the 1840s, as Lord Derby, he not only dealt with a number of railway companies, including the Liverpool and Bury Railway who wanted his land, but also invested money in exchange for shares.[4] The Second Earl of Yarborough went much further in Lincolnshire, promoting railways and the developments associated with them in order to improve his rural and urban property. However, on the Isle of Wight, where again he was a large landowner, he violently opposed the introduction of railways. In Lincolnshire he was closely involved with the Great Grimsby and Sheffield Junction Railway.[5] The

railway was planned to run from Grimsby to Gainsborough, meeting another from Sheffield to form a continuous line from Manchester to the North Sea. It was to be a means of improving the prosperity of the fishing port of Grimsby, of which in 1849 he owned 42% of the land, and the small market towns of Brigg and Kirton-in-Lindsey. Most of the line lay within the Yarborough estate and the Earl gave his full support to the project, which had a specific economic objective. Indeed it was a deliberate attempt to create a modern fishing port and take trade away from Hull across the Humber estuary. During the preparation of the plans for Parliament Sir John Nelthorpe objected to the railway crossing his land. As already explained it was the responsibility of the railway company to prove that this would not harm his interests and a petition in favour of the line was organised. The inhabitants of Brigg and the villages along the route were told about the local benefits that the railway would bring to the neighbourhood. Lord Yarborough also used his considerable influence with the tenanted farmers. His agent wrote '...in case of applying to any tenants of Lord Yarborough for signatures to the petition you may mention that it is the wish of Lord Yarborough to give the utmost support in his power to these railways, and there is at present no better way of serving him than by joining in these petitions.' Lord Yarborough, here, was seen as an energetic, improving landowner thinking mainly of the contribution that the railway would make to the estate. Yet as will be seen, he determinedly opposed the railways on the Island. His attitude in Lincolnshire was primarily determined by the nature of the estate and the potential for development. On the Island, as his estate was used more for recreational purposes, railways were seen as an intrusion into his privacy.[6]

Early railway schemes.

One of the first references to building a railway on the Isle of Wight, from Ryde to Ventnor, came in May 1845 when the Isle of Wight Railway Company, the promoters of which were mainly resident on the mainland, was provisionally registered at Companies House. Thomas Gisborne, M. P. for Nottingham, was chairman. Gisborne had unsuccessfully contested the Newport, I.W., constituency in the 1841 election. Mr Wheeler, a London solicitor, was designated company secretary and solicitor. There were upward of twenty other promoters, from various mainland locations, including Henry Tootal, who was associated with many mainland railway schemes, and a number of Southampton merchants. The London and South Western Railway was also interested in

the scheme. Mr Charles Popham Hill, who resided at Bonchurch and owned large tracts of land at Ventnor, was also a supporter.

A second company, the Direct Ryde and Ventnor Railway Company, was provisionally registered by Edwin Paul, a London solicitor, at Companies House on 20 October 1845. The promoters were Thomas Paul, his brother, a London Cabinet Maker, and Thomas Hellyer, an architect and surveyor with an address at Lind Street, Ryde. At that stage neither company had the resources to bring a Bill before Parliament as the investment of public money in railways was at a low ebb due to a lack of confidence and low dividends being paid on railway shares.

Support for the Isle of Wight Railway was strongest in the places that would be served by it most directly. Ventnor, cut off from the rest of the Island by the Undercliff, saw the formation of a pro-railway lobby. In November 1845 a handbill entitled *Reasons for supporting the Isle of Wight Railway*[7] was produced by the Ventnor Railway Association. However, there is no mention of the individuals who instigated the Ventnor Railway Association apart from C. R. Cundell, whose name appears at the bottom of the handbill and who is titled chairman. The handbill detailed sixteen points supporting the building of a railway to Ventnor. At a meeting held at the *St Boniface Hotel*, Ventnor, the Association made the following statement, '...the proposed railroad is deserving the cordial approbation and support of every person who desires the welfare, and is a friend to the prosperity of the inhabitants of the Isle of Wight.' The Association stated that there had been a great improvement in the means of travelling by the introduction of railways. This had been highly advantageous to all classes in the community in that it developed the resources of the country and improved trade. It also suggested that the introduction of railways was so widespread that even Jersey, an island smaller than the Isle of Wight, would soon be in possession of a railway and that the Isle of Wight would be missing out if the opportunity was not grasped. The Association also suggested that travelling between towns and communities on the Island was both time consuming and expensive and that '...thousands have been deprived of the pleasure and advantage presented to the tourist and invalid by the beautiful scenery and salubrity of the climate.'[8] This is a reference to the emergence of Ventnor and the Undercliff as a health resort. It also stated that, on the mainland, railways had vastly increased the number of travellers and the Isle of Wight, even in 1845, depended on visitors for its trade. The railway would also increase

opportunities for the farmer by '...affording a ready market for all the produce he can raise' and for the tradesman by increasing the demand for his goods.[9] Farmers could also gain as manure, chalk and lime could be delivered cheaply and quickly to the nearest railway station for distribution to local farms. The railways would also be advantageous by greatly reducing the parochial rate, especially that levied for the 'poor and highways', because the railways were assessed at a higher rate than other properties and would therefore contribute more.

The Ventnor Railway Association thought that the railway would not destroy '...the beauties for which the Island is so celebrated.' It had the optimistic view that the railway would not interfere with anyone's privacy, nor spoil the character of the country and, in fact, would only be built on the less scenic areas of the Island. It thought that the visitors would be brought to the 'verge' of the outstanding scenery and that there would be an increase in the demand for horses and public carriages to convey them through this countryside. Thus a group of people who thought their tourist trade would diminish because of the building of a railway was placated.

The Association also saw the wider implications of railway links, especially with the emerging rail-connected port of Southampton, which would open up the newly industrialised areas of Yorkshire, Lancashire and the North. This was, surprisingly, not for direct trade with the Island but to allow businessmen from the North, when at Southampton, to relax and enjoy themselves on the Isle of Wight. They would be able to '...take advantage of the opportunity to visit its transcendent beauties, where they could be enjoyed at so small a cost of time, which to them is of more importance than money.'

To sell the idea of the railway to the landowning class the Association suggested that London, the heart of business, would be only four hours away and that consequently there might be an increase in the number of wealthy merchants who, with their families, might reside in the south of the Island and enjoy the favourable climate. The proposed railway intended to link the four main towns of the Island, Ryde, Cowes, Newport and Ventnor - thus allowing the frequent visiting of friends and relatives and '...the interchange of thought and feeling...that would enlarge the understanding.' This would be an example, they hoped, of railways bringing about social change.

The Association stated that Ventnor, in particular, was at a distinct disadvantage for the delivery of coal. In 1845 the coal merchant was able to supply coal at a price of between 32s. and 35s. per ton. It calculated that if railways delivered coal the price would drop to between 22s. and 25s. per ton, thus making the point that Ventnor was very much at a disadvantage, in terms of risk, expense and uncertainty, in the delivery of goods to the town. The district around Ventnor, along the Undercliff, had, in their opinion, large quantities of a very fine freestone for building purposes. They suggested that a railway would help export this stone to London and other areas on the mainland, via Newport or Cowes, at a low cost, thereby increasing its demand.

A further point, if more were needed, for the building of the railway was that in its construction a vast sum of money would be spent within the Island, employment being given to labourers, workers and tradesmen, with the preference of work being given to the local people. The Association finished the sixteen points by saying that, as yet, no one had put forward a convincing argument as to why the Island should not participate in the new technology, just as in the past the Macadamised road had superseded the cart track, the coach the carrier's van and pack-horse, and the steam-boat the sailing packet.

These sixteen points, also relevant to other areas in Britain where railways were proposed, revolved around the benefits that the railway would bring to the economy of the area, especially to the tradesmen, farmers and those involved in the tourist trade. There was also a hint that railways would bring social change to the lives of the people who lived in the communities through which the lines passed. These arguments are characterised as being strongly developmental. That is to say, they rested on the assumption that the railways would themselves create the demand that they would in turn satisfy.

There was considerable opposition to the views of the Ventnor Railway Association. Railways were expensive to build and many people had to be persuaded to invest money in them. In the late 1830s and 1840s many lines were proposed in Britain; some were badly planned and never passed Standing Orders, in others investors lost all or most of the money that they had put into these speculative companies. Many people were afraid that this would happen on the Isle of Wight when the first plans were put forward in 1845. In that year a petition was raised to oppose this scheme. The introduction to the petition read:

> We the undersigned, Landowners, Clergy, Yeomen, Tradesmen and others, Inhabitants of the Isle of Wight, have seen with extreme surprise Advertisements having reference to a project for establishing Railways on the Island. We hereby declare our direct and determined hostility to this wild and dangerous speculation, which, so far from benefiting the Island, would painfully affect its interests, and would threaten with ruin a large class of its inhabitants.[10]

The opponents believed that there was no reason why there should be any increase in the '...facilities of transport other than those that we presently enjoy.' Their view was that it would not help trade, nor improve the road system and they played down the extent to which visitors wished to exchange their '...ordinary means of conveyance to the quiet enjoyment on which they look for pleasure and health', for the hurried speed of a railway. They stated that the railway was being thrust upon them contrary to their wishes and interests, it involved serious financial risk to speculators, threatened deep injury to the inhabitants and was utterly useless and valueless to the community at large. At that time a handful of wealthy families, the Oglanders at Nunwell, Lord Yarborough at Freshwater and the Hammond-Graems at Yaverland, owned large areas of the Island. They did not want railways crossing their estates and thus they became part of the anti-railway lobby. The petition attached to the declaration contained just over 1,000 signatures. Curiously the signature of Lord Yarborough, the largest landowner on the Island and one of the bitterest opponents of railways, occurred no less than four times. There were other repetitions as well.

The anti-railway lobby on the Island was very well organised and financed. It made use of every method then available to get its message across. In particular it used newspaper advertisements just as the pro-railway lobby had done. It used the *Hampshire Telegraph* and *Hampshire Advertiser*, which were both sold on the Island, as there was no all-island paper in the 1840s. Charles Wyatt Estcourt, a Newport solicitor, whose name appears on many receipts for local advertisements, acted as secretary to the anti-railway committee.[11] He also acted as family solicitor to many of the landed Island families including the Oglanders and the Hammond-Graems.

There were many other groups who had reservations regarding the construction of railways. In 1852, at a Methodist discussion class in Newport, the 'Moral evils of railways' was debated at which, it was concluded that the evils '...would outweigh any

advantages' because there would be an increase of Sabbath desecration, unwholesome speculation would be caused, many bankruptcies would occur, the levelling tendencies of the times would be fostered and finally the utilitarian spirit of the age would be encouraged.[12]

During 1852 the Isle of Wight Railway, whose promoters were largely from the mainland but included George Young, a prominent Island businessman and landowner, had plans for connecting Newport, Ryde, Cowes and Ventnor in 'one continuous line'. In the same year Thomas Hellyer and J. Woodman promoted the Direct Ryde and Ventnor Railway, though little is known of either man. On 14 December 1852 the Isle of Wight Railway's plans were presented at a meeting in Newport.[13] This meeting was abandoned in chaos as landowners, headed by Lord Yarborough, opposed the scheme. The editor of the *Hampshire Advertiser* said 'It would be a perversion of terms to allow the proceedings of such a meeting to go forth as the voice of the town.' However, the meeting did appoint a local committee, its aim being to secure an Act of Parliament. Lord Yarborough wrote a circular letter, dated 10 March 1853, to every member of the House of Commons in the hope of influencing their decision when the Bill was read for a second time. Lord Yarborough endeavoured to stop the Bill on a point of order as he suggested the initial proposals were drawn up in a hasty manner and were, in the opinion of the anti-railway lobby, full of errors. However, the Standing Orders Committee was prepared to pass the Bill '...upon condition of the errors being corrected and the new plans and surveys deposited.' The anti-railway lobby believed that this condition could not possibly be complied with and was aghast that a second reading of the Bill was being proposed. The anti-railway lobby wrote to all Members of Parliament listing the facts concerned with the proposal and asking them to '...assist in preventing the further progress, of a scheme, which is in truth, a mere speculation.' The first point made was that the promoters of the Bill were not connected with the Island in any way nor had they been asked to promote the Bill on behalf of any inhabitants. They commented that, of the whole list of subscribers only four were resident in or connected with the Island. The second point they made was that as the Isle of Wight was an island and separated from the mainland by four miles of water it could have no junction with the great trunk lines of the mainland and therefore could enjoy none of the advantages attained elsewhere. They went on to say that a railway in the Isle of Wight was not necessary because firstly, the waterborne access to Ryde, Cowes and Newport already supplied the '...best and cheapest mode of transmission of

goods to those places', secondly the town of Ventnor, with a population of only 2,500, was too small to require or maintain a railway and thirdly, because local passenger traffic between towns was very small and they could see no reason why it might increase. They also made the point that the majority of visitors who came to the Island during the summer did so to make an excursion around the Island and not just to visit Ventnor.

In the view of Lord Yarborough and the anti-railway lobbyists a railway on the Island would not be expedient because local interests, presumably their own, would be harmed, privacy would be reduced and land taken. Also there would be no advantage to commerce, agriculture, tourism and links to the mainland. Another point the anti-railway lobby made, on purely practical grounds, was that the cost of the works would greatly exceed the capital to be raised and that the income derived from it would be inadequate and give no remuneration to shareholders. Thus, they concluded, they had shown the railway to be unnecessary, inexpedient and impractical. They suggested that the line was only a mere speculation by parties unconnected with the Island; uncalled for by local people and not supported by them, and asked the members of the Lower House to oppose the second reading of the Bill. They also commented that the opposition to the Bill had caused them '...heavy expense.' It is not surprising that this scheme was dropped.

The Cowes and Newport Railway.

By the late 1850s the opposition to railway construction on the Island had waned sufficiently to allow a proposition to become a reality. The Cowes and Newport Railway was proposed to link the two towns on the River Medina. Communication between the port of Cowes, at the mouth of the River Medina and the county town of Newport, five miles inland and at the lowest bridging point on the River Medina, was difficult. It is true that vessels could sail up to the quays at Newport to discharge their cargoes but the river was notoriously shallow and tortuous in its upper part and at low tide ships had to take the mud at Newport. The only other means of communication was by road.[14] The coach, the *Cowes and Newport Stage Machine*, took about one hour for the journey, which on foot took just over two.[15] This state of affairs lasted until the mid-1800s. The great boost to shipbuilding, as a result of the Crimean War, had meant a brisk period of expansion for Cowes and it became apparent that there was need for an improvement in its communications.[16]

The prospectus for the Cowes and Newport Railway was issued in November 1858[17] and was received favourably in Newport although many thought the River Medina would offer serious competition for the carriage of goods between the two towns.[18] The prospectus lists four provisional directors, all local businessmen; the Hon. William Henry Petre and W. C. Hoffmeister from Cowes, and Henry Pinnock and Robert John Jewell from Newport. Interestingly the company solicitor was Charles Wyatt Estcourt who, in 1845, had acted as secretary to the Anti-Railway Committee. The directors first met on 17 August 1859 at the *Fountain Hotel*, Cowes, William Henry Petre acting as chairman.

The directors, in the prospectus, made the following points in favour of the railway. Cowes was described as a town of 6,000 inhabitants, which derived importance from its harbour, large shipbuilding establishments, proximity to the 'Palace of Osborne' and its rank as one of the south coast's watering places. The prospectus said of the port '...it is much frequented by British, Foreign and Colonial Shipping and is the home of the Royal Yacht Squadron and, most importantly, is the chief port for the arrival and departure of both passengers and goods to and from the Island.' They described Newport as having a population of 12,000, being the chief market town and being at the centre of communications. The traffic between the two towns was considerable and included coal, merchandise of all descriptions, a large number of cattle and military stores and baggage to and from the barracks at Parkhurst. There was also a large traffic in passengers, not only passing between the two towns, but also to all parts of the Island, especially to the well known watering places of Ventnor and the Undercliff. Cowes had an almost hourly steamer service to Southampton and landing at the Fountain Pier was not dependent on tides. The promoters wanted to '...present to the public and the inhabitants of the Island, the advantage which has long been desired, namely, a cheap, speedy and frequent means of transport for the traffic concentrated at Newport.'[19] They made the surprising point, in view of earlier schemes, that the local landowners had approved the railway and that the cost of construction and works were comparatively small. Therefore the undertaking would be profitable. It was envisaged that traffic would increase throughout the years.

The *Isle of Wight Observer*, however, gave a very different view of the prosperity of Cowes to that expressed by the prospectus. It described the population of Cowes as being under 3,000 people, not 6,000 as the prospectus stated. The 1861 census for the parish of Northwood, in which Cowes is located, gave the figure as 6,534, a more relevant figure

and in broad agreement with that quoted in the prospectus. The newspaper felt that Cowes was no longer the port it had once been, writing of it, '...a town ...which has long slumbered, should wake up and consider itself as the only port of security which nature has ordained.' Indeed, smaller ports, such as Cowes, had lost out to Portsmouth and Southampton. In Cowes shipbuilding had declined drastically as ships became larger and built of iron. People had to migrate from Cowes to seek employment. Nevertheless the *Isle of Wight Observer* hoped the railway would revitalise the town and that Cowes, '...would have fresh resources open to her,' and that, '...a vast change would come over the spirit of the dream, remembering what Southampton was before the introduction of a railway, and what it has become with all the blessings which science has heaped on it.'[20]

The Cowes and Newport Bill received Royal Assent on 8 August 1859 and work started on 15 October. The *Hampshire Independent* reported '...the first sod was turned in most unfavourable weather conditions, the rain scarcely stopping all day.' Michael Ratsey, a prominent local yacht builder, performed the ceremony.[21] The site of this ceremony was at the southern portal of the proposed tunnel under Mill Hill. In 1859 this was outside the town, being part of the Ward estate. The Cowes to Newport line opened on Monday 16 June 1862. [22] The basic premise that the Cowes and Newport Railway was built for financial gain is clearly upheld. Here the commercial link between the mainland, the port of Cowes and the county town of Newport and then onwards into the Island's hinterland was the main reason for the promotion of this line.

Other lines.

From 1858 onwards there were many projected railways that were widely discussed on the Island.[23] The main aim still appeared to be the development of an infrastructure to join the main centres of population - Ryde, Newport, Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor. The Cowes to Newport line was not seen in isolation. The *Isle of Wight Observer* reported that a Cowes and Newport Railway Extension Bill was in Parliament.[24] The promoters were planning two lines; one from Newport, through Godshill and Wroxall to the quarries at Ventnor, and the second from Newport to a junction at Alverstone with one branch to Ryde and another via Shanklin to join the first line near Wroxall. In addition, two local engineers, Birkenshaw and Conybeare, of whom little is known, planned a tortuous line from Cowes to Ventnor. Hamilton Henry Fulton, another local engineer, proposed a

railway, similar to the Isle of Wight Railway's scheme of 1852 but with a Cowes to Newport section. Fulton was also resident engineer to the Stokes Bay Railway, Tramway and Pier Company and made his living generating interest in railway schemes and then subsequently charging the undertaking for his services. Augustus Livesay and Richard Saunders proposed a heavily engineered line from the Pier Gates at Ryde to Bonchurch. Livesay and Saunders were local architects and civil engineers with a business address in the High Street at Ventnor. Livesay owned the Ventnor Gas Works and Water Works and was motivated by the beneficial effect that cheaper coal, brought by the railway, would have on his trade. Saunders was engineer to the Ventnor Harbour Company. There was great rivalry between the Birkenshaw and Conybeare scheme and the Livesay and Saunders scheme for a railway into Ventnor. A meeting was held in Ventnor on 23 December 1858 to debate these two schemes.[25] The meeting adopted the Birkenshaw and Conybeare line but nothing came of the proposal.

The Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway.

A line from Ryde, a major town and entry point to the Island for both passengers and goods, to Ventnor did make some form of financial sense. The Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway Company had a Bill in session in July 1859.[26] It had passed through the Commons by 9 July but was later rejected by the Lords. At a meeting of the directors and promoters, which took place at the *Pier Hotel*, Ryde on 5 October 1859, Messrs. Simpson, Barrow, More and Webster were described as directors and Messrs. Fulton, Livesay, Saunders, Fisher, Beckinsale and Porter as promoters. This was a disparate group, each with his own agenda, with some having been involved in earlier unsuccessful ventures. Motives were mainly financial; some owned land that the railway would need, some had skills that would be needed, others wanted links to the shore at Ryde and with other parts of the Island. James Simpson became chairman of the company at this meeting. He was a well-to-do civil engineer with a business address at 26, Great George Street, Westminster. He was involved with the building of Chelsea Water Works but had no experience of railways. Simpson had access to money as he made numerous loans to the company to pay bills and guaranteed borrowings from bankers. Thomas Webster introduced him to the possibility of building a railway on the Island. Webster was a barrister-at-law with a business address in Westminster and a home address at Cliff House in Sandown. He also owned an estate in Sandown. In 1856 he became chairman of the Isle of Wight Ferry Company, which owned the docks at Ryde and ran a ferry between Stokes Bay and Ryde.

Webster also knew Thomas James Willis Fleming of South Stoneham, Southampton. Willis Fleming was a Southampton magistrate, Deputy Lieutenant of Hampshire and Dorset, Grand Master of the Isle of Wight Masons and later, between 1864 and 1865, Member of Parliament for Winchester. He was also chairman of the Stokes Bay Railway, Tramway and Pier Company and the Ventnor Harbour Company where Saunders was the engineer. As has been shown, Fulton was engineer to the Stokes Bay Company. Simpson, Webster and Fulton all saw the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway as the last link in a through route from the London, via Stokes Bay and Ryde, to the lucrative destination of Ventnor. Alexander More was described as a 'Gentleman' and had an address in Bembridge. He had connections with unspecified businesses in Ventnor and represented local support for the line. The background and motives of Livesay and Saunders have already been described. Charles Fisher was a lawyer with a practice, which included both Sandown and Ventnor, and acted as local solicitor for the company in the early years issuing shares and negotiating the purchase of land. George Porter was a London-based lawyer with a business address in Westminster who specialised in railway law. No information has come to light on Barrow or Beckinsale.

Shareholders' meetings of the company were held in either Ryde or London, the locations reflecting the two principal sources of capital. However, the large number of small shareholders from the Island was outweighed by a handful of London investors. During 1859 the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway board strove to rally support on the Island for their own scheme and to oppose Birkenshaw's resurrected scheme. This they did successfully by the formation of local committees. The 1860 Parliamentary session contained both the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway Bill and the Cowes and Newport Railway Extension Bill. The Island was divided into two factions; Newport business interests supported the Cowes and Newport Railway Extension Bill while Ryde business interests favoured the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway, although the inhabitants of Ryde were never happy about a tramway to the foreshore from a railway terminus inland. Sir Henry Oglander, Sir John Simeon and William George Ward, all owners of large estates, opposed the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway proposals although Ward supported the Cowes and Newport Railway Extension Bill. Much of the 1845 opposition towards the railway had evaporated as old antagonists had died. The Third Earl of Yarborough, whose predecessor opposed all railways on the Island, actively supported the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway and was one of the first investors in

the company. The Cowes and Newport Railway Extension Bill was rejected in Parliament but the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway Bill was allowed to continue, being considered in detail by a committee on 22 and 23 March 1860. Objections from the Ryde Commissioners, the town's local authority, were placated by an agreement by the company to abandon the tramway and to build a road from the terminus to Melville Street instead. They disregarded Ward's objections as his quays at Cowes would have benefited from the opposing Cowes and Newport Railway. Simeon objected to the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway passing over his land but surprisingly supported the Cowes and Newport Railway's line, which would have split his land in two. Sir Henry Oglander was placated by an agreement to locate the line in a shallow cutting although Francis Fuller, surveyor of the line, maintained that Sir Henry's land was poorly farmed and that the construction of the railway would have a positive effect on the drainage. Supporters of the Bill included the Rev. James White, Capt. Mark Huish and Col. Gordon. The Rev. White was one of several local residents to give evidence in favour of the line. He resided in the manor of Bonchurch and was influential, being friends with Thackeray, Tennyson and Dickens. Capt. Huish, who lived in Bonchurch, had considerable railway experience being the retired General Manager of the London and North Western Railway. He gave evidence that he had made at least 75 journeys to London from Bonchurch and that up to 20 private carriages would meet the boat at Ryde and that eight to ten coaches would ply between Ryde and Bonchurch. He stated that the service was so overcrowded that he had to write days in advance to book a place and that it took longer to get from Bonchurch to Portsmouth than from Portsmouth to London. He also stated the merits of Brading Quay as a delivery point for coal compared to quays on the River Medina. Col. Gordon, Deputy Quarter Master at Portsmouth, was responsible for transporting stores and troops to the fort at Sandown. His evidence supported the railway as part of the infrastructure in the defence of the Island against invasion by the French. The support for the Bill was overwhelming and it became an Act on 23 July 1860.

In July 1860 the directors of the company were Messrs. Simpson, Norton, Atherley, Webster, Willis Fleming and More. In the preceding year Barrow had resigned and Willis Fleming and Atherley had joined. Maj. Atherley resided at Landguard Manor, Shanklin; he had access to money, lending the company money and guaranteeing borrowing from bankers. They employed Fulton as engineer. In October 1860 Thomas Norton resigned from the board and was replaced by Frederick Twynam who was one of the mainland

investors with a significant number of shares in the company. Capt. Huish's influence on the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway became more apparent when on 7 December 1860 he met Simpson and Atherley and was offered a seat on the board. At that time the board rejected a proposal to buy the Isle of Wight Ferry Company works at Ryde over which a tramway would have run. Willis Fleming and Webster had always hoped to amalgamate the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway, Isle of Wight Ferry Company and the Stokes Bay Railway and thereby recoup some of their investments. As this was not to be, Willis Fleming and Webster resigned.

The promotion of the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway was, again, for financial reasons. The commercial link between the mainland, London through to Portsmouth, and the tourist opportunities of Ventnor and the south coast resorts was the main motivating force behind the promotion of the railway. However, unlike the Cowes and Newport Railway, it was the passenger traffic, not the goods traffic, that was being developed.

The Ryde and Newport Railway.

The Ryde and Newport Railway was by no means the first company that had the intention of linking Newport with Ryde. As has already been described, in 1845 the Isle of Wight Railway envisaged a branch line from Newport to Ryde. In 1852 another company, with the same name, had similar intentions and a third, again with the same name, had made plans in 1858. None of these schemes, however, came about. The Ryde and Newport Direct Railway made plans in 1862 for a railway from a junction at Hurslake, just north of Newport, on the newly opened Cowes and Newport Railway, to a point about one mile south of Ryde on the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway which was under construction. The Bill promoted a single track some 7½ miles in length, but with enough land for a double line, and with a maximum gradient of 1 in 75 leaving Ryde. The estimated cost was £75,000 and major works included one tunnel 400 yards in length and a swivel bridge across the River Medina at Newport. This Bill was supported by the Borough of Ryde but rejected by the House of Commons which recognised that although the line was indeed desirable felt it should be promoted by local interests.[27] This scheme was briefly revived over the autumn of 1866 when the Mayor of Newport convened a meeting on 1 October to canvass for a railway between the two towns.[28] A similar meeting

was held in Ryde a few days later.[29] The promoters sought to revive the powers for the scheme in March 1867 but it was again rejected in Parliament.[30]

Five years were to elapse before railway promoters were again to look towards a direct railway from Newport to Ryde. Both towns were already served by rail; Ryde was at the northern end of the Isle of Wight Railway whilst Newport was the southern terminus of the Cowes and Newport Railway. It seemed therefore a logical process to join the two together. The chairman of the Ryde and Newport Railway was George Young who also was the proprietor of the chalk quarries at Ashey, which were to be served by the line. Directors included Henry Martin, who was on the Cowes and Newport Railway board and also contractor for working the line. An agreement with the Cowes and Newport Railway was drawn up, later to be revised in 1875 and 1877. The Bill received Royal Assent on 25 July 1872.

In the 1872 Act access to Ryde was to be via a junction at Smallbrook with the Isle of Wight Railway and then over their metals to Ryde St John's Road station. This was not a satisfactory situation. Therefore the Ryde and Newport Railway introduced a Bill in Parliament for the 1875 session.[31] The Bill proposed a new line, solely for the use of the Ryde and Newport Railway, from Smallbrook, parallel to the Isle of Wight Railway line, northwards to Ryde gasworks, making an end-on junction with the Ryde Pier tramway after passing through Ryde St John's Road station. In this way the Ryde and Newport Railway would not need to run over Isle of Wight Railway metals and would not be beholden to them. There was also a proposal to enlarge the pier facilities and to run locomotives to the Pier Head. The promoters also wanted to alter the station approach at Newport. The Bill was passed and the line finally opened for passenger traffic on Monday 20 December 1875.

Again the premise that the line was constructed for financial gain is upheld. It was the linking of the two major towns on the Island that was the main motivating force; Ryde with its passenger links to the mainland and Newport, the county town and the main commercial and administrative centre of the Island. The commercial interests of George Young, with his chalk quarries at Ashey, and Henry Martin also help to explain the promotion of this line.

The Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway.

After the opening of the Cowes and Newport Railway in 1862 there followed a rash of schemes to build lines throughout the Island, including a number of proposals to construct a direct link between Sandown and Newport. In February 1866 Richard Saunders, who had already been linked with a number of railway schemes on the Island, promoted the Isle of Wight Valley Railway in direct opposition to the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway, for a direct line from Sandown to Newport. The Lords eventually threw out this proposal.[32] In late 1867 a number of Bills were proposed for the 1868 Parliamentary session. Saunders's scheme was resubmitted under the name of the Isle of Wight and Newport Junction Railway with a line from Sandown to a permanent station on the south side of Newport, a length of just over 6½ miles. A tramway was to be built from this station across South Street, along Town Lane, across Pyle Street and along Holyrood Street to connect with the Cowes and Newport Railway. A second scheme was proposed by Stratton - the Pan Valley Railway or the Cowes, Newport and Isle of Wight Railway - for a line 6¾ miles in length with a tunnel through Arreton Down and a direct connection to the Cowes and Newport Railway. Both were rejected in Parliament in May 1868.[33] The Isle of Wight and Cowes and Newport Junction Railway also promoted a line from a triangular junction at Truckells to a triangular junction with the Cowes and Newport Railway at Dodnor. The engineer was to be Henry Martin who was also a director of the Cowes and Newport Railway.[34] The Isle of Wight Central Railway also proposed a Bill for a line from Sandown to Newport. This was in direct competition with the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway who proposed a line from Sandown to a terminus just to the north of Pan Lane, Newport, but with no connection to the Cowes and Newport Railway. The Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway formally abandoned any plans for an extension west towards Newport at this time.[35] On 31 July 1868 the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway Bill received the Royal Assent. The scheme, as described above, was modified in its passage through Parliament to include a junction with the Cowes and Newport Railway. In the revived form the railway was to be 9¼ miles long with stations at Alverstone, Newchurch, Horringford, Merstone, Blackwater and Shide. After many difficult years the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway was opened throughout its full length on 1 June 1879, some 11 years after the original Bill received Royal Assent. Whilst remaining a nominally independent concern for a number of years the line was eventually taken over and worked by the Ryde, Newport and Cowes Joint Committee.

Although this line was promoted for commercial reasons, it was never a financial success. It eventually linked the county town of Newport with the Isle of Wight Railway at Sandown, providing another, rather circuitous, link in the Island's railway network, establishing Newport as the railway hub of the Island. It ran through the most advantageous area for agriculture in the Island but the railway never really tapped into this trade. However, it did provide a more direct route between the mainland, this time Southampton and its links with the Midlands, and the south coast resorts of Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor.

A line to Bembridge.

In the East Wight an account of the promotion of a railway to Bembridge can illustrate the entrepreneurial spirit of railway building at its best. Indeed the Bembridge area was to be totally transformed by the coming of the railway. Large profits for the shareholders of the company concerned were expected. The promotion of this grandiose scheme illustrates the attitude, expectation and influence that railway speculation could have in this period.

At the end of the eighteenth century most of present day Bembridge was farmland. A few cottages existed in the High Street along with some fishermen's cottages at the edge of the harbour. Another pocket of habitation was centred on Peacock Hill at Whitecliff Bay, where Bembridge Farm and Stanwell Farm had the most substantial houses. Bembridge was a small village, dependent on agriculture, fishing, smuggling and on victualling the fleet, as the anchorage off St Helens was more sheltered than the traditional anchorage at Spithead. It was a short row to Bembridge to buy meat from the village farms, beer from the village brewery and flour milled at the windmill and the tidal mill at St Helens.

Soon after 1800 Bembridge began to grow. The Morton family was partly responsible for the transformation as in 1810 Col. the Hon. F. A. Reynolds Morton moved into Eastcliff and his nephew, the Hon. Augustus Morton M. P. (Gloucester), son of Lord Ducie, bought Hill Grove and several of his friends also settled in Bembridge. A local guidebook of 1848 said of the village '....several pleasant villas and lodging houses have recently been erected.' In 1858 the Morton family felt '....the charm and seclusion of Bembridge should be brought within reach of Ryde and Portsmouth otherwise...its inhabitants would soon get left in the lurch by other rival places on the Island.' They endeavoured to raise the necessary funds for a railway from Brading to Bembridge, identical in route to the one that

was later built, except that after leaving St Helens the line was to be carried on timber piles with a swing bridge over the main River Eastern Yar channel. They concluded that in this way there would be no interference with the tide or the passage of boats up to Brading Quay. One peculiarity was that it would have been built with a continuous slope from St Helens to Bembridge so that the carriages would run to Bembridge by gravity alone. Presumably this was due to the fact that the bridge and wooden piles would not be strong enough to support the weight of a steam engine. A stationary steam-winding engine would have been needed to haul the carriages back up the slope unless they planned to use horses.[36] This method had been in regular use in the north of the country on colliery lines. Needless to say, this scheme did not come to fruition.

The Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway constructed a spur or siding to Brading Quay, that was to become the forerunner of the Bembridge branch. Even though the quay at Brading was successful, the directors of the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway could also see the potential for a larger port at the mouth of the River Eastern Yar at St Helens.

In December 1863 it was reported to the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway board that the Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Company was proposing to introduce a Parliamentary Bill to allow them to extend from the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway's line at Yarbridge to Bembridge. The Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway was not in favour of this extension.[37] Land to the south of the harbour was under the ownership of Sir Andrew Snape Hammond, Baronet, of Norton, near Freshwater and the proposed Bill caused him some minor problems. He wrote to Messrs. Druce and Company, London solicitors for the railway company, via his solicitor in Newport, Mr Charles Wyatt Estcourt, on 16 January 1864, pointing out that the powers contained in the Harbour, Docks and Pier Clauses Act 1847 regarding the building of warehouses at Bembridge should only apply to the pier and not to the whole scheme and that the limit of power of the harbour master, set at 1,000 yards, was far too great and should be reduced.[38] Druce wrote back on 9 February 1864 stating that the company did not want to extend the Harbour, Docks and Pier Clauses Act 1847 to anything beyond the pier and did not think the proposed Bill had that effect.[39] Also 1,000 yards was a common limit for the jurisdiction of a harbour master as it allowed him to keep the fairway clear of yachts and other small craft which were apt to anchor. With respect to the warehouses the company were inclined to think that these would improve Hammond's property, as they were an essential part of the whole scheme if trade was to develop. Hammond's support for the

scheme was essential if it was to proceed. His basic objections were satisfied in a letter from Christian N. Nixon, managing director and secretary of the Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Company, on 13 February 1864, in which he stated that clauses would be inserted into the Bill restricting the building of warehouses, or any other 'objectionable buildings', between Yarbridge and the land belonging to Captain Coillandt-Macgregor Harrier at Bembridge Lodge.[40] This presumably ensured that the view from his residence at Yaverland Manor would not be spoilt. Also the jurisdiction of the harbour master was to be reduced to 100 yards north and south of the pier inside of low water mark. In the final Act this was in fact increased to 600 yards. In the light of these concessions Hammond promised to sign the petition in favour of the Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Company and to give it his general support. The *Isle of Wight Observer* announced on 27 February 1864 that the Bill had passed Standing Orders in Parliament.

The Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Act 1864 received Royal Assent on 29 July 1864 and empowered the company to build a railway from a junction with the Isle of Wight Railway at Yarbridge, over the bed of Brading Haven, to a terminal at the eastern end of Ducie Walk near Bembridge Point. In addition, a tramway was to be built starting at a point on Bembridge Down, centred on the base of the spoil bank on the Brading to Bembridge road, down to the branch joining it about half way between Brading and Bembridge. At the terminal at the eastern end of Ducie Walk a pier was to be built into the sea in a north easterly direction. It was intended to reclaim, infill and improve for agriculture some of the salt marsh of Brading Harbour.

The first directors of the company were Col. Arthur Lowry Cole C. B., James Gordon Nixon, John Head, Milton Druce, Edward Rainsford and James Legg. Little is known of these directors. It was stipulated that the first ordinary meeting of the company should be held within nine months of the passing of the Act and that an extraordinary meeting of the company could be called by a minimum of ten shareholders who collectively held one fortieth of the capital of the company.

The Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway had already built a short branch from their main line at Brading station to serve Brading Quay and it was proposed that it would be more convenient for the Bembridge Railway to join the branch direct instead of by a more formal junction south of the station. However, provision was made in the Act to protect the rights of the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway and stated that all the necessary

works would be paid for and maintained by the Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Company. The Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Company were given two years from the passing of the Act for acquiring land by compulsory purchase, and it was further stated that all the works should be completed within four years, after which time the powers granted by the Act would cease to exist except for the parts that had been completed.

On Wednesday 6 July 1864 a draft proposal for working arrangements with the Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Company was brought before the board of the Isle of Wight Railway. The directors of the Isle of Wight Railway did not approve the proposals but would review their position if '...a committee in the House of Commons should think it proper so to do that Clauses 46 and 47 of the Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Act 1864 be struck out.'

Progress of the Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Company is difficult to find. The company gave official notice of two amendments to the Bill.[41] The first was for a branch railway from the authorised Bembridge Railway at Knowles Copse to Whitecliff Bay and the second was for a wharf and pier near to Bembridge Point. The final proposal was therefore to build a railway from Yarbridge to Bembridge with a branch to Whitecliff Bay. A wall was to be built from Bembridge to St Helens Mill and the harbour was to be reclaimed. Wharves were to be built between Bembridge and St Helens. The Amendment Bill was withdrawn in March 1865 and little more was heard of the Bembridge Railway.[42]

The Oglander archives are a mine of information regarding the attitudes of local landowners towards the building of the railways of the Eastern Wight and the reclamation of Brading Haven. Sir William Oglander purchased Brading Haven from the Earl of Yarborough solely for the purpose of preventing it being enclosed and spoiling the view from his house at Nunwell. At various times speculators wished to enclose the harbour believing that about 800 acres would become available for agricultural purposes. Sir William and later Sir Henry Oglander always opposed the schemes. During the lifetime of Sir Henry Oglander leases were granted for various rights in the harbour, for example, a small piece was added to the millpond at St Helens and land and rights of fishery were granted to the Fishery Company. The quay at Brading produced a small rental and the Isle of Wight Railway paid a small sum for the use of the dock formed by the sea wall. Charges were also made for taking sand from the harbour for ballast. The total revenue

was not large and was insufficient to meet the large annual outlay, which was necessary to keep the sea defences in a fair state of repair. The expenditure was between £200 and £300 per annum. It is therefore evident that the 800 acres of salt marsh was important locally but not in terms of the whole Island. The local landowners were concerned with agriculture and a small amount of trade. None had the vision or the inclination to develop the area.

It was left to the London-based Liberator Building Society, under the chairmanship of Jabez Balfour, to have the vision of developing Brading Haven. The scheme was to totally transform the area by building an embankment from St Helens to Bembridge, thereby closing off from the sea the majority of Brading Haven. The River Eastern Yar was to be straightened and the 800 acres of land drained for agriculture. On the seaward side of the embankment a new harbour would be formed, named Bembridge Harbour, with a port development at St Helens which would be rail-connected to a branch line running from the Isle of Wight Railway at Brading, across the marshes to St Helens and then on to a terminus station at Bembridge, crossing the River Eastern Yar on a trestle bridge. Stations were to be built at St Helens and Bembridge and a large hotel built on the Point outside the terminus at Bembridge. The company also planned to run a steamer service to the mainland from the pier at Bembridge.

The aim of the scheme was purely commercial; to make money for the investors of the Liberator Building Society. It was a grandiose scheme typical of the time when railway companies were spreading throughout the country and investors, often falsely, had the impression that fortunes were to be made from such schemes. This, in short, was a speculative development. Jabez Balfour set up the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company to undertake it and seek the necessary powers by an Act of Parliament.

Sir Henry Oglander's Parliamentary agent, Frederick Gale, informed him that an application had been made to Parliament for the Brading Harbour Improvement, Railway and Works Bill.[43] Sir Henry was at that stage in poor health and instructed John Wilson Fardell, of Ryde, his solicitor not to oppose the Bill and to enter into negotiation with respect to it. Sir Henry died in 1874 and until the time of his death no negotiations had been started, as it was doubted whether the Bill would be allowed to proceed, as it did not comply with Standing Orders. John Fardell writing to John Glynn, cousin of Sir Henry and heir to the Nunwell estate, informed him on 21 May 1874 that the Bill had been introduced and had been read for a first and second time in the Lords and was, in late May,

before Lord Redesdale as an unopposed Bill, awaiting his approval of the clauses, especially those added by the Commissioners of Sewers.[44] John Fardell further informed Glynn that the whole of the harbour was included within the 'limits of deviation' and that all the Bill provided was the power to make an embankment from St Helens to Bembridge and a railway from Brading Quay to Bembridge. He emphasised that there was nothing in the Bill about the enclosure of the land between the embankment and the quay and the embankment and the railway. The Brading Harbour Improvement, Railway and Works Bill was unopposed and became an Act in 1874.[45]

According to the Act of Incorporation the first directors were William H. Saunders, a solicitor with connections with the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway and William A. Mansell. The link with the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway was reinforced by the employment of Richard Saunders as engineer to the company. Mr David Pryke, of Brading, was the clerk-in-charge of the company's activities and Captain Seymour was the first manager.[46]

Construction of the railway and works was not without problems and is described in a subsequent chapter. Near St Helens the railway was to run beside the breeding pans of the Bembridge Harbour Oyster Fishery Company. This company was successful in taking legal action against the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company in March 1877 for loss of property, compensation being £8,000.[47] The *Isle of Wight Advertiser* stated '...the arduous work of reclaiming Brading Harbour (sic), which has been carried out with unremitting diligence during the past two or three years, has now terminated successfully.' It suggested that this area, although picturesque, was very isolated, remaining unknown, not only to the world, but also to the population of the Isle of Wight '...of whom not a tenth part have visited it.'[48]

Although the line was not complete to Bembridge, the first passenger train ran in June 1881. It was a 'special' to take Sunday school children from St Helens to Partlands, Ryde, to celebrate the centenary of the Robert Raikes Sunday School movement. Mr H. G. Occomore, who, 87 years later, was to ride on the last train, was ten years old at the time and recalled that the platform at St Helens station had not been completed and scaffolding was used to build a temporary structure so that the Methodist children could board the train. Each child was given a mug to mark the occasion.[49]

In 1881 the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company felt the need for an extension of its powers and introduced a Bill into Parliament - the Brading Harbour Improvement, Railway and Works (Additional Powers) Bill. Its basic aim was to revive the powers of the 1874 Act that had expired and in particular to allow completion of the railway between St Helens and Bembridge. The company saw Bembridge as the major destination for passenger traffic and so it was essential to complete the line. They wanted to develop Bembridge as a tourist resort, mainly for the wealthy, bringing people from London to stay in the *Spithead Hotel* to enjoy golf and sailing. The line would also provide an onward method of transport for passengers using the steamboat service from Portsmouth. The Bill also gave the company the power to levy tolls, duties and rates for the use of the railway, harbour and other works, to alter existing tolls and to grant exemption. The company could also raise additional capital. The Bill authorised the company to build roads, grant leases and to sell land that it did not require. The Bill further allowed the company to provide vessels for carrying goods and passengers between Bembridge Harbour, Hayling Island, Portsmouth and Southampton. The company sought powers to enter into agreement with the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway, the London and South Western Railway and the Isle of Wight Railway. This was necessary as the Isle of Wight Railway was to operate the line and in 1884 the company would enter into an agreement with the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway to operate a train ferry between St Helens and Hayling Island. By this time the two mainland companies had built Ryde Pier and the line from Ryde Pier Head to Ryde St John's Road station, which was worked by the Isle of Wight Railway.

The Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company had to seek permission from the Board of Trade before the railway could be opened for passenger traffic. On 15 April 1882 the resident engineer, J. Walker, sent a letter to the Board of Trade asking if a form was needed to notify them of the intention to open a railway. The notepaper was headed 'H. S. Freeman. Receiver, Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company', so even at this time the company was in financial difficulties.[50] The Board of Trade replied on 19 April 1882 stating that no form was necessary and a letter would suffice.[51]

On 24 April H. S. Freeman wrote to the Board of Trade:

> On behalf of my company, as above, I hereby give notice that it is expected that our railway, which commences at the branch line of the Isle of Wight Railway at Brading Quay and terminates at Bembridge and which is now in use for goods traffic only, will be ready for inspection in about three to four weeks time.[52]

Until authorised as safe by the Board of Trade the line could only carry goods traffic. St Helens was effectively the only rail-connected port on the Island and would have dealt with all manner of general cargo including coal. On the same date Mr Hinks, secretary to the Isle of Wight Railway, sent a letter to the Board of Trade stating that the alterations at Brading in connection with the 'Brading Quay line' would also be ready for inspection in three to four weeks time.[53]

The Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company sent the relevant plans of the railway to the Board of Trade on 13 May 1882. The Isle of Wight Railway was asked to provide drawings of the carriages as they were to work the line.[54] On the following day the second notice of the opening was sent stating that the railway would be ready for inspection during the next ten days. On 27 May a letter was sent from the Canon Street office of the Isle of Wight Railway to the Board of Trade requesting that the branch be opened for Whitsuntide traffic on 27 May 1882.

The opening of the line on Saturday 27 May 1882 created much interest. The Brading section of the *Isle of Wight Times* stated:

> Brading Harbour's new railway is in a fair state of completion. The line was inspected on Wednesday last by Col. Yolland R. E., Her Majesty's Inspector, for passing the line for passenger traffic. At Brading a suitable station has been erected, platform widened, a new siding constructed and a handsome signal station (sic) adorns the eastern embankment. Arrangements have been made for working the new line of railway, which will be under the management of Mr J. Bourne.[55]

The occasion was marked with due celebration. On reclaimed land, half way along the embankment and between the road and railway line, a grandstand was erected, from which Balfour, shareholders and officials of the Liberator Group watched the proceedings. For the employees engaged by the company in reclaiming the land there was a cricket match - St Helens versus Bembridge. Refreshments were provided for all. Huge cheers went up when the first train steamed by with the engine *Bembridge* fully decorated. 'The engine which drew the opening train was decorated with flowers ...and about 300 of the villagers of St Helens and Bembridge were brought into Ryde for nothing.'[56]

This speculative railway scheme dramatically altered the geography of the Eastern Wight in a manner that no other railway company achieved. Unfortunately, the huge profits that were expected were not forthcoming and from its earliest days the railway company was in

receivership. Later the Liberator Building Society collapsed with large debts with its chairman, Balfour, ending up in prison for embezzlement. However, it did eventually provide the Isle of Wight Railway with a rail-connected port at St Helen's Quay and was financially important in moving goods, of all kind, onto the Island.

Lines to the West Wight.

In the period between 1864 and 1882 railway construction on the Island was very much focused on the Eastern Wight, linking up the major settlements of Newport, Cowes, Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor. With the opening of the Bembridge branch in 1882 the network in the east was complete. Attention then switched to the more rural West Wight and a second, more circuitous, line to Ventnor. The West Wight was, and still is, predominantly rural, consisting of sparsely populated farmlands and larger estates extending from Newport to the small towns of Yarmouth and Freshwater. It seems surprising that this small area should have supported a number of railway schemes, but indeed it did, due primarily, not to its hinterland, but to its mainland connection from Yarmouth to Lymington.[57] While a detailed discussion of the schemes in the West Wight, with the exception of the second route to Ventnor, is beyond the remit of this thesis, it is clear that the motive for building the lines was financial as trade and communications would be improved.

A second line to Ventnor.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close there was throughout Britain a fresh initiative for railway construction, many lines being built to compete with established lines where the increasing volume of traffic suggested a second route by a rival concern could be of overall advantage to the communities served. These were not always successful, as will be shown. In many cases old and established railway companies had built their lines by better routes and were therefore well placed to meet any challenges from rivals. [58]

To understand why the second line to Ventnor was built it is necessary to look at three, seemingly unrelated, factors. Of these, the first was a proposal in 1882 by the Swindon, Marlborough and Andover Railway to build a line from the London and South Western Railway's main line at Totton, over which it would have running powers, to Stone Point opposite Cowes, from where, it claimed, '...steamers would ply to Cowes ...in about ten minutes.' Secondly, the people in Ventnor were, sometimes unjustly, critical of the Isle of

Wight Railway with regard to the rates it charged and consequently the high prices of most commodities in the area. Thirdly, a line entitled the Shanklin and Chale Railway was authorised in 1886. It was against this background, and in an age of ambitious private enterprise and plentiful capital that the last line to serve the Isle of Wight was built.

In 1884 a discussion took place between interested parties and the Isle of Wight Railway regarding a railway to serve the south west area of the Island for both agricultural and passenger traffic. The Isle of Wight Railway had no wish to become involved with this but had no objection to an independent line being built. Hence, the Shanklin and Chale Railway Bill was proposed giving details for the construction of a railway from Shanklin to Chale via Godshill Park, Upper Appleford and Chale Green with a terminus near Chale Abbey Farm. At this time it was thought that the line would be extended to Freshwater via the Military Road.[59] To protect its interests the Isle of Wight Railway initially gave permission for running powers into Shanklin station from an intended junction at Winstone between Shanklin and Wroxall.

By 1885 the directors of the Shanklin and Chale Railway, Henry Francis Giles, Curzon Thompson and Philip Powter realised that there was no way that they could ever operate independently of the Isle of Wight Railway. In the passage of the Bill the Isle of Wight Railway refused running powers into Shanklin station, in the hope of forcing the Shanklin and Chale Railway to extend to Freshwater, a destination in which they were very much interested. The Bill received Royal Assent on 14 August 1885.[60] The company was given three years to purchase the land and five years to build. However, resources were exhausted and no shares were issued. Nevertheless, the directors then promoted a further Bill, the Shanklin and Chale (Freshwater Extension) Bill for a line to Freshwater. The route was to be via Grange and Brook and was to have a length of over 10½ miles.[61] It was at this stage that William Bohm took an active interest. He persuaded his friend, Harry Magnus of Ingatestone, Essex, to finance the new Bill in exchange for shares and a position on the board. The Freshwater, Yarmouth and Newport Railway's objections to the Bill were rejected by a Select Committee of the House of Lords on 12 March 1886 but the Bill itself foundered on its third reading. Mr Chamberlain M. P. stated:

> ...the railway was not required ... because it would involve an unnecessary and wanton destruction of some of the natural beauty of the Isle of Wight, and, in particular, would destroy some Downs, over which the public had from time immemorial enjoyed the right of wandering. The line would be inconvenient and

> dangerous in its plan and construction, and was promoted in the interests of one or two land speculators. Last year Parliament sanctioned the construction of a new line from Shanklin to Chale, which had not been laid down, and now it was sought to extend it to Freshwater. There were already five railways in the Island, only one of which, the Isle of Wight Railway, paid a dividend. The proposed railway would run by the seaboard over some of the most beautiful chines in the Island and irretrievably ruin the scenery.[62]

The Shanklin and Chale Railway was therefore left with a six mile line from Winstone to Chale. The Isle of Wight Railway wished to operate this line but the promoters did not accept this and looked towards an outlet via the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway towards Cowes and all points north. The Shanklin and Chale Railway was short of finance for their extension Bill for the 1887 Parliamentary session until Bohm provided the monetary assistance. Robert Elliott Cooper, a civil engineer, provided the plans, which were objected to by both the Isle of Wight Railway and the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway. The Bill passed through the House of Lords but an enquiry under the chairmanship of Lord Belper was required in the later stages. In this enquiry many arguments for and against the Bill were put forward. It was stated that the only means of getting goods in and out of this remote area of the Island was by cart, over small and winding minor roads. Indeed, the recovery of cotton by cart from the wreck of the S. S. *Cormorant*, on the south west coast, took over one month and cost in excess of £1,000. It was also said that the route to Ventnor, from Cowes, via the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway and Isle of Wight Railway was both circuitous and expensive and that the connection with the Isle of Wight Railway at Sandown was not always a good one. The route via Southampton and Cowes for London traffic could never compete with the Isle of Wight Railway's more direct route via Portsmouth. However, they could expect more traffic to Ventnor from the Midlands and South West England. Opponents pointed out that the through route via Cowes had a sea passage of eleven miles followed by a 150 yard walk up a steep hill to the station at Cowes. The Isle of Wight Railway strongly objected to giving the Shanklin and Chale Railway running powers from Shanklin to Ventnor as there was insufficient line capacity, no facilities for terminating trains at Shanklin and no room to expand at Ventnor. Bolton, chairman of the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway was also not supportive and stated that there had been no increase in traffic in the last few years between Cowes and Ventnor and he saw little prospect of Midland traffic. Lord Belper's judgement was that the Bill should be passed subject to striking out the running powers of the Shanklin and Chale Railway over the Isle

of Wight Railway from Shanklin to Ventnor.[63] This was a disaster for the Shanklin and Chale Railway as the Isle of Wight Railway had succeeded in stopping this competitor from taking traffic from their Ryde to Ventnor line.

The Shanklin and Chale Railway plans stagnated. However, hope was given to the venture as the Cowes and Newport Railway, Ryde and Newport Railway and Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway became formally joined to become the Isle of Wight Central Railway. Officers of the Isle of Wight Central Railway and the Shanklin and Chale Railway had informal talks over the winter of 1887 and the following spring with thoughts of resurrecting the scheme. It was realised that the Isle of Wight Railway would never agree to running powers over their line and that Chale was a poor terminus. Eyes were turned towards Ventnor. It was agreed that Merstone would become the junction with the Isle of Wight Central Railway and that a new route would be surveyed to Ventnor via Godshill, Whitwell and through a tunnel to St Lawrence. The Isle of Wight Central Railway would operate the line and would thus secure a route in opposition to the Isle of Wight Railway for Ventnor freight and traffic. The new railway was renamed the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway. The share issues authorised in the earlier Acts were retained to form the new basis of capital. The Isle of Wight Railway offered no opposition to the plan.[64]

The Bill authorising the abandonment of the Shanklin and Chale Railway went before the House of Lords Select Committee as an unopposed Bill on 27 June 1889. William Bell, appearing for the promoters, deemed it expedient to abandon the railways authorised in 1885 and 1887 and to substitute a railway 5 miles 5 furlongs and 6 chains in length starting in the parish of Arreton and terminating on the east side of St Lawrence Shute. The Bill passed the committee stage and was ordered to be put before the House. The Bill received Royal Assent on 12 August 1889.[65] The Act allowed two years for the compulsory purchase of the land and five years for the completion of the works. The chairman of the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway was W. Bohm: Captain H. Mainwaring Dunstan, Henry Martin, T. Dolling Bolton, H. Magnus and Percy Overton supported him as directors. Martin, Bolton and Mortimer were also directors of the Isle of Wight Central Railway.

It was always the intention of the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway and the Isle of Wight Central Railway to continue the line towards Ventnor and a Bill was prepared for

the 1892 Parliamentary session. Its passage was far from smooth, objections were made by the Isle of Wight Railway, Henry Sewell - the owner of Steephill Castle on the edge of Ventnor - and the Royal National Hospital for Consumption and Diseases of the Chest. This Bill came before a Select Committee of the House of Lords, under the chairmanship of the Earl of Lauderdale, on 28 March 1892 and was allowed to proceed. On 14 and 15 June 1892 the Bill came before a Select Committee of the House of Commons under the chairmanship of Mr R. Chamberlain M. P.. Two petitions were made against the Bill; the first from the Hon. Evelyn Pelham and Henry Sewell, both local landowners, who were represented by Mr Pope Q. C. and Mr J. D. Fitzgerald, the second was from the Isle of Wight Railway who were represented by Mr Balfour Brown Q. C. and Mr Bolton. Mr Pember Q. C. and Mr Hans Hamilton appeared for the promoters. Pember made the point that the line was just a terminal extension of a line, which Parliament had already sanctioned. The line was important as it afforded '...direct communication between Cowes and Ventnor.' Elliott Cooper, engineer of the line, gave evidence on the feasibility of building the line between St Lawrence and Ventnor and stated that any extension from the Isle of Wight Railway terminus was practically impossible, and that it was difficult to get to, being built between steep cliffs in a quarry and approached by '...one of the steepest roads in the kingdom which has seriously affected the distribution of goods and heavy traffic.' He also made the points that the railway would come no nearer than 200 yards to the National Consumption Hospital, would be completely out of sight and that it was absurd to suggest that the hospital would be injured by any vibration caused by the railway. He also suggested that the railway would enhance the value of adjoining land, including that of Pelham, and that there would be no danger of causing landslips as the 'blue slipper' was at least 100 feet below the surface and they would not be cutting into it. He thought the line would enhance the amenity and beauty of the area by running along the face of the cliff where it would not be visible. The Mayor of Southampton supported the line because it would greatly facilitate the flow of traffic from the South and West of England to Ventnor. Albert Bull, a supporter of the Isle of Wight Central Railway and a member of the local town Board, suggested the line '... would be of enormous benefit to Ventnor,' as it would provide a more direct and cheaper way of getting from Ventnor to Newport or Cowes. As it was, the fare from Ventnor, via Sandown, where there was a fifteen-minute wait, was so expensive that it was almost as cheap to hire a carriage than go by train. He said that the value of property in Ventnor was depreciating by virtue of the poor services offered by the Isle of Wight Railway. Nearly all the traders in the town had signed a

petition in favour of the new railway. Mr T. Saunders said that the Isle of Wight Railway had orchestrated all the opposition to the new line.

Thomas Dolling Bolton, chairman of the Isle of Wight Central Railway, explained that his company had entered into an agreement with the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway to work the line, stating that there would be an advantage in having freight delivered at a lower level in Ventnor than the Isle of Wight Railway was able to deliver. He said that the line would do no harm to the Isle of Wight Railway and he hoped it would get considerable pleasure traffic from Bournemouth and other places in the South of England via Yarmouth. Herbert Simmons, manager of the Isle of Wight Central Railway, said that, in his experience, the new route would be much more convenient for all purposes and that delays at Sandown were frequent and this effectively barred passenger traffic between Newport and Ventnor. Witnesses also explained how the proposed route would reduce the cost of the carriage of coal and other goods.

For the opposition Henry Sewell said that he had purchased Steephill Castle and about fifty acres in 1887 for its quietness and repose. Major Hanborough, his predecessor, had purchased a field that the promoters wanted in order to protect Steephill. Sewell said a railway station would lower the value of Steephill and cause him annoyance. Because of this he was anxious to sell the estate. Mr F. S. Judd, representing Pelham, said, 'The railway would have a most injurious effect in passing through his land, laid out as it was for residential purposes.'[66]

The Bill became an Act on 28 June 1892 authorising the company to extend to Ventnor in two sections.[67] Because of the objections from Pelham the railway was not permitted to provide a goods station or convey coal, minerals or heavy goods into the terminus. In effect it limited the line to passengers only. Three years were allowed for the purchase of the land and five years for the completion of works. Very little work was carried out on the railway until 1893 when the first sod was ceremoniously cut at Merstone on 18 April by Miss Beatrice Martin, a niece of Henry Martin who was a director and had done so much to further the cause of railways in the Island. The *Isle of Wight County Press* opened its report on the proceedings with the following '...Merstone kept high holiday on Tuesday for on that day the task was taken of elevating that pleasant hamlet to the position of "junction,"' and went on to describe the eulogising speeches customary at such events. Great enthusiasm was expressed at having a station at town level in Ventnor as great feats

of mountaineering were required to catch an Isle of Wight Railway train. While Southampton had expanded rapidly, Ventnor had been on the wane for about twenty years. Many people believed this was on account of the poor access to the town. Batton, a director of the Isle of Wight Central Railway stated that fares would decrease with new weekly ticket arrangements making it possible to travel on the Isle of Wight Central Railway system for 500 miles at a cost of 7s. 6d. saying that '...in no other part of the country could so much travelling be done for so little money. Who, after this, could talk of high fares in the Isle of Wight?' Elliott Cooper said '... the Isle of Wight Railway had the largest passenger traffic and largest earnings of any single line and it was at present the only route serving Ventnor.' With their own line serving Ventnor at town level he was sure the new undertakings would be a success. It was not the lack of traffic but the large amount of interest payable on borrowed capital which had prevented the Island's railways from becoming prosperous concerns and that it was important that such centres as Ventnor, Newport, Ryde, Cowes and Freshwater should be connected by one system, the Isle of Wight Central Railway. Henry Martin said that an objection could be lodged that the railway would pass through a sparsely populated district, but that it was well known that wherever a railway was constructed the population was sure to follow. He made the point that when the Cowes and Newport Railway opened it was believed the line would close in winter because the projected receipts would not meet the working expenses, but that this was far from being the case as the traffic on the line in winter was almost equal to that in summer and the line was one of the most useful in the Island. He therefore believed the new line would be an ultimate success and financially beneficial to those who had invested their money in it.[68]

It was at this stage that the *Isle of Wight County Press* published an official notice for the Ashey and Horringford Junction Railway. This was to start from the Isle of Wight Central Railway line 125 yards east of Ashey station and terminate at a point 61 yards north of Horringford station. The aim of this railway was to connect Ryde with Ventnor via Merstone in a direct line in competition with the Isle of Wight Railway. Both the Isle of Wight Central Railway and the Isle of Wight Railway were empowered to hold shares. Copies of the plans and reference book and map were lodged with the Clerks of the Peace at Newport and Winchester. The Bill was deposited at the Private Bill Office at the House of Commons for the 1895 Parliamentary session. The Bill was not opposed by the Isle of Wight Central Railway but objections were lodged that third class passengers were not conveyed on all trains and that the protection at level crossings was insuffiecient.[69] The

Bill did not pass the scrutiny of Parliament and little more was heard, it being formally abandoned in 1898.

The Board of Trade inspected the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway's line on 17 July 1897, and passed it subject to some remedial work. On the same day the press was also invited to inspect the line; most were impressed by the scenery. The *Standard* commented '...an interesting ceremony was yesterday performed in connection with the inauguration of a railway opening up a district in the Isle of Wight which has hitherto been practically inaccessible to visitors....' The *Isle of Wight Herald* stated '...that arrangements have been made for a bus to meet all trains so that passengers can be conveyed to Ventnor for 6d. by Mr F. Baker of Pier Street, Ventnor...the population affected by the new line numbers 40,000 people.' At the opening ceremony on 19 July 1897 Mortimer introduced the toast of 'the contractor'. Responding, Westwood said he was convinced in his own mind that the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway would ultimately prove the highest paying line in the Isle of Wight.[70] On the first day of operation, Tuesday 20 July, 24 people availed themselves of the connecting road service.[71] At the half yearly meeting of the Isle of Wight Railway, two weeks after the opening of the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway, the Chairman, Horace F. Tahourdin, stated that he considered the Isle of Wight was already endowed with enough railways and that it was true the new line passed through some very pretty scenery, but it served few people, and he thought the shareholders would have to wait a very long time before they received any return on their investment.[72]

The criticism that the Isle of Wight Railway terminus at Ventnor was inaccessible was to some degree true. The *Isle of Wight County Press* carried an Official Notice for the Ventnor Inclined Light Railway, a funicular railway in three sections. The first section was from opposite the pier to Marlborough Road or Church Road and the second from St Catherine's Church to the railway station. The third section was from the station to the top of St Boniface Down.[73] The promoter was Ernest Wetherick who was widely supported in the town and proposed to use the Light Railways Act for the project. The Isle of Wight Railway would be empowered to subscribe and they would have a booking office at the inclined railway's Church Street Station. The cost was estimated to be in the order of £13,000, a very modest sum. An Act was obtained in 1899 but nothing further came of this scheme.[74] Isle of Wight Railway passengers still had to climb up to their station, 294ft. above sea level.

By this time, the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway had opened to St Lawrence, somewhat short of Ventnor. Despite a trip over the line in the first week of operation by Princess Beatrice, who was opening a new wing at Ventnor Hospital, traffic remained light. The directors were confident that business would pick up once the extension to Ventnor was completed. The railway in the meantime made arrangements for road conveyances to meet all trains at Whitwell for Niton and Blackgang and at St Lawrence for Ventnor. Potential new users of the line must have been discouraged by the fare structure; charges to St Lawrence were the same as those over the much-maligned Isle of Wight Railway to Ventnor, which did not have the inconvenience or the charge of an extra 6d. to reach the centre of the town.[75]

The line bisected the Steephill Estate that earlier had been the cause of much wrangling. Eventually, after a High Court hearing the property was sold to Charles Mortimer, brother of the Godshill Company chairman who in turn sold the railway the land. The directors, ever optimistic, wished to further extend the line beyond Steephill to a central terminus near the *Royal Hotel* but no Parliamentary proceedings were instituted. It was on 18 April 1900 that the first train reached Ventnor from St Lawrence. This was a private visit of the chief officials of the London and South Western Railway who were interested in developing the Southampton and Cowes steamer route. Included in the party were Sam Fay, Superintendent of the London and South Western Railway, J. J. Burnette of the Isle of Wight Steam Packet Company and Charles L. Conacher, general manager of the Isle of Wight Central Railway. During the journey it was optimistically announced that the new route to Ventnor would become the main line with the Merstone to Sandown section relegated to the status of a branch. Conacher also took the opportunity to unveil the new train brought especially to the Island for the Cowes to Ventnor service consisting of five uniform carriages hauled by 'Terrier' tank engine No. 10.[76]

On 21 May 1900, Colonel Von Donop carried out the Board of Trade inspection, which, subject to minor remedial work, proved satisfactory. The extension was opened on Friday 1 June 1900, a day of constant rain. The directors realised there was little hope of tapping the lucrative Ryde to Ventnor traffic, despite jibes in the Ventnor newspaper about '...the other monopolist railway halfway up the Downs.' Therefore the publicity was geared to approaching the Island via Cowes. To some extent the Midland and South Western Joint Railway fulfilled its ambition of 1882 of a through route to the Island although the steamer

service was provided by the Southampton and Isle of Wight Steam Packet Company. The Royal Pier at Southampton was rail-connected and so the Cowes route to the Island was convenient for through passengers.[77]

On 1 August 1900, at the meeting of the directors of the Isle of Wight Railway, chairman Tahourdin said:

> ...there has been another railway opened to Ventnor which is perhaps a little shorter from Cowes than our line, but the communications and connections that the new railway has with the mainland companies are such that I do not think it is likely to do the Isle of Wight Railway much harm. Still, there it is, and we may lose a little of the traffic into Ventnor. Still, I feel the gradual growth of things in the Island will soon compensate for that....[78]

However, there was increased competition for the London traffic with a down train leaving Waterloo at 11.40am for the Royal Pier, Southampton, the ferry arriving at Cowes at 3.10pm and the train leaving for Ventnor at 3.30pm. The arrival at Ventnor at 4.10pm gave a total passage time of 4½ hours. The corresponding up train left Ventnor at 12.32pm with passengers arriving at Waterloo at 4.47pm. There was no increase in fare for this service and it did provide a better service for people living at Niton, Chale and Blackgang but it was still quicker, for those living in Ventnor, to use the more direct Isle of Wight Railway and Portsmouth service to Waterloo.[79]

The second route to Ventnor was never going to rival the direct route to the mainland from Ventnor to Ryde. It was true that the line was very picturesque and did hope to tap the agricultural traffic of the area. This was an attempt by the Isle of Wight Central Railway to expand its network and to try and compete with the Isle of Wight Railway. Although the Isle of Wight Railway was initially supportive of the proposed Shanklin and Chale Railway, with the possibility of further expansion west towards Freshwater, it opposed the later line into Ventnor. The envisaged through traffic to London and the Midlands never materialised.[80]

Conclusion.

Between 1845 and 1882 at least 22 major railway schemes were proposed on the Island, as detailed in Table 2.1, and there may well have been more. In the earliest days the opposition to the building of railways on the Island was great, well organised, well funded and led by such landowners as Lord Yarborough. Between 1845 and 1858 there were at least eight proposals, none being taken to Parliament for authorisation and some, such as

the schemes of Fulton, and Livesay and Saunders, being extremely vague. The first period of railway building in the Island began in 1859 when the Cowes and Newport Railway gained an Act of Parliament to build a line. Even after this success, their Extension Bill, submitted later in 1859, was rejected in Parliament. From 1859 onwards the Parliamentary success of schemes was greater. The Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway gained Royal Assent for their Bill in March 1860. However, between 1860 and 1868 another six schemes were proposed none of which came before Parliament. The period between 1868 and 1874 was more fruitful with three companies gaining Royal Assent for their lines - the Ryde and Newport Railway in 1872, the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway in 1868 and the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company in 1874.

Promotion of the Island railways came from many sources although it is true to say that a company would need to have both local and national interests if it were to succeed. Local interests would ensure that 'difficulties on the ground' could be overcome and national or mainland interests would raise capital and provide the legal and business knowledge for first promoting a Bill and then building a railway. The directors of the Cowes and Newport Railway were local businessmen whereas the promoters of the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway were mostly from the mainland. It is evident that a number of Island residents, such as Richard Saunders and Henry Martin, crop up time and time again in the promotion of new schemes, so supporting the view that the initial enthusiasm for a line was indeed local. The Island was always a holiday and retirement location and here the distinction between local and mainland interests becomes blurred. Capt. Mark Huish, for example, was a major figure in mainland railways but once retired to the Island became involved in promoting the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway. Most railway schemes on the Island had a proportion of both local and mainland interests.

During the period between 1858 and 1901 there were at least 17 separate schemes promoted for lines to the West Wight and Ventnor of which only two were built. The Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway was a 'second line' scheme and tapped the perceived lucrative market of Ventnor. First proposed as the Shanklin and Chale Railway in 1884, it gained Royal Assent as the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway in 1889 and finally opened to Ventnor in 1900. In the same year there was a proposal for a Solent Tunnel, linking directly into the Isle of Wight Central Railway system. If built, it would have completely changed the geography of the West Wight, encouraged development, and brought the whole of the Island within three hours of London.

Table 2.1
Railway schemes on the Isle of Wight 1845 to 1874

Year	Scheme	Notes
1845	Isle of Wight Railway.	Only a proposal.
1852	Isle of Wight Railway.	Only a proposal.
1853	Isle of Wight Railway.	Only a proposal.
1858	Cowes and Newport Railway.	Royal Assent Aug 1859. Opened June 1862.
1859	Cowes and Newport Railway Extension Bill.	Rejected by Parliament.
	Birkenshaw and Conybear's scheme (Cowes to Ventnor)	Only a proposal.
	Fulton's scheme.	Only a proposal.
	Livesay and Saunder's scheme (Ryde to Bonchurch).	Only a proposal.
1858	Isle of Wight West Coast Railway (Cowes to Yarmouth).	Only a proposal.
1859	Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway.	Royal Assent March 1860. Opened Aug 1864.
1861	Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway Extensions.	Received Royal Assent but not built.
1862	Ryde and Newport Direct Railway.	Only a proposal.
1863	Bembridge Railway.	Only a proposal.
1863	Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Company.	Royal Assent July 1864. Not built.
1872	Ryde and Newport Railway.	Royal Assent July 1872. Opened December 1875.
1866	Isle of Wight Valley Railway.	Only a proposal.
1867	Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway.	Only a proposal.
1867	Cowes, Newport and Isle of Wight Railway.	Only a proposal.
1868	Isle of Wight and Cowes and Newport Junction Railway.	Only a proposal.
1868	Isle of Wight Central Railway.	Only a proposal.
1868	Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway.	Royal assent July 1868. Opened June 1879.
1874	Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company.	Royal assent 1874. Opened 1882.

This scheme brought to a close the promotion of, and opposition to, railway building on the Isle of Wight in the Victorian period.

The main premise, that the motive of the promoters for building a railway was mainly financial, holds true, to a large degree, for all the railway schemes that were proposed and built on the Island. As has been clearly shown, the motives for promoting a railway line varied from line to line. In some, the promoters owned the land, in others they wanted to develop passenger traffic or goods traffic.

Overall, the construction of railways on the Island was often due, not so much to any real need but to the nineteenth-century ideology that dictated that railways should be built almost for the sake of building railways. The earliest railways built may have fulfilled a genuine need but as the century wore on railways were built, both on the Island and across Britain, for which the actual need, and even the perceived need, must have become increasingly slight. If an area was without a railway, it was considered to be disadvantaged in relation to other areas and hence required a line to be constructed. The reality was often that the area had been denied a railway because it had always been disadvantaged. It was unlikely that these factors would change. H. P. White notes that, '...had there been any alternative mode of transport... many of these lines would never have been built. The railway is ... particularly unfitted to be a general carrier serving a rural area offering only limited traffic potential.'[81] But such lines continued to be built and often welcomed by the local community. The Mayor of Newport held a celebratory dinner in 1875 to commemorate the opening of the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway and described the opening as '...an important local event...a most desirable project.'[82] Lines were often supported by the local landowners, sometimes out of genuine concern for the area and sometimes for their own benefit. However, even the opposition of a landowner would not necessarily prevent Parliament from authorising a line. By 1900 there were effectively two companies managing the 55½ miles of railway line on the Island. The Isle of Wight Railway, with its line from Ryde St John's to Ventnor, was a largely successful concern. The Isle of Wight Central Railway, centred on Newport, was larger but less financially sound.

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24. *Isle of Wight Observer*, report of Bills in Parliament, January 1860 et seq.
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26. *Isle of Wight Observer*, report that the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway Bill was in Parliament, 9 July 1859.
27. *Hampshire Telegraph*, report on the Ryde and Newport Direct Railway, 21 June 1862.
28. *Isle of Wight Observer*, reports on the meeting to canvas for a direct railway between Ryde and Newport at Newport, 6 October 1866.
29. *Isle of Wight Observer*, reports on the meeting to canvas for a direct railway between Ryde and Newport at Ryde, 13 October 1866.
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50. Walker, J., letter to the H.M. Inspector of Railways, Board of Trade, PRO, MT6829/5, 15 April 1882.
51. H. M. Inspector of Railways, letter to J. Walker, PRO, MT6829/5, 19 April 1882.
52. Freeman, H. S., letter to H. M. Inspector of Railways, Board of Trade, PRO, MT6829/5, 24 April 1882.
53. Hinks, letter to H. M. Inspector of Railways, Board of Trade, PRO, MT6829/5, 24 April 1882.

54. H. M. Inspector of Railways, letter to the Isle of Wight Railway regarding the working of trains on the Bembridge Branch, PRO, MT6829/5, 14 May 1882.
55. *Isle of Wight Times*, report on the Bembridge Harbour Railway, 1 June 1882.
56. *Isle of Wight Observer*, report on the opening of the Bembridge Harbour Railway, 3 June 1882.
57. The Lymington Railway Company was authorised by and Act of 1856 to construct a railway from a junction a mile west of Brockenhurst on the Southampton - Bournemouth mainline to a terminus at Lymington. Opened in July 1858. From Lymington there was a ferry service to Yarmouth.
58. As a result all the later routes were the first to be closed when motor competition and rationalisation forced changes. The Isle of Wight, as has been shown, mirrored these national trends; a second route to Ventnor was the last in the Island to open in 1900 and the first to close in 1952.
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60. *Isle of Wight County Press*, report on the Shanklin and Chale Railway Bill for the 1886 Parliamentary session.
61. *Isle of Wight County Press*, report on the House of Lords rejection of the Shanklin and Chale Bill, extension to Freshwater on its third reading, 26 June 1886.
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65. Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway Act 1889, 52 & 53 Vic Cap cli.
66. *Isle of Wight County Press*, report on the evidence given at the House of Lords Select Committee on the proposed Ventnor extension, 25 June 1892.
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68. *Isle of Wight County Press*, report on digging the first sod on the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway, 22 April 1893.

69. *Isle of Wight County Press*, report on Ashey and Horringford Railway Bill in Parliament, 24 November 1894 and 16 February 1895.
70. *The Standard*, report on the opening of the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway to St Lawrence, 20 July 1897.
71. *Isle of Wight Herald*, report on the opening of the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway to St Lawrence, 23 July 1897.
72. *Isle of Wight County Press*, report on the half yearly meeting of the Isle of Wight Railway Company, 31 July 1897.
73. *Isle of Wight County Press*, official notice of the Ventnor Incline Light Railway, 11 September 1897.
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75. *Isle of Wight County Press*, report on the fares to St Lawrence on the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway, 29 June 1898.
76. Paye, P., *Ventnor West Branch*, (Didcot, Wild Swan Publications, 1992), p.23.
77. *Isle of Wight Herald*, Advertisement for the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway, 1 June 1900.
78. *Isle of Wight County Press*, report on the meeting of the Isle of Wight Railway directors, 4 August 1900.
79. *Isle of Wight Herald*, Advertisement for a new Express Service to Waterloo, 7 July 1900.
80. Consequently the line was never a financial success and was the first to close on the Island, in 1952.
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Chapter 3

The financial perspective.

Now, in the early twenty-first century, the rural railway is virtually non-existent. Most branch lines closed in the 1950s and 1960s[1] when, it was argued, they were making too great a loss. Those that still exist rely heavily on state subsidies and are retained for their socially necessary services. There are few thoughts of reviving a former line unless as a working museum.[2] It is generally thought that the Victorian branch line became uneconomic with, firstly, the introduction of the rural bus service and, secondly, the private car. This may not be the case as the rural branch line did not suddenly cease to be profitable in the mid-twentieth century but was, in all likelihood, never viable in the first place. Many of the lines closed in the 1950s and 1960s were probably only marginally more successful in their Victorian heyday.

The financial history of lines on the Isle of Wight closely mirrors that of lines on the mainland. The failure to make railways pay, combined with the desire to build more lines, is characteristic of the promotion and growth of rural railways throughout Britain in this period. There are numerous examples of financial disasters occurring on the mainland; the Ashford to Hastings line, authorised in 1845 only finally began to make a return on the investments in 1890.[3] The Cambrian Railway was twice bankrupt, in 1868 and 1884, and paid nothing on either its ordinary or preference shares.[4] The Bishop's Castle Railway remained bankrupt and in the hands of the receiver from its opening in 1866 until its closure in 1935. The Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Railway was made bankrupt immediately upon its opening in August 1866; bailiffs took possession in December and the trains ceased running until December 1868. In 1872 a receiver was appointed and in 1880 a railway inspector condemned the line, which closed until 1911. In the words of David Norman Smith '...much of the rural railway network, particularly that built during the last quarter of the century, had little chance of commercial success.'[5]

This chapter aims to examine some of the financial affairs of the companies, actual and proposed, that built or attempted to build railways in the Eastern Wight. It will address such matters as sources and security of the finance, and profitability. Information on this topic is sparse but the minute books of the directors and proprietors, where available,

newspapers and Board of Trade returns, offer an insight into the financial affairs of the companies concerned.

In the mid-1880s the cost of promoting a Private Bill in Parliament was in the order of £3,000, a large sum of money when compared to the cost of building one mile of railway which was on average £5,000.[6] As part of the process of promoting a Private Bill the company would issue a prospectus inviting interested parties to invest in the company by purchasing shares. Usually a deposit had to be paid by the investor in advance with the rest being paid by one or more 'calls' at certain stipulated dates. An Act made clear how much capital could be raised by share issue, the time period in which the capital had to be raised and the additional borrowing powers of the company. If these needed to be changed or increased then a further Parliamentary Bill would be required.

The Cowes and Newport Railway.

The first line to be built on the Island was capitalised in the manner described above. The prospectus for the Cowes and Newport Railway was issued in November 1858.[7] The prospectus stated that the company would raise the necessary capital of £30,000 by the issuing of 3,000 shares at £10 each. A deposit of 3s. per share was required. Interestingly the prospectus named four 'provisional' directors, who all lived nearby; earlier schemes had been criticised for lacking local interests. The four were the Honourable William Henry Petre of Cowes, Henry Pinnock of Clatterford, W. C Hoffmeister of Cowes and Robert John Jewell, a merchant from Newport. The solicitor was Charles Wyatt Estcourt of Newport, the same solicitor who acted for the anti-railway lobby in the 1840s; secretary, George Owen Mew of Newport and the Hampshire Banking Company acted as bankers.

The Isle of Wight (Eastern) Section Railway.

The Isle of Wight (Eastern) Section Railway successfully promoted a Bill in Parliament for a line from Ryde St John's Road to Ventnor that gained Royal Assent on 23 March 1860. The company had even greater plans as they proposed, in a Bill for the 1861 Parliamentary session[8], a line to Newport and a short spur to Brading Quay.[9] The Bill authorised the creation of additional capital and allowed the London and South Western Railway and the London Brighton and South Coast Railway, both mainland companies, to subscribe capital, although there is no evidence that they did so. This is the first time that major mainland

companies are mentioned with respect to railways in the Island. George T. Porter and C. F. Fisher were solicitors and F. Gale, the Parliamentary Agent. The *Isle of Wight Examiner* ran an advertisement on 10 November for a 'call for shares' for the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway. A deposit of £1 0s. 0d. per share was required, with a first call of £2 0s. 0d. per share before 17 November 1860. The bankers were Messrs. Williams, Deacon and Co. of London and Charles Morrison was the company secretary.

On 20 March 1862 the board appointed John Fowler as engineer at a fee of £1,000 in cash, £2,000 in debentures and £3,000 in shares. Fowler prepared an estimate of costs, a proper specification and tender upon which the contract might be let. The board wanted to employ Thomas Brassey, a contractor of excellent reputation, to build the line but negotiations broke down. Fowler had also been in contact with Henry Bond, who was not well known but who had dealings with Brassey and Ogilvie when they were building the Stokes Bay Railway. On 2 December 1862 Bond met with the board to sign a contract for the construction of the railway, reputedly worth £126,000.[10]

The Isle of Wight Railway.

The Isle of Wight Railway, formerly named the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway, experienced financial problems in its early years despite having great potential for success. It had the most viable passenger-carrying route of any railway on the Island with its terminus at Ryde, the standard arrival point on the Island for visitors travelling via Portsmouth, and the line running through Brading and then following the coast through the newly developing resorts of Sandown and Shanklin before finally reaching the fashionable resort of Ventnor. However, the Isle of Wight Railway faced almost total collapse only two years after opening to Shanklin, causing twenty shareholders to insert a notice in the *Isle of Wight Times* on 23 May 1866 calling for an extraordinary meeting to examine the company's finances and to appoint a committee of investigation. The company did not comply with this request and the shareholders themselves called a meeting to appoint such a committee. In the summer of 1866, Bond, the contractor, found that the Isle of Wight Railway was in such financial difficulties that he applied to the Warrant Finance Company to pay him for the work he had undertaken. This they did and the railway company thereafter became indebted to the finance company.[11] Mark Huish, the deputy chairman of the Isle of Wight Railway Company, was accused of rendering incorrect financial

statements and, although the finance company held over 6,000 shares, he endeavoured to deny them voting rights. At a further meeting on 31 August 1866, Huish attempted to prevent the Warrant Finance Company advancing money for shares, asserting that the finance company had no rights to hold Isle of Wight Railway shares. It appears that the Isle of Wight Railway shareholders had paid the Warrant Finance Company on later share calls and the contractor was being paid in Isle of Wight Railway shares in the name of the Warrant Finance Company. Huish experienced an uncomfortable meeting. McAndrew, a director of both companies, pointed out certain discrepancies in the accounts and contended that to stave off financial failure any longer would finish the company.[12] At the meeting the chairman stated '...your committee regret that the available assets at the disposal of the company are practically nil.'[13] An extraordinary meeting was called in London on 14 September to receive the report of the committee of investigation. At the meeting were two representatives of the shareholders and three from the Warrant Finance Company. The meeting wanted to remove the current directors of the Isle of Wight Railway and elect new ones. Mr Dovers, solicitor for the company, announced that as the meeting had been illegally convened any proceedings or resolutions would be null and void and treated as such by the shareholders. One representative made the comment that as Dovers was not a shareholder he therefore had no right to speak. The meeting was adjourned until 6 October 1866 at Ryde.[14]

Despite the problems the company did complete its line to Ventnor, which it opened in September 1866. However, in October 1866, the company was forced to raise loans in order to avoid receivership and in December two locomotives and two wagons were handed over to the Railway Rolling Stock Company in order to cover the debts.[15] Changes in the board of directors occurred following the death of Mark Huish, aged 58, on 18 January 1867.[16] In February Alexander Beattie, a director of the South Eastern Railway was appointed to take his place; Deputy Chairman Major Francis H. Atherley retired and Thomas Norton took his place. This heralded a new era of co-operation between the Isle of Wight Railway and the Warrant Finance Company.[17] The board now had doubts about the wisdom of pushing ahead with the central and western line schemes and applied to the Board of Trade to abandon those lines authorised in 1863 and 1865.[18] Thus, the Isle of Wight Railway managed to avoid receivership and gradually, due to increased passenger traffic, pulled itself out of the financial crisis. It was not until the late summer of 1876 that

the Isle of Wight Railway finally achieved the healthy position it enjoyed for the rest of its independent existence, when the Isle of Wight Railway (Additional Capital) Act 1876 authorised further capital of £50,000 as the new ordinary stock of the company. £30,000 was raised at once by offering shareholders £75 of the new stock per £100 of the old stock, and the additional investment enabled the company to pay off the last of its debts, and the interest run up during the previous decade.[19]

The Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway.

After the opening of the Cowes and Newport Railway in 1862 there followed a spate of proposals to build lines throughout the Island including a number of schemes to directly link Sandown and Newport. On 31 July 1868 the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway's Bill to build such a line received Royal Assent. Capital for the scheme was raised from the English and Foreign Credit Company in return for shares and other securities. George Sheward was both chairman of the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway and a director of the credit company.[20] David Derry, one of the railway company auditors, was also secretary to the credit company. Hence there was a complicated financial involvement between the two companies. Although the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway escaped bankruptcy, its contractor, Henry Johnson, filed for bankruptcy in 1873.[21] By 1875, the year the railway finally opened for traffic, the company was beset with financial difficulties, having to pay its bills with shares. The company had had a lengthy dispute with the Ryde and Newport Railway over money that the Ryde and Newport Railway had spent on the Newport Junction Railway's behalf on joint works for the line from its temporary terminus at Pan Lane into the new joint station at Newport. The court case went in favour of the Ryde and Newport Railway but the Newport Junction Railway had no funds with which to pay them. In order to alleviate this financial position the company obtained another Act in 1878 authorising the raising of further capital, which made it possible for some of the outstanding debt to the Ryde and Newport Railway to be paid off, with the remainder spent on finishing the works at Newport to enable its trains to run into the joint station. However, the company's troubles were not yet over; debenture holders successfully pressed for arrears of interest and on 23 May 1879, one week before the line opened, David Derry was appointed receiver by the Court of Chancery.[22]

The Bembridge branch.

In the Eastern Wight there were a number of schemes for building a branch to Bembridge from the Isle of Wight Railway at Brading. The Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Company obtained an Act of Parliament on 29 July 1864 to build such a line. The company was given the power to raise £50,000 in capital divided into 5,000 ten-pound shares. Each director had to own at least 20 shares. The company was also given the power to borrow and re-borrow on mortgage any sum up to £16,000. However, no borrowing would be allowed until all the shares had been issued and half paid fully. The company also had to deposit with the Court of Chancery a sum of £4,410. This represented 8% of the £45,000 capital that would be forfeited to the Crown if the railway was either not completed for the public conveyance of passengers or, if the company could not prove, to the satisfaction of the Lords of Her Majesty's Privy Council for Trade and Foreign Plantations, that the company had raised and then spent on the works one half of the proposed capital.

The Act also fixed tolls and fares for the conveyance of passengers and goods, stipulating the fares but making the proviso that if carriages and wagons belonging to the Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Company were to be used, an extra charge could be made. This indicated that right from the beginning it was intended that the Isle of Wight Railway would operate the line, using its own locomotives and rolling stock. On the proposed tramway from Brading Down to the branch line the fare was to be 4d. per mile for each passenger, animal or ton of goods conveyed. The Act also defined the maximum fares and tolls that could be charged. It is strange, but in some cases this was less than that stated in the Act under Section 32. For example, under Section 32 second-class passengers would be charged 1½d. per mile with an extra charge of 1d. per mile if conveyed by a carriage belonging to the Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Company, but, under Section 34 of the Act it stated that the maximum fare for second class passengers should be 2d. per mile, ½d. less! The minimum distance for charging goods and passengers would be three miles and beyond this the charges would increase every quarter of a mile. Hence, the proposed charge for a first class journey from Brading to Bembridge would have been 6d., or 9d. if conveyed in a Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Company carriage. These charges applied only to ordinary and express trains, not to special or extra trains. The Act also stated that every passenger could take with 'him' (sic) his luggage as long as it did not exceed 120 lbs. in weight for first class passengers, 100 lbs. for second class passengers

and 60 lbs. for third class passengers without any charge being made. Obviously first class passengers travelled with more luggage than third class ones and lady passengers did not take luggage with them!

Rates were also set for the use of the pier or jetty at Bembridge for the landing of passengers, goods and animals and their conveyance by railway along the pier. These were set in Section 42 of the Act. Exemption was made to vessels employed in the service of Her Majesty's Coast Guard, Customs or Excise, Corporation of Trinity House of Deptford Strand, or the Commissioners of Northern Lights. If this exemption were in any way abused then the company would charge £10 for each offence as a penalty. On 8 March 1865 the *Isle of Wight Times* quoted the Bill as being in session. The company had issued shares to the value of £66,000 and had mortgages of £21,990.

The relationship between the Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Company and the Isle of Wight Railway was an interesting one and indicates that the two companies were closely linked. The Act allowed the Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Company to enter into working arrangements with the Isle of Wight Railway with respect to the running maintenance and management of the railway, tramway and pier and also for the fixing of tolls. It also stipulated that at least six months before the opening to public traffic, the Bembridge Railway, Tramway and Pier Company had to give notice to the Isle of Wight Railway inviting them to enter into partnership. If the two companies could not agree terms then the matter was to be referred to arbitration under the Railway Companies Arbitration Act 1859.[23] From all this evidence considerable insight is given into the financial planning and arrangements that needed to be made and put in place before a company could begin building a railway and operating it. The scheme failed, possibly because the capital, in shares, was not forthcoming.

However, a scheme for the area did become a reality. The Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company was funded by the London based Liberator Building Society, under the chairmanship of Jabez Balfour M. P.. Its objectives were to build a railway between Brading and Bembridge, to reclaim 800 acres of agricultural land, to build a rail-connected port at St Helens quay and to develop tourism. These objectives were purely commercial and typical of the time when many thought, often falsely, that fortunes could be made from such schemes. The Bill enabling the company empowered it to compulsorily buy the

required land, the majority of which consisted of the estuarine mudflats surrounding the River Eastern Yar known as Brading Haven and owned by the Oglander family. Sir Henry Oglander was at that time in ill health and instructed John Fardell, his solicitor, not to oppose the Bill but to enter in negotiations for the selling of the land. John Fardell then met with Mr Saunders, the engineer of the project, from Ventnor, to discuss the matter with him. Lady Oglander and her brother, Mr Leeds, were also consulted. The actual sale price of the land is not known. Mr Saunders suggested that 'his friends' (sic) would pay £7,000 for the land. Mr Leeds was of the opinion that if sold it might fetch £10,000. John Fardell's estimate was £12,000 but Lady Oglander, as quoted by Fardell in a letter, would have been satisfied with the sum of £10,000. Under the powers of Sir Henry's will the money raised from the sale was to be invested by the trustees and the proceeds paid to Lady Oglander during her lifetime. On her death John Glynn, her son, would become entitled to the money and the estate.[24]

The reclamation of the harbour was completed by the summer of 1879 and the line opened for traffic on Saturday 27 May 1882.[25] At this time the company was in financial difficulties as H. S. Freeman was acting as receiver. The *Isle of Wight Advertiser* stated that, until 1879, the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company had expended £80,000 on the project, a surprisingly small amount as by this time the railway had reached St Helens, two stations had been built, one at Bembridge the other at St Helens, and the quays at St Helens were well under construction. As the final total expenditure was said to be £420,000 the figure of £80,000 cannot be relied upon.[26] Optimistically, the *Advertiser* also suggested that the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company would be able to recoup their investment in five to seven years as the correspondent envisaged a large trade in connection with the railway and quays.

From its opening on 27 May 1882 the Bembridge branch was worked under contract by the Isle of Wight Railway.[27] The minutes of the board of the proprietors and directors of the Isle of Wight Railway of August 1892 reveal that the company was prepared to work the branch for 50% of the receipts or £1,400 per annum, whichever was the greater, and the agreement was to run for three, five or seven years.[28] The Isle of Wight Railway was prepared to purchase the locomotive *Bembridge* and cranes at St Helens Quay from the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company, at their current valuation. As little profit was forthcoming from working the line, the Isle of Wight Railway always used its

oldest rolling stock, giving the line a rather poor image. The Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company was to pay, as they had always done, all taxes and rates.

In June 1893 the minutes of the board of the Isle of Wight Railway indicate that the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company was not in a healthy financial position as it was again in the hands of the receiver.[29] In April 1894 the Isle of Wight Railway repaired the engine *Bembridge* at their Ryde St John's Road works but refused to return it to the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company until they had paid for the repairs. No money was forthcoming. The Isle of Wight Railway then offered to lease motive power, presumably *Bembridge*, from the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company for £100 per annum and from that point onwards took over all aspects of the operation of the branch.[30]

In 1895 the Liberator Building Society failed after several of its schemes had been the subject of legal proceedings that attracted enormous public attention. Balfour, who had sought refuge in Argentina, was extradited and was sentenced to a long term of penal servitude, ironically in Parkhurst Prison on the Island.

In February 1898 details came to light of the Isle of Wight Railway wishing to promote a Bill in Parliament enabling it to take over the Brading Harbour and Railway Company.[31] This came about by an agreement dated 10 June 1898 and was later confirmed by the Isle of Wight (Brading Harbour Railway) Act of 1898. The Bill was approved by the Lords and passed its committee stage on 19 July 1898. The Brading Harbour and Railway Company was taken over for £16,500 on 31 July 1898 when the ordinary share stock of the Isle of Wight Railway was increased. However, certain lands and liabilities of the Brading Harbour and Railway Company, such as the steamer fleet and the Royal Spithead Hotel, were not included in the take over.[32]

The Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway.

From the earliest days Ventnor was seen to be the place that the railways wanted to serve. The Isle of Wight Railway reached Ventnor in 1866 from Ryde. The Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway also reached Ventnor - but 34 years later! Its board members and initial finance derived, in part, from those of the Shanklin and Chale Railway which, in

1884, proposed a Bill that gained Royal Assent on 14 August 1885 and authorised the company to raise £60,000 in £10 shares with borrowing powers of up to £12,000 after the complete capital was promised and £30,000 actually paid up. Typical of the time, resources became exhausted and no shares were issued. However, the company wished to extend their proposed line beyond Chale to Freshwater and required additional finance. William Bohm, a director, persuaded his friend Harry Magnus to finance the new bill in exchange for shares and a position on the board. The Bill foundered on its third reading. Obviously many in Parliament were not impressed by the Island's railway affairs. Mr Chamberlain M. P., chairman of the Lords Select Committee, stated in 1886 '...there were already five railways in the Island, only one of which, the Isle of Wight Railway, paid a dividend.' It was proposed that the Isle of Wight Railway would operate the Shanklin to Chale line for between 55% and 80% of the net receipts, if the receipts were not less than £3,900 per year. The promoters rejected this. At this stage, Robert Elliot Cooper, engineer for the Shanklin and Chale Railway, gave evidence that the railway could be built for as little as £6,000 per mile, just under a quarter of the cost £24,410 per mile of the Cowes and Newport Railway but that it could earn only £23 per mile per week, just under half the £58 per mile per week of the Isle of Wight Railway.

The plans of the Shanklin and Chale Railway stagnated and a new railway company, the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway, emerged with a proposed line from Merstone to St Lawrence. The share issues authorised in the earlier Shanklin and Chale Railway Acts were retained to form the new basis of the capital.[33] A further Act was required, gaining Royal Assent on 28 June 1892, authorising the company to extend to Ventnor. The company was empowered to raise an additional £18,000 in £10 shares with borrowing powers for a further 6,000 when £9,000 had been raised.[34] Messrs. Westwood and Winley were appointed contractors.

The finance of the company was never secure. The inaugural board meeting of the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway was held on 13 March 1894. The meeting considered the request of the engineer for a payment on account. The company secretary approached the contractors, who were subscribing heavily for shares, for payment of £500 to enable the railway to pay the engineer. During March one hundred and twenty £10 shares were transferred to Messrs. Westwood and Winley as payment for completion of initial works. On 17 April 1894 the company decided to alter the arrangements for

payment of shares issued against certificates of completion of works presented by the contractors but Westwood and Winley had reservations about the changes.[35] On 26 June 1894 H. Milkins was appointed secretary of the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway and his first task was to secure the purchase of land at Steephill from Pelham, the owner. Henry Martin and Captain Dunstan were appointed directors and split the board by demanding the withdrawal of Westwood and Winley as contractors. Money problems still beset the construction. Bohm wrote to the Isle of Wight Central Railway, who would work the line, on 6 July 1894 asking them to waive the right to £5,000 worth of deferred shares. On 25 July 1894 the Isle of Wight Central Railway board agreed to accept contract bonds on condition that the outstanding money was paid out of the first call of the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway debentures. At an extraordinary meeting of the board of directors on 4 March 1895 a letter was read from Harry Magnus, a director, in which he commented on the dangerous practice of agreeing to pay the contractors in partly paid up shares. Even so, the company agreed to the issue of £28,000 of terminable debenture shares as authorised by the Shanklin and Chale Railway Acts of 1885 and 1887 and the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway Act of 1889 with a fixed interest of 4% per year when the railway opened to St Lawrence. £15,600 was paid to the contractors on 4 April.[36] The partnership between the contractors was dissolved in October 1895 and taken over by Westwood. The contract price was £160,000 worth of shares and £40,000 in debentures.

The company was having problems obtaining the land at Steephill Castle Estate and resolved to make an application to Parliament for a Bill. They were so confident of obtaining the Bill that within four days they had agreed a draft contract with Westwood for the construction valued at £22,000. The Bill was given Royal Assent on 2 July 1896 and apart from authorising the extension towards Ventnor repeated the restriction on the building of a goods shed and working of goods traffic to Ventnor mentioned in the Act of 1892.[37] The Act authorised the company to raise £18,000 of capital in £10 shares with an additional borrowing power of £6,000.

The financial problems besetting the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway were exemplified in November 1896 when they proposed to build a corrugated iron cottage for the crossing keeper at Dean Crossing. The Isle of Wight Central Railway was not impressed and instructed the contractor to build a more expensive brick cottage similar to

those on the Lancashire, Derbyshire and East Coast Railway. Matters were not helped when, in January 1897, Henry Martin resigned his post as director of the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway due to differences within the board and ill health, and immediately claimed the repayment of £4,400 debentures. In April a letter was received from the Ebbw Vale Steel Company requesting that deferred shares be deposited with them in lieu of cash as repayments for steel used on the bridges.

By October 1897 Westwood, the contractor, was also in financial difficulties; he had received £81,200 in shares and £25,900 in debentures but he was indebted to the sum of £41,545 and could only expect to realise £13,359. He found that the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway shares were worthless and was unable to dispose of them. He was unable to pay the men's wages and withdrew from the contract with only about 1¼ miles of the line remaining to be built.[38] J. T. Firbank took over the construction of the Undercliff extension, the railway company also paying him in shares. On 17 March 1899 the company issued £1,700 debentures and £10,500 shares to Firbank as settlement for £12,200 he had paid for the purchase of land from the Steephill Estate. This enabled the contractor to start on works towards the Ventnor terminus, although, due to the company's difficult financial position, there were several periods of inactivity. The line finally opened in 1900.

Conclusion.

Nationally, three railway promotional manias have been recognised, the first in the 1830s, the second in the mid-1840s and the final one in the mid-1860s. The promotion and the building of the lines in the Island come broadly into this last period when the organisational structure of British Industry was changing. By 1850 British industry had become centred on the family firm or partnership with new line management and staff procedures introduced and the delegation of authority to salaried managers. Also there was the development of a new law and constitutional framework surrounding joint stock and limited liability practice. Government control was greater and stemmed from a worry of the formation of monopolies.

Railways became a significant element in domestic investment with gross capital formation, excluding land, rising from 2% of the national income in the late 1830s to 7% in 1847, with 60% of all the capital raised between 1825 and 1875 coming after 1850. In the

1850s expenditure by railway companies accounted for 1.5% of the national income. Between 1862 and 1866 investment, excluding land, was equivalent to 2.5% G.N.P. and accounted for 33% of the domestic fixed capital formation. Investment in railway companies depended to a large extent on the national economic situation. In 1865 and 1866, a boom period, the railways successfully managed to attract investment.[39]

In the 1860s and 1870s railway investment fluctuations coincided with those of the economy, with peaks in 1865-1866 and 1874-1875 but a trough in 1869. The downturn in attracting investment can be accounted for by the increasing maturity of the railway industry and the slowing down of the innovational elements of technological change. Additional construction of either ambitious, or possibly risky ventures in the London area, or extensions into the rural periphery, such as in the Isle of Wight, where returns were expected to be lower, meant that investors were more cautious. Lack of investment led to a number of schemes on the Island, such as that of the Shanklin and Chale Railway, not getting beyond gaining an Act of Parliament. This left only contractors and finance companies to fund the lines, as illustrated by the undertakings of both the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) and the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railways. The fragility of these arrangements explains the difficulties that these companies had and also the problem the railways had in generating investment without help.

Investment in railways brought about changes in the structure of capital investment. There was the growth in investment journals and provincial stock exchanges with the railways playing a role in the mobilisation of local capital by the pledging of 'promises to invest' and subscriptions at public meetings or through advertisements. This can be shown by the capitalisation of both the Cowes and Newport Railway and the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway. At the national level most capital came from entrepreneurs in London and Lancashire. The railways also increased the trading in letters of allotment and partly and fully paid up shares. It was by the buying and selling of marketable securities that the railways extended the geographical and occupational base of investment and thus transformed the Victorian capital market. The railways brought a new type of investor to industrial capitalism, one looking for a rapid turnover of money. The concept of 'blind capital', that seeking a 5% return, was not really established until the general adoption of fixed interest shares, both preferential and debenture, in the 1860s. All this was taking place just as the Island's railways were being promoted, planned and built. Railway

investors were also protected by limited liability. The financing of railways by share capital alone led to joint-stock banks, insurance companies and building societies investing in railway companies. The Liberator Building Society invested £420,000 in the Brading Harbour, Improvement and Railway Company for very little return. Railways' dependence on geared shares and the conversion of short-term debentures into perpetual debenture shares is characteristic of this period. By 1870 48% of the UK railway capital was of the fixed interest type.

Difficulties in sustaining investment encouraged stockbrokers, bankers and others to play a more active role in railway management. Nationally Foster and Braithwaite, Heseltine, Powell and Henry Cazenove, were called in to advise railways on the state of the money markets, becoming a formidable investment lobby, which was able to exert considerable pressure on managerial policy. On the Island, for example, George Sheward was a director of the English and Foreign Credit Company and also chairman of the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway. It can also be seen that finance companies and contractors kept many railway companies afloat in this period. For example, Westwood and Winley, contractors for the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway, were paid not in cash but in shares for the completion of work. So, the long-term growth of railway investment helped to expand the horizons of financial institutions and involve them more closely in the problems and management of railway enterprises both on the mainland and in the Island.

Notes: The financial perspective.

1. The Bembridge branch and the Freshwater branch closed on 21 September 1953.
2. The Isle of Wight Steam Railway, a working museum opened up a five mile extension from Smallbrook Junction to Haven Street in 1992 to join with their two mile line from Haven Street to Wootton.
3. Simmons, Jack, *The railway in town and country 1830 – 1914*, (Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1986), p.272.
4. Ibid., p.316.
5. Smith, D. N., *The railway and its passengers: A social history*, (Newton Abbot, 1988), p.77.
6. Cooper, T. P., 'Nineteenth century Parliamentary procedure concerning Bills affecting railways', *Wight Report*, 37, (Autumn 1977), pp.249-250.
7. Cowes and Newport Railway Prospectus, Jerome collection, Isle of Wight County Record Office, Newport, JER/R/22.
8. *Isle of Wight Examiner*, report of a proposed Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway Bill for Parliament, 10 November 1860.
9. This line was never built.
10. *The Times*, report on the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway, 3 February 1863.
11. *Isle of Wight Observer*, reports on the financial difficulties of the Isle of Wight Railway, 21 July 1866 et seq.
12. *Isle of Wight Times*, report on the meeting of Isle of Wight Railway shareholders, 31 August 1866.
13. *Hampshire Independent*, report on the committee of shareholders of the Isle of Wight Railway, 1 September 1866.
14. *Isle of Wight Times*, report on the committee of investigation, 15 September 1866.
15. Isle of Wight Railway Company, minutes of the proprietors and directors, July 1860, Vol. 3, Public Record Office, Kew, RAIL 330.
16. *The Times*, report on the death of Mark Huish, 19 January 1867.
17. *Isle of Wight Observer*, reports on the new directors of the Isle of Wight Railway, 2 March 1867.
18. *Isle of Wight Observer*, reports on the abandonment of the lines authorised in 1863 and 1865, 1 February 1868.
19. Cooper, Tim, 'One hundred years ago', *Wight Report*, 33, (Autumn 1976), p.187.

20. *Isle of Wight Mercury*, report on the English and Foreign Credit Company, 5 October 1871.
21. Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway, report and accounts, 30 June 1873, PRO, BRS 401.
22. *Isle of Wight Observer*, report on the court case between the Ryde and Newport Railway and the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway, 6 November 1875.
23. *Isle of Wight Observer*, report on the amendments to the Bembridge Harbour Railway, Tramway and Pier Company's Bill, 19 November 1864.
24. Fardell, J. W., letter to J. H. O. Glynn, Oglander papers, IWCRO, OG/CC/828.
25. *Isle of Wight Times*, report on the Bembridge Harbour Railway, 1 June 1882.
26. *The Builder*, report on the completion of works on the embankment, 26 July 1879.
27. *Isle of Wight Observer*, report on the half yearly meeting of the Isle of Wight Railway, 26 August 1882.
28. Isle of Wight Railway, July 1882, minutes of the proprietors and directors, Vol. 7, PRO, RAIL 330.
29. Isle of Wight Railway, June 1893, minutes of the proprietors and directors, Vol. 7, PRO, RAIL 330.
30. Isle of Wight Railway, April 1894, minutes of the proprietors and directors, Vol. 7, PRO, RAIL 330.
31. Isle of Wight Railway, Sept 1898, minutes of the proprietors and directors, Vol. 7, PRO, RAIL 330.
32. Ibid.
33. Paye, P., *Ventnor West Branch*, (Didcot, Wild Swan Publications, 1992), pp.3-5.
34. Ibid., p.6.
35. Paye, P., *Ventnor West Branch*, (Didcot, Wild Swan Publications, 1992), p.7.
36. Ibid.,p.1.
37. Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway Act 1896, 59 & 60 Vic. Cap. xlvii.
38. *Isle of Wight County Press*, report on the finances of the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway, 7 May and 21 May 1898.
39. Gourvish, T. R., *Railways and the British Economy 1830 – 1914, Studies in Economic and Social History*, (London, Macmillan, 1980).

Chapter 4

Constructing the lines.

Once a decision had been made that a line should be built between two places there were choices to be made in determining its route. Factors to be taken into consideration included topography, the attitude of the landowners whose land the railway would cross, other settlements to be served and connections with other lines. Usually the promoters would employ a surveyor to advise on the best route. The promoters would then present a Bill in Parliament to obtain authority to build the line. They might find themselves forced to alter the route in order to avoid criticisms from the various committees in Parliament through which the Bill had to pass before becoming an Act. Even after all this, difficulties often arose during construction forcing a deviation in the route.

It was customary for each company to appoint an engineer to oversee the construction of the line and a contractor to organise and put in motion the actual construction. Railway contractors would move around the country from job to job either bringing the necessary plant with them, such as locomotives and trucks, or purchase them locally. They would probably bring their key staff with them but would employ large numbers of unskilled men from the local pool of labour. Nationally the contractors needed thousands of unskilled hands. These people came from many areas, from the land, from areas of high industrial unemployment and from Ireland and Belgium. The work was hard and discontinuous, but wages were higher than the 8-11 shillings a week that a farm worker would have expected in Southern England.[12] Before the railways, agricultural workers were tied to their employment and opportunities for better-paid work were vague and remote. The railways gave workers the prospect of employment in their own district and, if they could afford it, a journey by train to the construction sites of new lines. This mobility of labour had the effect of increasing the wages of agricultural workers because it caused labour shortages in some districts.

To bring a planned railway to actuality much finance was needed and money was a factor affecting the speed and manner of construction. During the 1840s and 1850s, on mainland Britain, a whole new railway industry had grown up, which needed a continuing momentum in the building of railways both overseas and at home to maintain it. During the period 1856-1866, the need to fully occupy the industry, was very important in driving

the promotion of new lines. As there was little investment from outside the industry, finance had to come from within and contractors often had a vital role to play. There are many cases where the payment for contractor services was in shares in the company. Between 1842 and 1844 over half of the cost of the Yarmouth and Norwich Railway was borne by the contractors.[6] The London and North Western chairman, Moon, said in 1863, '...there are no proprietors willing to come forward to make a railway. They are made by contractors, engineers and speculators.' *The Economist* commented that between 1864 and 1866 over two thirds of the capital authorised was for 'constructors' lines.' In 1857 William McCormick, contractor, bore the entire subscription for the proposed Mid-Sussex line. In Mid-Wales contractors built the entire system; local contractors such as Thomas Savin, David Davies and others all saw the opportunities to provide a railway. Thomas Brassey, a national contractor, who built the Shrewsbury-Hereford Railway between 1859 and 1868, joined them. As has already been described Brassey had a tenuous connection with the Ryde to Ventnor line.

The construction of a railway line, therefore, depended on many factors and a long series of decisions.[1] The lines in the Eastern Wight show the variety of factors that could affect the route and construction of any railway.

The Cowes and Newport Railway.

In 1858 William Petre, Henry Pinnock, W. C. Hoffmeister and Robert Jewell, all local businessmen, determined that a line ought to be built between Cowes and Newport and so issued a prospectus, that cited Henry Martin and Mr J. S. Burke as engineers of the line.[2] Martin was the senior of the two and employed Mr Fernandez as contractor. The route chosen, alongside the River Medina, was the flattest and most direct possible. However, even on this short line relatively major works were required. As Cowes is built on the side of a hill overlooking the mouth of the River Medina, the terminus needed a flat area to be cut into the hillside above the town. A road crossing at Smithard's Lane, Cowes; a short tunnel at Mill Hill, Cowes; a viaduct at Cement Mills; a terminus station at Newport along with major cuttings and embankments also had to be built. At least, by the 1860s, the engineering needed for these works was well known and practised.

The work on the Cowes and Newport line started at noon on 15 October 1859 '...the first sod was turned in most unfavourable weather conditions, the rain scarcely ceasing all day.'

Nevertheless, a considerable company assembled. Neither Petre, the chairman, nor Ward, the major landowner through which the line ran, could attend due to illness, but a well-known yacht builder, Michael Ratsey '...posed as an excellent substitute and wielded the barrow and shovel with a will. After this he gave a brief speech followed by excellent champagne upon which the party of 30 or so adjourned to the *Fountain* to be entertained by the contractor Mr Fernandez.'[3]

In January 1860 the Cowes and Newport Railway promoted a Bill in Parliament to extend their railway beyond Newport.[4] Two lines were proposed, the first from Newport through Alverstone, Godshill and Wroxall to the quarries above Ventnor, and the second from a junction at Alverstone, with one branch going to Ryde and another, via Shanklin, joining the first line at Wroxall. Unfortunately the Bill did not pass through Parliament, being thrown out due to non-compliance with standing orders, especially with regard to errors in levels. This suggested, at the very least, bungling on the part of the engineer and shows the importance of correct surveying in the earliest stages.

Progress on the Cowes to Newport line was described in the *Isle of Wight Observer*, 2 November 1861:

> The railway commences at Cowes and its station is situated in Carvel Lane; and being several feet above the level of the street is reached by a flight of about 20 stairs. The station, as yet incomplete, has a general waiting room, departments for the stationmaster etc. and for about 50 feet up the line is covered in. There is but one line of rails laid down and on leaving the station it forms a gentle curve until Mill Hill is reached under which there is a tunnel... past Cement Mills and then across a wooden viaduct about 100 feet in length, supported on wooden piles erected over a small arm of the river... The rails are laid down nearly the whole length of the line except for a half a mile near Newport. A large number of navvies are employed on the line. The Newport termination of the line is close to Woodward Wharf, Sea Street, but no station accommodation is yet erected there.

By this time Fernandez, the contractor, was in financial difficulty and the work was behind schedule, perhaps because he had to rely on horses and carts in the construction as no steam locomotives had yet been transferred to the Island. In February 1862 Henry Martin replaced Fernandez and took on the dual role of engineer and contractor.[5]

The Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway.

The building of the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway gives an opportunity to look, in some detail, at the work of the engineers and contractors. There was, in fact, a long delay between the authorisation of the line from Ryde St John's Road to Ventnor in March 1860 and the start of construction. Construction should have begun in November 1861 but there were delays due to differences of opinion among the directors and also to management changes.[7] Nine months later, in August 1862, it was reported that construction was about to begin, giving the delay as being due to '...difficulties in obtaining land.'[8] It was not until 6 December 1862 that there was a report stating that the contract had been signed with John Fowler, the engineer and that plant was on its way from the River Severn to Brading Quay.[9] It was proposed to start on the Sandown to Shanklin section, as the clay lands to the north could not be worked until the summer. The contractor was Mr Bond and the contract worth £126,000.[10] Later, on 14 October 1865, an article in the *Isle of Wight Observer* stated that Dorrell had become the contractor. The article went on '...we find (sic) Mr Dorrell's long connection with the eminent firm of Messrs. Brassey and Company. As their engineer and agent, he will carry out the work to the satisfaction of all connected with it, which has ever been Mr Brassey's character on the great and important works he has constructed.' However, Brassey did not always deliver what was promised. The contractors Peto, Brassey and Betts not only built the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway, but also ran it for the first 21 years after the opening under lease from the company. They did their work poorly and it was not until the lease came to an end in 1875 that the company prospered.[11]

By 24 December 1862, 20 men had arrived in Ventnor to begin the construction work.[13] It is not clear where these people came from. Some would have been local, others would be itinerant, moving around the country looking for well-paid railway work. It was recognised that by far the largest works on the line was the tunnel from Wroxall under St Boniface Down to the quarry high above Ventnor where the terminus was planned. By 10 January 1863, 20 men were at work 24 hours a day on the tunnel. Initially two vertical shafts, one 300 yards from Wroxall Farm, the second 150 yards from the quarry at Ventnor, were sunk 120 feet into the chalk.[14] These were completed by the end of February. At that time some five miles of land had been placed in the contractor's hands. By 13 June 1863 the work was well under way all along the line.[15] The bridges at

Smallbrook and Rowborough had been started. However, problems were reported on the northern part of the tunnel where the work had been suspended because of ingress of water and steam pumping gear had been sent to the site.[16] The engineer's report of 31 July 1863 indicates that the contractor, for whatever reason, had difficulty in getting plant to the line and that the work was not being completed quickly enough. Five miles of line had been fenced, eight bridges were in progress, ten culverts had been completed and the earthworks were well under way with some smaller ones finished.[17] The tunnel gave most cause for concern; from the bottom of the southern shaft it had progressed only100 yards to the south and 150 yards to the north with a cross section of nine feet square. The southern section was expected to break out into the quarry by October.[18] The northern shaft still had problems. Despite over 400 men being employed on the project the work remained behind schedule. By Christmas 1863 the cuttings at Sandown were progressing well and the station at Sandown was being built.[19] Not everything was going to plan as the Lake road bridge suddenly collapsed into the roadway on 18 January 1864.[20] By February the Brading-Sandown section was well under way and the new road to Brading station complete.[21] Even at this late stage the company had not purchased all the land it needed; there was still one property between Shanklin and Ventnor that was required.[22] The construction problems increased; in late March wet weather caused landslips near Brading and the men had to work all through a Sunday to solve the problem.[23] On 9 April the bridge at Hyde collapsed while being tested by a heavy wagon being drawn over it.

The proprietors wanted the line to Shanklin to be open for revenue earning traffic by May 1864 at the latest. The contractors had to take on an extra 200 men in an attempt to achieve this. The locomotives and rolling stock were to arrive in May. However, it was not until 19 August 1864 that the line eventually opened from Ryde St John's Road to Shanklin after being inspected by Col. Yolland, H. M. Inspector of Railways.[24] The section from Shanklin to Ventnor was far from complete. In early September 1864, the contractor was working on all the cuttings. The northern section of the tunnel was at last proceeding with the drainage improved and the whole of the tunnel widened out to its full bore.[25] By the end of December the bore had been completed, the next stage being to line the whole tunnel with bricks.

It is interesting to note that in the contract it was specified that the line had to be completed by 1 January 1865.[26] If this were the case then the line was well behind time and presumably penalty clauses in the contract came into play. The brickworks for the tunnel was established at Wroxall. On 11 February 1865 it was reported that the contractor's arrangements for the supply of bricks to the tunnel were unsatisfactory and that manufacture had not yet started.[27] The first brick was laid, on 20 February 1865, by Alexander More, a director; a dinner for the 600 men employed was given at Ventnor the next evening.[28] As hinted above, financially, all was not well with the contractor; on 23 May works were suspended at Ventnor and 60 workmen discharged without notice.[29] In June the contractor was reported as receiving financial help from the Warrant Finance Company and by August was unable to fulfil the Shanklin to Ventnor contract.[30] The finance company took over his obligation to complete the works.

A report on the works between Shanklin and Ventnor gives some idea of the conditions in which the men worked:

> It being reported that a number of men were working at the station yard at Ventnor, and feeling anxious to have the line completed, we started to see what was doing, and here found a number of men engaged in cutting and blowing away the rock on the side of the hill where the station is intended to be. (We could have wished it would be in some other part of the town; however, better here than nowhere at all.) We were struck with the dangerous nature of the work, the men were on the side of the cutting which is almost perpendicular and 60 to 70 feet deep, drilling holes for blasts of gunpowder, whilst others were engaged picking off loose lumps... As one of the employees was going through, we asked to walk with him, and he being civil enough to hand us a tin with a candle in it we entered the tunnel, but it was some time before we could distinguish any object. The first thing was a number of candles appearing like stars on a dark night, and on coming closer we could observe the tunnel for some length bricked to full size, and at the end of the brickwork were a lot of bricklayers, on side walls about ten yards in length, working in a style we never witnessed - all as busy as bees. The length of the walls up here is about 400 yards. Beyond this for a distance of 150 yards is a row of candles on either side of the tunnel, looking like one of the streets in London by gaslight, with a string of miners busy - some with drills, others wielding large hammers driving wedges, others with picks getting loose pieces, which the labourers are loading into wagons. This is really a sight worth seeing. On nearing the Wroxall end we found another long length of tunnel completed, and we were informed it is being done at the rate of ten yards per day. From the rapidity with which the bricks are being laid, we had doubts as to its character, but on examination we found it to be straight, true and neat; more so than is generally the case than with buildings in the neighbourhood. On remarking as to the quality of the work, we found that Mr J. Fowler, the engineer-in-chief, had been through the work and given Mr J. Dorrell, the contractor, and Mr Sharp, the inspector, credit for

> the way the work was constructed. Arriving at Wroxall, we examined the mortar machines, and brick making by steam. The clay here is pressed into moulds and passed through the machine, passing in and out as regularly as a clock ticks, and the bricks are knocked out onto a strap that carries them along to the men, who put them on barrows, and run them into the kilns to be burnt. We were informed that one machine makes 15,000 bricks per day. There were a number of men at work here - no irregularity in working - very different to when we saw the works six months ago. Mr Dorrell, who was just going to Shanklin with his locomotive and a train of ballast trucks was present a few yards along the line from the tunnel. Having asked to be allowed to go to Shanklin, we were kindly welcomed, and on getting up we were struck with the neat and compact appearance of the engine, and so beautifully clean we could almost fancy it was introduced to the drawing room after its day's work was done. There was not much time to examine the works from Wroxall to Shanklin, but we found the line permanently laid and nearly complete in ballast, and we could not help noticing the neat appearance of the cuttings and embankments and substantial look of the bridges, several being completed, and two or three in hand. We have no doubt we shall see the opening of the line to Ventnor in the coming year.

The proprietors were obviously pleased with the contractor as they approached J. Dorrell about the construction of the central and western lines to Newport. Dorrell offered to complete these lines in about 12 months.[31] Later the Bembridge branch was actually contracted to Dorrell. However, still much work was required before the line could open to Ventnor. Shift working was in progress in January 1866. An advertisement appeared later in the *Isle of Wight Times* detailing items of contractor's plant for sale.[32] This included a 35 h.p. steam engine with winding gear, an Oates' patent brick machine and 40 ballast wagons as well as many smaller items. J. E. Scott was the auctioneer and the sale was on the instruction of the Warrant Finance Company. Whether this was just a normal sale of redundant contractor's equipment or an attempt to raise money by the Warrant Finance Company is not clear. At this time, as has already been described, the Isle of Wight Railway was in severe financial difficulties. A second sale of plant took place at Wroxall on 19 April 1866. Here an 0-4-0 locomotive, constructed by Hawthorne and Company of Leith, along with its engine shed, numerous wagons and carriages and four brick built, slate roof, cottages were put up for sale.[33] The line eventually opened for traffic at the end of the summer. The line was inspected, for a second time, by Col. Addison, H. M. Inspector of Railways, on 8 September 1866 and was passed for passenger traffic. Goods traffic to Ventnor had started a number of weeks before.[34] After the opening there was still much work for the contractor to complete. In March 1867 Wroxall and Ventnor stations were still not finished.[35] Work on the line, started in December 1862,

was still not complete five years later in 1867. The total cost of the line was £300,000 due to considerable construction works.[36]

The Ryde and Newport Railway.

The Bill for the line between Ryde and Newport received Royal Assent on 25 July 1872. George Young, chairman of the Ryde and Newport Railway, was also owner of the chalk quarry at Ashey, which was to be served by the line. The chalk from the quarry would be used in the construction of this and other lines on the Island. Henry Martin, engineer and contractor to the Cowes and Newport Railway, was also on the board of the Ryde and Newport Railway. The board decided to accept the tender of Messrs. Barnett and Gale for building the line and construction began in October.[37] Although informal meetings were held, the first official board meeting of the Ryde and Newport Railway was held at 7, Brigstocke Terrace, Ryde on 17 August 1872.[38] The line would leave the Isle of Wight Railway at a junction at Smallbrook, south of Ryde, and climb southwest towards Ashey before crossing the Blackbridge Brook at Haven Street. The line would then climb through wooded land to its summit south of Wootton before descending to Binfield and then paralleling the River Medina to reach Newport. By February 1873, work was at hand at Smallbrook junction and at Ashey. Sleepers for the line were landed at Ryde and many men were engaged in the construction.[39] By November 1873, the junction at Smallbrook was largely complete[40] and by the following March all the necessary land for the work had been acquired. The contractor failed financially and was unable to proceed so Frank Stileman, the engineer, engaged Messrs. J. and G. Taylor of Abbotsham Court, North Devon, to complete the line; Messrs. J. and G. Taylor having been responsible for construction work on the Exeter-Yeovil line.[41] By spring 1874 over half of the first 6¾ miles from Smallbrook had been completed and over 300 men were employed working on the line. All the culverts were finished and five of the eight bridges completed. A branch from Ashey to the chalk quarry was under construction and the rails were due to arrive. The three-arched bridge at Beech Lane, Wootton, was the largest structure on the line. Chalk from Ashey was being used as a foundation for the track but there was a shortage of good quality ballast, which had to be obtained, very unusually, from fired clay. This was produced at Newport with 12 fires constantly alight. By June 1874, the line had progressed to Newport gasworks and it was agreed that the Ryde and Newport Railway should occupy, for constructional purposes only, land afterwards required for the Isle of

Wight (Newport Junction) Railway for their line from Sandown to Newport. This, as will be discussed later, gave rise to a court action between the two companies.

By the beginning of 1875 the work on the line between Newport and Ryde was still in progress; one cutting required to be finished and only four miles of permanent way had been laid and ballasted.[42] Protracted legal proceedings with the Borough of Newport delayed the construction of the viaduct across the River Medina into Newport station for some months and in consequence the opening was further delayed. The viaduct contract was separately let to Messrs. Campbell, Johnston and Company. The ironwork, weighing 65 tons, arrived in July on board the coaster *Ino*.[43] The finished bridge comprised a sharply curved red brick structure containing a wrought iron section across the River Medina which could be drawn back horizontally for ships to pass. The opportunity was also taken to increase the size of the quay at Newport by a factor of at least four and this was completed by July 1875. A new station, joint with the Cowes and Newport Railway, was provided on a new alignment and the old Cowes and Newport terminus was closed to passengers. By August the new station building was being built and it was reported that the works and signalling for the line were complete.[45] The line from Ryde St John's Road to Smallbrook was started in June 1875, Pritchard of Sandown having won the contract.[44] It was not until 22 October 1875 that George Young and the engineer made their first run over the entire line, taking 22 minutes.[46] The contract for the intermediate stations on the line was also separately placed. Two double storey red brick buildings, which were identical, were provided at Whippingham and Ashey.[47] Whippingham is referred to in early correspondence as 'Osborne', the Royal residence being 2½ miles to the north. Queen Victoria's railway journeys on the Island were never frequent, although she once went to Ventnor by train. Ashey station was somewhat larger than otherwise might have been expected. Perhaps it was designed to impress Sir Henry Oglander, who had already sold the company much of the land through which the line passed at its eastern end, but more probably it was to accommodate a healthy potential traffic to and from the nearby racecourse. Haven Street and Wootton stations were single platforms with the barest of facilities. The line was single throughout, the only crossing loop being at Ashey.

Col. Hutchinson, from the Board of Trade, inspected the line on the 6 November 1875 and refused to pass it because of some serious landslips.[48] After remedial work the line opened for traffic on Monday 20 December 1875, when the 8.00am train from Cowes continued

from Newport at 8.16am for Ryde. No special ceremony appears to have taken place and the event received minimal publicity.[49]

The Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway.

Newport was becoming the hub of the Island's railway network. The Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway's proposed line from Sandown to Newport received Royal Assent on 31 July 1868. The construction of this line illustrates the problems of constructing a poorly financed scheme, and also the legal and practical problems of providing a junction with another railway, as was proposed at Newport with the Cowes and Newport Railway. The contract was quickly let to Thomas Greenhill of Kensington who undertook to build the line for £55,000. This was subject to much acrimonious discussion in the boardroom and no work, beyond the initial survey of the line, was ever done by Greenhill. In August 1870, a new contract was let to Henry Jackson, whereupon Greenhill took the company to court for 'breach of contract'.[50] The company successfully defended its action against Greenhill; the court upheld the view that the original contract was so vague that it could not be deemed binding. The new contractor started construction in the late summer of 1870 with a ceremony at Shide, following which, work started in earnest at Sandown. By the summer of 1871, notice had been given for the purchase of land between Sandown and Shide and the notice for land from Shide to Coppins Bridge was about to be served.[51] Excavations started at Shide on the left hand side of the road leading to Blackwater; the River Medina being diverted. Adjacent to Coppins Bridge, land owned by the Corporation of Newport, was leased to the company at a peppercorn rent for a term of 1,000 years subject to the line being carried across the land at a height of 17 feet. In addition the railway was to build a rail-connected quay 300 feet in length, to reclaim marshland and to deepen the River Medina to 9 feet.[52] Douglas Fox was the engineer for the line and a large number of workmen were engaged on the project.

By the autumn work was progressing, but only very slowly. The half-yearly meeting of the proprietors took place in the Bugle Hotel, Newport, on 28 February 1872. Delays were reported due to the wet weather but there was hope that the line would be ready by the summer. At this stage, the Ryde and Newport Railway was promoting its Bill for a line from the Isle of Wight Railway at Ryde to Newport in competition with the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway, and the board resolved to oppose the scheme. The original idea of a terminus at Shide was abandoned in favour of one at Pan Lane, although how this

was to be achieved is not clear as the company was not in possession of the land and certainly did not have the capital for it.[53] By the summer it was hoped that the line from Sandown to Horringford would be open and arrangements were made with Newport coach proprietor H. Mew to operate a connecting road service between Horringford and Newport.[54] On 13 April 1872, the first trial trip was made from Horringford to Sandown and back conveying the contractor, officials and Newport councillors. A second trial took place on 22 May 1872, after which the directors saw fit to air some grievances as little money had been put up locally and the company was in a poor financial situation, having already been the subject of a Chancery suit. Nevertheless, the first portion of the line was more or less complete; it was properly ballasted and the platform at Sandown finished and signalled. Despite the Board of Trade inspector refusing to pass the line on 22 May 1872, the company '...proposed to run a half-hourly service between Sandown and Horringford on Coronation Day.'[55] The company, not having received sanction from the Board of Trade to do so, was unable to run any trains itself, but successfully got round the problem by allowing the contractor to provide them. Jackson, having removed his own engine, hired a Beattie 2-4-0 well tank, No. 36 *Comet*, from the London and South Western Railway. The Board of Trade also raised objections regarding the state of the metals, pointing out that the second hand rails from the London and South Western Railway were unfit for further use. No further work was done on the line and to make matters worse Jackson filed a petition for bankruptcy shortly afterwards. In 1873 work once again got under way. An arrangement was made between the company and Jackson's trustee to enable him to finish the line. At the end of April new rails arrived, 105 tons being unloaded at Newport and 300 tons at Brading Quay.[56] The old rails were taken up and sold to the Ryde Pier Company. The fencing between Shide and Pan Lane was completed. The *Isle of Wight Chronicle* reported, '...it is hoped this summer will witness the opening of the railway to Pan Lane at least. This is a consummation devoutly to be desired, and we trust that it will be accomplished.'[57] By May work was being undertaken on the whole line between Sandown and Coppins Bridge. A Board of Trade inspection on 29 August 1873 found the rails to be satisfactory but the signalling unsuitable. A further inspection was carried out in October but again the line was failed because there was no footbridge at Sandown. This was in place by the end of November. The company had obtained a further Act in 1872 empowering it to raise further capital, and the money thus injected enabled the works to press ahead so that by the close of 1873 the line was all but complete from Sandown to Pan Lane. Attempts to open the railway in time for the 1874 season did

not meet with success. After remedial work had been undertaken, Col. Rich, for the Board of Trade, finally passed the section from Sandown to Pan Lane on Saturday 30 January 1875.

The company was unable to fulfil their obligations to the London and South Western Railway for the hire of *Comet* and the owners took steps to retrieve their engine a month prior to the opening. An agreement was then made with the Isle of Wight Railway to manage the line and to help with motive power. The company also purchased a 2-2-2 well tank, No. 10 *Queen Mab*, third hand, from the London and North Western Railway for £750. Although not old it was in poor condition and gave constant trouble. The line was worked by the Isle of Wight Railway for a fixed weekly sum. This '...tended to ensure efficiency and punctuality.'[58] It was suggested that no time should be lost extending from Shide to Pan Lane where a temporary station was required; the station at Shide was too far from the centre of Newport and very inconvenient for passengers. Even so, the company enjoyed a successful 1875 season but was heavily committed to the works necessary to join the line with the Ryde and Newport Railway before crossing the River Medina into the new Newport station. On 11 August the line opened from Shide to Pan Lane,[59] only for the service to be stopped by the Board of Trade two weeks later.[60] After inspection it re-opened on 6 October 1875. Despite the heavy summer traffic the company's financial position was poor and in September some of the unissued shares were sold by public auction for the best price that could be obtained. Matters were made worse by the opening of the Ryde and Newport Railway on 20 December 1875, effectively routing traffic from Ryde away from the Sandown-Newport route.

The company also found itself involved in expensive litigation with the Ryde and Newport Railway in connection with the works that the Borough of Newport had insisted on before the River Medina could be bridged. The Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway was authorised in its incorporating Act of 1868 to construct a line from Sandown to join the Cowes and Newport Railway at Newport, both railways running into a new, joint station. In 1872 the Ryde and Newport Railway obtained an authorising Act for their line to the new station at Newport, running into Newport on land already belonging to the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway. Both the 1868 and 1872 Acts deemed that both companies would share this part of the line and the bridge over the River Medina to the

new station and that any disputes between the two companies would be referred to an arbitrator appointed by the companies or the Board of Trade. The Ryde and Newport Railway reached Newport first and appealed to the Railway Commissioners under Section 8 of the Regulation of Railways Act 1873, for adjudication on the way the works should proceed. Mr Samuel Swarbrick, general manager of the North Eastern Railway was appointed arbitrator and in November 1873 published his decision that the Ryde and Newport Railway should build the line and bridge with the expense split between the two companies. The Ryde and Newport Railway completed the work and set about collecting capital from the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway. A court case between the companies ensued, as the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway had no funds with which to pay. In court Mr Webster and Mr Butte represented the Newport Junction company and Mr Castle the Ryde company. The Newport Junction company stated that all the necessary land in their possession had been handed over to the Ryde company for the construction and works but that the works were carried out to plans not agreed at arbitration but to other plans to the advantage of the Ryde company and to the injury of themselves. In answer the Ryde company contended that the court had no jurisdiction in the case under the terms of the 1873 Act and that the real question was on the legal interpretation of Swarbrick's award and their own justification in declining to spend any more money on behalf of the Newport Junction company. Furthermore, the Ryde company stated that they had completed all of their share of the work as required by Swarbrick's award and that if there had been departures from the original plans it had been with the express permission of the Newport Junction's engineer and the Board of Trade. They also stated that the Newport Junction company had not adhered to the original agreement as they were bound to complete their line within one year of opening. This they had not done and were about to open a station of their own at Pan Lane to the serious detriment of the Ryde company. They also maintained that the Newport Junction company were in an insolvent state having never paid for any part of the joint works already constructed and so were justified in refusing to spend any more money on their behalf without guarantees of payment. The Newport Junction company denied this and gave evidence to prove that they had done all in their power to carry out the agreement and that the Ryde company had deliberately carried out work to their advantage and not to the joint benefit of the companies as intended. In the end, the Newport Junction company had no funds with which to settle and there the matter rested.[61]

Meanwhile, the company continued to operate services between Sandown and Pan Lane as best it could. In order to alleviate its financial position the company obtained another Act in 1878 authorising the raising of further capital. Some of the outstanding debt to the Ryde company was paid off and the remainder spent on finishing the works at Newport to enable it to run trains into the joint station. However, the company's troubles were not yet over; debenture holders successfully pressed for arrears of interest and on 23 May, one week before the extension opened, David Derry was appointed Receiver by the Court of Chancery. The line was opened to passenger traffic, without ceremony, on 1 June 1879, though goods traffic had already been using it for some weeks. Pan Lane station closed immediately. Whilst remaining a nominally independent concern, the line was taken over by the Ryde, Newport and Cowes Joint Committee who also undertook to work the line. Here it can clearly be seen how lack of finance hindered the construction and delayed the opening of the line.

The Joint Committee's line between Ryde Pier Head and Ryde St John's Road.

The construction of a railway in an urban environment can be illustrated by the short railway that was built in Ryde from Ryde Pier Head along a pier to Ryde Esplanade and then by a cut and cover tunnel to connect with both the Isle of Wight Railway and the Ryde and Newport Railway at Ryde St John's Road. This double line was to replace an earlier tramway between the pier and St John's Road and allowed the through running of Isle of Wight Railway and Ryde and Newport Railway trains. The new line was to be only 1 mile 16 chains long but was to prove difficult and costly to build. It was to be built and run jointly by the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway and the London and South Western Railway, both mainland companies. The latter's engineer, W. Jacomb, was in overall charge; Ernest Benedict was the resident engineer with J. Wyke-Jacomb-Hood as his assistant. The contractors for the tunnel section were Messrs. Perry and Company of Bow, London. Messrs. Cochrane and Company was responsible for the pier construction with Horsley and Company of Tipton providing the ironwork. Contracts was signed in December 1877 with an estimated construction cost of £750,000.[62] Capital expenditure of this kind was well beyond the resources of the smaller Island companies.

In February 1878, work started on the 'cut and cover' tunnel. The new pier, alongside the old one, was well under way by the end of the year.[63] The work continued apace in 1879.

The Ryde Pier Company was unhappy as trade was being taken from their pier and tramway. They claimed £125,000 in compensation from the Joint Committee. This went to arbitration and was reduced to £12,541. The Ryde Pier Company were unhappy at this and went to appeal, where the sum was reduced even further![64]

The work progressed well. The rail link to the Pier Gates was virtually complete by January 1880. On 20 February 1880 Col. Yolland, H. M. Inspector of Railways from the Board of Trade, joined with railway officials to inspect the line from Ryde St John's Road to Pier Gates. Apart from the incomplete bridge at Park Lane, the line and tunnel were found to be satisfactory. However, the opening was delayed by a dispute with the Town Council over the failure to provide adequate access to George Street slipway.[65] The line to Pier Gates was opened, without ceremony, on 5 April 1880 and worked by the Isle of Wight Railway. The old terminus at Ryde then became officially known as Ryde St John's Road and the station at Pier Gate as Ryde Esplanade. The railway along the pier was opened to the Pier Head on 12 July 1880. The *Shanklin Weekly News* described the pier as being '...extensive and having every accommodation for luggage and passengers' and that '...the enterprise of the railway companies is to be highly commended, and that the inhabitants of the town cannot fail to derive a very substantial benefit from it.'[66] The Ryde and Newport Railway started using the line in October of that year.

The Bembridge branch.

The building of the Bembridge branch railway was unique in that the line was to be built, for most of its length, on reclaimed seabed. In addition to building an embankment between Bembridge and St Helens, the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company was authorised by the Brading Harbour Improvement, Railway and Works Act 1874, to build a railway from the Isle of Wight Railway's Brading Quay Siding via St Helens to Bembridge, along with a rail-connected port at St Helens. Here the problems of building an embankment can be described along with the detailed construction of the railway.

In December 1876, the company bought, from the trustees of the late Sir Henry Oglander, the whole of Brading Haven. Work was begun in spring 1877 on reclaiming the estuary. Sluices at St Helens would allow the flow of the River Eastern Yar to sweep the new quays

free of silt. Two similar stations were built at St Helens and Bembridge in 1877. This date may be seen in the brickwork on the gable end of St Helens station; the date occupied a similar position on Bembridge station building, which has now been demolished. The stations were both built in advance of the construction of the line presumably so that its opening would not be delayed. It is said that some in the company had an eye for private enterprise and the story goes that the building used for the original telephone exchange in Bembridge was built from bricks intended for the station. It is rumoured that adjoining cottages in Seymour Place were also built with similarly obtained materials. So extensive was this practice that it has been calculated that the bricks for Bembridge station cost one-pound each.[67]

Meanwhile, preparations for the extension of the railway from Brading to Bembridge were being made. In June 1878, the board of the Isle of Wight Railway gave instruction to arrange the junction with the Brading Harbour Railway (sic) at Brading.[68] There is reference in February 1879 to a Brading Harbour company engine being on the Isle of Wight Railway jetty at Brading Quay.[69] This would probably have been the locomotive *St Helens*. In June 1879 repairs to Brading Quay were authorised by the board of the Isle of Wight Railway and undertaken during that summer.[70] Minutes of the board meeting of May 1880 indicate that Brading station was to be enlarged to accommodate trains from the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company.[71]

The reclaiming of the seabed was not without incident.[72] Under the direction of engineer Mr James Walker, who later became engineer-in-chief of the River Tyne, work started in 1875 on the embankment that was to cut off the estuary from the sea. The large new harbour, to seaward of the embankment, did not affect the tidal mill at St Helens. This new harbour was to be known as Bembridge Harbour. To construct the embankment thousands of tons of chalk, rubble and clay were brought from Bembridge Down by horse and cart, and from Portsdown Hill, north of Portsmouth, by boat. Sluices were constructed for the outflow of the River Eastern Yar. Great difficulty was encountered in closing the gap in the embankment.[74] Three initial attempts were made and all failed, with the result that a gap 70 feet long and 15 feet deep at high water spring tides remained. Mr Saunders, engineer, called in the firm of Gardeners for advice and they submitted a plan on which he acted. A dam was constructed by driving two rows of timber piles 15 feet into the clay. The piles were to be 13 inches square and 12 feet apart. The tops of the piles were at a

height of five feet above low water spring tides. Baulks of timber were bolted onto the front of the first row and to the second row so as to make a box-like construction. The two rows of piles were then braced together with more substantial timbers. Sheet piling was then driven into the clay immediately behind the front row of piles. The space between the rows of piles was then filled with bags of sand with chalk on either side of the piles to form a slope of 45°. Meanwhile a bank of chalk two or three feet above low water was constructed at a distance of 200 yards to the rear of the dam; this bank prevented the worst of the scour on the last of the outgoing tide. On the main embankment long piles were then driven inside of the inner front line of piles and walling, having their tops 19 feet above the low water mark. These were braced to the rear piles. Sand was deposited behind as the embankment grew. The base of the dam below the top of the sheet piling was strengthened with clay with sand above. By this means the sea was shut out on 26 June 1879. To celebrate the completion cricket match was played on the reclaimed ground.[75] There are no recorded details of the teams or the result! Mr Bill Langworthy of Hillway, Bembridge, remembers the original embankment as being just wide enough for a footpath.[73] His father had come to Bembridge to work on the construction of the embankment and was employed by the contractors Scott and Edwards of Melmerby, Yorkshire

Disaster struck on 18 October 1879, a Sunday morning, when the sea breached the embankment at a point where Bembridge Sailing Club now stands. The extra high spring tide caused a five to six foot flood over the reclaimed land, which swept away everything in its path including thousands of tons of chalk, tree trunks and a steam pile-driver. The pile-driver still lies buried under the roadway. A horse and cart was also lost and the carter drowned. The depth of water in the gap, at high water, was as much as 22 feet. The first attempt to mend the gap was by the construction of a cofferdam in the rear of the old line similar to the first. Soil and rock were removed from a field near Hill Grove estate using 40 carts and the clay and chalk were thrown in behind the sheet piling.[76] However, the scour was so great that the main piles were loosened. This and a further attempt failed. The cofferdam was again restored, a barge sunk in the gap, and at last the sea was finally shut out on 23 February 1880. The embankment was then widened to 35 feet at the top and a road, connecting Bembridge to St Helens, made on it. The total cost of filling the gap and reconstructing the embankment was £10,000.[77]

The railway line was inspected by Col. Yolland R. E.. In his report, dated 25 May 1882 he found that the railway '...commences in an end on junction with the Brading branch of the Isle of Wight Railway near Brading Quay and terminates at Bembridge, a length of 2 miles 14.3 chains. The line is single throughout with sidings at a Brick Yard, at St Helens station and at Bembridge. The land has not been purchased nor any arrangements made for an additional line at any future period.'[78] On a short branch line such as this it would not have been necessary to double the line at vast extra expense; with an end-to-end journey time of 12 minutes all the traffic could be accommodated on a single line.

The track was made of cut sleepers of Baltic timber, rectangular in shape, the average being 10" wide by 5" deep and 9' long. These were placed 2' 6" apart, reduced to 1' 10" at the rail joints. The rails themselves were 72 lbs. per yd., in lengths of 21, 22 and 24 feet, and joined by two fishplates and four bolts at each joint. Fang bolts and dog spikes secured the rails to the sleepers. The formation was 20 feet wide on top of which shingle ballast was laid to a depth of 1' 6". This was typical at the time for a single-track branch line.

The track was fenced partly by five-wire iron wire fencing four feet high with posts nine feet apart. There were no brick bridges but two viaducts of timber, one of three yards and the other of 44 yards. There were no level crossings. The steepest gradient was 1 in 100 and the sharpest curve 12 chains. This suggests that the construction was relatively simple, the line being on an embankment for much of its course. The only major engineering feature would have been the 44 yard wooden trestle bridge over the River Eastern Yar. Commercially the line had to run on the north side of the Haven to St Helens, to serve the quays and the passengers generated by the village, before crossing the river to serve Bembridge on the south side of the Haven.

Signalling on the branch was provided by Stevens and Son. At the siding at Brick Field a frame was built with four levers, the points being locked by an Annett's key, which was kept at St Helens station. At St Helens station the signal box contained 10 levers, all of which were in use. At Bembridge a similar signal box was built, again with 10 levers, all being in use. Col. Yolland found the locking of the signal frame to be correct. He pointed out where fencing was required alongside the River Eastern Yar and at Brick Field and also recommended that the guardrails on the two viaducts should be brought within seven

or eight inches of the line as they were too far away. He wrote, '...I am informed that the line is to be worked by the Isle of Wight Railway Company and that only one engine in steam carrying a train staff is to be used between Brading and Bembridge.'[78] He asked the company to send him an undertaking to that effect. On 25 May 1882 the Isle of Wight Railway sent a letter to the Board of Trade confirming the arrangement.

Col. Yolland also reported on the existing Brading Quay branch which was owned by the Isle of Wight Railway.[79] He commented that the Brading Quay branch started at Brading station and terminated at an end-on junction with the Brading Harbour Railway, a length of 43 chains. There was land for a single line only and the formation was 20 feet wide. The sleepers were 10" wide, 5" deep and 8' 11" long. Two types of rail were used. Flat bottomed rails of 70 lbs. per yd. in lengths of 21 and 24 feet long were secured to the sleepers by fang bolts and double headed rails were held in 36 lbs. iron chairs by oak keys outside the rails. The chairs were secured to the sleepers by spiked tree nails. Sleepers were 2' 10" apart except at the joints were they were 1' 10" apart. Sandstone ballast was laid on the formation to a depth of 15". There was one culvert but no bridges or viaducts. The track was fenced by post and rail fencing 3' 6" in height and a short portion of iron hurdles. Brading station platform was 337' long and 2' 7" high. The steepest gradient was 1 in 150 and the sharpest curve was 12 chains. A new signal box was built at Brading, which contained a locking frame with 30 levers, two of which were spare. He commented that point lever No.19 should lead signal lever No.3 and be back locked by levers No.2 and No.3. He also asked for a name board on the down platform and the crossings at the front of the platform ramps to be boarded. At Brading Quay level crossing a signal box with eight levers was provided, all of which were in use. He concluded by saying that the whole line was in good order and that there had been working by goods traffic for many years. In fact an Isle of Wight Railway letter of 15 May 1882 suggested that the line had been used for goods traffic between St Helens and Brading since August 1878. The line opened with due ceremony on Saturday 27 May 1882. Thus, the considerable effort in reclaiming land from the sea and the building of a railway can be seen in detail. It is also interesting to note how the Government, through the Board of Trade, regulated the building of the railway.

The Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway.

The last railway to be built on the Island was the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway between Merstone and Ventnor. Here, another company, the Isle of Wight Central Railway, had control over the construction of the line. The Act, authorising the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway to construct a line of five miles and five furlongs from Merstone on the Isle of Wight Central Railway line to St Lawrence, received Royal Assent on 12 August 1889. It allowed two years for the compulsory purchase of the land and five years for the construction. The contract was awarded on 8 August 1891 to Messrs. Westwood and Winley, who hoped to start construction by the beginning of October, depending on the purchase of the land. The contractor's engineer was Mr Charles Minns.[80] By autumn 1891 the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway line had been surveyed and pegged out. However, very little work was carried out until 1893, when the first sod was ceremonially cut. The Isle of Wight Central Railway officers and board had complete control over the finance and construction of the line and works had to give their approval for any expenditure. The boring of the St Lawrence tunnel, through the lower stratum of the Upper Greensand, caused few problems as the stone was '...soft, dry and easily worked.'[81] Two teams, working from either end, joined on 2 February 1895. An interesting event occurred at this stage as sixty to seventy navvies went on strike on the Whitwell section of the line. They argued that navvies on other sections were getting 5d. an hour and they got only 4½d.. The matter was not resolved and most left the area. Mr Phillips, the manager, was not able to replace them.[82] The Board of Trade's inspection of the line on 17 July 1897 proved successful, and the line was passed, subject to some remedial work being carried out. Ventnor was always the final goal and the line was extended to the town and opened to traffic on 1 June 1900. This was the last line to be built on the Island and brought to a halt the phase of railway construction.

Conclusion.

This chapter considers the processes and problems of railway construction. The building of the Cowes and Newport Railway, the first on the Island, illustrates the factors that needed to be taken into account and the decisions that needed to be made in deciding on the best route for a line. The construction of the Isle of Wight Railway, between Ryde and Ventnor, allows description and analysis of the construction techniques involved in building a line, and in particular the boring of a lengthy tunnel. The building of the Ryde and Newport Railway demonstrates the processes involved in construction, the difficult

financial position of contractors and the problems of connecting with the line of another railway company. The construction of the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway, between Newport and Sandown, allows the examination of a line that was poorly funded, the problems of building a railway in an urban area and the ensuing legal conflict with the Ryde and Newport Railway for works that allowed access to the joint station at Newport. The construction of a line through a built up area, along a pier, through a 'cut and cover' tunnel, to an end-on junction with another railway is described with respect to the short 'joint railway' line between Ryde Pier Head and Ryde St John's Road. The building of the Bembridge branch cannot be divorced from the total regeneration and transformation of its surrounding area with an embankment was built, a railway constructed over the sea bed and the development of a hotel and the infrastructure associated with a port; a massive undertaking. On the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway the Isle of Wight Central Railway had financial control over the building of the line.

Between the 15 October 1859, the starting of work on the Cowes and Newport Railway, and the 1 June 1900, the opening of the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway to Ventnor, eight major lines were constructed on the Island, totalling 55½ miles. The construction of each line had unique problems and issues that had to be resolved before the Board of Trade would sanction the line for passenger traffic.

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Chapter 5.

The impact of the railways on population, urban growth and tourism.

By 1900, hundreds of small hamlets and villages around the coast of Britain had become towns; urbanisation had gone on apace with houses, hotels and a complete infrastructure being built, all within a lifetime. Where the railways failed to penetrate, villages remained small and picturesque; where the railways arrived, bringing 'trippers', the rate of urban growth was far greater. So much so, that by the end of the Victorian period, the seaside resort had changed its character, with the wealthy and smart moving away to more select locations. Mass-tourism brought prosperity to many. However, from the onset it must be remembered that the railways were just one factor that could account for the growth of the urban areas; increased personal mobility, industrialisation, improvements in agriculture and improvements in sea communications were all factors that collectively accounted for the growth of the towns during the nineteenth century.

The aim of this chapter is to consider the relationship between the development of railways and population growth, urban development and the growth of tourism on the Isle of Wight with especial reference to the towns in the Eastern Wight served by the Isle of Wight Railway, namely Ventnor, Shanklin, Sandown and Ryde. On the Island, a four-stage model, shown in Table 5.1, would seem an appropriate framework in which to describe the changes that occurred during the nineteenth century.

Table 5.1 Model for railway development in the Isle of Wight.

Phase	Dates	Description
Phase 1	1801 -1830	Pre-railway period.
Phase 2	1831 - 1860	Development of the mainland mainlines and steamboat services.
Phase 3	1861 -1880	Building of the main Island railway network joining the main towns.
Phase 4	1881 - 1900	Building of the peripheral Island branch lines.

In Phase 1, the pre-railway period, population growth, urbanisation and tourism had just started on the Island. In Phase 2, the growth of railways on the mainland, particularly the building of the London and South Western and the London, Brighton and South Coast Railways, can be shown to have a significant effect in promoting the Island as a

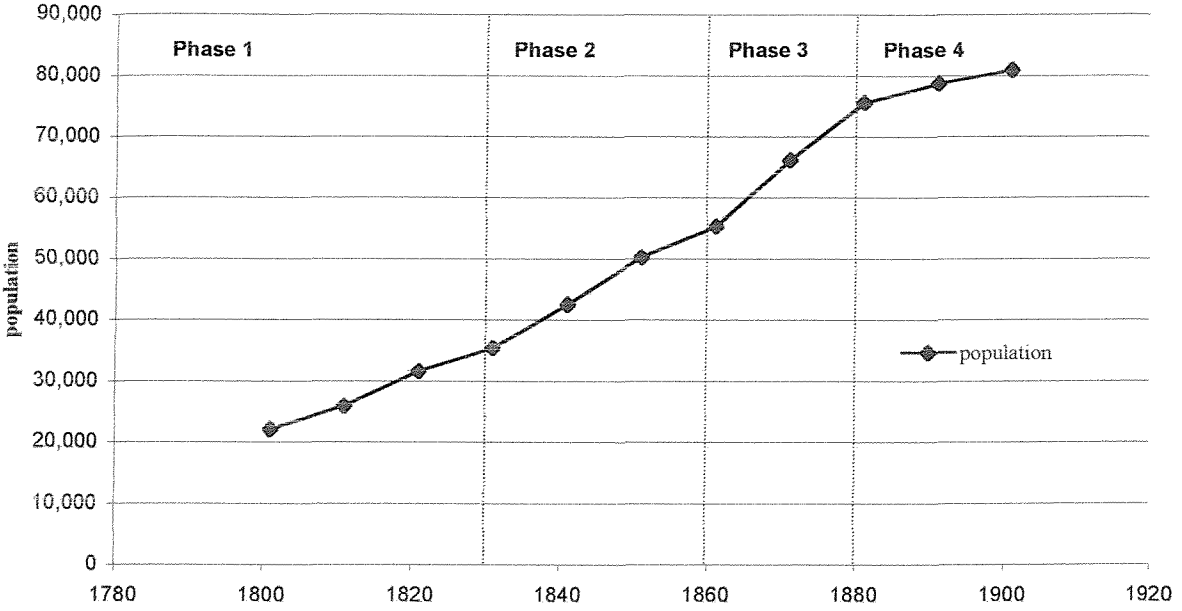
tourist destination, encouraging urban growth. The steamers complemented the railways. Regular steamers from Lymington, Southampton and Portsmouth were the only way for visitors to get to the Island. The London and Southampton Railway opened its main line from Nine Elms, London, to Southampton on 11 May 1840. This, coupled with the development of the port of Southampton, led to considerable prosperity for the town. Southampton had a number of natural advantages; it was on a deep-water estuary sheltered by the Isle of Wight, it had a low tidal range and double high tides. Initially, the Southampton, London and Branch Railway and Dock Company was interested in promoting the port but when they opted out the Southampton Dock Company took over obtaining their Act in 1836. A new dock, south east of the London and Southampton terminus, was started on 12 October 1838 and completed four years later on 29 August 1842. It enabled Southampton to become a major port dealing mainly with cross channel and international trade but local traffic to the Isle of Wight also became important.

In Phase 3 the first railway built on the Island connected Cowes and Newport in 1862. By 1880 all the main towns had become rail-connected. The railways were particularly valuable in assisting the growth of groups of adjacent coastal resorts. The Isle of Wight Railway from Ryde reached Sandown and Shanklin in 1864, and Ventnor two years later. These four are still the main coastal resorts on the Island and provide the opportunity to study in more depth the effect a railway could have on the towns it served. Phase 4, at the end of the century, is characterised by the development of peripheral branch lines to Bembridge and Ventnor.

The growth of population.

The primary data source is the national census between 1801 and 1901, taken for each parish on the Island. A major problem here is that the main centres of urban growth are not always wholly or uniquely in one parish. For example, in Victorian times the parish of Newchurch stretched right across the Island from north to south and included parts of the towns of both Ryde and Shanklin. To complicate matters further, the eastern part Ryde lay in the parish of St Helens. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence to analyse, in broad terms, the effects the railways had on the growth of the towns and tourism.

Figure 5.1 Population of the Isle of Wight, 1801 - 1901.



The population growth of the Isle of Wight is shown in Figure 5.1. In 1801 the population of the Island was small, only 22,097, and mainly rural. Newport was the largest settlement, having a population of 3,585. It was connected to Carisbrooke that had a population of 2,352. The other major urban areas were Cowes and Ryde. The exact populations of these two towns are difficult to establish as Cowes was in the large parish of Northwood, which had a population of 2,771, and Ryde, in the even larger parish of Newchurch, which had a population of 2,039. The only other parishes with populations over 1,000 were Arreton, Brading, Godshill and Whippingham, all being largely rural in nature. By 1901 the population on the Island had risen to 80,911, an average increase of 2.66% per year. This can be considered a high rate of growth and is slightly greater than that of England and Wales, which had an average increase of 2.44% per year in the same time period.

A more detailed 10-year analysis (Table 5.2) shows that the four phases of railway development correlate with actual population increase. In the first thirty years of the century, Phase 1, the population grew by 13,334 from 22,097 to 35,431, giving an average growth rate of 444 per year. In the next thirty years, 1832 to1861, Phase2, growth was greater with population rising by 19,931 to 55,362, giving an average growth rate of 664 per year. The largest population increase was between 1862 and 1881 when an increase of 20,271 gave a growth rate of 1014 per year. This

Table 5.2 Population growth, IW and England and Wales, 1801 to 1901.

	Actual Increase	Percentage increase, IW	Percentage increase, Eng & Wales
1801-1811	3,841	1.7 %	1.6%
1812-1821	5,669	2.2	1.8
1822-1831	3,824	1.2	1.6
1832-1841	7,119	2.0	1.6
1842-1851	7,774	1.8	1.3
1852-1861	5,038	1.0	1.2
1862-1871	10,857	1.9	1.3
1872-1881	9,414	1.4	1.4
1882-1891	3,129	0.4	1.2
1892-1901	4,149	0.3	1.2

coincides with Phase 3 and strongly suggests that the opening of the railways had an important part to play in this growth. Between 1882 and 1901, in Phase 4 of the model, the growth of population slowed to 264 per year.

The increase in population can be accounted for in four ways as illustrated by this simple formula:

Natural increase

Population change = Birth rate – Death rate + Inmigration – Outmigration

In the early nineteenth century birth rates were high in Britain, certainly over 30 per thousand per year. A large number of children were born to counter losses due to a high rate of infant mortality. In the early part of the century, crude death rates were also high due to disease, poor hygiene, lack of sanitation and a lack of primary medical care. From 1850, the crude death rate dramatically reduced due to improvements in medical care, sanitation, water treatment and improved transport. With death rates reducing and the birth rate still high, there was a high rate of natural increase and therefore a high population growth rate. Nevertheless, this process cannot wholly account for the increase in population on the Island and, as will be seen later, by a more in-depth study of Shanklin, inmigration to the Island and a redistribution of population from rural to urban also help to explain the general rise in population and urban growth on the Island.

Table 5.3 Opening dates of the railways of the Isle of Wight.

Phase	Company	Places linked	Opening date
Phase 3	Cowes and Newport Railway.	Cowes – Newport.	1862
	Isle of Wight Railway (Eastern Section) Railway.	Ryde St John's Rd – Shanklin.	1864
	Isle of Wight Railway (Eastern Section) Railway.	Ryde St John's Rd – Ventnor.	1866
	Ryde and Newport Railway.	Ryde St John's Rd – Newport.	1875
	Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway.	Sandown - Shide.	1875
	Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway.	Sandown – Pan Lane, Newport.	1879
	Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway.	Sandown - Newport	1880
	London Brighton and South Coast Railway and the London and South Western Railway.	Ryde St John's Rd – Ryde Pier Head.	1880
Phase 4	Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company.	Brading - Bembridge.	1882
	Freshwater, Yarmouth and Newport Railway.	Newport - Freshwater.	1889
	Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway.	Merstone – St Lawrence.	1897
	Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway.	Merstone – Ventnor Town.	1900

Railways feature as a factor to consider in explaining the population growth in the last 40 years of the century. This corresponds to Phases 3 and 4 in the railway development model. The opening of the various lines is shown in Table 5.3. Thus, by 1880, all the main towns bar Freshwater were rail-connected. An integrated railway network linked Cowes, Newport, Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor, with Newport in the centre. Newport's dominance in the urban structure of the Island and the pattern of an urbanised East Wight and a rural West Wight were firmly established. In general terms, the period of railway building between 1861 and 1882, Phase 3 of the model, becomes very important. It was in this period that the population of the Island rose by over 19,000. The question that remains is whether the railways promoted the urban growth or the urban growth promoted the railways. A more detailed look at the parishes in the east and centre of the Island might help to throw further light on this question.

Population changes.

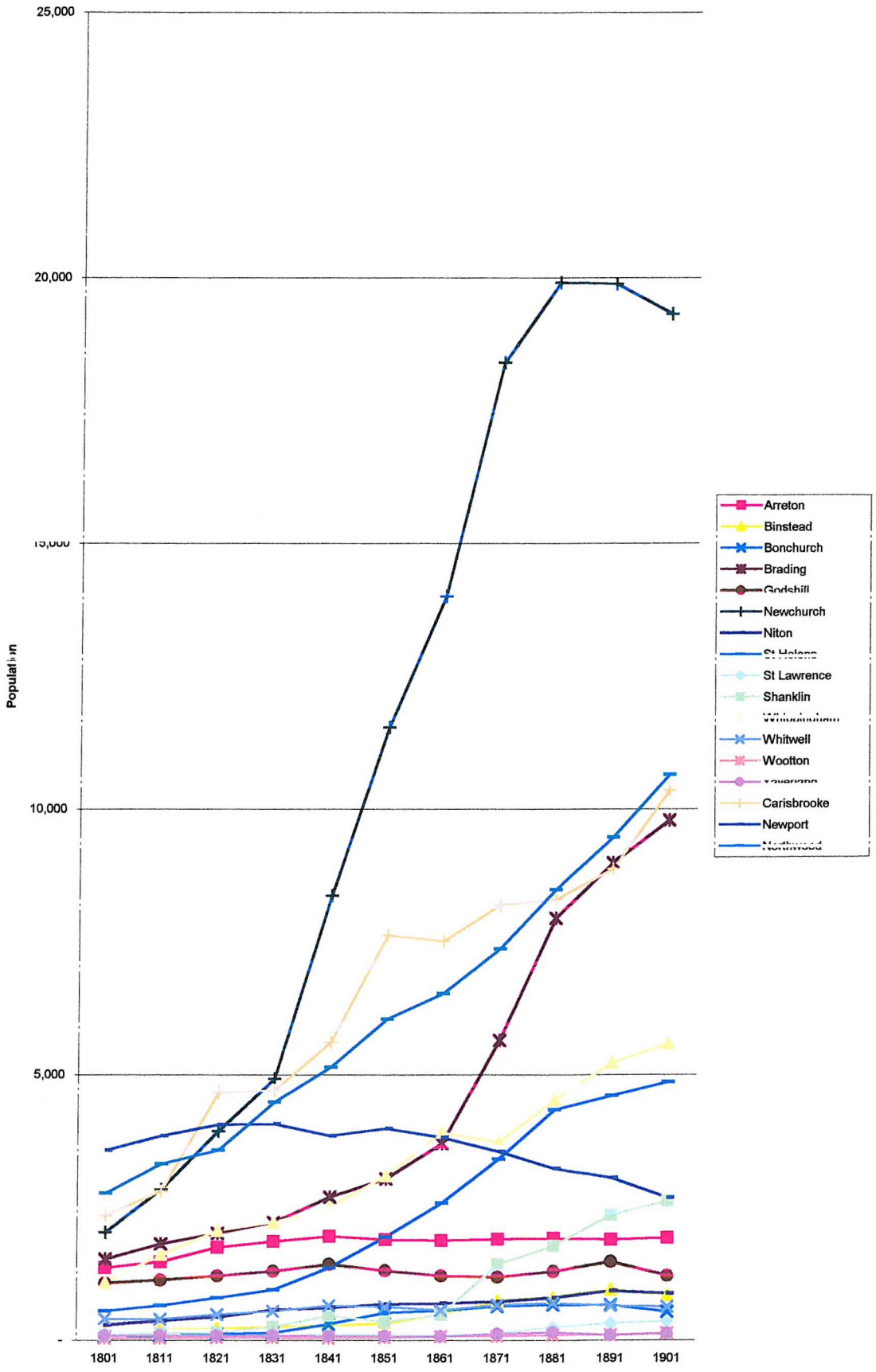
Table 5.4 and Figure 5.2 show the population in each of the parishes in the Eastern and Central Wight at each census date between 1801 and 1901. The method of analysis is to identify the parishes that showed moderate or limited growth during the century and to compare them with the parishes in which growth was high. The proximity of a railway station and the date of opening of the line for passenger traffic can then be discussed in relation to population growth in that parish.

The parishes that show a small growth of population are mainly rural and located in the centre of the Island. The parish of Arreton, a large parish, shows a modest growth of 561 persons between 1801 and 1901. The nearest station to the village of Arreton was Alverstone, opened in 1875, although the stations of both Haven Street and Wootton on the Ryde and Newport Railway also lie within the northern part of the parish. There is little evidence here to suggest that the railway had any influence on population growth. Godshill is very similar with its population rising by only 240 in the same period. Again, the parish was largely rural and the railway, opening in 1875, had little or no influence on its development. Whitwell, adjacent to Godshill, exhibits a small population increase of 228 persons. The railway to St Lawrence opened here in 1897, but again there is little evidence of it contributing to population growth. Niton and St Lawrence lie on the south side of the Island and both show steady population growth during the century, Niton's population rising by 596 and St Lawrence's by 245. The

Table 5.4 Population of the Isle of Wight by parish (selected), 1801 to 1901.

	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Arreton	1,374	1,481	1,757	1,864	1,964	1,902	1,880	1,910	1,920	1,903	1,935
Binstead	180	211	225	258	278	317	486	748	813	961	851
Bonchurch	69	88	122	146	302	523	564	641	670	668	539
Brading	1,529	1,818	2,023	2,227	2,701	3,046	3,709	5,648	7,952	8,994	9,791
Godshill	1,079	1,135	1,214	1,305	1,435	1,316	1,215	1,197	1,302	1,480	1,219
Newchurch	2,039	2,847	3,945	4,928	8,370	11,539	14,008	18,402	19,912	19,890	19,321
Niton	288	370	443	573	613	684	700	732	801	931	884
St Helens	550	658	804	953	1,373	1,948	2,586	3,412	4,343	4,611	4,866
St Lawrence	76	101	96	78	114	111	85	135	249	318	361
Shanklin	105	138	155	255	462	355	479	1,432	1,780	2,361	2,621
Whippingham	1,089	1,619	2,068	2,229	2,518	3,100	3,915	3,730	4,528	5,236	5,585
Whitwell	405	397	488	556	660	637	570	666	706	653	633
Wootton	38	52	56	55	51	58	79	82	108	106	134
Yaverland	90	100	92	96	80	78	69	118	153	94	131
Carisbrooke	2,353	2,811	4,670	4,713	5,613	7,630	7,517	8,198	8,304	8,875	10,354
Newport	3,585	3,855	4,059	4,081	3,858	3,994	3,819	3,556	3,237	3,058	2,684
Northwood	2,771	3,325	3,579	4,491	5,147	6,049	6,534	7,374	8,484	9,468	10,649
Total Population	22,097	25,938	31,607	35,431	42,550	50,324	55,362	66,219	75,633	78,762	80,911

Figure 5.2 Population of the Isle of Wight by parish (selected), 1801 to 1901.



nearest railway station to Niton was Whitwell, which opened in 1897. The station at St Lawrence opened to Merstone in 1897 and to Ventnor Town in 1900.

The moderate growth in these parishes is due to an increase in village population as agriculture developed and to the attraction of the south coast for tourists. The railways came late in the century to these areas and did not have a profound effect on population. The parishes that show a large increase of population in the nineteenth century are associated with the towns in the Eastern Wight and on the River Medina. It is in these parishes that the first railway lines were built in the 1860s, with consequential effect on population growth.

As already stated, the parish of Newchurch was a very large one, stretching from the north to the south coast and containing part of the town of Ryde in the north and Ventnor in the south. Between 1801 and 1901 the population rose by 17,282 persons. The major ten-year period of growth was between 1861 and 1871 when the population increased by 4,394 persons. The Isle of Wight Railway joined the two towns in 1866 and could, therefore, be one of the factors that accounted for their population growth. Adjoining Ventnor is Bonchurch and here again the railway could be considered a factor in its population growth. The population of Bonchurch in 1801 was only 69 and rose to 851 by 1901, the major period of growth being again the period between 1861 and 1871 when the population grew from 564 to 641. The nearest station was Ventnor, which opened in 1866. To the east, on the coast and also on the Isle of Wight Railway, was the parish of Shanklin. In 1801, the population was 105; by 1901 it was 2,621, the largest period of growth again being between 1861 and 1871 when the population increased by 953 persons. The railway from Ryde opened in 1864 and must be considered a major factor in its growth.

The parish of Brading, served by the Isle of Wight Railway, also shows a rapid growth of population during the century from 1,529 in 1801, to 9,791 in 1901. The parish includes a large area of Sandown, which grew as a resort during this period. The major period of growth was between 1861 and 1881 when the population rose by 4,243 persons. The Isle of Wight Railway opened stations at Brading and Sandown in 1864 and the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway opened its line from Newport to Sandown in 1875. The Bembridge branch opened to Brading in 1882. Here the railway

had a role to play in the population growth of Sandown, although Brading still remained relatively small. The parish of St Helens, which included the eastern part of Ryde, grew rapidly by 4,316 persons between 1801 and 1901. Again the main period of growth was between 1861 and 1881 when the parish increased by 1,757 persons. It is no coincidence that the Isle of Wight Railway opened to Ventnor from Ryde in 1866 and the Ryde and Newport Railway to Ryde in 1875. However, the village of St Helens remained relatively small despite the building of a rail-connected port in 1882.

The parish of Northwood contains the town of Cowes. The parish showed a healthy rise in population during the last century, rising from 2,771 in 1801, to 10,694 in 1901. The two main periods of growth were between 1841 and 1851, when the population rose by 902, and between 1861 and 1871, when the population increased by 840. This second period of growth coincided with the opening of the Cowes and Newport Railway in 1862, which would have been a factor in the continued growth of the town. The town of Newport is divided between the parishes of Whippingham, Newport and Carisbrooke, which show curiously different trends. Whippingham was a large parish that not only had the town of East Cowes within it, in the north, but also the eastern residential area of Newport. The parish grew by 4,496 persons between 1801 and 1901. The main period of growth was between 1871 and 1891 when the population rose by 1,506. East Cowes was never rail-connected, the nearest station being in West Cowes, which involved crossing the River Medina by chain ferry. The population of the parish of Newport dropped between 1801 and 1901 from 3,585 to 2,684. This parish contained the central part of the town, the loss of population perhaps coinciding with the expansion of industry and services replacing housing. The parish of Carisbrooke, which included the western, more residential part of the town of Newport, shows substantial growth between 1801 and 1901, with population rising from 2,353 to 10,354. Two major periods of growth can be identified, the first between 1861 and 1871, when population rose by 681 persons. This corresponds with the growth of Cowes and also the opening of the Cowes and Newport Railway in 1862. The second period was between 1891 and 1901, when the population increased by 1,499. By this time Newport was well established as the railway hub of the Island, with lines leading to Ventnor, Sandown, Ryde, Cowes and Freshwater, surely contributing considerably to the growth of Newport as the largest settlement on the Island.

It can therefore be clearly demonstrated that the opening of a railway had an influence on the population growth in a parish. Where the railways arrived early there was the potential for urban and population growth. The opening of the Isle of Wight Railway from Ryde to Ventnor in 1866 had a profound impact on the populations of Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor. Similarly the opening of the Cowes and Newport Railway in 1862 had an impact on the towns it connected. Newport became the railway hub of the Island with lines radiating to all parts and this accounted, in part, for its growth in the later part of the century. In contrast the rural parishes in the centre and south of the Island, to which the railways came later, did not show the same increase in population. In essence the opening of the first railways on the Island enabled the towns and villages that they served to get a head start in urban growth and development.

Tourism and the railways.

Watering places have always been part of the history of England and Wales. The Romans valued the mineral waters of Bath. Places like Tunbridge Wells, Epsom and Scarborough were visited for their waters in the seventeenth century.[1] Recognition of the medicinal benefits of the sea started in the seventeenth century, reportedly in Scarborough, where there were already mineral springs. Here Dr Richard Russell started to use seawater as a cure for various diseases. He mixed half a pint of seawater with either milk or port as a cure for scurvy, jaundice, gout or gonorrhoea. By the mid-nineteenth century the seaside resorts were beginning to replace the inland spas as the places for the rich and wealthy to be at and be seen. George III made Weymouth into a health resort and George IV promoted Brighton in a similar manner.

In the early years of the nineteenth century the number of resorts in Britain multiplied rapidly. Each resort had its own character. Seaside resorts, of which the Isle of Wight was to have many, were either small and sedate or teeming and vulgar. The reason that many developed so quickly was an improvement in transport. On the mainland visitors were already being conveyed in large numbers to and from the resorts, not by land transport but by water. It was claimed by 1800 that '...over 18,000 passengers were carried every year between London and Margate by sailing boats.'[1] This number increased with the advent of steam driven boats; by 1830 the number had risen to 95,000. Steamers also appeared on the Clyde, Mersey, Tyne and, not surprisingly, the

Solent. It was therefore the steamboat that first facilitated this mass movement of people.

However, by the 1840s, it was the railways that accounted for the growth of many seaside resorts. This can be shown with reference to Brighton. In 1830 the fastest coach took just over five hours to travel the 50 miles from London to Brighton, which had become very popular as a health resort, watering place and stylish town. Between 1801 and 1841 its population grew from 7,000 to 47,000; the railway transformed Brighton.[2] The middle and working classes replaced the upper classes and royalty who had patronised Brighton in the late eighteenth century. One excursion train was supposed to have carried 4,000 people to Brighton in 1846; arrivals came 'en masse'.[3] In 1860 nearly 150,000 excursionists were said to have been brought into the town on a single Sunday and Monday. Not all local people were happy with this as, it was said, it induced idleness and drunkenness on the streets of Brighton.[4]

However, it was Queen Victoria who gave the English seaside resorts the status and recommendation that enabled them to grow into large towns. She wrote in her diary on 30 July 1847, '...drove to the beach with my maid and went into the bathing machine, where I undressed and bathed in the sea, for the first time in my life, a very nice bathing woman attending me. I thought it delightful until I put my head under the water when I thought I should be stifled.' Much of the Island's development and popularity in the nineteenth century was due to Queen Victoria and her Prince Consort, Albert, building their residence at Osborne in 1846. However, there is only one reference to ~~her~~ Queen Victoria using the railway on the Island for travelling to an official function when, on the 11 February 1888, Her Majesty visited the Royal National Hospital at Ventnor.[6] This is very late in the railway history of the Island and although a significant publicity coup for the Isle of Wight Railway and the Isle of Wight Central Railway, adds little to the development of railways on the Island. The only other reference to royalty using the Island's railways was in 1890 when H. R. H. Prince Henry of Battenberg was conveyed by special train from Mill Hill in Cowes to Wroxall.

It was initially the steamer and later the railways that made the coastal resorts of Britain accessible and changed their character. Towns such as Scarborough and Blackpool developed quickly. Public buildings, such as Assembly Rooms and Reading Rooms,

were built along with grand hotels. The resorts developed new entertainments such as street musicians, acrobats, minstrel shows and fair grounds. Most coastal tourist resorts built a pier. To give an indication of the importance of piers to the tourist industry, Bournemouth Pier may be cited.[7] On 22 April 1889, Easter Monday, over 18,000 tourists passed through the turnstiles onto Bournemouth Pier generating an income for the pier company of £95 9s. 6d.. Four steamers patronised the pier on that day carrying over 4,400 passengers. The *Bodrick Castle*, on excursion from Portsmouth, picked up 112 passengers from Yarmouth, 55 from Poole and 357 from Bournemouth. On its return to Portsmouth it carried 397 excursionists. The *Lord Elgin, Victoria* and *Empress* carried over 3,500 passengers between Bournemouth and Swanage on that day.

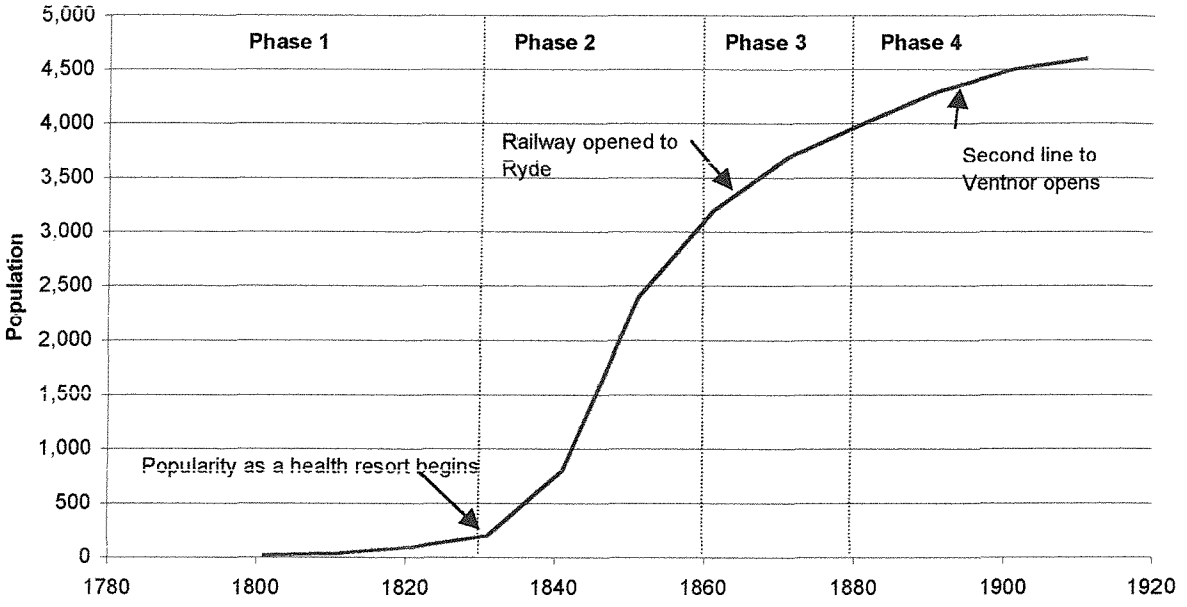
The steamers and later the railways both played a significant part in the development of the tourist industry on the Island. The main period of pier building comes after the main period, Phase 3, of railway building on the Island. With the exception of Ryde Pier, which was a vital link in the communications infrastructure to and from the Island, the building of a pier was an integral part of the development of a tourist town. It has already been shown that Ryde Pier, built in 1814, was instrumental in improving communications to and from the Island. Later in 1859, Victoria Pier was constructed alongside Ryde Pier. Both greatly improved access to the Island but neither was purely for tourists.

On the south coast of the Island three piers were built for the tourist traffic. Sandown Pier was completed on 29 May 1887 and Shanklin Pier on 18 August 1890. Ventnor Pier had an eventful history. By 1881 it consisted of a short landing stage and a pier head. On 27 November 1881, this was all washed away in a severe storm. The Ventnor Pier and Esplanade Company took on the task of building a new pier which was formally opened on Wednesday 19 August 1887 by Sir Richard Webster M. P. and given the name the Royal Victoria Pier.[8] On some days two of the South Coast Company's vessels could be seen at Ventnor Pier; on Tuesday 22 August 1887, the *Empress* and *Premier* sailed from Bournemouth to Ventnor, the *Empress* continuing to Seaview.

The urban growth of Ventnor.

A more detailed analysis of the four towns served by the Isle of Wight Railway in the Eastern Wight with reference to the railway development model will serve to illustrate the influence that the railway had on population growth, urban growth and tourism.

Figure 5.3 Population of Ventnor.



Ventnor, on the south coast of the Island, grew as a town because of the curious association of a particularly unpleasant infection and the railway. The former was consumption, now known as tuberculosis of the lung, and up until the late 1940s there was no effective drug treatment. The only measure available was sanatorium treatment; rest, fresh air and good food. With this regime it was hoped that the body's own defences would do the rest. As early as 1760 the climate of Ventnor and that southern part of the Island known as the Undercliff were recognized as being favourable for sufferers from chest ailments, but no hospital or facilities were in existence. In 1821 Ventnor comprised of a few scattered cottages and a watermill. There were no shops, no roads and no daily postal delivery. The carrier brought letters once a week and the nearest butcher's shop was at Brading. In 1820 Sir Lawrence Peel visited his brother Edmund, a consumptive poet recovering in Ventnor. Of his journey he wrote, '...I found the Island was not easily reached, sailing packages were formidable conveyances to bad sailors and invalids. A post-chaise from Ryde, with a boy to open the various gates, and a post-boy to drive, at 1s. 6d. a mile was expensive.' He also said that

'... unless very provident as to provisions we ran as much risk from dying from famine, by going to the back of the Island, as from consumption.'[9]

As shown in Figure 5.4 the population of Ventnor in 1831 was under 200. In 1846 Sir James Clarke published *The Sanitive Influence of Climate* and recommended the Undercliff for chest sufferers, which gave a welcome boost to the development of Ventnor. More sufferers came to Ventnor than could be accommodated which led to more houses being built, haphazardly, on virtually any piece of land. In 1851, the population of Ventnor had grown to about 2,500 and it was in 1852 that the first proposals for a rail link to Ryde were made. There were a number of schemes, all attracted by the promise of lucrative traffic to Ventnor. However, these schemes came to nothing and it was several years before the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway was proposed to connect Ryde and Ventnor with a line running through Brading, Sandown, and Shanklin and along the coast via the Landslip. The Shanklin to Ventnor part of the route was rejected but replaced by a section running via Wroxall and a long and expensive tunnel to a terminus in an old quarry high above Ventnor. The initial growth of Ventnor, therefore, took place in Phases 1 and 2 of the railway development model.

The opening of the Isle of Wight Railway in 1866 allowed the town to continue to grow, but at a slower rate. This directly correlates with Phase 3 of the railway development model. The Royal National Hospital for Diseases of the Chest was founded at St Lawrence, just west of Ventnor, in 1867 and the Royal Hampshire County Hospital and the London City Mission both opened convalescent homes. Ventnor was now a major resort for curing the sick. The Royal National Hospital was a particularly large affair, built on the cliff top looking straight out to sea.

The opening of the railway brought a great benefit to invalids travelling to the Undercliff from the mainland. Mackett suggests that the relatively high proportion of saloon carriages owned by the Isle of Wight Railway was because of the invalid traffic.[10] In fact, one train was named *The Invalid's Special* and ran non-stop between Ryde Pier Head and Ventnor. Non-stop running would only save a few minutes on the journey but does indicate the importance of a large number of people travelling to

Ventnor for cures or to visit relatives and friends in hospital. Non-stop running ceased in 1904 and *The Invalid's Special* ceased altogether in 1908.

The Isle of Wight Railway did not keep its monopoly on the Ventnor traffic. Phase 4 of the railway development model can be recognised by the opening of a second route to Ventnor. In 1889 the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway was authorised and a further Act in 1896 provided for an extension to Ventnor which opened on 1 June 1900. ~~It's~~ The terminus, Ventnor Town station, was some distance from the town itself but closer to the Royal National Hospital, perhaps looking towards the invalid trade. This line had little effect on the development of Ventnor, which was largely established by this time and the visitors to Ventnor were changing. The invalids dwindled, being replaced by holidaymakers. The invalid trade and the recuperative climate were very important factors in accounting for the initial growth of Ventnor as a resort. This growth must have been important in bringing about the building of railways to Ventnor, which in their turn helped the growth of the town to continue, albeit at a slower rate.

The urban growth of Shanklin.

The relationship between the growth of Shanklin and the arrival of the railway will be examined next, tracing the development of the town from an insignificant, sleepy village into a smart Victorian watering place. In 1824 Brannon wrote:

> Nothing can be more gratifying than the cheerful appearance of the scattered habitations which are clean and neat to a degree, shaded by lofty trees, and adorned with a profusion of flowers, woodbines and myrtles; most of them fitted up for summer lodgings; and the increasing popularity of the village has led to the establishment of a hotel, capable of furnishing excellent accommodations of every kind.[11]

From this it is evident that Shanklin's growth was initiated by tourism in the pre-railway period. Shanklin had a number of natural advantages such as a striking cliff line, a beach, a chine, a chalybeate spring and Dr Fraser's grotto.[12] The chine in particular was a major attraction '...one of those fissures, so common on this coast of the Island. The mouth of the chine, towards the sea, appears to have been rent by some sudden convulsion of nature....' The Rev. Richard Walton White, Lord of the Manor, built a road down the chine to the beach for tourists.[13] Lord Jeffrey in 1846 wrote:

> This village is very small and scattered, all mixed up with trees and lying amongst sweet airy falls and swells of ground, which finally rise up behind to a breezy down 800ft. high and sink down in front to the edge of the varying cliffs which overhang a pretty beach of fine sand and are approachable by a very striking wooded ravine which they call the chine.[14]

It was after 1846 that Shanklin began to develop rapidly and it was the mainland railway that was instrumental in bringing Shanklin into closer contact with London. Railway access to the Island had improved considerably with the London and Southampton Railway opening in 1840, with a branch to Gosport in 1841. Steam navigation had also improved. In Shanklin the local people provided accommodation in their own homes for casual tourists. Wealthier families rented villas for the season and new houses were built.[15] In 1831 Shanklin consisted of 45 houses and 250 people; by 1851 it had increased to 72 houses and 355 people. In 1853 Knight wrote '...the new houses have sprung up to a degree that has, within a few years, considerably altered the appearance of the place.'[16] In 1861 the population was 479 with 96 houses, growing quickly to 1,425 people and 251 houses by 1871, a tripling in size in just 10 years. It is perhaps significant that the Isle of Wight Railway opened its line to Shanklin from Ryde in 1864. However, in 1863 Brannon wrote '...almost every building in the village accommodated visitors in summer and new "large and fashionable buildings" were hidden from each other so the view was still of a quiet hamlet.'[17] Thus it is quite clear that the railway supported the growth of the town rather than initiated it. Some deplored the changes taking place. In 1871 Hill wrote 'In previous years new buildings were made to harmonise with the surrounding scenery due to the refined taste of the owner of the estate, but now the retiring village has swollen into a watering place, and the watering place's greed of gain is making itself manifest.'[18] Not all agreed, as Betts wrote '...new villas added to the beauty of the place.'[19]

Whatever, the expansion was carefully controlled first by Richard Walton White and later Francis White Popham, his son, who were consecutive Lords of the Manor. Richard Walton White conducted the expansion of Shanklin in a conservative manner. In 1841 he refused a building lease on the following grounds '...we do not altogether feel expedient to enlarge the town which exists at present in the lands which lie to the north side of East Cliff Cottages.'[20] Francis White Popham was in his mid-twenties when he inherited the estate. In October 1855 he was presented with a plan by James

Horlock to extend Shanklin. Horlock was not only bailiff for the estate but also a builder and house agent. Francis took advice from the estate's legal adviser, Griffith of Newport, and agreed to build below East Cliff and to let building plots if and when he could. As was expected, the cessation of the Crimean War released more capital for speculation and in turn promoted urban growth. Early in 1856 Griffith printed draft leases for property '...good sized gardens, not too close together', specifying the type of building, use and the responsibilities of the lessee and allowing inspection twice a year.[21] The gardener at East Cliff planned new roads and the building programme was started. Francis' policy was that the expansion should be done steadily, with care, and that monetary gain was not to be the sole aim unlike that of his cousin Charles Popham Hill, Lord of the Manor of Ventnor, who allowed haphazard development to occur in Ventnor in order to stave off bankruptcy.[22] Urbanisation involves more than just the building of houses and in 1855 Francis granted a plot of land for a schoolhouse. The trustees were himself, a Mr Phillips and the Rev. G. Southouse. The school raised £250 from local inhabitants, including Francis, and £25 from the National Education Society. It opened in 1856 with 40 boys and 38 girls.[23] In 1857, the Shanklin estate issued the first of their leases for 999 years, which encouraged investment. In 1862, Popham was asked to become a provisional director of the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway and in reply said, '...if a station is placed upon my property at Shanklin and the Bill passes the house, I may then have no objection to becoming a director if by so doing I can promote the interests of the company.' His reasons against initially joining the company were that he was not fully acquainted with public business and that railway directors were not guaranteed immunity from all liability.

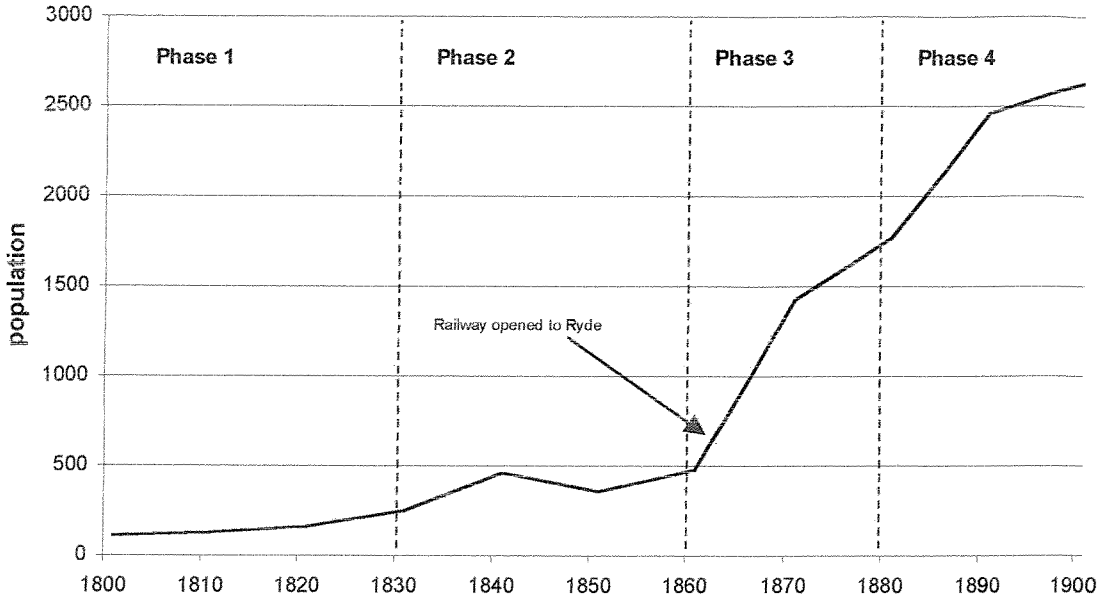
In 1866, Shanklin became a through station on the line from Ryde to Ventnor. In the 10 years from 1861 to 1871 there was a trebling in Shanklin's population and the number of people using the railway increased to such an extent, that the single platform at the station was extended and another built on the opposite side of the line.[24] In 1869 a new church, St Saviours, was built on the cliffs to serve as parish church for a new residential area.[25] Francis White Popham donated land for the new National School that was completed in 1872 for 100 boys, 100 girls and 120 infants. Another indicator of this expansion is that in 1869 the Popham estate leased three acres for two brick kilns to Jacob Kent, brickmaker, for a rent of £13 7s. 6d. per year with an additional rent of 2s. for every 100 bricks made.[26] By 1875 building land was expensive, being quoted as

£1,000 per acre.[27] In 1876 the estate leased eight building lots on the shore estate with ground rates of £9 8s. 4d. per year.[28] Leasing land was a lucrative method of expansion as the estate rent account for 1876 showed a rent income of £4,667 with debits of £4,290 and a credit of £377 indicating an average annual income per holding of £32.[29] In 1878 land was leased to Francis Cooper, a builder, at the rate of £46 5s. 0d. from 1878 until 1880 and then £115 12s. 6d. per year from that date onwards. In 1878 agreement was made on an area of Great Whittle Mead '...the lessee will upon receiving one months notice give up any portion of the said land that may be required for building purposes.'[30]

After the Bank Holiday Act of 1871, day tripping had become a normal holiday event for many living in London. Both the railways and steam navigation had brought Shanklin within the reach of London. A pier had been suggested in 1878[31] and plans were drawn up in 1881.[32] Local shareholders contributed £23,940 and it was completed in 1891 thus encouraging the steamship companies to disembark passengers to the town. In the 1880s the original sea wall and path were made into an esplanade, which incidentally led to the bankruptcy of William Summerhayes, a local builder.[33] A prospectus was issued for the Shanklin Passenger Lift Company to build a lift to help visitors from the pier up the cliff to the town level. This opened in 1892.[34] However, and for reasons which are unclear, Francis White Popham rejected a tramway from the top of the cliff to the town and main station. He subscribed to a 'public centre' or Winter Gardens, which included both billiard and reading rooms '...for the convenience and recreation of ladies and gentlemen either resident in or visiting Shanklin.' He leased a piece of land between St Saviours Church and Osborne Road and also subscribed £500 in shares to the Shanklin Pavilion Company.[35] In 1886 Shanklin Social Club opened.

Figure 5.4 shows the population growth of Shanklin. Between 1811 and 1861 growth was relatively slow in absolute terms, with numbers rising from 110 to 479. Shanklin grew rapidly between 1861 and 1891, increasing by 1,882 people. After 1891 growth slowed. The four phases of railway development are superimposed on this graph. The start of the rapid growth of Shanklin corresponds to the start of Phase 3 of the model. In 1864 the Isle of Wight Railway opened from Ryde and in 1875 the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway opened from Sandown to Newport. This not only allowed

Figure 5.5 Population of Shanklin



the residents of Shanklin easier access to Ryde, and thence to the mainland, but also to the county town of Newport. The railway also encouraged visitors to sample the tourist facilities of the town.

A more detailed analysis of the structure of the population between 1851 and 1871 helps to identify the demographic processes in operation. The population of Shanklin, analysed by place of birth, is shown in Tables 5.5 and Figure 5.5. The largest increase during this period was in the number of visitors, which rose from 61 in 1851 to 382 in 1871. In 1851 the visitors represented 17.2% of Shanklin's population, reflecting the growing importance of tourism in the town. Excluding visitors, the population born in Shanklin grew from 136 in 1851 to 340 in 1871. In 1851 this represented 46.3% of the population but by 1871 this had dropped to 32.4%. The number living in Shanklin, but born on the Isle of Wight outside of Shanklin, rose from 122 in 1851 to 424 in 1871. In percentage terms this group made up 41.5% of the population in 1851 and 40.4% in 1871, approximately the same percentage. The largest increase, in percentage terms, was in those who were born off the Island. In 1851 this group represented just 12.2% of the resident population but rose to 27.2% in 1871. In summary, 53.7% of Shanklin's resident population, over half, had moved to live in Shanklin in 1851. This figure had

Table 5.5 Population of Shanklin by place of birth.
(Source: census data 1851, 1861, 1871.)

5.5a Actual figure including visitors.

Place of birth.	1851	1861	1871
Shanklin	136	145	340
I.W.	122	148	424
Outside I.W.	36	101	286
Visitors	61	85	382
Total	355	479	1432

5.5b Percentage figures including visitors.

Place of birth.	1851	1861	1871
Shanklin	38.3	30.3	23.7
I.W.	34.4	30.9	29.6
Outside I.W.	10.1	21.1	20.0
Visitors	17.2	17.7	26.7

5.5c Percentage figures excluding visitors.

Place of birth.	1851	1861	1871
Shanklin	46.3	36.8	32.4
I.W.	41.5	37.6	40.4
Outside I.W.	12.2	25.6	27.2

risen to 67.6% by 1871, the majority, just over 40%, coming from the Island but with an increasing percentage that had come to live in Shanklin from outside the Island.

Figure 5.6 shows how the age structure of the population of Shanklin changed in this critical period between 1851 and 1871. In 1851 60% of the population was under 30 years of age. The 20-29 group is larger than would be expected and can be accounted for by their increased mobility in search of employment. Between 1851 and 1861 the percentage of children had decreased from 22% to 17%. This suggests that the young adults (20-29) who were moving to Shanklin were more intent on seeking employment than bringing up a family. Inmigration into Shanklin can also be seen on the 1871 graph. Here again there is a larger percentage of young adults (20-29), indicating the mobility of this group. Census returns for 1871 give good examples to illustrate the point. George Wells, 24 years old, a bricklayer and his wife Louisa, 20 years old, a lodging-house keeper moved to Shanklin from Lincoln; L. H. Cator, 37, carpenter and

Figure 5.5a Population of Shanklin (excluding Visitors)

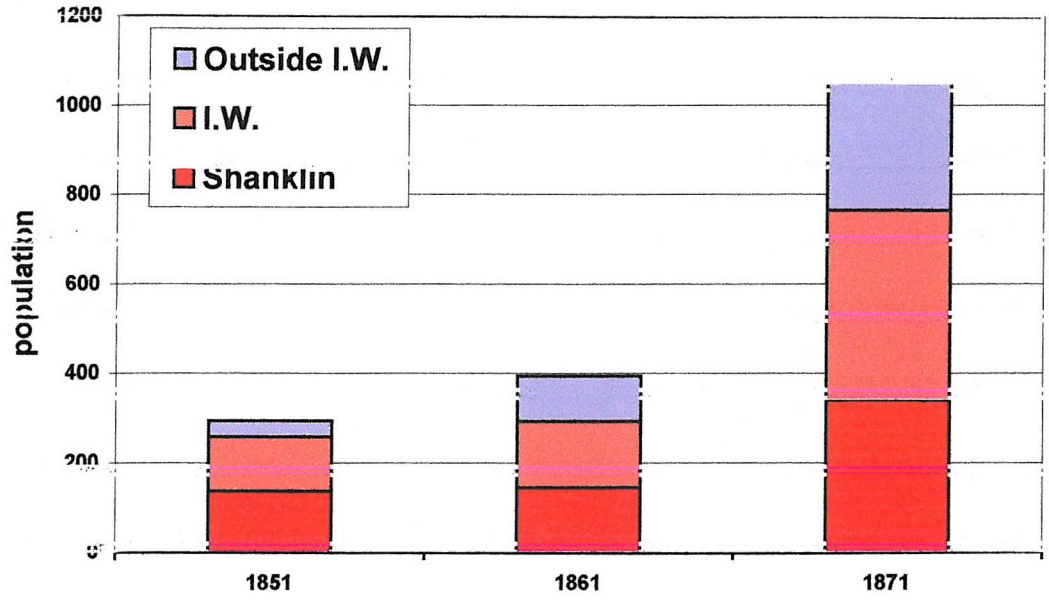


Figure 5.5b Population of Shanklin (including Visitors).

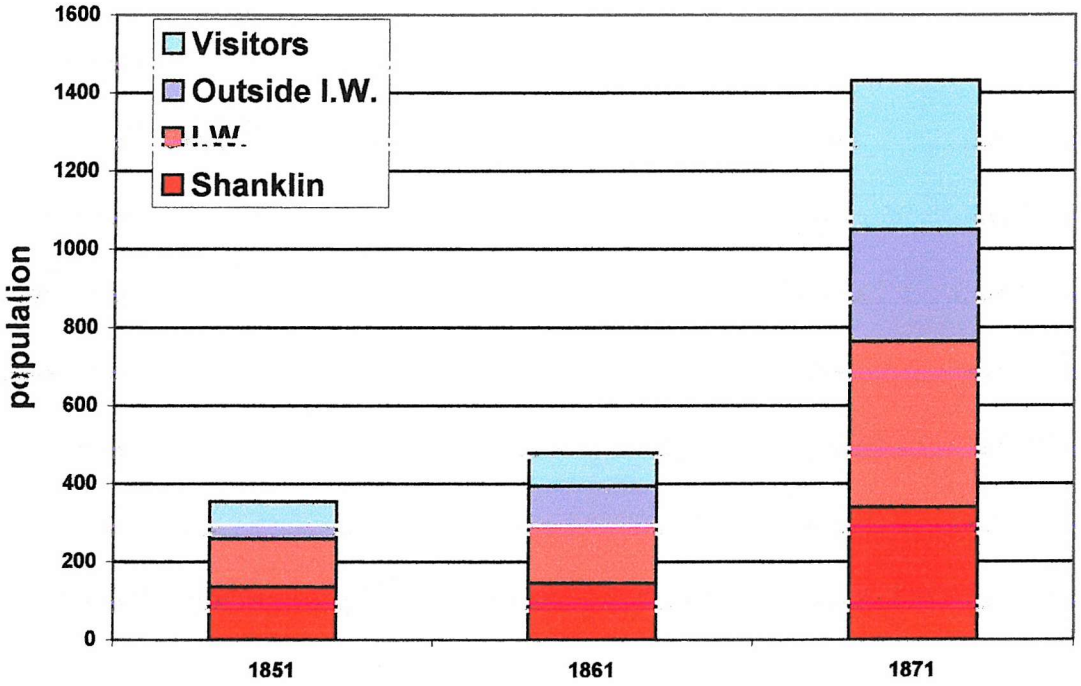
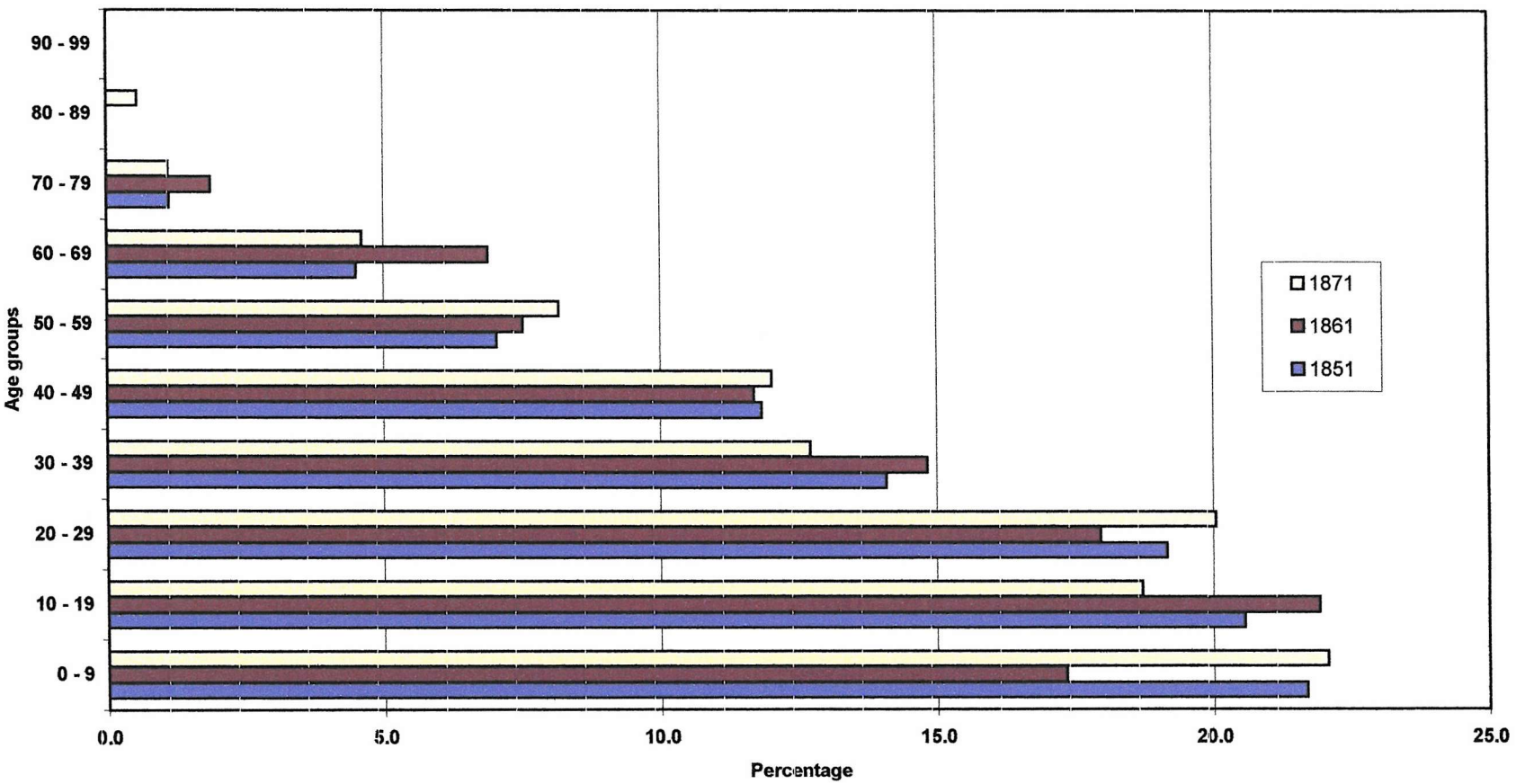


Figure 5.6 Population Structure of Shanklin



his wife and two children moved from Essex and Francis Griffith, 26, a chimney sweep and his wife Mary, 23, moved from Wiltshire. All were working class inmigrants who would have used the railways to make their journey.

The occupations of the permanent residents of Shanklin can be studied with reference to the 1851, 1861 and 1871 census data. Between 1851 and 1861 the number of immigrants to Shanklin, born outside the Island, was 65. Of these only the curate, ministers and their families, an authoress and her servant and a Major General had occupations that were not already common to the town in 1851. In this period the majority of the immigrants, from all sources, had either marital connections of were attracted to the town by tourist employment. Table 5.6 shows a selection of occupations found in Shanklin during this period.

Table 5.6 Selected occupations of permanent residents of Shanklin. (Source: census data 1851, 1861, & 1871.)

Male

Occupation	1851	1861	1871
Agricultural Labourer	15	4	4
Baker	1	4	7
Bootmaker	1	3	7
Bricklayer		1	8
Builder	1	2	5
Carpenter	9	12	32
Coachman	1	1	6
Gardener	3	8	15
Gardener's assistant	1		5
Labourer	6	1	35
Lodging House Keeper	1	4	15
Mason	4	5	11
Servant	3		8

Female

Cook	2	6	8
Dressmaker	3	2	13
Lodging House Keeper	1	4	16
Servant	16	25	88

The number engaged in agriculture decreased from 15 to 4 in the 20-year period but this was countered by an increase in those occupations concerned with construction and tourism. Bricklayers, builders, painters, carpenters, masons and labourers all show an

increase, especially in the period between 1861 and 1871, the main period of urban growth that was aided and abetted by the arrival of the railway. Jobs associated with tourism also show this increase with lodging-house keepers, both male and female, cooks and servants showing the largest increase in numbers. Perhaps only the increase of coachmen can be directly related to the railway, as they would be engaged in taking travellers from the station to their lodgings. By 1871 there were six men whose recognised occupation was that of coachman, whereas in 1861, before the railway opened, the number was only one. The number of naval personnel also increased between 1861 and 1871, indicating that they found, thanks to the easier travel by rail and connecting steamer with Portsmouth, that towns on the Isle of Wight Railway were good places to house their families. Interestingly, there is an increase in the number of dressmakers (prostitutes commonly gave the occupation of 'dressmaker'). There is no evidence from the 1871 or 1881 census data of railway employees living in Shanklin. However, as will be seen in the next section, this is not the case for the parish of Sandown where railway employees were evident. Although the totals in any one occupation, apart from servants, are not large, they do suggest something of the nature of the urban growth that took place in Shanklin after the opening of the railway from Ryde in 1864.

The census data also gives information about the visitors to the town. Many were from the upper middle classes and included army officers form the Empire, a clerical professor, merchants including a wine merchant, a tobacco and sugar refiner and others who derived their income form dividends and bonds. Shanklin was a refined, quiet, up-market resort. Francis White Popham died on 18 February 1894, aged 64. He had helped Shanklin develop from a small, scattered village into a respectable watering place with villas and new roads. Shanklin parish church had doubled in size; two new churches had been built along with three dissenting chapels. Shanklin had a waterworks and street lighting and, through the Local Government Bill of 1858, had its own local Board to oversee public affairs. Although this might have been possible to some extent without the railway, it must surely be true to say that the railway helped to propel this rapid, tourism induced, urban growth.

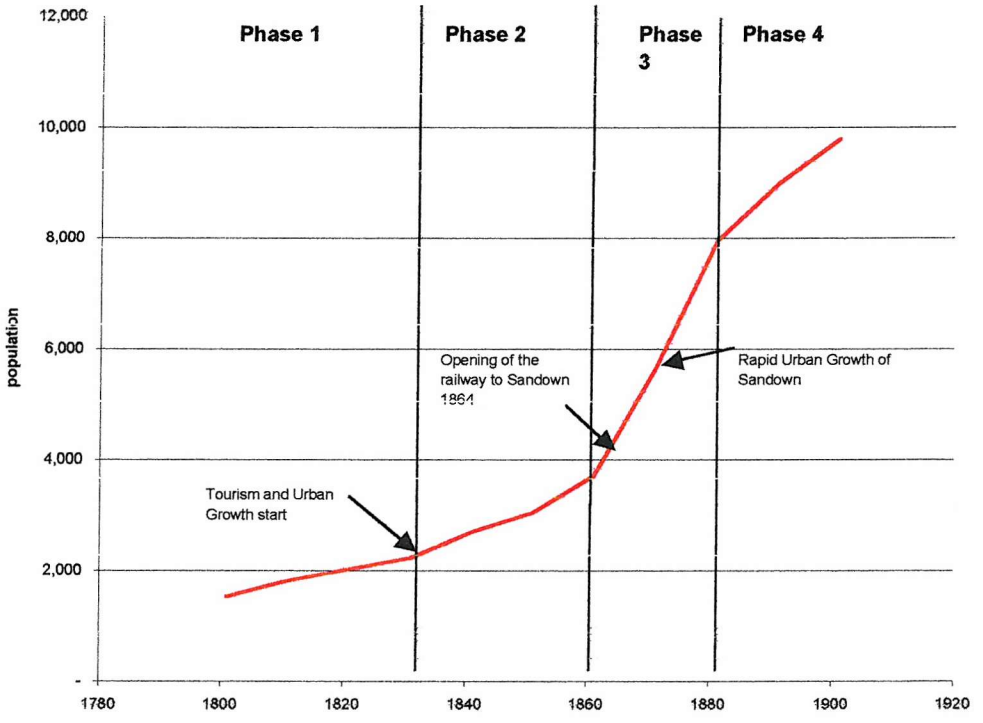
The urban growth of Sandown.

Sandown initially grew as a tourist resort before the railway arrived in 1864. The area, now known as Sandown, was in 1800 part of the parish of Brading. In the pre-railway period it had two separate small centres of habitation, Sandham and Ryall Heath, about a mile apart and connected by a coast road. Sandham, in the east and adjoining the parish of Yaverland, bordered the road south from Brading and had an area of marsh to the east. In 1803 Sandham consisted of Sandham Farm, Sandham Cottage and Sandham Parsonage, as well as premises that served as a public house.[36] By 1817 it had acquired three tenements,[37] and in 1827 leases were granted for building plots.[38] The most remarkable feature was a military fort which dominated the coast. Until 1845 the area was largely undeveloped. Brannon wrote '...though comprising a great number of widely scattered houses Sandown has nothing remarkable except the fort.'[39] In 1845 a nucleus for development was established at Ryall Heath with the building of the church of Christchurch to serve the increasing resident population of the area. This was closely followed in 1853 by the building of the National School.[40] In the same year, the sale of Vining's Farm released 42 plots of building land in four main areas of Sandown; part of Ryall Heath a quarter of a mile from Christchurch, seven acres at Pell's Street, Broad Lane ground and at Street Butt where the road from Brading entered Sandham. Plots of land were, in general, large with a 50ft. frontage and 150ft. deep.[41] Two years later in 1855, Sandown was described in the following terms '...the bay is magnificent. Excellent lodging houses are springing up, and the hotel accommodation is first rate.'[42] These developments took place well before the railway arrived at Sandown, but it could be argued, just as with Shanklin, that the development of the mainland railway system did have the effect of initiating population growth, urban growth and tourism.

In 1862 Sandown still comprised of two separate areas, upper and lower Sandown, which had not joined. Lower Sandown or Sandham had linear development along the road from Brading to the sea front. On the sea front was one hotel, the Sandown Hotel. Upper Sandown had a nucleus of housing around Christchurch and a grid of roads between the coast road and Broadway Lane. The town then, bit by bit, developed downwards from Christchurch to Sandham, with the High Street being built along the coast road. No one developer was responsible for building Sandown. Builders included Barnabus Cooper, Messrs. Hayden, Cecil (a Liverpool Shipping Agent and speculator), Taylor, Bound and Withers.

Sandown station opened in 1864. The railway encouraged both tourism and urban development, the two going hand in hand. The station was on the northern outskirts of the town, some half a mile from the sea. It directly encouraged development north of Broadway, with a grid of streets being built. However, the acquisition of land by both the Los Altos Estate[43] and the Winchester Estate to the north of the town, limited the urban growth in that direction.[44]

Figure 5.7 Population of the parish of Brading.



The railway brought mixed blessings; some thought the influx of visitors would ruin the beach. The *Isle of Wight Times* commented '...the very existence of the town as a health resort and fashionable watering place, must almost entirely depend on the continuance of its beautiful sandy bay and bathing grounds.'[45] This comment was, perhaps, a little extreme as Sandown was not as fashionable as either Ventnor or Shanklin, both of which had far more facilities at the time. Sandown was always more 'down market'. Figure 5.7 indicates that the population of the parish of Brading in 1861, before the railway arrived, was 3,709; by 1881 it had grown to 7,952, a very significant growth due to the development of Sandown and the easy access afforded by the Isle of Wight Railway.

The 1871 census shows the first indication of railway employees living in Sandown. All were living either in Leeds Street or Station Street although the Station House was unoccupied. Ten railway employees were enumerated as shown in Table 5.7, the most senior being Island born John Buckell, aged 52 years, who was described as station master. George Grant, aged 22 years, and Alfred Lawrence, aged 32 years, both of whom had at some time moved to the Island from the mainland, were clerks. Grant was not married but Lawrence had a wife and two young children. William Hancroft, aged 20 years, was cashier and was Island born. Thomas Weeks, aged 36 years was porter and his sons Selwyn, aged 14 years and William, aged 11 years, were employed as telegraph clerk and telegraph messenger respectively. William, at the age of 33 years, was to become the first station master at Bembridge. Thomas Weeks and his wife were born on the mainland and moved to the Island. William Wheway, aged 31 years and Island born, was inspector. It can be assumed that these all worked at Sandown station and gives an indication of the staff that would be required. Lastly enumerated was Joseph Bowauf, aged 34 years, who was described as an engineer, possibly an engine driver. Bowauf was born on the mainland and had a wife and young family. This list gives an indication of the employment opportunities that the railways provided. There were at least ten employed at Sandown station and this would be typical for most stations on the line.

By 1868, there was still little tourist development on the beach side of the main road apart from the King's Head Hotel. In 1863 a pier was proposed for Sandown. It was finally completed in 1878 and extended to 1,000ft. in 1885.[47] The pier was purely a pleasure pier and a landing place where coastal paddle steamers could discharge their day-trippers to enjoy the delights of Sandown. The esplanade was not built until 1878 and it was left until the last twenty years of the century for the development of hotels along the front such as the Ocean, Sandringham and Trouville. In 1884, after the opening of the rail-connected pier at Ryde, the London and South Western Railway was actively promoting the Island as a holiday destination. It said that Sandown had '...fine sand for walking.'[46]

The year 1886 saw the first active town government in Sandown with the setting up of a Local Board for the improvements that both the residents and visitors expected.

Table 5.7 Isle of Wight Railway employees living in Sandown in 1871.

Name	Age	Occupation	Street	Place born	Dependants
George Grant	22	Clerk, IWR.	Leeds St.	Camberwell, London.	
Joseph Bowaul	34	Engineer, IWR.	Leeds St.	Droitwich, Worc.	Wife(32); 3 daughters.
Joseph White	45	Foreman, IWR.	Leeds St.	Washington, Linc.	Wife (44), daughter (19), (9,5,4); son (7).
John Buckell	52	Station Master (line).	Station St.	Alverstone, IW	Wife (52), 2 sons (20,17,16).
William Hancroft	20	Cashier, IWR.	Station St.	Ryde, IW.	
Alfred Lawrence	33	Clerk, IWR.	Station St.	Lauthampton, Hants.	Wife (28), son (5), daughter (3).
Thomas Weeks	36	Porter, IWR.	Station St.	Wickham, Hants.	Wife (41), sons (14,11).
Selwyn Weeks (son)	14	Telegraph Clerk.	Station St.		
William Weeks (son)	11	Telegraph Messenger.	Station St.		
William Wheway	31	Inspector, IWR.	Station St.	Ryde, IW.	Wife (31), sons (8,5), daughters (7,2,1).

Thomas Hale, a local hotelier, was the first chairman. The board concerned themselves with providing a gas supply for the town, improving the water supply, supplying electric lighting and improving the approaches to the sea shore.

In summary, Sandown grew later than any of the other resorts served by the Isle of Wight Railway, but its growth was rapid due to its long, accessible, sandy beach; its sunny aspect; the stunning views east to Culver Cliff and west towards Dunnose Head; and the arrival of the Isle of Wight Railway. Once again the railway helped the development of the town but did not initiate the tourism that had already begun.

The urban development of Ryde.

In the pre-railway period the division of the Player family estate influenced the urban structure of Ryde. The Player estate was partitioned, in 1820, to allow Jane Player's children, George Player and Elizabeth Lind, to have a controlling interest in their own affairs.[48] The commercial centre and sea shore were shared by both families, but the residential area was largely owned by the Lind family. In 1829, under the terms of the Ryde Improvement Act, Ryde achieved town status.[49] In 1832 Ryde was described in the following terms:

> ...the town is laid out with great regularity as regard the streets which are wide, and well paved; they run in parallel lines from north to south and are intersected by handsome streets at right angles. The buildings are chiefly in the cottage style, detached, with gardens before them, or are situated in the midst of smooth lawns...[50]

From 1830, and linked to the development of the trunk railway routes on the mainland, Ryde grew. Topography was important in shaping the direction in which it developed. The view from a site was very important, the best sites being near the sea, followed by those portions of East Hill that had views over Spithead. In general, the further from the sea, the poorer the view, so the cheaper the price of land and the poorer the housing. Weeks and Oakfield, the poorest areas in Ryde, were found well away from the sea. During the period between 1830 and 1850, Ryde suffered from the building of poor housing around its Regency centre, poor drainage and an inadequate water supply. In 1856 it was described as '...a group of houses on the top of the hill with a few struggling fishermen's cottages on the waterfront.'[51]

Although opposite Portsmouth, Ryde has never been an ideal site for a landing place as the foreshore has a very shallow gradient causing at least half a mile of sand and mudflats to be exposed at low tide. Regular daily, cross-Solent, services by a sailing packet were started in 1796. At high tide the boat could come alongside a simple quay at Ryde but at other times passengers had to transfer to a smaller boat and then to horse or cart to finally come ashore. As the Island became a more popular tourist resort it was recognised that a deep-water pier was a necessity. The Act authorising Ryde Pier was passed in 1812. Construction of the 1,740ft. pier, with six flights of steps along its path and two at the pier head, was started in 1813 with completion in 1814. As steamboats replaced sailing boats, the pier was lengthened several times, eventually reaching 2,250ft.. On 19 May 1817, the *Britannia* packet, fitted with a 15 h.p. engine, commenced '...a service between Ryde and Portsmouth, taking thirty minutes each way.'[52] It was intended to run two services per day on the run. Although Ryde Pier was useable at all states of the tide, the individual traveller was faced with a half-mile walk to the shore on an exposed footway; vehicular traffic was not possible. So, in June 1857, the directors of the Ryde Pier Company reviewed a report by Messrs. Walker, Buges and Cooper of London suggesting there should be '...a line of railway drawn by a locomotive or a "horse" on the pier.'[53] On 10 November 1860, the *Isle of Wight Examiner* printed an official notice for a Bill to incorporate a company, the name of which was not specified, to purchase by agreement the powers and properties of both the Ryde Pier Company and the Isle of Wight Ferry Company and to construct on the seashore at Ryde a new roadway from the Royal Victoria Yacht Club to the Dover Street slipway, to demolish properties and to enable access to the new roadway from Union Street. The Bill asked for authorisation to build a railway or tramway, from an end-on-junction with the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway, in the marshes on the eastern side of Monkton Street to the Strand, past the Castle to terminate at Pier Gates; along with a branch from the north end of East Street to the premises of the Isle of Wight Ferry Company adjoining the Coastguard Station. The Ryde Pier Company objected to this Bill and the Lords rejected it.

The authorised terminus for the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway was originally fixed at a point no further north than Melville Street, on a site at, or near, its junction with Monkton Street.[54] This was never developed because of the objections and conditions raised by the Ryde Town Commissioners who refused to allow the line

beyond the northern end of Monkton Street because the development of platforms, engine sheds, sidings etc. was not desirable in a residential area.[55] In addition, houses would have needed to be demolished and streets realigned. This would have been far too expensive, so the railway company found another site on open ground at Monkton Bridge, which was outside the town boundary, in the parish of Newchurch, where they could do as they wished. This station was later to be named Ryde St John's Road.

By 1861, with the prospect of the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway reaching the town, the Pier Company realised the need for a tramway along the old pier. They asked Cooper, of Walker, Buges and Cooper, to revise the original plan, and appointed John Langdon, of Ryde, as contractor in April 1862.[56] Even at this early stage it was noted locally that it would be advantageous if the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway were to connect with the new tramway on the pier.[57] The tramway opened for passenger traffic on 21 August 1864, a week after the opening of the Isle of Wight Railway. When the railway and tramway were opened, there was still a gap of about a mile along which passengers had to make their own way. It is clear that the Ryde Pier Tramway Company had every intention of extending their tramway from the Pier Gates towards the authorised terminus of the railway at Melville Street. Evidence of this was that the east line down the pier curved away from the Pier Gates and was provided with a longer platform. The proposed extension of the tramway between Pier Gates and Ryde St John's Road was opposed by a large number of Ryde ratepayers, who thought that the extension would spoil the amenities.[58] The Pier Company offered to meet many of the objections by working the line with horse power, constructing the line so that it would not rise above the level of the roads, paying £50 per year to the Ryde Town Commissioners, constructing the road at their own expense and keeping it in good repair. Even so, the Commissioners rejected the tramway on the grounds that it would not benefit the town, only the railway and pier companies.[59]

However, after the opening of both the tramway and the railway, there was a marked change in attitude. The gap between the two lines or 'middle passage' caused great inconvenience to passengers. The local press came out in favour of through carriages rather than a separate tram connection. The Isle of Wight Railway had already made an offer to the Ryde Town Commissioners to complete the railway to Melville Street and to build a tramway to the pier. The railway company placed a number of conditions on

this scheme. If they were defeated, they threatened not to spend the estimated £320,000 extending from Monkton Bridge (Ryde St John's Road) to Melville Street. As part of the scheme they would pay rental for the use of the highway, limit the number and speed of trams and make a public road from Melville Street to St Johns Park. In the end the Commissioners rejected the scheme.[60]

In 1865 the Ryde Tramway Bill was promoted by the Ryde Pier Company and Isle of Wight Railway to extend the tramway from Pier Gates, along East and Monkton Streets, to Ryde St John's Road.[61] In July 1869 the construction work had begun and was in the hands of Messrs. J. and J. Langdon.[62] The line from Pier Gates was extended to a point opposite Ryde Castle and was carried for a greater part of its length, nearly 1,180ft., on a viaduct. This part of the extension opened on 28 January 1870 when George Young, chairman, announced '...that the company would be able to declare they had undertaken all the works authorised by their present Act of Parliament.'[63] The Ryde Pier Railway was opened for traffic on 7 August 1871, using a temporary track across the Esplanade. Mr J. Bourne, the manager of the Isle of Wight Railway, managed the line. Later in the year a new station was completed at the Pier Gates. A new tramway inside the foreshore was opened on 18 July 1872 replacing the temporary one on the Esplanade.[64] The cost of the construction was £20,256 together with £11,624 for the purchase of land and over £6,000 for legal and Parliamentary expenses.[65] Little is known of the operation of the tramway. The Board of Trade return for 1873 showed the total number of passengers as 246,456, passenger train miles as 20,086, total receipts of £15,806 while expenditure was £7,999. Although the Isle of Wight Railway had the authority to bring steam locomotives as far as Simeon Street level crossing, these were not used for passenger traffic. Even at this stage, many local people realised that a lightly built tramway was not sufficient and a locomotive railway was required.

The resultant changes to the town from the building of the tramway can be examined. On the positive side, Monkton Mead Brook was diverted into a new channel, allowing the council to drain the land to the east and create a new recreation ground. However, the proposed reclamation of three acres of foreshore was not so popular. Some thought that the new sea wall would reduce the number of visitors although others thought the raised areas could be used as a promenade and gardens; an asset to the town. The company also wanted to move Dover Street slipway, a change not appreciated by the

local residents. In the end, the Ryde Pier Company undertook to provide a 20ft. wide promenade behind the sea wall with steps to the shore, to build a new slipway and to let the intervening land to the council for an ornamental garden at an annual rent of £20.

Thus the 'middle passage' was complete and an integrated transport network established, at least in the vicinity of Ryde. Tram journeys were timed to connect with 'up' and 'down' trains at Ryde St John's Road and also with boat connections. However, the problem of changing from locomotive hauled trains to horse drawn trams emerged. This break of journey was seen as an obstacle for those travelling to and from the mainland. It was at this stage that Ryde Town Council took a hand. They sent a clear message to the Joint Committee of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway and the London and South Western Railway, that they would support a new scheme for a 1¼ mile railway that would run under a bridge from Ryde St John's Road, pass through a tunnel under Monkton Street and the Esplanade, emerge in the centre of the inner dock basin and then run up to street level to a station at Pier Gates before continuing along a new pier to a terminus at the Pier Head.[66] In response, the Joint Committee promoted The Isle of Wight Railway and Ryde Pier Bill which was publicised in November 1878 for the 1879 Parliamentary session. The Town Council petitioned Parliament to modify the Bill to ensure that the bridges were as wide as the level crossings they replaced and had pavements. They were also concerned about access to the foreshore and the size of the bridges over the Monkton Mead Brook. However, the Joint Committee accepted only the clauses relating to the bridges. In March 1877 the Bill went before a Select Committee of the House of Lords and, despite concerns from the Isle of Wight Railway's representative, the Bill continued its passage through Parliament. The small Island railway companies may well have had concerns about the two larger mainland companies getting a foothold on the Island and perhaps, with their larger resources, competing unfairly with them. The Joint Committee continued to work closely with the Town Council. Agreements were made to place the new pier adjacent to the old pier, to raise the Esplanade no higher than 5'6" and to build a new access to Victoria Pier and George Street slipway. The Bill passed through the House of Commons unopposed and Royal Assent was given in July 1877. The railway was duly built and opened on 12 July 1880. By the building of this short line, which completed a direct and integrated transport system from London, through Portsmouth and Ryde, to the resort towns of Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor, the commercial

success of the Isle of Wight Railway was assured. Also, the dominance of Ryde as the major point of entry of passengers to the Island was confirmed and the eastern end of the Island was established as the main area of settlement growth, thus establishing patterns on the Island, which still exist today.

The building of the railway line through Ryde illustrates the influence of Ryde Town Council on the structure of the town. The Town Commissioners originally refused to allow a railway terminus within the town limits, or to permit a tram service between the pier and the terminus at St John's Road. This action was less of a fear about public safety but more a concern that the railway would in some way detract from the civic amenities that had been created. The Town Council's attitude to the railway gradually changed as they began to realise that the town could gain real benefits from it. The Council established an Esplanade with gardens and a bowling green and preserved these amenities by forcing the railway to go underneath. This solved the considerable problems of unsightliness, smoke, noise and level crossings. What is more, the question of cost to them did not arise, as the railway companies would pay for the works. Right from the beginning the railway companies and pier company had to work hard to obtain the Town Council's approval. It was obvious that the earlier tramway would not be compatible with an Esplanade and had a limited life span. It was not until the building of the tunnel that a permanent and satisfactory solution to the 'middle passage' became possible. Above all others, one person was responsible for bringing together the interests of the town, railway and pier. This was George Young, who became chairman of both the Ryde and Newport Railway and the Ryde Pier Company. He was a major shareholder in both and had the ability to influence events and, as a resident of Ryde, he could claim genuine concern over what happened to the town.

The Town Council substantially improved the eastern area and foreshore of Ryde for the benefit of the residents of the town. The Esplanade was constructed, new bridges, roads and housing were built and a recreation ground was created. As a bonus, the residents of Ryde had good rail and steamer connections to the mainland and all parts of the Island. By 1880 Ryde boasted three stations; Ryde Pier Head, Ryde Esplanade and Ryde St John's Road. The railway played a significant role in the development of Ryde.

Conclusion.

It has therefore been clearly demonstrated that the railways had a profound impact on the population growth, urban growth and tourism on the Island. The four-phase model of development, linked to periods of railway growth, helps to describe and explain the changes that took place. Growth, in the pre-railway period, (Phase 1) is limited. It is not until the second phase, between 1830 and 1860, when the mainline trunk routes were completed and the associated steamer traffic on the Solent was developed, that population growth, urban growth and tourism on the Island began to develop rapidly. Ventnor, due to its restorative microclimate, and Ryde, due to its position opposite Portsmouth, started to grow before Shanklin and Sandown. The Isle of Wight Railway linked all four towns in 1866 and it was from this date that population growth, urban growth and tourism took off and it was the railway that allowed this to happen. The railway brought goods, mail, workers, and tourists, all more speedily than before and ended a perceived sense of isolation. Only Ryde agonised about a railway and this was over preserving its water frontage. This was resolved in 1880 when the Pier Head was linked to Ryde St John's Road by a double track line with a cut and cover tunnel under the Esplanade. Growth slowed in the final phase of the model with only the Bembridge branch and the second route to Ventnor being built. Royal patronage, with Queen Victoria taking up a holiday residence at Osborne in 1847, gave the Island a certain status as a holiday destination but it was the railway that allowed the growth to take place. By the end of the Victorian period, the railway had become an integral part of the towns on the Island and all depended on the railway for their respective prosperity.

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Chapter 6.

The railway and the village of Bembridge.

Bembridge, before the railway opened on Saturday 27 May 1882, was an isolated village, typical of many such coastal communities that relied upon fishing and farming. The railway had a profound influence on the development of the village. It instantly improved communications, not only with the rest of the Island but also with the mainland, and encouraged, both directly and indirectly, the building of dwellings. In addition it provided the village with both a gas and water supply. These socio-economic improvements were typical in many villages that railways served. However, the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company had much grander development plans. They promoted high class tourism by building a large hotel adjacent to their Bembridge terminus, developed trade by building a rail-connected port in the adjacent village of St Helens and, in the process, reclaimed 800 acres of land for farming from Brading Haven.

Improved communications.

Travel from Bembridge to the town of Ryde was made difficult by the River Eastern Yar flowing to the north of the village. The only road out was westwards to Yaverland and then either south to Sandown or again westwards to cross the River Eastern Yar at Yarbridge to join the main Ryde – Sandown road. From 1835 a horse drawn coach, the *Surprise,* connected Ryde, Bembridge, Sandown and Shanklin. In the period before the railway, steamer routes were also an important means of communication. The *Isle of Wight Observer* announced that a new steamer service had been inaugurated on 1 August 1853 connecting Portsmouth with Bembridge and Ventnor using the steamer *Dart.*[1] There were two sailings each day apart from Sunday when there was only one.

The Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company, under the chairmanship of Jabez Balfour, in addition to building the railway, bought out, from local concerns, the steamer fleet and operated it under its own flag. This provided an additional direct service to Portsmouth that was not dependent on the connection with the Isle of Wight Railway at Brading and subsequent through journey to the mainland via Ryde Pier. The Isle of Wight Railway was aggrieved by this development, as this was not envisaged when the original working agreement between the two companies was drawn up.[2]

On 10 June 1898 the Isle of Wight Railway took over the Brading Harbour and Railway Company. At the time steamers of the company were for sale but the Isle of Wight Railway was not interested in purchasing them.[3] Steamer traffic to and from Bembridge was mainly a summer activity trading on the tourist and excursion traffic.

The arrival of the railway helped improve the lives of those who lived in the village, but all did not welcome it unreservedly. In 1882, just before the opening of the branch line, W. H. Davenport wrote:

> Bembridge is situated on the northeast side of the peninsula among green trees. Its church and white houses form a pleasant group extending down to the waterside, and command a variety of charming prospects. Now that it will be connected to Ryde by railway it will probably grow into a prosperous watering place but at the same time may lose that charm and seclusion which has hitherto endeared it to the artist and botanist.

Before the railway, the only way from Bembridge to Ryde would be to walk or take a horse and cart via the high road to Yarbridge and Brading, a distance of nine miles. Crossing the harbour by a horse-drawn boat to the Duver at low water could shorten this. After 1882 the journey by train from Bembridge to Ryde would have been far quicker; eleven minutes from Bembridge to Brading, with a connection to Ryde. On the main line all trains stopped at Brading to pick up and set down passengers for the Bembridge branch. So much store was set on anticipating the benefits that the railway would bestow on Bembridge that the 'Row Barge Inn', which stood a few yards from where ships berthed at Bembridge before the reclamation, became a hotel and changed its name to the 'Marine'. The owners, Messrs. Long and Company, the former brewing firm of Southsea, obtained the hotel licence. The first hotelier there was Mr Henry Weaver, the head of a well-known Bembridge family.

According to Captain Ernest du Boulay, '...Bembridge found all the blessings of modern civilisation showered on it as if by a magician's wand.'[4] Mrs Miller, of St Helens, remembers the impact of the railway. 'Everyone who had shopping to do went to Ryde by train and, on return, had to walk up Latimer Road or Station Road. Many people preferred to walk to Ryde and return by train...' Village life was virtually transformed over-night, for example, it enabled '...the boys to go to the National School, on the Mall at Brading, in rough weather whereas they would normally have had to walk.'

In the opening years traffic was light and the trains generally comprised of two coaches and a van for luggage. The summer service, during the line's first season consisted of six trains each way on weekdays and a generous provision of five on Sundays. In the winter the weekday service was similar but with only four trains on Sunday. The 1885 winter week day service is shown below.

Table 6.1 Railway timetable, Bembridge Branch, January 1885.
(Source: Isle of Wight Railway timetable, 1885)

	WEEK DAYS					
	am	am	pm	pm	pm	pm
Bembridge (dep)	8.13	10.30	1.12	3.28	5.38	7.55
St Helens	8.18	10.35	1.17	3.33	5.43	8.00
Brading (arr)	8.24	10.41	1.23	3.39	5.49	8.06
Brading (dep)	8.37	10.57	1.41	3.45	5.53	8.06
St Helens	8.43	11.03	1.47	3.51	5.59	8.22
Bembridge (arr)	8.48	11.08	1.53	3.56	6.04	8.27

Traffic throughout the year would have been varied; a peak being reached in the summer months as tourists flooded into the area. Railway travel would have been relatively cheap and many of the local people would have taken advantage of this to travel to Ryde, the nearest large shopping centre, or perhaps Newport which could be reached from two different directions; either from Sandown or from Ryde St John's Road, although both would have meant two changes of train. Newport market days were notably busier on both lines. The working class was not forgotten. In 1888, by Act of Parliament, third class accommodation had to be provided by the railway companies. The secretary of the Isle of Wight Railway replied to the Board of Trade '...present third class trains run at times relevant to the working class, and that.... cheap tickets were issued to the general public on seven trains during the day.' Third class tickets were issued on the branch trains.

The timetable, as advertised in the *Isle of Wight County Press* in 1892, indicates that there were five trains each way on weekdays and three on Sundays.[5] The journey time between Bembridge and Brading was still eleven minutes, which included a stop at St Helens. On weekdays, the first train left Bembridge at 10.27am, whilst the last train arrived back at Bembridge at 8.31pm. On Sundays, trains were only operated in the afternoon, the first

leaving Bembridge at 3.05pm and the last arriving back at 9.16pm, which was later than on weekdays.

The fares charged by the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company in their opening years are not immediately available, although evidence can be gained from the original Act, the Brading Harbour Improvement and Works Act 1874. Clause 32 authorised the company to make charges for the use of the railway. The authorised fare per mile would be; First Class 6d., Second Class 4d. and third Class 2d.. This compared in 1880, two years before the railway opened, to a return fare to Portsmouth from Bembridge by the steamer *Tynemouth* of 2s. 6d. First Class and 1s. 6d. Second Class. It was, therefore, probably cheaper to travel to Portsmouth direct by steamer than to take the train to Ryde Pier.

The Isle of Wight Railway fares for excursions are more easily obtained. The Isle of Wight Railway advertised, in the *Evening News,* that on Sunday 6 August and Bank Holiday Monday 7 August, for a 'long day' on the Isle of Wight from Portsmouth and Southsea to any Isle of Wight Railway station, including St Helens and Bembridge, on all boats up to 4.40pm, a fare of 3s. 6d. First Class and 2s. 8d. Third Class.[6] The Isle of Wight Railway advertised excursions from Shanklin from 1 July 1902 on all week day trains up until 3.00pm and on all Sunday trains:

Table 6.2 Excursion fares on the Isle of Wight Railway from Shanklin to stations on the Bembridge branch, 1 July 1902.
(Source: Isle of Wight County Press, 24 June 1902)

Fares from Shanklin	First Class	Second Class
to Brading	1s. 3d.	0s. 10d.
St Helens	1s. 11d.	1s. 1d.
Bembridge	2s. 1d.	1s. 5d.

In addition, the Isle of Wight Railway had a weekly tourist ticket valid for seven days over any part of the Isle of Wight Railway system. The fare was 7s. 6d. First Class and 5s. 6d. Second Class. Half-day holiday tickets were also available on Wednesdays between 2.00pm and 7.15pm.

The *Isle of Wight Herald* ran an advertisement for the Isle of Wight Central Railway, on Monday 18 August 1902, announcing that they would be selling cheap excursion tickets to Bembridge and St Helens, where passengers would get a magnificent view from the Downs of the departure of the Fleet and 'Grand Naval Manoeuvres' before the King. Trains would leave Cowes at 8.45am, 10.00am and 11.45am returning from Bembridge at 3.20pm, 5.25pm and 8.00pm. The fares were 3s. 6d. First Class and 2s. 6d. Third Class. In the *Isle of Wight Guardian,* the Isle of Wight Railway suggested that its passengers should go to Brading and then walk up to Bembridge Down or travel to Bembridge. Trains would leave Brading for Bembridge at 8.22am, 9.45am, 10.12am, 10.51am and 11.35am. The fare from all Isle of Wight Railway stations was to be 10d. First Class and 7d. Second Class.

Village growth.

The opening of the railway from Brading, through St Helens, to Bembridge had a socio-economic impact on the inhabitants of the area. Mr William Chappell, of Bembridge, who as a boy watched the first train, gives an amusing view of village life in those days. He recalled that Bembridge boys knew little of St Helens as they always had a hostile reception when they went there. It was wiser for them to remain in their own village. The embankment road and railway perhaps helped to allay the ancient animosity.

This period was the time of rapid expansion for both St Helens and Bembridge. Many houses were built of red brick and grey slate, the bricks being manufactured at local brickworks and brought to Bembridge and St Helens by rail. The slate would have come from northwest Wales, probably by coastal trading ships, to the Island ports, including St Helens Quay. There is reference in February 1884 to the Isle of Wight Railway agreeing to serve the Brading cement works with a siding indicating the importance of the building industry at that time and the role of the railway in the development of the Island.[7] On 11 October 1882 Sir Graham Hammond-Graeme, local landowner, commissioned a report from Mr J. Binfield Bird, surveyor of West Cowes, regarding the development of land for housing at Whitecliff Bay in the parish of Brading.[8] Binfield Bird described the land as valuable freehold building land lying 2½ miles from Brading station and 1½ miles from Bembridge station, in an area of great scenic value. The area in question was about 64 acres, accessed by one good main road 20 feet in width. A spring, at or near Beamisher's cottage, could be used to provide water for a reservoir. The tenant farmer, Mr J. Smith, would be compensated. It was suggested that a timber pier might be built in Whitecliff

Bay. The houses would be valued at £800 each if detached and £500 if semi-detached. Restaurants, shops, cottages and stables would also be provided and all would be fenced in. Rents would be £2 per annum in the first year, rising to £10 from the sixth year onwards. He concluded that, if successful, the surrounding land would double in value. Although nothing became of the scheme, it gives a good indication of the effect the arrival of a railway could have on an area in the nineteenth century.

Providing a water supply.

In the late-nineteenth century there was a problem of water supply for the steamers *Bembridge* and *Island Queen*, as Bembridge had only a few wells and springs. However, the hand rails that ran along the newly made embankment were made of gas piping so it was quite easy to pipe water through them from the engine water tank at St Helens Quay, and store it in barges. These barges later became Bembridge Sailing Club's pontoons. Not surprisingly, the water often had a reddish tinge due to the rusting of the pipe. The source was therefore not satisfactory for village consumption.

The problem of obtaining a regular water supply for the village was not resolved until 1903, when the Bembridge Parochial Committee reached an agreement with the United Realisation Company, an offspring of the Brading Harbour and Railway Company. The matter took over six years to complete. A motion at the annual public meeting on 9 December 1897 requested the Rural District Council to:

> ...take immediate steps to determine as to the desirability of securing the water supply from the Bembridge Harbour company, either separately or in conjunction with Brading, as may seem best.

This was proposed by the Rev. E. H. Francis, seconded by Mr W. F. Fisher and carried by a majority. The Rural District Council wrote back to the Parochial Committee on 14 February 1898 as follows:

> I am directed to inform you that the Council proposed to purchase from the Brading Harbour Company, at the price of £3,000, the gas and water works belonging to them with the view of providing a water supply for the parish of Bembridge and possibly also the parish of Brading...

A copy of the letter was sent to Mr Osborn, secretary to the Bembridge Harbour and Railway Company. The Parochial Committee discussed the matter and agreed with the Rural District Council as to the purchase of the water works, but not of the gas works, as '...the matter had not been brought sufficiently before the public.' This was proposed by Mr Sillence, seconded by Mr Jordan and carried by a majority. However, the annual meeting of Bembridge ratepayers on 12 May 1898 were not in agreement with the Parochial Committee, on the grounds of water supply contamination, and wrote to the local government board:

> We, the ratepayers of Bembridge, at a parish meeting assembled, do beg of you to restrain the Rural District Council, as an extraordinary high tide may overflow the embankment at Sandown or Brading harbour, or the storm water may flood the marshes, then the Brading sewerage may possibly contaminate the spring. We do not consider it a fit and proper source to provide any village from, and the expend would be very high for the village. The main is laid through the village to the Point that anyone wishing to have water laid-on could. There has not been a high tide for a number of years, or heavy floods of rain but no one can tell how soon there may be.

A year later the matter was still not resolved and the annual parish meeting on 14 March 1899 approved the resolution to '...appoint a committee to inspect places where water is supposed to be.' This was proposed by Mr Taylor and seconded by Mr Jordan. Obviously things had not moved on because at the next year's annual meeting on 19 March 1900, Mr A. H. Morton proposed that '...the parish council should take immediate steps to procure a water supply.' The Parochial Committee duly reported the matter to the Rural District Council on 26 June 1900 who replied on 3 July 1900 that it had not yet entered into agreement with the United Realisation Company regarding the supply of water. Mr H. H. Freeman, local agent for the Isle of Wight Railway, dealt with the matter.

A letter, dated 18 February 1901 from the Rural District Council and local government board, was read to the ratepayers of Bembridge suggesting that Bembridge Parochial Committee should talk with Brading Parochial Committee about procuring a water supply. Bembridge Parochial Committee reported on 9 May 1901 on the well and pumping works of the United Realisation Company at the harbour, St Urians and at Stoney Stiles. The report gave two options:

1. To purchase the works and plant of the United Realisation Company.
2. To undertake experimental borings at Stoney Stiles.

At the meeting the former was adopted, although there were 18 votes against it.

A letter dated 19 June 1901 was read to the Parochial Committee from the directors of the United Realisation Company, who were prepared to sell the gas and water undertakings to the Rural District Council for £3,500; £2,500 for the water works and £1,000 for the gas works but £1,250 if separate. Freeman, the local manager, signed the letter. The Parochial Committee, on discussion, formed the opinion that the water works and plant were practically worn out and would need to be replaced. They failed to see a reason for the higher price and vowed that the agreement should not be entered into. Just over a year later the matter was finally resolved. A letter dated 6 January 1903, was read to the Parochial Committee stating that the water works and supply had been purchased from the United Realisation Company for £2,433 1s. 0d. The Parochial Committee asked Freeman if he would undertake the duties of managing the water supply for £25 per year but he declined the offer. Eventually the water supply for Bembridge was bought from the railway for the village. Bembridge Parochial Committee minutes over the next ten years, suggest that the works, and especially the pumping engine, were to be a continual and expensive problem for the ratepayers of Bembridge.

The silting of the harbour.

Right from the outset the problem of silting of Bembridge Harbour was evident. River silt was continually brought down from the River Eastern Yar and deposited in the upper part of the harbour around St Helens Quay, whilst wind-blown sand from the Point filled the harbour entrance, despite the strong currents formed by the narrow entrance. The Parochial Committee attempted to persuade the Isle of Wight Railway to keep the harbour clear.

The village sewer discharged its effluence into the harbour entrance. In July 1899 the Parochial Committee wrote a letter to the Rural District Council, stating that; '...the railway company had damaged the sewer, which was working satisfactorily up to that time, by driving piles through it.' They thought it unjust that the parish should be put to the expense of a new outfall and considered that the railway company should be called upon to make it good. The railway company offered £20 to repair the damage. The most persistent problem was with the blocking of the sewer by silting. The Parochial Committee were advised on 19 June 1901 that the sewer was not discharging properly and promptly wrote

to the Isle of Wight Railway asking if they would dredge a channel in front of the outfall. In July 1901 the Isle of Wight Railway dredger took away two loads from the sewer outfall. Two years later the Parochial Committee, on 23 March 1903, again wrote to the Rural District Council about the state of the sewer outfall and asked if it could be extended a further 40 yards below the present low water mark as it had become buried with soft sand. They asked the Isle of Wight Railway to dredge in from the main channel to the outfall. This was done by 25 May 1903. However, the problem was not solved, as the Isle of Wight Railway was again asked to dredge in September and to keep the cost under £5. It was reported to the Parochial Committee on 20 November 1903, that the Isle of Wight Railway dredged 200 tons from the sewer outfall at a cost of 6d. per ton and that the result was successful. Four years later the silting of the harbour was again a problem: the Parochial Committee reported, on 15 July 1904, that the sewer outfall was in a bad state of repair and they asked if the Isle of Wight Railway could dredge out 120 tons as soon as their dredger was in working order. The problem of silting still continues to be a problem for the harbour owners.

Tourism.

The growth of Bembridge can be likened, in some ways, to the growth of Saltburn in Yorkshire. The Stockton and Darlington Railway Company took powers to extend its line from Redcar to Saltburn in 1858. The Pease family, local landowners, were interested in developing Saltburn as a seaside resort and persuaded the landowner of Saltburn, Lord Zetland, to sell the land to them in 1859. Like Bembridge, an Improvement Company was set up to manage the development of the area; its secretary, Thomas McNay conducted the affairs of the company and Francis Mewburn its legal business. This was not a railway company as such, but acted in a very similar manner to one. At Bembridge the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company, also an independent company, took on a similar development but with perhaps more elements. At Saltburn, the railway, the key element in the development, opened in 1861. The town began to grow with well laid out and wide streets planned by George Dickinson of Darlington. The railway built some cottages for its men and a row of six-storey houses. The Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company never took on the role of speculative house building. In Saltburn the railways main contribution lay in the building of a large hotel, facing straight out to sea. The architect was William Peachey. Alfred Waterhouse, of Manchester acted as consultant and Lord Zetland allowed the hotel to be named after him. The hotel, with about fifty bedrooms, was opened on 27 July 1863. The railway ran right into the hotel,

the main platform of the station reaching up to the back windows, so visitors and their luggage had access to it even in the worst of weather.

At Bembridge, the Improvement Company also built a hotel, the Spithead Hotel on Bembridge Point, adjacent to the railway station, overlooking the Duver, the harbour and St Helens Roads; a truly idyllic situation. However, it had not always been so, as behind the Point, in a backwater, seaweed often had collected and then decayed giving off a foul smell. Villagers had for years petitioned the company to improve the situation. In 1881 the company built a large concrete tank (sic) on the site on which H. Ingram and Sons of Ventnor, built the hotel. The hotel was opened on 15 July 1882 when a party, consisting of the chairman, Jabez Balfour M. P., the directors and others interested in the undertaking, travelled from London to Portsmouth where they embarked on the paddle steamer *Alexandra* and sailed direct to Bembridge. This was the largest vessel to have called at Bembridge up to this date. A special train, adorned with flowers and bunting, was run from Bembridge to Brading, where further guests and a military band joined the train and returned to Bembridge for the customary lunch in celebration of the day's events.[9] The hotel soon had to be enlarged, by the development of the top floor with dormer windows, to accommodate the many rich and famous who came to Bembridge for sport, especially sailing and golf. The Royal Isle of Wight Golf Club, the first on the Island, was established across the harbour on St Helens Duver. An additional room on the side of the hotel became the Royal Isle of Wight Golf Club's clubhouse. In 1883 Queen Victoria bestowed the title 'Royal' on the hotel; the full name 'Royal Spithead Hotel' being written over the entrance porch. This was an important part of the development completed. It was hoped that the hotel would help establish Bembridge as a tourist resort and bolster the fortunes of the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company. In 1894 the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company sold the Royal Spithead Hotel to the United Realisation Company. An advertisement in the *Isle of Wight County Press* in 1894 promoting the Royal Spithead Hotel gives an insight into the area:

> This is one of the most charmingly situated hotels in the Isle of Wight standing as it does on the point of Brading Harbour and commanding a magnificent view of the Harbour, St Helens, Sea View, Spithead and the Channel. The steamboat pier is immediately alongside the hotel, from which direct communication with Portsmouth and Southsea is available. The two paddle steamers, *Island Queen* and *Bembridge*, are running at frequent intervals; crossing in about one hour. The Bembridge railway station is also immediately opposite the hotel, and any place in the Island can be conveniently reached from here in a short time. The hotel is the

> headquarters of the Royal Isle of Wight Golf Club whose links (one of the most sporting in the kingdom) are close by. In addition to these links there is in the course of construction a first class 18-hole course, and there is also a ladies golf club. One of the specialities of the hotel is that visitors can at all seasons ensure a game of golf. Brading Harbour is well known for its excellent yachting facilities, and extra moorings are being laid down. The Bembridge Sailing Club clubhouse is within a few yards of the hotel and offers every accommodation possible for sailing. The hotel has recently been decorated and partly refurbished and is under entirely new management. The wines have been carefully selected and will be found of excellent quality. Table d'hôte dinner is at 7.30pm. For tariff and further particulars apply
>
> W. Heydon, Manager. [10]

In its heyday Bembridge was a notable resort village. It was famous for its regattas, bathing parties, picnic suppers, concerts and bridge parties; all the preserve of the elite on holiday at fashionable Bembridge. The Isle of Wight Corinthian Sailing Club was founded at Bembridge in 1886. In 1889 it was renamed the Bembridge Sailing Club and moved to its present location on the harbour, its first clubhouse being the relocated wooden shed formerly used to house the winding engine from the *Carrier* slipway at St Helens Quay, which still forms part of the present clubhouse. Everything was done to establish facilities for sailing; Londoners, who wished to bring their boats down to Bembridge, were transported free to Bembridge by train! The Garland Club, an exclusive ladies bathing club, was established in Bembridge in 1894 and provided rows of bathing huts on the beach at the end of Ducie Avenue. Entertainment included dances, concerts and tableaux.

Conclusion.

Present day Bembridge owes its infrastructure, in part, to the railway that created a small village resort for a largely wealthy clientele. It is a pity that, as far as can be ascertained, the records of the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company are not available for scrutiny as it would be useful to know how many people from the village used the railway, what goods were carried and what profits, if any, were made. However, the lives of those living in the village were considerably altered by the arrival of the railway. It made life easier by improving communications in and out of the village. Goods, especially coal and building materials, could be more readily obtained and this encouraged the building of houses in the locality. The village, thanks to the boreholes drilled on railway land, was able to obtain a clean and reliable water supply. Town gas was obtained from the gas-works at St Helens Quay. The railway company also built the prestigious Spithead Hotel, hoping to bring the wealthy to Bembridge to sail in the harbour and secluded waters

of Spithead and to play golf at the Royal Isle of Wight Golf Club on St Helens Duver. From 1882 the lives of those living and working in Bembridge and the prosperity of the village were closely linked with the railway.

Notes: The railway and the village of Bembridge.

1. *Isle of Wight Observer*, report on the new steamer service between Portsmouth, Bembridge and Ventnor using the *Dart*, 6 August 1853.
2. Isle of Wight Railway Company, minutes of the proprietors and directors, May1883, Vol. 6, Public Record Office, Kew, RAIL 330.
3. Isle of Wight Railway Company, minutes of the proprietors and directors, February 1898, Vol. 7, PRO, RAIL 330.
4. Du Boulay, E., *Bembridge past and present*, (Ryde, Observer Press, 1911), p.176.
5. *Isle of Wight County Press*, Advertisement Isle of Wight Railway Timetable, Saturday 17 December 1892.
6. *Evening News*, advertisement for the paddle steamer *Bembridge*, 3 August 1899.
7. Isle of Wight Railway Company, agreement by the Isle of Wight Railway to serve the Brading Cement Works, minutes of the proprietors and directors, February 1884, Vol. 6, PRO, RAIL 330.
8. Binfield Bird, J, report on the freehold land in Whitecliff Bay, 11 October 1882, Hammond-Graeme papers, Isle of Wight County Record Office, Newport, HG/2/660.
9. *Isle of Wight Journal*, report on the opening of the Spithead Hotel, 22 July 1882.
10. *Isle of Wight County Press*, advertisement, Royal Spithead Hotel, 1894.

Chapter 7.

The influence of the railways on ~~the~~ agricultural activities.

To evaluate the influence that railways had on the agricultural community it is necessary to describe, in some detail, the agriculture of the Island in Victorian times. In 1860 the Rev. E. Venables made a comprehensive study of the agriculture of the Island, a date close to the opening of the first railway on the Island, between Cowes and Newport, in 1862.[1] Venables described the Island as a '...purely agricultural district with as diverse relief, climate and soil, and therefore farming, as could be found anywhere in England.' The Island could be divided into three farming areas; the chalk downs, extending west to east through the backbone of the Island with a further area of downland to the south just inland from Ventnor; the north side of the Island with mostly cold clays, and, lastly the area south of the chalk backbone where sands and a warmer climate offered better farming opportunities. Generally the land was as good, and farms as well cultivated, as in any part of England. Even in the poorer farming districts, there were pockets of good farming practice. The Prince Consort was setting a personal example by his development of the Barton Estate adjacent to Osborne House. Venables, however, admitted, after more accurate and continued observations, that '... the local peculiarities of soil and climate were such that no man was competent to decide on the best mode of farming in the Isle of Wight without a personal and practical experience of several years.'[2]

Criticisms were made; there was a lack of capital among farmers for improvements and there was a fear of introducing modern farming practices even though in other areas they were successful. The farmers were not receptive to new farming ideas and they continued to buy too many inferior horses and use old-fashioned implements. These problems were lessening, mainly due to increased intercourse with other parts of England and the beneficial effects of agricultural associations. The railways had a part to play in opening up the Island to new markets, new ideas and new agricultural implements.

The Island had been for many centuries regarded as an arable area, with wheat as the staple crop. At the turn of the nineteenth century it was estimated that the Island produced eight times more wheat than it could consume and it was described as '... in a measure the granary of the western counties, and the chief resource of the Government contracts for

wheat, malt, flour and biscuit.'[3] From 1800 the increase in population reversed this and by 1860 the Island was a net importer of wheat and corn, although corn merchants from many of the principal towns in Hampshire would still attend the Newport markets. The quality of the corn grown was good; red wheat, a hardy variety, was produced on the poorer soil, while white wheat was successfully grown on the better-sheltered soils. The lighter soils in the south of the Island supported barley whilst the heavy clays of the north supported oats. Crop rotation was practised on the heavier clay soils using a four-field system with wheat, corn, grass and turnips. On the lighter soils a two-crop system was practised.

Pastoral farming was also important on the Island, the chalk down being grazed by flocks of South Down sheep. The Island was famous for early lambs; large numbers of ewes were brought over from the mainland to lamb on the Island and it was reported that over 4,000 lambs were sent to the London market in any one year. On the warmer and better farms of the interior, grass-fed lambs could be obtained as early as Christmas. The breeds kept were usually pure South Down or Dorsets or crosses between these and Somersets; the latter were very profitable and imported in large numbers into the Island. The wool produced was noted for its fineness: as many as 3,500 sheep and lambs were shorn annually yielding 5,000 tods of wool, 28 lbs. to the tod. All was exported from the Island, mainly to the markets in Yorkshire.[4]

Cattle fattening was also becoming an important pastoral activity. Older inhabitants could remember when the principal butcher in Newport went to Salisbury for his Christmas oxen and, on his return, paraded his purchases round the town, bedecked with ribbons. By the 1860s Island-fed cattle were supplying the Island market with excellent beef. However, it was dairying that was the most important pastoral activity. The urban growth taking place on the Island produced a ready market for the milk and butter. The milking cows were, in the most part, crosses from Norman breeds but some herds were pure Alderneys or Devons.

Venables also noted that many fields on the Island had been drained during the 1850s and 1860s with results proving beneficial both to the landowners and occupiers of the farms. The farmsteads on the Island were generally of a superior kind. A number of old manor houses, belonging to former landowners, had been converted into farmhouses and were

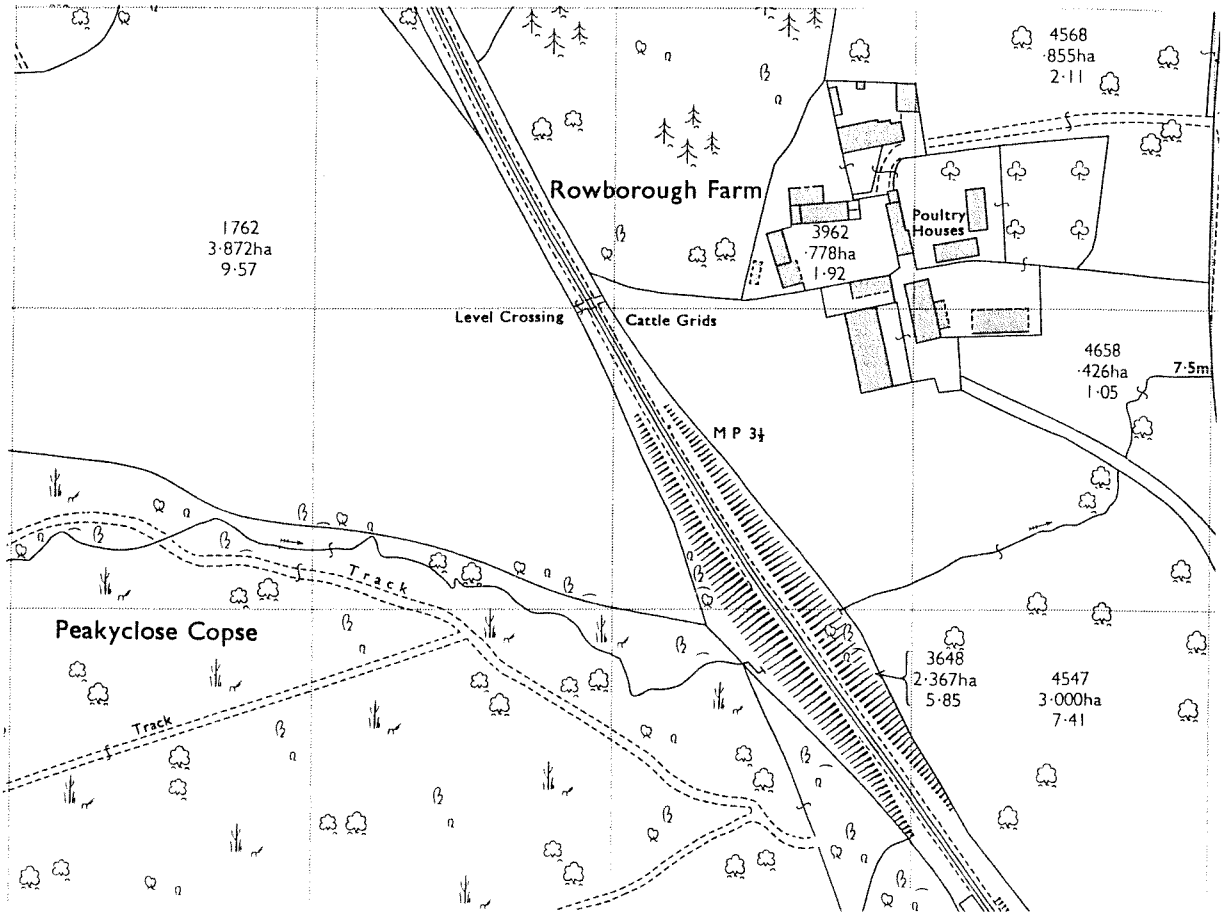
occupied by owners of the larger farms. Large barns were a peculiar feature of these farmsteads because due to the dampness of the climate, before the introduction of drying machinery, it was necessary to house as much corn as possible. The rickyards were always close to the barn. The stacking of corn in the field, a modern innovation, was rarely practised. The hayricks were also close to the farm.

The wages for agricultural labourers was generally low, varying from 7s. per week to a maximum of 12s. per week. Many of the labourers would have a cottage rented to them by the farmer. Typical rents were two guineas a year, which were usually secured to the farmer by the wages of the harvest month. Normally a quarter of an acre was annexed to each cottage. The almost exclusive right of gleaning was reserved for the families of the farm labourers. Barley would be given in exchange for their pigs and often a ridge of land given for their potatoes. Fuel, normally coal, would also be given and carted to them. So, although the nominal wages were low possibly 1s. 6d. to 2s. a week could be added from these benefits. The landless poor did not enjoy the same additions as the tied farm labourers.

The physical impact of the railways on the landscape.

The railways were built in the Island between 1861 and 1900, some 55½ miles of line in the space of 39 years. The companies laid the lines across fields and estates, and through hills, often in deep cuttings. Their earthworks were unavoidably prominent although the railway surveyors designed their lines to fit in with the landscape wherever they could. Lowlands and valleys were used wherever possible as this reduced the cost of building. However, this land was often the most agriculturally productive. The landowners, and especially those engaged in agricultural activities, believed the railways could do great damage to the properties through which they passed. In 1853, as has been shown, Lord Yarborough did all in his power to oppose the scheme to build a railway across his land and was successful on the grounds of loss of privacy and the damage it would do to his estates.[5] Certainly the privacy and unity of farms could be destroyed with a railway line cutting a farm in two, separating one part from the farmstead. The Isle of Wight Railway split Rowborough Farm near Brading, leaving field No.1762 to the west of the north-south railway line and separated from the farmstead to the east. This 9.57 acre field had to be

Figure 7.1 Rowborough Farm (O.S. Plan SZ 6088 – 6188)



joined to the main farming area by a level crossing.[6] (Figure 7.1) To overcome such problems the railway companies would build occupational level crossings, bridges and cattle creeps, but, only where they were forced to do so by the Act of Parliament. This can be demonstrated by following the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway between the villages of Godshill and Whitwell. All the distances are from Cowes station. On leaving Godshill (9 miles 66 chains) the railway crossed the wrought iron Bridgecourt underbridge (No.16) at 10 miles 2½ chains, and Bow Court Farm underbridge (No.17) at 10 miles 9 chains before climbing to Nodehill underbridge (No.18) at 10 miles 10 chains. At 10 miles 54 chains the railway climbed to Roud underbridge (No.19); beyond the bridge the gradient increased to 1 in 72, initially through a cutting where the railway was spanned by Roud footbridge (No.20) at 10 miles 79 chains. The railway then ran across a long embankment, passing over Millers Lane underbridge (No.21) at 11 miles 79 chains. The main Godshill to Whitwell road was crossed on Southford underbridge (No.23) at 11 miles 60 chains; beyond the bridge the railway ran through a short cutting before passing under Whitwell cart track overbridge (No.24) at 11 miles 77½ chains. After a further straight, Whitwell cattle creep (No.25) was crossed at 12 miles 12 chains on a rising 1 in 250 gradient before entering Whitwell station at 12 miles 20 chains.[7] Therefore, in a distance of only 2 miles 34 chains, there were nine bridges utilised by the line, seven of which were purely for agricultural purposes with the remaining two for crossing rural roads. On the mainland, where trunk lines were at least double lines, and quadrupled in busy areas, the building of overbridges and underbridges was difficult and expensive for the railway companies. On the Island this was less so as, apart from between Ryde Pier Head and Smallbrook Junction, all were single lines.

Deep cuttings could intercept the supply of water to wells and the ground below them although this was never thought to be a problem on the Island. Likewise, large embankments across lowlands could produce poorly drained land by intercepting the natural drainage of the land above them. This could well have been a problem north of Southford Farm, between Whitwell and Godshill, where the railway crossed the low land on a lengthy and high embankment. By 1873 the railway companies in England and Wales owned 109,762 acres of land, no more than 0.3% of the land area. They could not be seen as a major encroacher on agricultural land[9] but for every one-mile of railway 9.7 acres of land would be required; which, on the Island, would be mainly good arable or pasture land.

Agricultural tramways.

Although not in the Eastern Wight the first tramway on the Island was on the Hamstead Estate, near Yarmouth, and was for agricultural purposes. This tramway system consisted of a roughly rectangular loop providing two separate routes from Hamstead House to the brickworks at the quay in Lower Hamstead on the banks of the Newtown estuary.[10] Each line was approximately a mile long and the system was constructed between 1830 and 1835, some thirty years before the opening of the Cowes and Newport Railway. However, it was never worked by locomotives.

The idea of tramways or light railways serving farming communities or estates had been advocated from the earliest days of railways. William Bridges Adams saw what tramways could do for agriculture and in 1862 made the following point:

> Haulage on to the land and off is the great daily cost to farmers. Without cheap transit into their very farmyards they cannot have cheap coal, at least in the south, and without cheap coal they cannot have steam engines or machinery. Without machinery farmers cannot make good profits, or their landlords obtain large rents. In the question of physical progress our chemists are in arrears of our machinists. In agricultural questions they are in advance of our machinists. [11]

The first lines in Europe of this kind were built in France. The French government encouraged their growth by allowing local authorities to undertake their construction out of taxes. From 1859 lines had been built in the Department of Bas Rhin and by 1870 over 1,000 miles of line had been opened. Belgium followed France with a similar undertaking. Britain made a valuable contribution by developing the technology that allowed locomotives of the smallest gauge to be built: Spooner had developed sophisticated double-bogie steam locomotives that were in use on the Ffestiniog Railway in North Wales from 1863. The Tramways Act 1870 had allowed the construction of a few rural lines alongside high roads of which the Wantage Tramway was the first, connecting the town with the Great Western Railway mainline. However, in Britain the local authorities did not have the power to spend rates in such a way as on the continent until the Local Government Act 1888, which introduced county rates that could be used to support new services including the construction of light railways. A conference, called by the Board of Trade to discuss the promotion of light railways, led to the passing of the Light Railways Act of 1896. Henry Oakley, of the Great Northern Railway, told his board that he had

'...long thought that the proper way of dealing with these villages and small towns laying beyond the line of railways is by tram or light railway to serve as feeders to existing lines.' The Act of 1896 made it much easier to build such railways. An order from the Light Railway Commissioners cost much less than an Act of Parliament. Powers were given to County Councils, Borough Councils and District Councils to contribute towards the cost; the Treasury could make loans or even free grants. The results of the Act were, however, disappointing and the promotion of light railways remained largely in private hands.[12] An attempt was made to build a narrow gauge railway in the West Wight to serve the agricultural community. The Bouldnor, Yarmouth and Freshwater Railway Company intended to build a five-mile narrow gauge line from Bouldnor to Alum Bay through the Heytesbury Estate.[13] The speculative venture did not amount to anything and the plan died. Apart from a number of industrial tramways the only other narrow gauge venture with any agricultural or rural implications was reported in 1889 when Mr J. E. Hughes promoted a narrow gauge line between Newport and Chale with branches to Shorwell and Brighstone.[14] However the scheme, as with other predominantly agricultural ventures, did not prosper.

The Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway and the agricultural community.

To illustrate the role that a railway had in a rural farming community the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway can be usefully analysed. Opened from Merstone Junction to St Lawrence on Tuesday 20 July 1897, it wound its way south through the largely agricultural valley of the River Eastern Yar, serving the villages of Godshill and Whitwell before passing through the short tunnel to St Lawrence on the Undercliff. The villages of Merstone, Godshill and Whitwell all boasted stations on the line. The railway became the focus of rural activities and the stations handled all sorts of business. The goods yards became the centres for the local coal supply, most having a cattle-dock and the larger having a shed for local merchandise. Milk and perishables would be dealt with at the station as well as the mail; until the end of the nineteenth century the telegraph office at the station would be the only one in the area. The passenger business made the station the centre of social life and it was here that virtually every Victorian invention could first be seen.

The railway company, when siting a station, took into consideration the nature of the business that might be generated, the transporting out of bulky and perishable goods and the bringing in of raw materials such as coal. There were also engineering considerations, as the Board of Trade would not allow stations to be built on steep gradients. Both Godshill and Whitwell are relatively large nucleated villages and stations were provided within half a mile of the village centres. Merstone was more of a hamlet and the location of the large station there was due to it being a junction with the Isle of Wight Central Railway's line from Newport to Sandown.

On the mainland trunk routes, the average distance between stations was in the order of four to five miles. On the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway it was one and a half miles from Merstone to Godshill, two and a third miles form Godshill to Whitwell and a further one and a half miles between Whitwell and St Lawrence. Stations were closer together here but this was not atypical of the Island where every bit of business had to be cultivated and collected. Merstone station was completely rebuilt as a junction in 1895. The island platform, some 301ft. in length, housed a booking office, waiting room and staff rooms within the single building, fronted by a canopy over each platform. The track layout consisted of up and down loop lines, the latter one used by the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway. Two sidings for goods traffic and storage were provided. No.2 siding, 380 ft. long, was utilised as the coal siding by local fuel merchants and a gate in the south end boundary fence gave access to a trackway from Merstone Lane. East of the level crossing, and served by trailing points from the Sandown line, was the original goods siding that was 200ft. in length.[15]

Godshill station was a much simpler affair and typical of many wayside stations. The 300ft. platform, located on the east side of the single line had a station building, a two-storey stationmaster's house and a single storey station building. The station building consisted of a booking office, waiting room, toilets and staff accommodation, and was fronted by a canopy that gave some protection in wet weather although facing the southwest. At the south end of the station points gave access to the single goods yard siding, 180ft. in length, which ran alongside the platform to act as a loading dock. The goods yard was served by a small, unmade trackway to enable horse-drawn carts and road vehicles to load and unload merchandise from railway wagons.[16]

Whitwell station was somewhat larger and a passing place on the single line. The Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway obviously thought it had the potential to generate more traffic than elsewhere on the line. Both platforms at Whitwell were 285ft. in length. The down platform had a shelter whilst on the up side a station building similar to that at Godshill was provided. The goods yard was located on the east side of the line with the sidings extending round the back of the station buildings. The entry points facing Ventnor bound trains were located in the up loop and gave access to a cattle-dock siding 100ft. in length, a long siding and a run-round loop siding 360ft. in length. Access to the station and goods yard from the village was a wide approach road from Nettlecombe Lane.[17]

Most of the area served by the branch formed part of large agricultural estates or downland and consequently the majority of people were employed on the land. Goods traffic of agricultural produce was smaller than originally estimated. Root vegetables were conveyed to Newport and included potatoes, carrots, swedes and turnips. Milk was dispatched daily to Newport and Cowes in 17 gallon churns, from Godshill, Whitwell and Merstone. Two consignments were sent daily during the summer months, the first by an early morning train and then, a second, in late afternoon. During the winter the one consignment went out by early morning train. Despite the provision made at both Whitwell and Godshill the livestock traffic handled on the branch was minimal. The principal consignments appear to have been sheep reared on the downland around Whitwell and St Lawrence; sheep, pigs and cattle were carried in ordinary covered vans.[18]

As an agricultural commodity coal was important as a cheap and ready supply could allow the larger farmers to make a number of farming improvements. Coal was used in the powering of farm machinery, mostly traction engines, and in the drying of grain. As the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway approached completion, the contractor reported on 2 October 1896 that he had been approached regarding the carriage of coal and the letting of land adjacent to Whitwell station as a coal yard and distribution point. The Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway board asked the Isle of Wight Central Railway not only for conveyance charges per ton per mile, but also what rent to charge for coal grounds at their stations. The Isle of Wight Central Railway replied suggesting a rate of 3d. per ton per mile but left the renting of land to local agreement. In June 1897 further

enquiries were made by an Island coal merchant for renting sidings and coal yards at stations along the line; the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway again sought the views of the Isle of Wight Central Railway before granting permission and established the standard rent for coal grounds in goods yards as £3 per year. Coal was routed from the mainland via Medina Jetty for distribution throughout the Island. On opening to Ventnor in 1900, the Isle of Wight Central Railway increased the rate for the conveyance of coal to its branch stations; the rate to Whitwell went up from 2s. 0d. to 2s. 3d. per ton, and St Lawrence from 2s. 5d. to 2s. 6d. per ton. The amount of coal handled by the stations in the early days is not known but in 1923 Godshill handled 40 tons per year, Whitwell 96 tons and St Lawrence 15 tons. Ventnor West handled 400 tons per year indicating the difference between a small town and a village.[19]

In May 1896 the Isle of Wight Central Railway agreed to the National Telephone Company putting up telegraph poles along the route of the railway from Merstone to Ventnor at a wayleave charge of 1s. 0d. per mile per year, providing the railway company could use the same pole. On the 29 June this proposal was put to the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway board and was subsequently agreed to in September, with the proviso that it had free use of all telephone and telegraph services. Here is another illustration of how the railway had improved the communications within the agricultural community, this being the first telegraph to be available in the district.

The initial timetable of the Isle of Wight Central Railway, who operated the line from 20 July 1897, consisted of ten trains in each direction on weekdays and four on Sundays. The traffic generated from the line, and from the through traffic from Cowes to Ventnor was much less than the over-optimistic forecasts and the company made an operating loss for the first three years. The 1909 Isle of Wight Central Railway working timetable showed one goods, two mixed, four passenger and one express passenger in the down direction on Mondays to Fridays with an additional passenger train on Saturdays. The morning goods, 6.30am ex-Newport, was diagrammed for a larger engine and called at all stations on the line.

The opening of the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway undoubtedly brought benefits to the local community. The journey to market at Newport was quicker, the

district was opened up to new ideas, coal could be delivered in larger quantities and relatively cheaply, and the local stations became a focus of activity adding to village life. However, the coming of the railway to this rural community did not bring about an immediate revolution in farming practices. Some change did take place, as milk could be sent quickly to Newport or Cowes, but generally the changes were limited

The importance of Newport as a market town.

On the Island the railway system and road system focused on the County Town of Newport. Newport was in the centre of the Island and roads and railways radiated from it. By 1889 the Isle of Wight Central Railway had established Newport as a major railway interchange. Trains departed from Newport to Ryde (Ryde and Newport Railway), Sandown (Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway), Ventnor (Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway), Freshwater (Freshwater, Yarmouth and Newport Railway) and Cowes (Cowes and Newport Railway). These companies were brought together by various amalgamations to form the Isle of Wight Central Railway. Newport also had access to the sea and was situated at the lowest bridging point of the River Medina.

Newport market was the chief focal point of Island agricultural business. By 1860 the market day in Newport was Saturday with a cattle market on alternate Wednesdays. The Saturday market was held in St James Square, the centre of the town, just under half a mile from the railway station. In England, the number of markets had declined in the nineteenth century. The Royal Commission on Market Towns and Rights compared those in existence in 1888 with those held in 1792. They found that they had declined by half, from 745 to 370.[20] Railways contributed to that decline, making the market system of the country less flexible. In the past markets had depended on the business that was available and the entrepreneurship of dealers and those that controlled them. By the late-nineteenth century they depended heavily on the railways. Unless a railway could serve a market it could not generate sufficient business to survive. Of the 412 markets held in 1888 in England and Wales only 22 were more than 3 miles from a railway station and 12 of these received a station later. This decline in the number of markets was more marked in the south of England. This was not the case on the Island where the railway had magnified the importance of Newport as the County Town.

The country carrier.

Traditionally, the country carrier moved all kind of goods including agricultural produce. Early carriers were smallholders who needed to transport their own produce. Typically they had a horse or two and a small acreage of rented land on which they cultivated vegetables, fruit and corn. They would have been mainly self-sufficient, keeping one or two cows, pigs, hens, ducks and geese. The little surplus would be sold at market to buy clothing, furniture, tools or anything else they required. From them the carrier service grew. The country carrier would be expected to carry almost anything in a horse drawn van; parcels and packages, groceries, meat and eggs, flour and coal, sides of bacon, packages of cigarettes, dead rabbits and live hens, ducks, pigs, calves, acids and poisons, medicines, newspapers, coffins, and people as passengers.

Before the introduction of railways to the Island there was a sophisticated carrier network trading to and from Newport. Inevitably, the railways took some of the trade but not as much as might be expected, as the carrier would deliver door-to-door and the railway relied on goods being brought to, and collected from, a station.[21] Indeed, the proliferation of the railways created new carrier routes to and from the stations. Carriers acted as feeders for the railways, bringing people and goods from the outlying areas to the stations. Interestingly, few carriers operated between Cowes or East Cowes and Newport, partly due to the railway service and also because of the river transport system that operated along the River Medina.

Samuel Mundell, a carrier, was trading from his home at 61, Crocker Street in Newport to Cowes in 1871, but later moved to 12, Holyrood Street. This street was on the direct route between the station and the centre of Newport and as such provided Mundell with a good passing trade. There were also those carriers operating who were mainly under contract to the railway companies to deliver and collect goods and take passengers to and from the railway stations. These included Chaplins Ltd, who linked the stations of Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor and the country stations and delivered to all parts of the Island; Prescott and Son who traded from the Kent Tavern in Ryde, and James Hall who operated a railway service in the Yarmouth and Freshwater area from the 1870s to 1903.[22]

In the Victorian period it was not uncommon to hear of people who had only visited a town once or twice in their lives. It was not necessary to go to town as the carrier bought for them and then delivered to them. Carriers adapted quickly to change. The competition from the stagecoach in the nineteenth century had been seen off by the spread of the railways across the Island. Carriers turned this new competition to their advantage and prospered from the rural trade it developed. Trains could only operate on the tracks that were laid from the stations that were built; carriers could travel anywhere a road or track allowed access for their vans and took their passengers as close to their door as was possible. Even the stagecoach never took them to their door.

The railway and farming patterns.

In England and Wales the railways were able to influence the pattern of farming, especially that of grain and cattle, as warehouses and maltings were established at stations. This was the case in East Anglia where they were numerous, for example at Mellis and Haughes in Suffolk, and grain stores for fodder at Didcot in Berkshire. The buying and selling of sheep became concentrated at markets convenient to both farmers and dealers alike. On the Island, Newport became this centre. It was recognised that cattle could be transported quickly over large distances by train with the animals losing less weight, although this was less important on the Island where distances were smaller. In England and Wales the railways substantially altered the pattern of liquid milk production. From the 1870s onwards milk could be transported quickly over large distances to its main markets, notably London, Birmingham and Manchester. In Wiltshire and Berkshire large arable areas were turned over to grass and the Great Western Railway transported large quantities of liquid milk into London on a daily basis.[23] Although the Isle of Wight Central Railway transported the familiar 17 gallon churns of milk, sometimes twice daily, from their rural stations to the dairies of Newport and Cowes, there is no evidence to think that this produced wholesale changes to the pattern of farming on the Island.

On the mainland some rural districts found it worthwhile to specialise in growing foodstuffs for the large urban markets, especially fresh fruit and vegetables. This was evident in Cambridgeshire where Henry Chivers developed orchards from 1873 at Histon, a small village that was served by stations from both the Great Eastern and Midland Railways. In Somerset the cultivation of strawberries was developed after the building of

a railway from Cheddar to Westbury. The Island did not have these developments; the market gardening that did occur was to satisfy the Island market that was growing steadily as both urban growth and tourism developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century. There is an account later of just such a farm on the reclaimed marshes of Brading Haven. The Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway that wound its way from Sandown to Newport served the Vale of Arreton where the light sandy soils were especially favourable for this type of agriculture.

The railways became the new employers of labour in their construction, upkeep and service. The contractors needed labourers and paid more than workers could earn in farming where pay was between 7s. to 12s. per week. In February 1895 Westwood and Winley, contractors to the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway, paid their men 5d. an hour on each section of their construction, apart from around Whitwell, where the labourers went on strike as the rate was only 4½d. an hour.[24] This would put the weekly wage at between 20s. and 23s., double that which could be earned on the land. However, the work was hard and discontinuous. Before the arrival of the railways the great majority of agricultural workers were tied to their employment; they were fixed in mind, place and pay. Railways gave them mobility to seek better paid work but only if they could afford the fare. Even on the relatively small Island it allowed this mobility, especially as the towns and tourist industry was growing apace at this time.

The reclamation of Brading Haven for agriculture.

The reclamation and subsequent use for agriculture of Brading Haven by a railway company, will serve to illustrate the influence that the railways have had on the farming activities within a small area of the Island. East of Brading the River Eastern Yar flows in a shallow valley, some two miles wide, before entering the sea at Bembridge. This area of esturine mudflats with its winding channel was known as Brading Haven. From Roman times right up until 1880 small ships could, at high water, sail right up to the quays at Brading to unload and load cargoes. Between Brading and Bembridge, there were over 800 acres of land that had the potential to be reclaimed for agriculture. The case study below charts the history and use of this area as it was progressively reclaimed from the sea for farming.

The reclamation of Brading Haven proceeded from 1338 when Sir William Russell, Warden of the Isle of Wight, drained some of Sandham Marsh and built Yar Bridge. Jermyn Richards, a Welshman, purchased Yaverland in 1553 and in 1562, with George Oglander, started the second reclamation or innings when an embankment was built from Brading to St Helens, and North Marsh was recovered. Edward Richards made the third innings in 1594 when land from his sluices up to Yarbridge was reclaimed for pasture.

Henry Gibbs acquired the right to enclose the Haven from James I. This was later sold to Sir Bevis Thelwell, ex-Cheapside apprentice and page of James I's bedchamber, who enlisted the co-operation of Sir Hugh Myddleton and Dutch engineers to drain the main part of the Haven. On 16 December 1620 work was started by driving a row of oak piles in a line from under the Lodge at Bembridge to Woodnutt's stores on the Duver at St Helens. Sluices were constructed to let the river water out and clay, earth and stones made the embankment watertight. Thelwell spent £4,000 on drainage and £3,000 on buildings. Disappointment followed when it was discovered that the reclaimed land, nearly 800 acres, was too sandy to be of any value. Of the wheat, barley, oats, cabbages and rape, with which Thelwell experimented, only rape was successful. On 8 March 1830, ten years after the reclamation began, the sea broke through the embankment. Sir Hugh Myddleton's fields once more became the harbour bottom and cockles and winkles grew where his meagre crops of oats and rape had struggled for existence. The old hankering to win back the land persisted. There was the abortive scheme of Sir Robert Worsley, a surveyor, who prepared an estimate of £4,400 for the reclamation in 1699, and in 1808 Vancover expressed the opinion that '...500 acres might be embanked with great advantage.'[25] Generally, no one thought it worthwhile to spend money on reclamation, although small areas and creeks were, from time to time, banked off and reclaimed by adjacent landowners.

Sir William Oglander had previously purchased the Haven from the Earl of Yarborough purely for the purpose of preventing it from being reclaimed. Sir William was concerned for the view eastwards from his house at Nunwell near Brading that overlooked the Haven. Sir William, and later his son Sir Henry Oglander, had always opposed any schemes to reclaim the haven for agricultural purposes. However, by the 1870s the Haven was becoming a financial burden; the income from the quay at Brading, plus the various

charges for taking sand and the renting of land was just not large enough to cover the cost of £200 to £300 a year that was needed to keep the sea defences in an adequate state of repair. Therefore, the area was sold to the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company under the chairmanship of Jabez Balfour M. P.. Part of his £420,000 scheme was to straighten the River Eastern Yar and to reclaim up to 800 acres of the Haven for agriculture.

The reclaimed area was oval in shape with the smaller end facing the sea and the other abutting on ancient dams near Brading, two miles up the valley. The broad embanked River Eastern Yar runs straight through the centre, dividing the area into two, collecting the waters from the ancient reclamations up stream. At high water the pressure of the water in Bembridge Harbour shuts the sluices at St Helens. At low tide the sluice gates open and the river discharges into Bembridge Harbour. From a scenic point of view the reclamation was a great improvement on the ancient mud flats. From Brading Down, looking east, the area looked like '...a green sea between a ring of surrounding hills.'[26] The area was still rich in wild fowl which fed in the shallow pools and drains; half-wild swans fed on the weed which otherwise would choke up the dykes. It had been estimated that two swans would clear as much as one paid labourer. In fact the reclamation of mudflats and foreshore was advocated at the time as a means of providing 'work and wages' whilst adding to the resources of the county. The area was still isolated, as on the reclaimed section there were no roads, no right-of-ways and no footpaths. The area was secured absolutely for the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company. Of the £420,000 spent on the project, it was estimated that £100,000 had been spent on the railway, quays and buildings, giving £320,000 as the cost of reclaiming the 800 acres, a cost of nearly £500 per acre. The quality of the reclaimed land was better than Sir Hugh Myddleton judged. After the salt water had been drained from the land the area was left to the acts of nature to improve. The slightly acid rain would have leached out the salts from the soil, allowing grasses to colonise and provide pasture for cattle. C. J. Cornish noted that grass, clover and trefoil matured quickly. Left to itself, without any reclamation, the Haven would have gradually silted up over the course of time and pastures would have developed of their own accord.

The draining of Brading Haven in the summer of 1881 led to a protracted conflict over fencing between the landowners on the south side of the Haven and the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company, which rumbled on well into 1882. Before the Haven was enclosed the tidal waters and the softness of the mud acted as a barrier to cattle straying from Bembridge Farm, tenanted by Mr John Smith, and Yaverland Farm, tenanted by Messrs. J. and M. White. Sir G. E. W. Hammond-Graeme of Yaverland Manor owned the land on the south side of the Haven. The argument started in June 1881 when Mr A. Harbottle Estcourt, solicitor for John Smith, wrote to Mr H. Samuel Freeman, receiver for the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company, complaining of the '...insufficient and temporary fence,' which encroached onto Sir Hammond-Graeme's land and asked for a good permanent fence to be erected. The temporary fence consisted of a ditch with thorn stuck into the top of the thrown out material.[28] Two days later Freeman replied for the company stating that the fence had been put up at the request of Smith and that he had expressed his satisfaction with it in a letter and had promised to keep it in a good state of repair. Freeman also questioned whether the company was bound to put up a fence in the first place. He also refuted the position of the fence stating '...I don't think we have exceeded our limits a single foot, the fence has been put in on a proper contour line very carefully surveyed...'[29]

Further letters were exchanged in September 1881. Harbottle Estcourt stating Smith's case and Freeman that for the company. On 12 September 1881 Freeman wrote:

> ... I cannot entertain the idea of putting up any more fencing for the convenience of your tenants. What I did before, although I was under no obligation to do it, has caused me so much grumbling that it has quite cured me of the quixotic idea of doing anything from a neighbourly or friendly feeling.

The next exchange was on 16 March 1882 when Harbottle Estcourt wrote demanding that the argument be settled by magistrates. This led to a survey on the state of the fencing being made. The report, dated 11 April 1882, found the boundary fence between the farmland and the company's land to be totally insufficient to keep cattle and sheep straying across it.[30] They recommended that an ox-fence be erected upon a bank as follows:

> ...should most readily be attained by fixing stout oak posts in the usual manner with strong rails, four or five in number according to the height required, mortised

> into them, or with strong wires, fastened in the usual manner with holdfasts.....or, should the company prefer, to form the usual bank and ditch fence with thorns, it would be equally available if the thorns were protected during their growth by strained wire or other similar fencing until the quick-fence became sufficient.

As the issue of the fencing was still not resolved R. B. Lawnes Esq. and Mary Lady Hammond-Graeme, trustees of the recently deceased Sir G. E. W. Hammond-Graeme, brought a case against the Brading Haarbour Improvement and Railway Company taking advice from Mr A. Charles Q. C..[31] The documents of the case give a detailed insight into the reclamation of the harbour and the building of the railway. Lawnes. and Lady Hammond-Graeme demanded that the company build a fence to stop cattle straying from their land. Freeman duly erected this. However, as the fence was poorly constructed and the company refused all liability to maintain it. Lawnes and Lady Hammond-Graeme applied to the justices for the Isle of Wight under clauses 68 and 70 of the Railway Clauses Act 1845 to determine whether the company was liable to make and maintain such a fence. The company argued that the land of the harbour had been sold in 1879 by the company to the House and Land Investment Trust; Freeman was also director of the trust. This land, they argued, was separate from the site of the embankment and railway. Therefore, the company argued, that although they were liable to fence the permanent way of the railway under clause 68 of the 1845 Railway Clauses Act to prevent the danger of cattle trespassing onto the track, they were under no obligation to put it at the extremity of their land, as long as it was somewhere between the line and the land of the adjoining owners. Further, even if they were liable, this liability had ceased as the land had been sold and therefore ceased to be land adjoining the railway under the terms of the 1845 Railway Clauses Act - a very neat solution as they saw it!

However, Lawnes and Lady Hammond-Graeme argued that the company was bound under the Railway Clauses Act, clause 80, to maintain the embankment and that in the conveyance to the House and Land Investment Trust the company were reserved the 'right of entry' for that purpose, and that in 1879 the harbour land could not have been surplus to requirements and therefore the company had no right to sell it in the first place. To complicate the matter even further, the company argued that they had not erected the fence in 1880 but that the House and Land Investment Trust erected it.

The magistrates eventually found in favour of the company's argument. Lawnes and Lady, Hammond-Graeme were not happy with this outcome and asked Mr A. Charles Q. C., for advice on the matter.[32] .The advice he gave was as follows:

1. If the land was still the property of the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company they had the liability to maintain the fence under clause 68 of the 1845 Railway Clauses Act.
2. However, if the company had sold the land to the House and Land Investment Trust it resolved them from all liability to maintain the fence.
3. The House and Land Investment Trust had no liability to maintain the fence under clause 68 of the 1845 Railway Clauses Act.
4. However, he was inconclusive as to whether the land was surplus in 1879, when it was still under water, and whether the company had the power to sell it.

It is evident that these answers were not to the liking of Lawnes and Lady Hammond-Graeme and the matter of the fencing appears to have been dropped. However, it does illustrate clearly the difficulties that could arise between a railway company and landowners over agricultural issues.

In 1895 C. J. Cornish made a personal study of the reclaimed Brading Haven.[33] The land had been reclaimed for 15 years and agriculture was well established on it. The land nearer Brading had become good pasture grazed by cattle. These 150 acres of land were let at 30 shillings per acre giving a yearly income of £225. This land had been improved by alluvium when the River Eastern Yar flooded. Interestingly, the land had not been levelled as the creeks and fleets, in which the tide used to rise and fall, could still be seen. Around the edge of the Haven earthworms had begun to colonise and gradually improve the quality of the soil. On one side sewage had been run onto the poorer soil and three crops of grass were then possible on this land that otherwise would not have fetched 5 shillings per acre in rent. However, at that time there was still a portion of dead, sour, 'greensand' on which very little grew. Even after 15 years there was only the gradual colonisation of grass, rushes and plaintain.

Cornish reported that a cattle farm and nursery garden occupied the centre of the 'seaweed curve'. He wrote: 'The farm is already surrounded by rich grasses, clover and herbage, and the garden is a wonder of fertility.' Cornish interviewed Mr C. Orchard, lessee of the market garden:

> Some portions of the reclamation contain a sulphurous matter injurious to vegetation, and require a top dressing of manure or other soil for the seed to germinate in. There are many varieties of soil and substances to be found throughout the whole area. The best for vegetation is a kind of loamy deposit of mud, on the highest parts; that is, above the strata of sand: in this nearly every variety of cereal and vegetable luxuriates and grows beyond all proportions. There are four acres included by a fence, and now cultivated by me, as a market-and flower-garden. The soil is rich in phosphates, and all kinds of vegetables grow wonderfully clean and of good flavour; the asparagus especially being noted for its delicious flavour, being in its natural element as a seaside plant. Apples, plums and peas have been tried with great success, and flowers of all kinds grow and flower in great profusion; the bright colours coming out to the highest degree in the open and sunny position.
>
> Quite indigenous, the wild bastard samphire or glasswort grows most profusely around the brackish streams and lakes. The horn-poppy also luxuriates on the sides of the road that forms the embankment, and on two distinct places I have found the very rare Silewe quinqueculnera, which I believe has been found only in two or three places in England. The wild evening primrose, is found both here and on St Helens 'Dover'(sic), as well as the sea-holly.

Cornish noted that the greatest success over the last 15 years was in the condition of the light, running sand close to the embankment. This had a stratum of clay beneath it and supported poplar trees and had been developed into a golf course, studded at short intervals with level lawns of turf for 'putting greens'. This area had the potential to be converted into a beautiful park-like recreation ground.

Conclusion.

In the Victorian period the Isle of Wight was a mixed farming area typical of that found in southern and south-east England. On the Island, as in other areas, the railways had a physical impact on the rural landscape through which they passed. The companies laid lines across fields, often on embankments or in cuttings and in many cases splitting farms. The railway companies had to accommodate the farms and estates by building bridges and occupational crossings. Many large landowners, such as Lord Yarborough, vigorously

disagreed with the building of such lines on the grounds of loss of privacy and damage. On the Island only the Hamstead estate built a tramway for agricultural proposes although they were common on the mainland and continent. The opening of the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence railway enhanced the rural economy of the area that it served. It improved access to the established Island markets; taking from the farmer what he wanted to sell and bringing to him what he wanted to buy. In particular, bulk coal, foodstuffs for cattle, manure and fertiliser were transported. The railway assisted general farm improvements, including, mechanisation, by distributing, via the station goods yard, coal for the traction engines. Associated with this was the changing role of the country carriers, who took advantage of the trade the railway generated by extending their networks to the stations. However, on the Island, there is no evidence that the railway altered the regional pattern of agriculture, as it had on the mainland. The Island was too small for this. The railways did, however, increase the mobility of the agricultural workforce.

An examination of the reclamation of Brading Haven gives a clear indication of the effect a railway could have on the agriculture of an area. Over 800 acres of, albeit poor quality, land was created and it has been shown that conflicts could and did exist, on a day to day level, between the farming community and the railway. In this one area of the Island the railway had a profound influence on the agriculture and the geography.

Notes: The impact of the railways on agricultural activities.

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28. Estcourt, A. H., (1881), letter to H. S. Freeman, Hammond-Graeme papers, IWCRO, HG/2/511.
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Chapter 8

The movement of goods to and from the Island.

Between 1861 and 1901, as the population on the Island rose from 55,362 to 80,911, great demands were made for merchandise of all type. The railways of the Island helped satisfy these demands. This chapter aims to describe and discuss the developments and improvements in the transportation of goods to and from the Island in the Victorian period with reference to the Eastern Wight. Particular aims are to describe the changes that took place at the rail-connected ports that dealt with the transportation of goods and to analyse the movement of goods by the Isle of Wight Railway.

Unless manufactured from natural resources found on the Island all goods and merchandise were, and still are, brought to the Island by sea transport. The main transhipment points to the mainland were established at the mouths, or upstream from the mouths, of rivers that flowed north to the Solent or Spithead. These rivers or estuaries were from west to east, the River Yar, Newtown Creek, the River Medina, Wootton Creek and the River Eastern Yar. Only at Ryde was a port established where there was no natural inlet. By 1860 Newtown Creek had diminished in importance as a port and Wootton Creek was not developed until the 1920s when the Southern Railway used it as a port for their vehicle ferry. All the others became, by the late 1800s, rail-connected. Yarmouth, sited at the mouth of the River Western Yar, was reached by the Freshwater, Yarmouth and Newport Railway in 1889, although the station was over half a mile from the harbour and had no direct sidings with the quay. Opposite, on the mainland, the Lymington Railway Company had opened a branch line from Brockenhurst to Lymington in 1858, and from 1830 local businessmen had established a paddle steamer service from Lymington to Yarmouth. The quay at Lymington was adjacent to the Town station allowing wagons and goods to be unloaded close to the boats. The River Medina provided the longest ingress into the Island. Newport, the county town, was established in Roman times at the lowest bridging point, five miles from the mouth, and East and West Cowes developed at the mouth. West Cowes and Newport became rail-connected in June 1862. Twenty years earlier, in May 1840, the London and Southampton Railway had opened to Southampton with through steamer traffic to Cowes being developed. The town of Ryde had always been considered a main point of entry to the Island and although opposite Portsmouth was never an ideal landing place as the foreshore had a shallow gradient. Regular daily sailing-packet services were started from Portsmouth to Ryde in 1796 and by 1812 an Act enabling a pier

1740ft. long had been authorised. Ryde became rail-connected by the Isle of Wight Railway in 1864 although it took until 1880 for a rail-connected pier to be opened. On the mainland Portsmouth was reached from London in two directions, the London and South Western Railway from Bishopstoke and the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway from Brighton, the two companies jointly building the last few miles into Portsmouth Town station. In 1859 the London and South Western Railway opened a more direct line with London via Havant and Guildford. In 1863 the London and South Western Railway opened an extension on their original Bishopstoke-Gosport branch to a pier at Stokes Bay, immediately opposite Ryde. It was not until 1876 that Portsmouth Town station was rail connected to a pier and station at Portsmouth Harbour. Lastly, in the east was the estuary of the River Eastern Yar. Quays had been established some two miles upstream at Brading, which became rail-connected by a siding from the Isle of Wight Railway in 1864. These quays were later to be made redundant when the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company reclaimed Brading Haven in 1880 and built a new and larger and rail-connected port at St Helens. For a time in the 1880s St Helens Quay was connected by a freight-only train ferry to the Hayling Island branch of the London Brighton and South Coast Railway in Langstone Harbour on the mainland. So, at the main points of transhipment it was possible for goods to be moved from ship to rail or vice versa with considerable ease and the minimum of effort. The goods could then be distributed rapidly, and in large quantities, to the main stations or distribution points. This was a great improvement on what had gone on before where the distribution of goods had been in the hands of the carrier who operated on less than adequate roads and could only carry small quantities using horse and carts. A more detailed analysis of the main ports in the Eastern Wight now follows.

Ryde.

On 5 April 1825 the steam packet *Union* joined the service between Ryde and Portsmouth with four services per day and a cost of 18d. per person on the quarter-deck and main cabin, or 12d. in the forecastle and fore cabin. Goods and parcels could be booked at the Quebec Tavern, Portsmouth and the Pier Hotel, Ryde.[1] Boats with heavy goods such as coal often anchored offshore at Ryde and took the ground at low tide when carts were drawn by horses across the sands to unload them. By 1857 it had been decided to build a basin and a pier at Ryde to deal with this trade and the increasing passenger traffic. The Isle of Wight Steam Ferry Company undertook the project. The contractor, Mr Bennett of Pimlico, started operations at the beginning of October but work commenced slowly.[2] By

the spring of 1859 the dock basin was rapidly approaching completion and the pier, named Victoria Pier, was to be started.[3] At the end of July 1859 the entrance between the tidal basin and the inner dock was being built and all the iron pillars to support the pier had been driven in. The pier was only 1,000ft. long and therefore not available to boats at low tide. The Victoria Pier had a centre roadway for carriages 16ft. in width and two sideways, each 7ft. in width, for foot passengers. Suitable waiting rooms were provided and luggage was moved directly between the boat and shore.[4] At this time there was no rail connection to the docks or piers. The nearest rail connection was at the terminus of the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway at Ryde St John's Road over a mile away and that did not open until 1864. The railway had little influence on the movement of goods into the Island at this stage. Later, in 1880, Ryde Pier became rail-connected, the docks closed and became part of the track under the Esplanade to Ryde St John's Road station. Ryde had become the main passenger port of the Eastern Wight, whilst Brading Haven dealt with the mineral and general goods traffic.

Brading Haven.

From Roman times Brading Haven afforded one of the main channels of ingress into the Island for goods and mechandise. St Helens was, according to Sir John Oglander, the main landowner of the area, '...formerly...ye sole harbor' and Brading '...ye only towne for receypt of strangers that came by shippinge.'[5] Before 1594, when Edward Richards reclaimed the upper part of the Haven for agriculture, small vessels used to sail right up to the High Street in Brading where the landing quays were at the back of the houses. In 1594 Brading had a new port or quay built to the north east of the village. Brading continued to trade in a minor way for the next two and a half centuries supplying ships, both merchant and naval, in St Helens Roads off the entrance of the river, with provisions, notably beer.

The quays at Brading were destined to become rail-connected as they were ideal for Sir John Fowler, contractor for the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway, to bring in machinery, plant and the materials that were required for construction. The Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway planned a siding from the mainline at Brading station to link with the quay. They gave notice of a Bill in Parliament in the 1861 session '...to construct and maintain the following railway with all the necessary works, stations, approaches and conveniences.'[6] Of the two proposed extensions in the Bill the second, for a siding to the quay was as follows:

> A railway all in the Parish of Brading, commencing by a junction with the intended Isle of Wight Railway in a piece of marshland belonging to William Jacobs and being about six chains north west from the first great bend in the River Yar above Sandown bridge and terminating in an arable field belonging to Sir Henry Oglander, Baronet, and in the occupation of John Cooper.

The layout of the quay is not clear, nor the facilities established, although some details can be gleaned from the minute books of the proprietors and directors of the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway. The directors resolved to establish at Brading a storage area for coal and building materials, and to form a company called 'The Brading Quay Company' for that purpose although there is no evidence that this was formally achieved. On 23 July 1860 Mr Morrison, manager, reported that he had been in negotiations with Messrs. Smith, Jacob and other coal merchants from Ryde, Ventnor and Sandown. He had also been talking with local builders.[7] Mr Saunders, the company's engineer, was asked to examine the land at Brading Quay and to report how much was available for the storage of coal.

On 7 March 1861 the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway's directors discussed the purchase of land at Brading Harbour (sic) resolving that the existing quays, owned by Sir Henry Oglander, should not be purchased by the company and that sufficient land should be purchased on the northern side of Brading Harbour to enable the company to construct wharves and landing places.[8] This never came about and was perhaps discussed to put pressure on Sir Henry, never a promoter of railways on his land, to sell his land. However, there is no documentary evidence to support this idea. However, under the authorisation of the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway Act, the company had the right to compulsorily purchase the land required for the Brading Quay branch from the Oglander estate. The propriety of serving a 'Notice to Treat' for the land required for the Brading Quay branch was considered and discussed at the board meeting on 1 August 1861.[9] The company's solicitor was instructed to prepare and serve the same without delay, the land being duly purchased from the Oglander estate.

Brading Quay was a hive of activity. Captain Mark Huish, deputy chairman of the Isle of Wight Railway, promoted the coal trade. It was resolved that the board should sanction arrangements for the delivery of 10,000 tons of coal at Brading that was to be conveyed by the Isle of Wight Railway and resold at Ryde and other stations. In October 1864 '...a weighbridge was deemed necessary as a sizeable trade was flourishing.'[10] The *Isle of*

Wight Observer reported that goods traffic on the Isle of Wight Railway commenced in December 1864 but at that time the jetty and tipping stage at Brading Quay were still incomplete.[11] The works at Brading were finally completed in August 1865. There was a healthy traffic in coal; steam colliers and wagons could run alongside each other at the quay and there was sufficient room for three vessels of up to 150 tons to discharge their cargoes simultaneously.[12] Business was so good that Captain Huish made arrangements with the Railway Carriage Company for the supply of ten additional wagons which were to be paid for at £21 per annum over five years. The wagons would be delivered to Brading Quay.[13] The quay was a very convenient place for the Isle of Wight Railway to unload their stock of locomotives, carriages, wagons and building materials. On 27 April 1864 the Isle of Wight Railway ordered three engines from Beyer Peacock for their passenger and freight service in readiness for the opening which was to be in August of that year.[14] These delightful 2-4-0 tank engines were dispatched from the makers in June 1864 and shipped, at a cost of £200, by E. Pritchard, of Sandown, to Brading Quay. They were named *Ryde*, *Sandown* and *Shanklin*. Four years later, in October 1868, the Isle of Wight Railway's new engine *Ventnor* was landed at Brading Quay and placed on the railway, again by Pritchard.[15] *Wroxall*, a similar locomotive, was landed at Brading Quay in May 1872.[16] Following tenders in March 1873 Boudon Hayward, of London, supplied 1,500 red-wood sleepers to the Isle of Wight Railway, each measuring 9'0" by 1" by 5", at a price of 4s. 2d. each, delivered to Brading Quay. Even though Brading Quay had become rail-connected, the commercial use of Brading Harbour had declined during the 1860s. In 1869, to improve trade, the Brading Haven Oyster Fishery Company installed a tug at St Helens to enable the quay at Brading to be used by vessels up to 300 tons.[17]

In January 1871 it was decided that cranes were required both at Ryde and at Brading Quay.[18] Five five-ton cranes were ordered from F. Bradley of Kidderminster for £69 10s. 0d. each, delivered to Ryde. Trade was obviously improving, as on Wednesday 28 February 1872, the Isle of Wight Railway's general manager reported that more room would be needed at Brading Quay for storing coal and that Sir Henry Oglander had proposed to lease a portion of his land for a rent of £10 p.a..[19] This was finally agreed on 2 October 1872.[20] Later, in October 1875, it was resolved that Brading Quay should be extended at a cost of £1,200.[21] In April 1878 J. Bourne, manager of the Isle of Wight Railway, recommended the purchase of a locomotive whipping crane for use at Brading Quay for an estimated cost of £400.[22]

In September 1874 came the first mention of the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company. A letter was read from Mr R. S. H. Saunders, engineer to the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company, referring to the proposed branch line and works. The board of the Isle of Wight Railway considered the letter but deferred to make any official comment at that stage.[23] The plans of the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company, to build an embankment from Bembridge to St Helens and reclaim the marshes up to Brading, would have made Brading Quay completely redundant. Even though the quay at Brading was successful the directors of the Isle of Wight Railway, and others, could also see the potential for a larger port at the mouth of the River Eastern Yar at St Helens. Jabez Balfour's Bill, the Brading Harbour Improvement, Railway and Works Bill 1874, financed by the Liberator Building Society, was unopposed in Parliament and therefore had the acquiescence of the Isle of Wight Railway.[24] Right from the start it was envisaged that the Isle of Wight Railway would operate the line using their carriage stock and traincrews and have access to the quays at St Helens.

St Helens Quay was transformed with the arrival of the railway, becoming a major goods yard. The new quays at St Helens were substantial structures and made up of two main wharves, North Quay and South Quay. The quays themselves could accommodate vessels of up to 250 tons and 280ft. in length. Sidings ran from the branch line to the quays. The engine house, gas works and goods sheds along with the weighbridge were situated on North Quay. As the quays were at the head of Bembridge Harbour, and the sluice gates of the River Eastern Yar were situated between North and South Quays, it was hoped that the flushing action of the sluices would prevent the silting up of the quays and harbour. This was never to be the case, eventually being the reason for St Helens Quay to be superseded, in the late 1920s, by Medina Wharf as the main rail-connected port in the Island. A 1'11½" gauge line, positioned across Latimer Road, leading from the gashouse sidings to the gashouse, served the gas works. This was used to convey coking coal tubs from the quay to the works where coal gas was made for the village. On South Quay a mobile steam-crane operated, which could be moved onto a small turntable to enable it to serve the 100ft. road that joined North and South Quay. A stationary hand-crane was also positioned on this quay.

A number of local firms used St Helens Quay including Chaplins, Pickfords and Curtis, all local carriers of general mechandise. Long's Brewery also used the quay. Goods of all description were unloaded from the boats, labelled, sorted and then loaded into the covered

box wagons for dispatch to all parts of the Island. Timber, cement, building materials and coal were the main bulk commodities. From 1884 the steam colliers *Allerwash* and *Ellington* delivered coal, 500 tons at a time, from the North East's coal ports. It cost in the region of 17s. 11½d. per ton, which was 2s. 8½d. more expensive than charged to the London and South Western Railway at Basingstoke. St Helens Quay was the larger rail-connected port on the Island, the other being Medina Jetty at Cowes, and was a vital facility both to the Island community and also the Isle of Wight Railway.

Balfour's Liberator Building Society also financed the short lived Isle of Wight Marine Transit Company, that was formed in 1884 to install and operate a train ferry between the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway's Hayling Island branch from Langstone Harbour to St Helens Quay; a distance of 11 miles, 6½ miles of which were in the open sea, the rest being in land-locked harbours. A prospectus dated 12 March 1884 gave details of the scheme. The capital was £30,000 in 3,000 shares at £10 each with the cost of the works at St Helens and Langstone being limited to £28,423.[25]

Up until this time there had been considerable delay in getting goods to the Isle of Wight. *Engineering Magazine* quoted the following:

> At Portsmouth, where the first handling and delay occurs, everything must be unloaded at the town station, and take turn with Portsmouth town goods; then follows cartage through the town to the quay, and two more handlings occur here in unloading the carts and shipping. Arrived at Ryde, the goods are moved again for cartage to the station through the town of Ryde, and once more they're in loading into railway wagons. At Ventnor, or other destination, the reverse process occurs and, after two more handlings and another cartage, the consignee is at last reached; and it is well if he has nothing to complain of in the condition of his goods. Since arriving at Portsmouth there have been seven separate handlings, three cartages, a risky water passage, and a railway journey. Although the railway company's responsibility continued throughout, their actual control ceased at Portsmouth, when possession was transferred to the Isle of Wight agents or carriers.[26]

Using the new train ferry it was envisaged that wagons would go direct to their destination without having to unload and load their goods, and the terminal services at both Portsmouth and Ryde would be avoided. The reference in the account above to goods being shipped to the Island via Portsmouth and Ryde with the attendant transhipment and cartage is distinctly misleading. Wagon traffic had been handled at Brading by the Isle of Wight Railway since 1864, and at St Helens, and at Medina Jetty by the Cowes and

Newport Railway since 1878. Luggage and parcels traffic by passenger train was handled at Portsmouth Harbour and Ryde Pier Head stations without the necessity of cartage.

The *Carrier*, a train ferry, had been purchased from the North British Railway for a price of £3,400 which included the winding engine and cradles from the Tayport and Broughty ferry, the original home of the *Carrier*. She was built in 1858 by Scott and Company of Greenock and finally arrived on the Solent on Saturday 4 July after having been thoroughly overhauled at Newhaven.[27] The funnels were fitted athwartships and as all the machinery was below decks it meant that there was a lot of room for the railway wagons. Two lines of rails ran along the decks from end to end, which were capable of carrying seven trucks on each line.[28]

Loading and unloading was achieved using a wooden cradle, which could be adjusted to suit the height of the tide, and a rope haulage system connected to a stationary steam engine. Once unloaded at St Helens the wagons could be sent to any destination on the Island railway system. The Isle of Wight Marine Transit Company had arrangements with the London Brighton and South Coast Railway to allow goods to be sent to and from the Island using this route for 21 years and who also had the option of purchasing the undertaking. They also gave the London and South Western Railway running powers over the Hayling Island branch so that they could use the train ferry. It was estimated that the working expenses of the *Carrier* would be between £1,400 and £1,600 per year and that the Isle of Wight Marine Transit Company would pay a handsome dividend. The *Isle of Wight County Press* reported that all of the large mainland railway companies had agreed to send their coal to the Island at 'Portsmouth rates' with the Isle of Wight Marine Transit Company receiving a proportion of the tolls. It was expected that the new system would stimulate the export of agricultural produce and livestock from the Island.[29]

All the works were complete and the new service was ready for opening on 6 August although several trips had already been made.[30] An interesting statement from the Isle of Wight Railway was to be found in the *Isle of Wight County Press* announcing that they had not subscribed to the Isle of Wight Marine Transit Company nor had they been asked to. This suggests that the capital for the venture was to be found from sources from the mainland, perhaps from the two mainland railway companies who were involved with the project.[31] This new service was welcomed on the Island. The rector of Carisbrooke wrote, '...the operations of the Transit Company give the promise of a great boon to the Isle of

Wight.' The *Engineering Magazine* stated the following '...It is in great measure due to the enterprise of the Brighton company's board; to their manager Mr J. P. Knight; goods manager Mr Stainforth; and to Mr Jabez Spencer Balfour M. P., that the Isle of Wight is secured the possession of an economic means of communication of great promise and capability.'[32]

This was not to be as the company soon got into financial difficulties and after only one year it was sold to the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway for £40,000.[33] The service finally ceased in 1888 due, in reality, to the small size of the vessel in relation to the winter sea conditions often found in Spithead and to the silting problems in Bembridge Harbour.[34] As a result little of the anticipated traffic was forthcoming. The *Carrier* was laid up at Newhaven before being broken up in 1890. The one area where the train ferry could have been exploited to great advantage was not really used; viz. the transfer of rolling stock and locomotives to the Island. However, Mr C. G. Woodnutt suggested that three or four ex-London Brighton and South Coast Railway vans were brought over for use at St Helens.[35] In August 1900 the Board of the Isle of Wight Railway agreed to sell the 'remaining items' at St Helens Quay for £75.[36]

However, despite the limited success of the Isle of Wight Marine Transit Company, St Helens Quay had become a major port for mineral and general goods traffic to and from the Eastern Wight and had established the Isle of Wight Railway as a major carrier of goods not only to its own stations but also to all parts of the developing railway network on the Island. As will be seen later in the chapter goods traffic on the Isle of Wight Railway developed rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth century. This is due, in no small measure, to the construction of St Helens Quay by the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company and its involvement with the Isle of Wight Railway Company.

The River Medina.

The River Medina had always been a major artery for the landing of goods on the Island. Even before the coming of the railway in 1862, there was intense rivalry between the two principal towns on the river; Cowes at the mouth and Newport some five miles inland. This was complicated by ancient rights exercised over Cowes by Newport. The first landing point on the Medina used by the Cowes and Newport Railway was at Medham Hard some 1½ miles upstream from Cowes. Here, the first two locomotives for the Island, *Precursor* and *Pioneer*, were unloaded directly onto a temporary hard and hauled over the

mud to the railway line. This was a totally unsatisfactory landing place and powers for a wharf or jetty at Shambles were sought in an 1869 Bill. The Bill was in fact withdrawn when Newport Corporation demanded £1,000 from the railway company in compensation. In 1870 the Cowes and Newport Railway again used Medham Hard to unload their third engine, a 0-4-2ST, *Mill Hill*. This proved to be a disaster as the locomotive toppled into the Medina mud.[37] An improved landing facility was therefore essential, and in 1875 a Bill concerning works on the Cowes and Newport Railway contained references to a ' ... wharf near Shambles.'

Construction of Medina Jetty, as it was to be called, started after the Bill received Royal Assent, and also after a lengthy row with Newport Corporation over compensation for the loss of trade and the construction of sidings at Newport Quay. The mudflats in this part of the River Medina were historically good oyster beds. The oysterers, perhaps encouraged by the Newport authorities, made a claim against the Cowes and Newport Railway for loss of trade. They were successful and the railway duly paid up. Medina Jetty, constructed of wood with two tracks serving it, was opened in November 1878 and extended two years later in 1880. An Armstrong Whitworth rail-mounted hand crane had been purchased in January 1879. Although two steamers could moor alongside, there were only cranes for unloading one. A portion of the jetty collapsed on 20 January 1879. The Isle of Wight Central Railway carried out some repairs but the company could never afford to do the job properly. In November of that year Charles Conacher, general manager of the Isle of Wight Central Railway, had the chance of buying a second hand crane from Pollock, Brown and Company, scrap merchants of Southampton, in exchange for scrap. The deal did not go through, as the Isle of Wight Central Railway board wanted their money first for the scrap, much to Conacher's dismay. By 1890 the jetty was in a poor state being affected both by rot and worm. In March 1896, in a report on the state of Cowes Harbour, Mr Shelford M. I. C. E. found the jetty to be in an unsafe condition and could only take the weight of one small locomotive, *Mill Hill*. It was sufficiently repaired for it to become, by 1898, the principal point of entry to the Island for coal. In that year the jetty, now with three cranes, unloaded 122 stream colliers, discharging 73,000 tons of coal, into trucks destined for the Island coal merchants. Colliers as large as 1,000 tons were frequent visitors from the Welsh and Tyne ports.[38]

A further 1½ miles upstream from Medina Jetty was Cement Mills. Brickyards and kilns were ancient features of the west bank of the Medina along with an early cement mill.

Charles Francis & Sons established the cement mill, known as West Medina Mill, in the early 1800s. In 1862 it was substantially enlarged.[39] This can be linked directly to the opening of the Cowes and Newport Railway. The products from the mills were used not only on the Island and the mainland, but also on the continent. Early in 1860 the company made an application to lay a tram road across the Cowes and Newport Railway main line to their clay pit, inland from the river. Initially this was refused but was eventually allowed in 1871 with the tram road being taken under the railway, which was on a wooden overbridge. This was improved by the building of a new bridge in iron by Westwood and Winley in 1895. The works expanded as the railway system on the Island was enlarged. To complete the expansion the cement company opened a chalk pit at Shide with trucks of chalk being propelled from the quarry through Newport to the sidings at Cement Mills.[40]

The final rail-connected quay on the River Medina was at Newport. When the Ryde and Newport Railway reached Newport it was decided to connect it with the Cowes and Newport Railway with a viaduct over part of the old quay with an opening section across the River Medina. The railway had to build a new quay as compensation for the loss of the old and the building of Medina Jetty downstream. This they did downstream from the viaduct on the east side of the Medina. The quay was 300ft. long and was reached from Newport by a road swing bridge owned by Newport Corporation. The new quay had to be rail connected but this was not an easy task as there was a severe gradient, 1 in 40, from Newport station down to the quay. The siding crossed the River Medina on a low-level bridge with one span opening. On the quay a 90° turntable was used to access the two sidings, joined at the north end, running down the quay. This arrangement was not easy to operate and was the least successful of the three rail-connected quays on the Medina. The rails were present until at least 1892 but not much used.[41]

Goods traffic on the Isle of Wight Railway.

An examination of the goods traffic handled by the Isle of Wight Railway can be undertaken using the annual returns to the Board of Trade; these are shown in Table 8.1 and Figures 8.1 and 8.2.[42] The rates for carrying freight were set by the Act of Parliament that authorised the building of the line. This could mean very different rates for neighbouring lines. The rates set for the Isle of Wight Railway on opening are detailed in Table 8.2 and indicate the commodities that ~~were being~~ could be transported by the railways at the time. From the outset it must be said that although passengers, not goods, were the main source of receipts for the Isle of Wight Railway, nevertheless the latter made a welcome

contribution to the finances of the railway and a very marked contribution to the trade that developed in the eastern part of the Island. The Board of Trade returns show that the goods traffic could be divided into two, mineral traffic comprising of coal, sand, ballast, stone etc. and more general goods, basically everything and anything that needed to be moved.

Figure 8.1 shows how the volume of traffic varied throughout the Victorian period. Between 1864 and 1875 the volume of mineral and general goods traffic grew rapidly and were of equal importance. The rapid period of growth correlates with one of the main periods of growth of the towns of Ventnor, Shanklin and Sandown, each of which were served by the Isle of Wight Railway. However, between 1880 and 1895 the volume of mineral traffic became substantially greater than the volume of general goods, which remained static.

Coal and building materials such as timber, Welsh slate, ballast, bricks and cement were all carried by the Isle of Wight Railway. Coal and Welsh slate were landed at Brading Quay. Stone would have been taken from local quarries and bricks and cement were manufactured from the small works found along the line. The water works, sewage works and gas works supplying vital and new services for the towns and villages also demanded coal in large amounts with the railway being the main carrier, in some cases, laying sidings direct to the works. In 1868 George Young said his business manufactured 1½ million bricks most of which would have been moved by the Island railways.[43] Henry Ingram, a builder from Ventnor, gave evidence quoting the cost of transporting material via Cowes to Ventnor over three different lines. He bought bricks from the Medway and the North of England, and lime and timber. Even though the Isle of Wight Railway cost him more at 3s. 9d. per thousand bricks from Sandown to Ventnor, compared with 3s. 1d. from Newport to Sandown via the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway he chose to import them via St Helens, directly onto the Isle of Wight Railway line.

Between 1895 and 1900 there was a marked reduction in both mineral and general goods traffic. This was due to the Board of Trade revising and standardising, on a geographical basis, the rates that could be charged for carrying goods.[44] Traders had long been complaining that the Isle of Wight Central Railway charged different rates to the Isle of Wight Railway for carrying the same goods. This was typical of lines throughout the

Table 8.1 **Isle of Wight Railway, Board of Trade returns, 1864 to 1910.**

Year ending 31-Dec	Goods Traffic Mineral tons	Goods Traffic General tons	Gross Receipt £
1864	1,324	172	212
1865	13,695	2,463	1,146
1866	8,477	5,867	1,123
1869	13,983	17,774	3,406
1870	16,254	13,177	3,349
1871	14,968	22,823	3,557
1875	24,919	26,749	5,305
1880	21,780	31,376	7,464
1881	22,226	29,961	8,013
1885	46,750	23,175	8,595
1890	47,485	25,251	9,796
1891	49,147	27,483	10,217
1895	56,027	34,240	11,296
1900	35,805	24,270	11,740
1901	34,813	24,657	11,481
1905	57,887	6,838	11,824
1910	56,454	8,448	11,599

(Source: Board of Trade returns, as quoted in Maycock, R, J, & Silsbury, R., *The Isle of Wight Railway*, p.65 et seq.)

Table 8.2 Freight rates, Isle of Wight Railway, 1864.

Carriages	Up to one ton weight.	4d. each per mile.
	Per extra ¼ ton.	1d. per mile.
Freight	Horses.	4d. each per mile.
	Cattle.	3d each per mile.
	Calves.	2d. each per mile.
	Sheep.	1½d. each per mile.
	Coal, coke etc.	3d. per ton per mile.
	Sugar, grain, cotton, wool.	3d. per ton per mile.
	Fish, drugs, iron etc.	3d. per ton per mile.
	Boilers, cylinders, timber etc.	1s. per mile.
Parcels	Up to 7 lbs.	4d.
	7 – 14 lbs.	5d.
	14 – 28 lbs.	8d.
	28 – 56 lbs.	1s.
	56 – 100 lbs.	No restriction.

(Source: The Isle of Wight Railway Eastern Section Act 1860
23 & 24 Vict. Ch.162. Date of Incorporation, 23 July 1860.)

Figure 8.1 Goods traffic Isle of Wight Railway

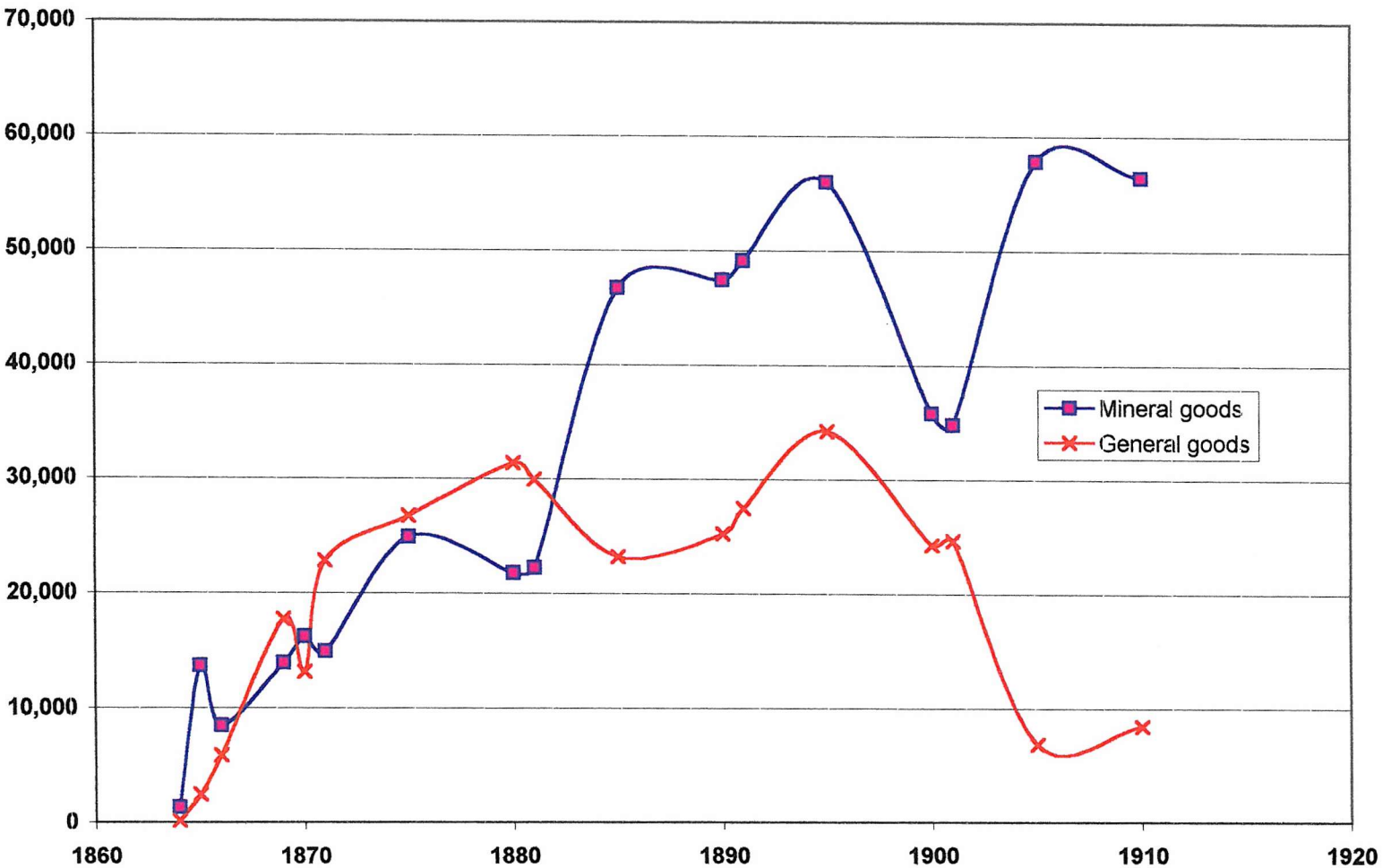
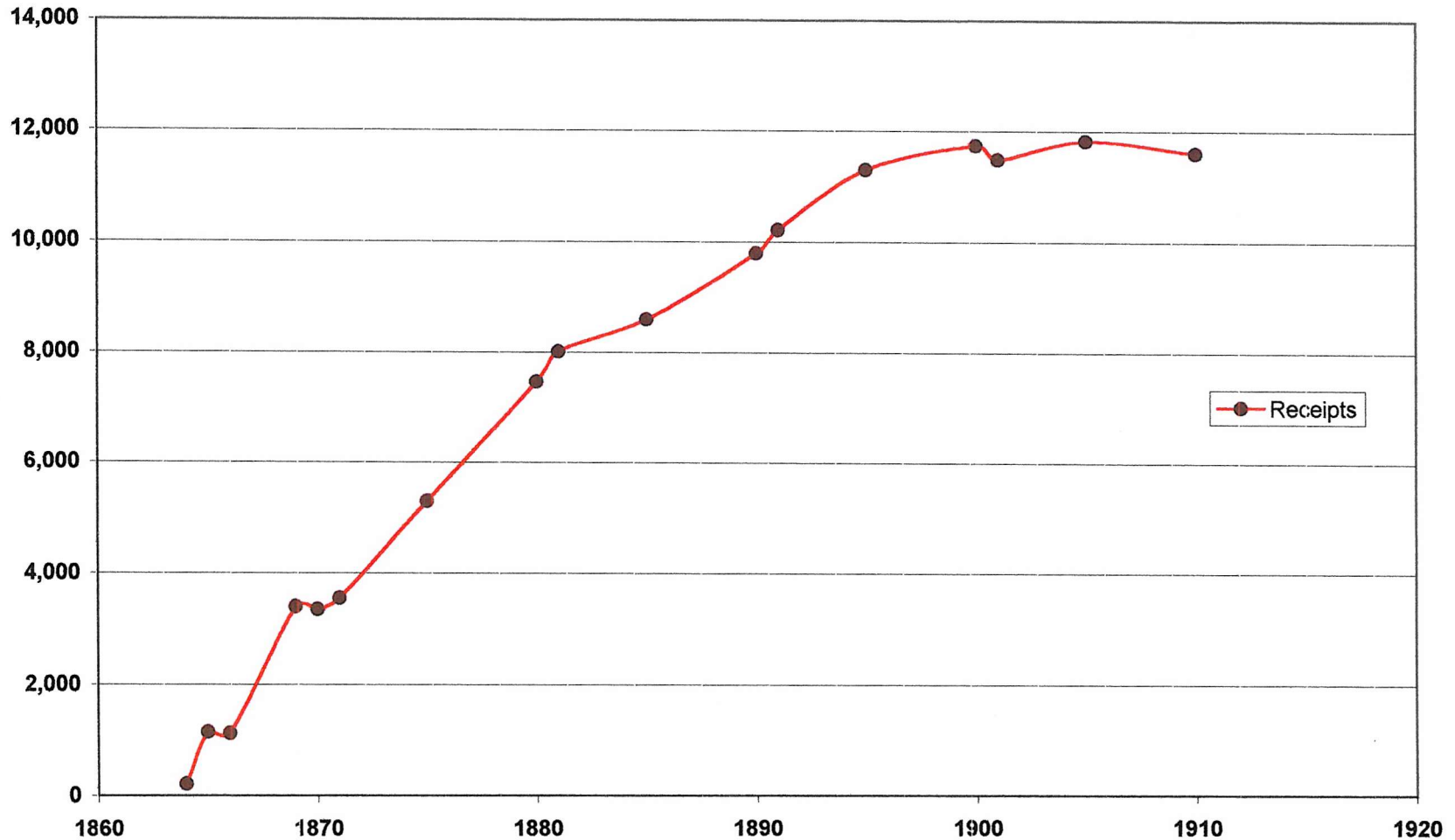


Figure 8.2 Receipts from goods traffic Isle of Wight Railway



country. After 1900 the mineral traffic returned to its pre-1895 level but the volume of general traffic continued to fall, reaching its nadir in 1905. The receipts generated by goods traffic (Figure 8.2) show a steady increase from 1864 to a zenith of just under £12,000 p.a. before levelling out so the drop in the volume of general traffic after 1900 was more than made up by either an increase in the volume of mineral traffic or a re-designation of traffic type.

In order to carry this goods traffic, the Isle of Wight Railway had to purchase a number of specialist goods wagons from the Railway Carriage Company Ltd of Oldbury. Initially the Isle of Wight Railway purchased 20 open wagons that were wooden, three planks in depth, with drop doors midway along each side and capable of carrying six tons of goods, either mineral or of a general nature although the general goods would be open to the elements. Further purchases of wagons occurred during the ensuing years. By the end of 1866 the wagon stock had risen to 40 and a year later it consisted of 54 goods wagons and a brake van. However, the Isle of Wight Railway still lacked horseboxes, carriage trucks and furniture vans. This position was improved when in 1868, two carriage trucks were acquired and in 1869 when six covered vans and four timber trucks were bought and a coal truck was converted into the company's first cattle wagon. The goods wagon stock of the Isle of Wight Railway was gradually added to until 1904 when the Board of Trade returns indicate that the company owned 207 wagons for moving freight along its lines. This gives an indication of just how important the railways were in moving freight and stimulating trade on the Island in this period.

Conclusion.

In the Eastern Wight Brading Quay was the first rail-connected port to be developed. It was used extensively for the construction of the Isle of Wight Railway and developed a thriving coal trade. In 1880 it was superseded by a larger and more efficient port at St Helens that was rail-connected and worked by the Isle of Wight Railway. At the same time the Isle of Wight Central Railway was developing Medina Jetty near Cowes. Medina Jetty had the advantage that it could handle vessels up to 1,000 tons as the River Medina was deep and could be accessed at all states of the tide. Bembridge Harbour and St Helens Quay could only handle ships of half this size as the harbour was shallow, tide-dependant and prone to silting. St Helens Quay was developed to handle the Isle of Wight Railway's mineral and general goods traffic whist Medina Wharf handled the Isle of Wight Central Railway's coal traffic. Newport Quay, despite being rail-connected, never became

important because of the shallow depth of way and the steep gradient from the station down to the quay.

Goods traffic was important for the success and growth of the Isle of Wight Railway. It contributed significantly to its receipts. The railway carried the goods that fuelled the urban growth and tourism at the main towns on its route. In 1866 the Isle of Wight Railway had only 40 wagons for goods traffic; by the turn of the century it had 207 wagons for moving mineral and general goods along its line. The railway contributed significantly to the growth and development of trade in the Island in the Victorian period.

Notes: The movement of goods to and from the Island.

1. *Isle of Wight Observer*, report on the building of the dock basins at Ryde, 14 February 1857 et seq.
2. *Isle of Wight Observer*, report on the work on the Ryde dock basins, 20 May 1859 et seq.
3. *Isle of Wight Observer*, report on Victoria Pier, 3 September 1859.
4. Blackburn, A. and Mackett, J., *The railways and tramways of Ryde*, (Bracknell, Town and County Press, 1971), p.10.
5. Oglander, Sir John, *The Oglander memoirs, 1595 – 1648*, edited with an introduction and notes by W. H. Long, (London, Reeves and Turner, 1888).
6. *Isle of Wight Examiner*, notice of the Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway Bill for the 1861 Parliamentary session, 10 November 1860.
7. Isle of Wight Railway Company, minutes of the proprietors and directors, Vol. 2, discussions on the importing and distribution of coal onto the Island using Brading Quay, July 1860, Public Record Office, Kew, RAIL, 330.
8. Isle of Wight Railway Company, minutes of the proprietors and directors, Vol. 2, discussions on the purchase of land at Brading Quay, March 1861, PRO, RAIL 330.
9. Isle of Wight Railway Company, minutes of the proprietors and directors, Vol. 2, Serving 'notice to treat' on the Oglander estate for land required for the Brading Quay Branch, August 1861, PRO, RAIL 330.
10. Isle of Wight Railway Company, minutes of the proprietors and directors, Vol. 4, discussions on the establishment of a coal trade using Brading Quay, October 1864, PRO, RAIL 330.
11. *Isle of Wight Observer*, report that goods traffic on the Isle of Wight Railway commenced in December 1864, 11 February 1865.
12. *Isle of Wight Observer*, report that the works at Brading Quay were completed, 5 August 1865.
13. Isle of Wight Railway Company, minutes of the proprietors and directors, Vol. 3, arrangements with the Railway Carriage Company for the supply of ten additional wagons, June 1865, PRO, RAIL 330.
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Chapter 9

Conclusion.

The histories of railways on the Isle of Wight have multiplied during the last ten years and the value of what has been researched has been great. Yet not one of these studies is devoted to discerning what the railway did in, and for, the country it crossed or served. Most of them give a definitive history of the line from a rather narrow railway prospective, few have moved beyond giving some account of passenger services offered or to try to discover who used them and with what results. The difficulties of such an enquiry are only too obvious. We cannot go beyond the evidence that exists which is, at best, fragmentary and discontinuous. This thesis has attempted to place the business of the railways within a national framework, and also within a local setting. The railways were an integral part of the landscape both in England and on the Isle of Wight and have been examined from this viewpoint. This thesis sets out the evidence, with all the limitations indicated, and shows how the Isle of Wight, a small island some 28 miles by 18 miles, became transformed by the building of the railways and their associated developments. In this context railways need to be seen, not only as a means of transport, but also as an instrument of social and economic change, especially during its growth period in the nineteenth century. The writers of railway histories have been mostly concerned with the details of the locomotives and infrastructure, tending to ignore than with the importance of railway business, the practices adopted and their impact on the lives of the people they reached.

By 1854 railway construction had produced a national system that was unbalanced, serving, like the motorways of today, only the major urban centres. Up to this date the railway companies had paid little attention to agricultural and rural communities. This was to change in the 30 years following the Crimean War. Between 1856 and 1886 railways came to be extended and the number of railway companies increased in almost every part of the British Isles to give the country a fully national system. It was in this latter period that railways developed on the Isle of Wight. There are four main reasons for this growth. The first was that the demand for railway services, especially from agricultural interests was growing, creating valuable business. Secondly, Parliament had shifted its attitude towards railways. Between 1854 and 1864, it made no substantial effort to help or encourage railway construction. However, in 1864 two Acts were passed, both containing measures to encourage the building of railways in rural districts; the Improvement of Land Act, which allowed land owners to subscribe capital to railways by charging it to their estate, and the Railway Construction Facilities Act, which offered a cheaper procedure for

the building of railways in cases where all the landowners along the route were willing to sell land without opposition. The latter was especially relevant to the Isle of Wight, the former less so. The third reason was the strong competition between companies that led to the building of new rural lines, which then could bring benefits to rural communities. This was evident in the Isle of Wight where the Isle of Wight Railway reached Ventnor in 1866, via Shanklin and later, in 1900, the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway reached the town, from an entirely different direction. The last of the reasons for the proliferation of rural railways was due to momentum. Railway construction in the 1840s and 1850s had developed a whole new railway industry, in terms of both the number of contractors and in the manufacture of equipment. The maintenance of that business depended on the building of more railways. This substantial industry was looking for opportunities to construct new railways that demanded the full range of railway equipment. There was, therefore, every inducement for further railway construction, as was seen in the Island.

Not only did contractors choose to invest in railway building but, as has been shown, insurance companies and building societies also went into the railway business. Banks extended credit, and finance companies were ready to lend to railway promoters. The promoters during this period were vastly different from the speculators of the 1840s. Landowners, farmers and small businessmen earnestly wished to secure the construction of railways to benefit their properties and their communities. They were often people of limited means, some easily taken in by financiers, contractors, engineers and by lawyers, who were all anxious to perpetuate the railway business and ensure their own prosperity.

The first railways were proposed on the Isle of Wight in 1845, when the Ventnor Railway Association put forward 16 reasons for supporting the Isle of Wight Railway, all of which proved, in some degree, to be relevant in explaining why lines were built and indicating the advantages that could accrue to the Island. These reasons revolved around the benefits that the railway would bring to the economy of an area and hint of the social changes to the communities to be connected by them. The assertion, that they would do no harm to the areas and communities through which they passed, was contested by the wealthy landowners of the Island, led by Lord Yarborough. After many false starts a line was proposed and subsequently built between Newport and Cowes. The Bill received Royal Assent on 8 August 1859 and the line opened for traffic on Monday 16 June 1862. This heralded other schemes, the major one being for a railway between Ryde, a town and entry point to the Island, and Ventnor, a goal for many of the proposed schemes. The Isle of

Wight Railway opened from Ryde St John's Road to Shanklin on 19 August 1864 and to Ventnor in September 1866. George Young, a railway entrepreneur, and chairman of the Ryde and Newport Railway steered a Bill through Parliament that received Royal Assent on 25 July 1872. Interest here is on the close co-operation with the Cowes and Newport Railway with which it proposed an end on junction at Newport. The line opened for traffic on 20 December 1875. Newport, the county town, was seen as the hub of the railway system and it was no surprise when the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway obtained an Act of Parliament to build a line to Newport from Sandown, via the Arreton valley. After many difficulties this opened on 1 June 1879, eleven years after it received its Act. The company, nominally independent, was eventually taken over by the Ryde, Newport and Cowes Joint Committees, which later became the Isle of Wight Central Railway.

In the East Wight, after at least two abortive schemes, the Brading Harbour Railway and Improvement Company undertook a large multi-faceted scheme in the Bembridge area. The 1874 Act of Parliament authorised the company to build a line across the reclaimed seabed of Brading Haven to St Helens and thence to Bembridge, to build stations at St Helens and Bembridge and build a rail-connected port at St Helens. At Bembridge a hotel was constructed adjacent to the station and the company bought a steamer fleet, which operated from Bembridge to the mainland. The scheme was financed by the Liberator Building Society and is reported to have cost £420,000. The line opened for traffic on 27 May 1882 but the company was never financially stable. The line was worked from the outset by the Isle of Wight Railway and taken over by them in 1896.

Between 1864 and 1882 railway construction on the Island was focused upon linking up the major settlements of Newport, Cowes, Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor. After 1882, attention switched to the more rural West Wight and to a second route to Ventnor. Again the period under consideration was characterised by many ill-conceived and aborted schemes. The Freshwater, Yarmouth and Newport Railway was eventually authorised on 26 August 1880; construction was slow, the line opening for traffic on 20 July 1889 and worked, under contract, by the Isle of Wight Central Railway. The last line to be built on the Island was to be the second route to Ventnor. Ventnor people were critical of the Isle of Wight Railway with regard to the rates it charged and consequently the high prices of commodities in the area. Against this background and in an age of ambitious private enterprise and plentiful capital the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway received Royal Assent for a Bill enabling them to construct a line from the Isle of Wight Central

Railway at Merstone south to Godshill, through a tunnel to St Lawrence and along the Undercliff to Ventnor. The line opened to St Lawrence on 19 July 1897 and to Ventnor on 1 June 1900. By 1900 there were effectively two companies managing some 55½ miles of railway line on the Island. The Isle of Wight Railway, largely in its original form, operating from Ryde Pier Head to Ventnor with a branch to Bembridge and the Isle of Wight Central Railway, centred on Newport, had lines to Ventnor, Cowes, Ryde, Sandown and Freshwater.

The financial history of lines on the Isle of Wight closely mirrored that of lines on the mainland, the failure to make railways pay combined with the desire to build more lines is characteristic of rural lines in this period. Capital for the first line to be built, the Cowes and Newport Railway, was raised by share issue, the amount stipulated in the Act and described in detail in the prospectus issued by the company. The Isle of Wight Railway experienced financial problems in its early years, even though its route was the most viable passenger-carrying route on the Island. In May 1866 twenty shareholders called for an extra-ordinary meeting to examine the company's financial affairs. In 1866, Bond, the Isle of Wight Railway's contractor, applied to the Warrant Finance Company, a loan company associated with the Isle of Wight Railway, for payment for outstanding work. The railway became indebted to them thereafter. Financial problems continued to beset the company and in October 1866 it was forced to raise loans in order to avoid receivership. This it did and managed to pull itself out of financial crisis. The Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway was always in financial difficulty and illustrates the relationship between a railway and its credit company, the English and Foreign Credit Company, where capital was paid to the company in exchange for shares. The Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company paid for their grandiose scheme by investing £420,000 from the Liberator Building Society. The Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company was reported, even at its opening, to be in receivership. Eventually in 1896, after the financial collapse of the Liberator Building Society, the Isle of Wight Railway took over all aspects of operating the branch. There was an interesting relationship between the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway and its contractor. Here payment for work done was made to Messrs. Westwood and Winley, the contractors, in shares in the company. These case studies show the difficulty of sustaining railway investment in this period.

The construction of lines on the Island show many of the techniques used and the problems that needed to be overcome in railway building. By 1862 the methods of railway construction were well developed with numerous contractors and engineers available to tender for the railway building contracts. Most contractors and engineers that worked on the Island were more than competent to deal with the building of lines where single tracks and shallow gradients made the construction relatively simple. Nevertheless there were a number of interesting engineering features. The Cowes and Newport Railway, running alongside the River Medina, had a wooden viaduct and short tunnel on its route and a terminus station perched on a hillside above Cowes. The Isle of Wight Railway was, from an engineering point of view, a much more exciting affair. The line was relatively simple to construct between Ryde St John's Road and Shanklin, but from Shanklin the line climbed Apse Bank to Wroxall before driving through the chalk in a tunnel under St Boniface Down and emerging into a quarry on a hillside above Ventnor where the terminus was sited. Large numbers of navvies were needed on this project and it was reported that, at one time, over 400 men were employed. Associated with the works would be brickworks capable of producing 15,000 bricks a day and all the other support required for such a project. The Ryde and Newport Railway had few constructional problems apart from the availability of ballast. Traditionally gravel was used on the Island but Messrs. J. and G. Taylor decided to fire clay and then break it to form angular ballast. At Newport a new station was built to serve the Cowes and Newport, Ryde and Newport and the Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railways. To gain access to the station the Ryde and Newport Railway had to build a brick viaduct over the River Medina, which contained a wrought iron section that could be drawn back horizontally for ships to pass. The Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway was beset with constructional problems. In 1872 the Board of Trade ordered the service to cease, as the second hand rails purchased from the London and South Western Railway were unfit for use. Henry Jackson, the contractor, also filed a petition for bankruptcy, a common occurrence for contractors at this time on the Island. The other major engineering works on the Island was the double-track line constructed from Ryde Pier Head along the pier to Ryde Esplanade and then by a cut and cover tunnel under the Esplanade to Ryde St John's Road station. This cost £750,000 and capital expenditure of this kind was well beyond the resources of the small Island companies. It was funded and overseen jointly by the London and South Western Railway and the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway. The Bembridge branch shows how an embankment was built to exclude the sea and drain Brading Haven to allow a railway to be built from Brading across the former seabed to St Helens and then on to Bembridge. The

scheme also included building the infrastructure required for a rail-connected port at St Helens. The only major engineering works on the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway was a tunnel between Whitwell and St Lawrence. Between the 15 October 1859, the starting of work on the Cowes and Newport Railway, and 1 June 1900 the opening of the Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway, eight lines were constructed on the Island, each illustrating the problems and techniques of railway construction in the Victorian period.

The first railway in the Island was opened in 1862 between Newport and Cowes, by 1880 all the main Island towns were rail connected. Between 1861 and 1901 the population of the Island grew from 55,362 to 80,911. In the East Wight population and urban growth took place in the parishes of Newchurch, Brading, Shanklin, St Helens and Whippingham. The Isle of Wight Railway opened from Ryde St John's Road to Ventnor in 1866 and was a major factor in promoting urban growth in Ryde and developing Ventnor, Sandown, and Shanklin from small villages into towns. Growth also took place in the parishes of Carisbrooke, Newport, Northwood and Cowes. Here the railways had some influence on the urban growth but building lagged behind the initial period of population growth, stimulating a later, secondary phase.

The Isle of Wight Railway had a pronounced effect on the settlements it served. Shanklin had a number of natural advantages, such as a striking cliff line, a beach and a chine, and developed rapidly after 1846 due to tourism. To some extent this was due to the railway making the Island more accessible from London; the London and Southampton Railway opened a branch to Gosport, opposite Ryde, in 1841. The Isle of Wight Railway arrived in Shanklin in 1864 and supported the growth of Shanklin. Shanklin's population doubled between 1861 and 1871. The railway never had the same effect in Ryde, which was established as a town much earlier. Ryde was well placed with respect to the mainland and started to grow from 1813, when the first pier was completed, and became a major entry point to the Island for both people and goods. The Isle of Wight Railway had, from the outset, an uneasy alliance with the people of Ryde choosing to build its terminus at Ryde St John's Road on the eastern outskirts of the town and in the neighbouring parish of Newchurch. A tramway was initially built between the Pier Head and the terminus of the Isle of Wight Railway but later, in 1880; it was replaced by a line financed jointly by the London and South Western Railway and the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway. This allowed Ryde to preserve and develop its water frontage for tourism.

The railway had a great impact on the village of Bembridge in the East Wight. The Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company opened a short branch from the Isle of Wight Railway mainline at Brading in 1882. On the positive side the railway brought prosperity to the village, bringing in well-to-do tourists, creating jobs to cater for them and so brought money into the local economy. The railway also allowed local people easier access to Ryde, the nearest main town, Newport and the mainland and gave them the steamer service that was bought out and run by the company. The railway stimulated growth, the Spithead Hotel was completed in 1882 and the village expanded. The railway also brought social benefits to the village. A regular piped water supply was acquired for the village in 1903 from the United Realisation Company, originally owned by the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company. However, negative factors included the increased silting of the harbour, which was brought about by the creation of the embankment between St Helens and Bembridge in 1880 and with it the associated problem of the silting up of the sewage pipe that the village relied on. Some local inhabitants thought that Bembridge had lost its charm and seclusion with the coming of the railway. Whatever, the life of those living in the village was considerably altered by its arrival.

In 1860 Venables found the Island to be a diverse agricultural district. Wheat, barley and oats were the main crops, cattle fattening and dairying was more important on the heavier soils and sheep were reared on the Downs. Apart from the sheep, whose wool was sent to Yorkshire, all produce went to the local market. There was a general lack of capital for agricultural improvements and a fear of introducing modern farming practices. The wage of agricultural labourers was low. It was said that farmers bought too many inferior horses and used too many inferior implements. Landowners such as Lord Yarborough believed that the building of railways could do great damage to the land through which they passed by restricting privacy, separating the unity of farms and dividing fields into ill-shaped fragments. The Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway passed through an agricultural area. Here the stations at Merstone, Godshill and Whitwell became the focus of rural activities and handled all sorts of business. Coal, used for powering farm machinery and drying grain, was brought into the district quickly, cheaply and reliably and perishable goods, such as milk and root crops, were sent to market frequently and quickly by train. Stations boasted sidings for goods wagons, cattle docks for loading sheep and cattle and sheds for storing merchandise. Passengers made the station the centre for social life with the stationmaster a prominent person in the village society. The railways therefore brought benefits to the agricultural communities making the journey to market

quicker and more reliable, opening up the district to new ideas and allowing bulk commodities to be delivered quickly and cheaply. Railways, by virtue of their use of unskilled labour during construction, increased local labour rates and gave mobility to those seeking better-paid work. However, changes were slow and there is little evidence to think that the railways brought about wholesale changes to the pattern of farming on the Island.

Urban growth between 1861 and 1901 made great demands for merchandise of all kinds. If not manufactured on the Island from raw materials found on the Island then all goods had to be transported across to the Island from the mainland. In 1864 the Isle of Wight Railway built a siding to serve Brading Quay. Coal, in particular, was transferred using this facility. In 1882 the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company closed Brading Quay because of its reclamation of Brading Haven and substituted in its place a new rail-connected port at St Helens with modern facilities that were capable of dealing with much larger vessels. The firms of Chaplin, Pickford and Curtis, carriers of general merchandise, were able to unload direct from their vessels into railway box-vans and wagons ready to distribute their goods throughout the Island. However, bulk commodities, especially coal, timber, building materials and cement were the main goods handled by the port. The Isle of Wight Marine Transit Company, a subsidiary company of the Brading Harbour Improvement and Railway Company, operated a freight-only train ferry, between Langstone Harbour, on the mainland, and St Helens. The aim was to make the movement of goods to the Island quicker and easier because they would not have to be unloaded on the mainland and then loaded again into wagons on the Island. The scheme had some success but the vessel, the *Carrier*, was in truth too small for the waters and the service ceased in 1888. Medina Jetty, near Cowes, became rail-connected to the Cowes and Newport Railway in 1878 and soon became the principal point of entry for coal. In 1898, 122 colliers unloaded 73,000 tons of coal for Island merchants. Further upstream, Newport Quay became rail-connected but was never successful because of the severe gradient of the siding down to the quay. Freight, both mineral and general, became an important source of revenue for Island railways. In 1864, the first year of operation of the Isle of Wight Railway, freight traffic was worth £212 but by 1910 it had risen to over £11,000 p.a. The railways supported the increase in trade brought about by population growth, urban growth and tourism in the Victorian period.

From 1820 regular ferry services from the mainland made the Island more accessible and gave a boost to the tourist industry. The mainland railway companies made the Island easy to get to from London. The London and Southampton Railway opened to Southampton in 1840 and later, renamed the London and South Western Railway, opened a branch to Portsmouth and even later, in 1858, a branch to Lymington, all ports which had regular services to the Island. Tourists came to the Island essentially for the recuperative climate, coastal air and scenery. Queen Victoria made the Island popular by building her summer residence at Osborne in 1846. Ventnor grew as a resort due to its association with the disease, tuberculosis of the lung. In 1846 Sir James Clarke recommended the Undercliff at Ventnor for sufferers, as the only cure at the time was rest, fresh air and good food. The Royal National Hospital for Diseases of the Chest was founded at St Lawrence in 1867, a year after the Isle of Wight Railway reached Ventnor. The railway quickly improved communications to the area and this gave a great boost to Ventnor as a tourist resort. Sandown on the south coast grew into a notable resort and sizeable town due to its excellent beach, sunny aspect and stunning views. The Isle of Wight Railway reached Sandown in 1864 and helped substantially in its development and in its promotion of tourism. Railways, then, were just part of an infrastructure that enabled the Victorians to move more freely from where they lived to where they enjoyed themselves. David St John Thomas, articulated the rural myth of continuity, community and the classlessness of the country railway, states the following:

> ...the country railway provided more than transport. It was always part of the district it served, with its own natural history, its own legends and folklore, a staff who ~~that~~ were at the heart of village affairs, its stations and adjoining pubs ~~were~~ places for exchange of gossip, news and advice.[1]

This could be applied, without reservation, to the Isle of Wight and its railway system in the Victorian period.

This thesis has therefore added considerably to the of knowledge of the effect the railways had in a small, relatively rural area, by describing, analysing and evaluating the impact of the railways in the eastern part of the Isle of Wight in the Victorian period. In particular the study has shown the reasons why railways were promoted and the nature of the opposition to them, how they were financed and constructed and the impact that they had on settlements, agriculture, trade and tourism. The thesis has added to the history of the Isle of Wight in the Victorian Period and allowed the impact of the railways on the Island to be compared with other relatively isolated rural communities.

Notes: Conclusion.

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