

Issue 189

APRIL 2015

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER  
GROUP



**HOT KEY**

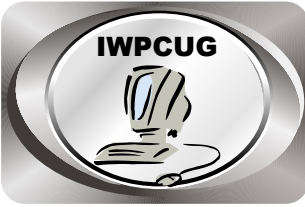
SPRING 2015



Sales Director Peter Collinge (left of picture) and Senior IP Engineer Paul Merrin, in front of some of the equipment racks in the main data centre of Wightfibre

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# The Isle of Wight Personal Computer User Group

We welcome anyone who has an interest in computers and related technology and what you can do with it.

We are a group which seeks to exchange ideas and new information.

**Membership is £12 per annum**

Our meetings are normally held on the first Wednesday of each month at

**The Riverside Centre, Newport** from 7.30 to 9.30 pm

*Visitors are always welcome.*

**A charge of £2 is made per meeting, which includes tea or coffee during the break.**

**If you would like to know more about us, you are most welcome to come along to one of our meetings, or you can contact one of our Committee Members listed on page 3.**

The Club Website address is **www.iwpcug.org**

We also have an e-group discussion area on

Yahoo groups: **iwpcusers@yahoogroups.com.**

See page 4 for how to join.



## **FUTURE MEETINGS**

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Subject</u></b>	<b><u>Speaker</u></b>
<b>1 April</b>	<b>Simulating Games of Chance</b>	<b>Richard Burkill</b>
<b>6 May</b>	<b>Mini Talks</b>	
<b>3 June</b>	<b>TBA</b>	

## ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Chairman :** David Groom

**Treasurer :** Phil Rogers

**Secretary :** Susanne Bone

**Membership and Database Secretary :** Roger Skidmore

**Committee Member :** Steve Sutters

**Committee Member :** Soren Johanson

**HotKey Editor :** Bob Groom

**Committee Member :** Mike Hoar

**Note:**

Contact details of committee members have been removed prior to publishing this edition on the internet.

Suggestions for new events, topics or speakers for talks are always welcome.  
Please contact Steve Sutters, or any committee member, with your ideas.  
If necessary we may be able to find a speaker for your subject.

## **Chairmans Report**

We held our AGM in February, following recommendation from the committee the members agreed to keep next years subscription rates unchanged. Mike Hoar has agreed to join the committee, other committee members remain unchanged.

At the AGM it was suggested that one service which IWPCUG might be able to offer to the community was some form of assistance to people struggling with the use of computers. The committee are currently investigating what other provision of this service is available, with a view to seeing how we might be able to fit in. If you have any thoughts or suggestions please let one of the committee know.

For our March meeting we had a most enjoyable visit to Wightfibre's premises in Cowes. The company could not have made us more welcome and we had a really enjoyable visit. More details on the next page.

We have on occasions asked members to write a short biography of themselves for HotKey, Roger Skidmore did one a few years ago. However I felt I should start the ball rolling again, and later in this issue you find an article by me, I'm afraid it got a bit longer than I was expecting!

**David Groom**

### **Joining the Yahoo Group**

Send an email to: **[iwpcusers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:iwpcusers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)** with "join" in the subject line.

All members are encouraged to join this group ( which costs nothing and is private to club members ) in order to keep in touch with events and to join in with the discussions.

You can also keep in touch by regularly visiting **[www.iwpcug.org](http://www.iwpcug.org)**

## **A Visit to Wightfibre**

On the 4 March, instead of our usual meeting at the Riverside Centre, fifteen or so of us went along to Wightfibre's premises in Cowes. It was a highly enjoyable and interesting evening, and I can't stress too much just how welcoming the company was.

In case you don't know, Wightfibre is the Isle of Wight's very own TV/ phone/ broadband provider.

The evening started with tea/coffee and biscuits while we waited for everyone to arrive. Then we were given a presentation outlining the history of the company, and where it was going in the future, together with details of the network infrastructure. After this we were treated to a tour of the premises, in particular spending time in hub of the company's operations - the server and data centre. An environmentally controlled space,



complete with all the necessary backup power facilities, houses row upon row of telephone & IT equipment. It is here that the connections to the internet backbone, the telephone system, and the feeds for TV come in, and then go out along the company's fibre optic network.

Anyone who has been on the Island of a few years is probably aware of the company, but I have to admit that I had thought that the services they offered were geographically restricted to the Cowes / Newport / Ryde areas, and was surprised to learn that they can offer near island-wide coverage through radio networks.

It is a sad fact that probably many of us when considering a broadband / TV provider only consider the big mainland firms, and we forget, or perhaps just didn't realise, that all this can be offered by an Isle of Wight based company. I suspect the way we were treated is a reflection of how the company treats its customers, another good reason for considering them for your TV/ phone/ broadband package, especially when you consider that all their support staff are located in Cowes (so no problems with understanding far away call centre staff).

**David Groom**

## **Adventures with a tuner card and Youview box.**

### **DVBSky dual tuner TV card**

I have been using this for a few years. It receives standard and high definition broadcasts from both satellite and terrestrial stations. I am using it with my Windows 7 multi media PC and have found the hardware superb but the supplied software awkward to set up and unreliable. The best supplied is DVBViewer but only a trial version is included and the full version is an extra 15 Euros. The general opinion I have found on the internet is that Windows Media Centre (W.M.C) is the best to use - works with terrestrial and satellite. The user interface is nice and clear. It is time consuming though as it takes at least 20 minutes to set up. Programs can be set up to record onto the C drive.

I recently wanted to watch a program on a lost Egyptian city. Got half way through then lost the signal. So I reset tuners for satellite, ended up missing 20 minutes but watched to the end with a perfect picture. Then I saw that the Quest channel was showing a program on sea mysteries. The trouble was that Quest only broadcasts on Freeview (as against Freesat). Anyway I had an hour to set up the tuners so “no problem” I thought. Now it is possible to set up W.M.C. for Freeview and Freesat but this can take an hour of faffing about so I just scanned for terrestrial channels - no channels were found. I did another scan - no channels were found. The programme was about to start and steam was coming out of my ears. I did another scan. Over 100 channels found including Quest. Missed half an hour but at least the rest of the program was very interesting. I don't know what it is about W.M.C. but when I most want to watch a program there is often bad or no reception and there is no time for a rescan, it seems to delight in winding me up. The trick is to make sure everything is working at least an hour before I want to watch a particular program. Does work fine most of the time and the picture quality is good with standard definition. and a treat when I can watch in high definition.

An advantage of watching TV with a tuner card is I can use the PC for other tasks at the same time. A disadvantage is I don't think it can ever be as reliable as an integrated piece of hardware (thinking of a set top box) where one company makes the remote control, tuners, video / audio outputs etc. Plus being far easier to set up.

## The Youview service.

Operated by BT and TalkTalk. I have tried a Youview box (terrestrial only) and found it totally reliable with superb picture quality. Simple and fast to set up (takes about 5 mins) and the catch up service (comes through the phone line) is so much easier than hunting around for stations on the internet. Normally better picture too when it comes to catch up TV as the picture quality can be awful with catch up internet broadcasts. Also the live / recorded channel can be paused for up to half an hour and starts playing back from where it was paused unlike WMC. The cheaper Youview box (HUAWEI DN360T) can not record but it can pause so I was wrong about this in past talks / articles.

The greatest thing for me about modern telly is the large number of channels, and the technology to watch them when I want to without having to record them. It does make me have to get out of the chair and unplug the HDMI lead from the pc and plug it into the Youview box plus switch the audio output too. Can do with the exercise though!

**By Stephen Sutters**

## **Car Sharing / Lifts**

It is possible that a number of our members do not attend our monthly meetings because they find transport to Newport difficult and the committee have wondered if it might be possible to arrange lifts for those members. With a membership as large as ours it is not always obvious who might like to attend but has difficulty with transport, and secondly, who might live nearby and be able to offer them a lift.

As a first step, if you would like to attend the meetings, currently can't get to the Riverside Centre on a Wednesday evening and would like to see if there is a nearby member who might offer you a lift, then could you please get in contact with me. We will then try and find a member who might be willing to give you a lift.

**David Groom**

## **Steve's Rants & Raves**

This month's rant is about eBay idiots and concerns a tool organiser I have tried to buy from 3 sellers. I was surprised at how bad the first and last ones were considering the amount of trading they do. Too big to care / organise themselves, just like BT?

I particularly wanted a Kamasa 55877 Storage - 16 Compartment Organizer as it is the right size to fit inside my bicycle box and has removable storage trays in a bright mustard colour. The first trader I tried (AP MotorStore or Performance Race Parts) advertised it as being in stock at a good price so I paid for it. After a couple of days I received a confirmation email from eBay saying that it was marked as dispatched which gave me more confidence that it would arrive shortly. A couple of days after that I get an email from the company saying they were out of stock. So they advertised a product that they claim is in stock and then accept my money before they bother to check if they have the item! They apologised and said would I like one similar. I said no and got a refund. Meanwhile they carry on advertising the same item claiming it to be in stock. Unbelievable!

Next I tried to buy one from Total DIY. It got lost in the post and then they ran out of stock so I got a refund. They then had the ignorance to thank me for this purchase and ask if I would like to buy anything else. I replied with 'Just been sent an automated email thanking me for a purchase of your tool organiser WHICH YOU DID NOT SEND BECAUSE YOU WERE OUT OF STOCK. Don't bother to send me more spam as I have had enough of your incompetent service!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!' To be fair it probably wasn't their fault it got lost in the post but I don't like spam especially when it is automated with no regard to what has actually happened.

Lastly I tried Aps AutoParts or motorseamus. This was the worst of the lot. After 7 days it still had not turned up so they sent another which was different to the one I ordered. They said their posting boys had made a mistake and promised to refund the tool box and pay for my return postage if I posted it back to them. This I did but they refused to pay the £2.80 return postage and then ignored my emails. Talking of which, their email replies took as long as a week. I told them their posting boys should have gone to Specsavers.

So what have I learned from this jinxed tool organiser? One thing is not to



trust a trader just because they have high positive feedback ratings. All three had over 99%. One test would be to email potential sellers and ask if the item is in stock. If they don't reply they are not worth bothering with and I do like a reply within 24 hours. More than 48 hours would stretch my patience too far. Also a cheap price could mean slow postage or poor condition / service from the trader.

Reckon I have been unusually unlucky with this tool organiser. Most of my purchases have gone well – I would say 99%. Happy eBuying!

**Stephen Sutters**

## **Should Windows 7 Users Be Worried?**

Windows 7 is the most popular operating system today, despite the release of the much maligned Windows 8 in October 2012, an eon ago in the computer world.

Before Windows 7, the darling of Windows aficionados was Windows XP. But Microsoft stopped supporting XP in April 2014, which meant it stopped releasing bug fixes, including those related to security. For a large number of people, particularly those in the corporate world, this eliminated XP as a viable product.

Microsoft is currently working on the successor to Windows 8, which in a marketing contrivance it's naming Windows 10, not Windows 9. Microsoft's marketers apparently think that by skipping ahead two numbers we'll think the product will be twice as good. Time will tell.

In the meantime, Microsoft has been and still is trying to put the brakes on the sale of Windows 7. Last October it ended Windows 7 sales in stores as well as the manufacturing of new desktop and laptop PCs installed with Windows 7 Home Basic, Home Premium, and Ultimate. Even before that you would have been hard pressed to find a Windows 7 PC for sale in a physical store.

You can still buy a new PC running Windows 7 Professional, though you'll likely find it only online. Good sources include Amazon ([amazon.com](http://amazon.com)) and Newegg ([newegg.com](http://newegg.com)).

Of greater concern, at first glance, is that Microsoft stopped "mainstream support" of Windows 7 in January 2015. This sounds more dire than it is, however, which results from another less-than-optimal naming choice. The stopping of mainstream support mostly means that Windows 7 won't be receiving any new features. It will still receive the all-important security fixes. But the end of mainstream support also means you'll no longer be able to call Microsoft for free help with Windows 7.

Microsoft is planning to maintain Windows 7 "extended support" for another five years, until January 2020. That's when security fixes will no longer be provided, and that's when Windows 7 will become too risky for many users.

With Windows 8, Microsoft made one of the biggest business miscalculations in history. By putting a tablet and smartphone interface on its PC operating system, it sought to boost sales of its own tablets and smartphones, which lagged far behind competitors. But the result was sabotaging sales of PCs made by others while doing nothing for the sale of Microsoft's tablets and smartphones.

Windows 10 is still in public testing, or beta, phase. At this point it doesn't appear to be the dud that Windows 8 was. Microsoft has moved away from the interface hated by so many PC users and rediscovered the need to provide them with a PC interface.

With Windows 10, Microsoft isn't abandoning its wishes that everyone use Windows on smartphones and tablets as well as desktop and laptop PCs, despite pesky competitors such as Apple (currently the most valuable company in the world because of its smartphones and tablets), Samsung (the Korean company that makes a huge variety of well-regarded electronics), and others.

Microsoft is making it easier for those who use multiple Windows devices to use them together, and it's making available and improving its Microsoft Office word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, and other apps for smartphones and tablets.

Windows 10 switches interfaces depending on the type of device it's used on. It looks one way on devices in which users primarily use a keyboard and mouse or other pointing device, such as a desktop or laptop PC. And it looks

another way on devices in which users primarily use a touchscreen, such as a tablet or smartphone. With convertible laptops/tablets, it asks users what they want.

Microsoft has also brought back the much missed Start menu, where you can start programs from the bottom left of your screen. Additionally, Microsoft's "modern apps" no longer try to take over, letting you use them in a desktop window if you like, which makes sense because the product is named and has always been named Windows.

With Windows 10 Microsoft has also broken precedent by announcing that for consumers wanting to upgrade their existing Windows 8 or Windows 7 machine, the cost during the first year after its release will be, drum roll please, nothing.

Apple has been doing this for years, but it's a big move for Microsoft. It will mean, unlike in the past, that previous versions of Windows will no longer have the same desirability for users. The release of Windows 10 is scheduled for late 2015.

**Reid Goldsborough**

## **David Groom – My Computing History**

My first exposure to computers occurred when I was around seventeen. I can't now remember the exact sequence of events, but around that time my school purchased one computer for use by the students, and I was also given a Sinclair ZX Spectrum for Christmas. I remember I subscribed to a Sinclair spectrum magazine, and spent what must have been hours re-typing lines of code which was written in the magazine into the Spectrum in order to program it. I did try to use the school computer, but the programming task I set myself was so complex I had to give up, and anyway A Level exam pressure intervened.

A few years later I started university, studying Business Studies. Our university must have been quite forward thinking as we were exposed to computers from an early stage, most of our assignments were expected to be typewritten – quite unusual at that time I believe.

After graduating I joined the accountancy practice Grant Thornton. At this time desktop computers (running DOS in those days) were used by the secretarial staff for producing letters and copies of accounts, and in the audit department, where I worked, we had two or three “portable” computers, again running DOS, and about the size of a small travel case. I started to write a few DOS scripts to automate some of the tasks we had to do. Maybe because of my earlier exposure to computers, or maybe just out of natural curiosity, I found myself more and more starting to support some of the people in the office in the use of computers. Over the next eight years or so this role became a little more formalised as the use of IT in the office increased – though it still wasn't my main job and I found myself juggling demands of two positions. I assisted in the planning of the office network, liaising with external suppliers and our head office computing function in the London office. I increasingly found myself involved in staff training on new software packages, as well as being the network administrator for 50 or so staff (all this as an addition to my then main role of Audit Manager).

Some time in the early 2000's Dad became interested in computing, and joined the IWPCUG. On my visits back to the Island I assisted him in putting together a collection of programs which allowed a friend of his, the Rev. K Parsons, to produce typewritten documents in the Miao language used by people in the SE of China. I believe an English / Miao dictionary was compiled by the Rev Parsons and is now in the British Library, inside are credits to both Dad and myself!

In 2008 I left Grant Thornton and decided to spend a year backpacking around the Pacific region. Before I left I decided that the easiest way for me to let my friends know that I was doing would be to set up a web site, and to update it as I went along. Since I would need to update the web site wherever I was in the world, I would have to hand code everything in simple text editors and then upload it to the web site, so I taught myself the basics of HTML programming! I had no digital camera, so sent photographic prints back to the UK, and Dad scanned them and then emailed them back to me. So in 2008-09 I created what was probably one of the first ever “travel blogs”, though that phrase was not in use at the time.

On my return to the UK I came back to Bembridge and, whilst I was deciding what my next move would be, the father of an old school friend asked me to create a web site for him. It was rather more complex than the one I had created

for myself already, but he was kind enough to let me start on the basis I might not actually be able to produce what he wanted. So I set about learning to program in PERL (Oh – I'm so glad we've moved on from that programming language). The site did everything my friend's father wanted, and I got paid for doing it. A short while later my uncle very proudly announced that his company had just had a new web site designed, and he suggested I take a look at it. He later asked me what I thought of it, I asked him how honest he wanted me to be, and he said totally honest. So I told him the site was rubbish, I could have done better myself, and I hoped he had not paid too much for it. I think he was a bit crestfallen, but he listened to what I said, understood the points I was making, and then asked me to redesign the site properly. I had got my second paying customer! This led me to realise other people might pay me to design web sites, and Vectis WebDesign was born.

Dad was still heavily involved in the IWPCUG, and would occasionally ask me to assist with replies he was making to people on its “Egroup”. Eventually I decided it would be easier if I joined the IWPCUG so I could reply directly on the Egroup. Soon I was asked to join the committee, and ended up being elected Chairman a few years later.

Because it was free, and used by a large number of web hosts, I had started to develop an interest in Linux. In early 2006 a message was I believe posted to the Isle of Wight Linux user group announcing that something called “OpenStreetMap” was planning to hold a workshop on the Island over a weekend in May, and asking for volunteers to assisting mapping the whole of the Island in one weekend! I replied saying I thought this was an unrealistic task, and offered my support - I ended up co-planning the mapping weekend. Though a large number of roads and footpaths were mapped that weekend I would estimate that it was nowhere near even 40% complete. Over the summer of 2006 I drove constantly round the Island with a GPS mapping roads, and by the late summer had achieved nearly 100% coverage of all roads. I still take a GPS unit out walking with me to finish off some the mapping of the footpaths.

I hope the above has been an interesting read. Other than two days whilst I was at Grant Thornton I've never had any formal training in computing, and I often wonder if had I don't had exposure to computers when I was seventeen whether I would ever had developed an interest in them at all.

## **The Ins and Outs of the Latest iPhones**

Seven years after its initial release, Apple's iPhone is still the next big thing, a sensation that continues to excite, the single most important reason that Apple Inc. is the most valuable company in the world today.

Apple just released the latest versions, the iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus, on September 19. I think they're a mistake. A lot of other people feel differently, with huge numbers jumping on the bandwagon and buying them.

The iPhone 6 and 6 Plus, along with Apple's mobile operating system, iOS 8, which was simultaneously upgraded, has had their problems. At least at this early point in their release, this has caused Apple's astronomic stock price to take a small but appreciable hit.

The biggest difference between the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus and their immediate predecessors, the iPhone 5, 5C, and 5S, is that they're bigger. With the iPhone 6 the screen size jumped from 4.0 inches to 4.7 inches, and with the iPhone 6 Plus it jumped to 5.5 inches. This puts them more in line with the sizes of the iPhone's most immediate competition, the smartphones of Samsung. But it also makes them difficult, and sometimes impossible, to fit into your shirt pocket. This, to me, is their main problem.

For other people, who keep their phone in their pants pocket or purse, this may not be a problem, and they appreciate the larger size. It makes video on the phone more compelling, it makes text easier to read, and it makes an already easy-to-use phone easier to use.

But pants-pocket use has led to another problem, this one unexpected, the bending of the phone out of shape caused by the bending of your leg while sitting and standing, particularly when wearing skinny jeans. The iPhone 6 and 6 Plus' superthin all-aluminum design hasn't led to widespread reports of breakage, just the development of annoying bends or kinks.

The iPhone 6s have had other problems too. They're supposed to have longer battery life than their predecessors, but some people have experienced a shorter battery life, preventing them from using the phone all day without recharging.

The main problem with iOS 8 has been sluggish WiFi, particular with version 8.0.1. Short battery life, lost cell service, crashing apps, and botched fingerprint reading are other issues.

Users of the iPhone 4S and 5, 5C, and 5S can download iOS 8 as a free upgrade, though not users of the iPhone 4 and earlier models, which are incompatible with it. Some iPhone 4S users upgrading to iOS 8, however, report serious slowdown and other problems. iOS 8 is also available to users of the iPad 2 and later and the fifth-generation iPod Touch.

Apple continues to release bug fixes, or updates, to this upgrade, and if history repeats, which it should, these problems will clear up in the future. But it gives added weight to the old advice to wait a bit after the release of an update or new program for problems to be fixed that weren't identified in the testing phase.

Fortunately, among the many new or improved features of iOS 8 is Battery Usage, which identifies apps that may be hogging battery power, giving you the option of deleting them or modifying their use. Launch the Settings app then select General, Usage, and Battery Usage.

Among the other improvements that I've found the most useful are how the Siri voice recognition feature now displays text as you speak it and how the Calendar scheduling program shows all of your upcoming events.

On the hardware side, among the other improvements with the iPhone 6s is the built-in camera. It still uses an eight-megapixel sensor and five-element lens, but focus speed is a lot faster, a timer is now included, and video capture is improved. The camera of the iPhone 6 Plus, which features optical image stabilization, is supposed to be even better than that of the iPhone 6, but reports indicate this doesn't lead to a big real-world difference in image quality.

Because of their popularity, iPhones remain pricey, even refurbished older phones. With a cell contract, the iPhone 6 starts at \$199 for a unit with 16 gigabytes of storage, while the iPhone 6 Plus starts at \$299 with the same storage, which is adequate for most users. Without a contract, the iPhone 6 starts at \$649, the iPhone 6 Plus at \$749.

A look around the web indicates that a refurbished unlocked Apple iPhone 5 would set you back more than \$400.

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**Reid Goldsborough** is a syndicated columnist and author of the book *Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway*. He can be reached at [reidgold.com](http://reidgold.com) or [reidgoldsborough@gmail.com](mailto:reidgoldsborough@gmail.com).



At our January meeting David Groom demonstrated a preview release of Windows 10, here we see the return of the start button and menu

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