

Gunning for Fort Victoria

On a morning cold enough to 'freeze the balls off a brass monkey' a 3.5 tonne Victoria gun was carefully lowered, inch by inch onto its new resting place at Fort Victoria.

As part of the Heritage Lottery funded Fort Victoria Regeneration project the West Wight Landscape Partnership commissioned local public artists Eccleston George to construct a gun carriage capable of carrying a 19th century cannon destined for display at the Fort. On 15 March the team successfully installed the carriage in one of the Fort's extant casemates. With much anticipation - and a few sweaty palms - on 26 March local contractors Reynolds and Read helped the team finally lift the 3.5 tonne cannon into place onto the carriage.



Cannon and carriage reunited at Fort Victoria

Now poised if to send a broadside across the Solent the carriage mounted gun completes a fantastic new attraction at the Fort which can be expected to strengthen the historic character of the site and be enjoyed and explored by visitors for years to come.

WANTED Stories and photos of Fort Victoria

The Fort Victoria project has created new opportunities for the story of the Fort to be told for existing and future visitors to the site.

The WWLP is therefore keen to hear from anyone who has any stories about relatives that may have posted at the site or have photos of the Fort during service or following its decommission in the 1960s.



Fort Victoria in 1967 before demolition



Fort Victoria 1969 during demolition

If you think you might be able to help please contact Pete Fellows on 07970 767479 or email info@wwlp.co.uk

Chalk grassland restoration

The Rowridge Valley SSSI is notable as the finest example of ancient semi-natural woodland on chalk on the Isle of Wight. The site includes Rowridge Copse and Monkham Copse as well as chalk grassland, acid grassland and scrub.

The SSSI contains small areas of chalk grassland linked by rides. These areas were once much more extensive but the cessation of grazing allowed the scrub into the grassland, shading out the wider range of herbs and grasses. With support from the WWLP the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust have been working with the landowners to reverse the slow inexorable change from grassland to woodland through the removal of thorn, hazel scrub, bramble and rank grasses and reintroduce grazing.



Before (left) and after (right) scrub removal

This has involved tractor work to remove root systems as well as chainsaw work to produce a useful by product from the operation such as firewood. Fencing will shortly be erected to allow grazing with sheep as part of the longer term management of the site for its important species and to ensure the site contributes to this important habitat resource on the West Wight.

Get ready for Summer!!

It may not feel much like it, but Summer is just around the corner.

To help people explore the Island's stunning landscape and cultural heritage the Wildlife Trust have just published this year's Wight Summer Walks booklet. Containing almost 100 different walks there's sure to be something for all tastes and interests. Pick up your copy at attractions throughout the Island.

