

Issue 170

July 2010

**ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER
GROUP**



HOT KEY

SUMMER 2010



**Rhododendrons at Mottiston
Manor**
Prizewinning photo by David Broughton

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The Isle of Wight Personal computer User Group

We welcome all owners and users of IBM compatible Personal Computers.

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

Membership is £6 per annum

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

The Riverside Centre, Newport from 7.30 to 9.30 pm

Visitors are welcome.

**A charge of £1 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 12 for how to join.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
July 7	Digital Photography and Photoshop	Debbie Lane
Aug 4	Summer Barbeque 7.00 PM Start	
Sept1	Park Centre	Barry Kemp
Oct 6	Family History Ray Boote & John Moxton	
Nov 3	Short talks by Members	Various

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman : David Groom

Treasurer : Phil Rogers

Secretary : Susanne Bone

Membership & Database Secretary : Ray Boote

Committee Member : Roger Skidmore

Committee Member : Steve Sutters

HotKey Editor : Bob Groom

Note : contact details removed prior to
being published on web site

Suggestions for new events, topics or speakers for talks are always
welcome.

Please contact any committee member with your ideas.

If necessary we may be able to find a speaker for your subject.

Chairman's Report

Roger & Su have done an impressive job of finding speakers and topics for our meetings, as a glance at "Forthcoming Events" on page 2 will demonstrate. Our recent meetings have been well attended, though I have to admit to being a little surprised that no one has approached me to see if there might be someone willing to offer them a lift to our events.

The email group has been quite active, with over 50 postings in the last three months. Only 45 of our members are signed up though, and I would encourage you all to join.

I hope to see as many of you as possible at the BBQ next month, details on page 11, please **remember this starts** at 7:00 PM.

The articles on pages 12 -15 have come from the "Paducah Parenting and Family" Magazine, more details can be found on page 15 of the Spring 2010 edition of HotKey.

David Groom

Club Library

Every once in a while I remind members that we have a club library, and that an index of its contents can be found on the web site (www.iwpcug.org/docs/library.htm).

I can't remember the last time anyone requested a book from the library, but I would hazard a guess that it was well over two years ago.

In view of this the committee have decided that the library should be disposed of. A list of items is on the club web site, and also included on this months cover disk. **If anyone would like any of the books then please contact me.** Any that are remaining on 1st September will then be scrapped, either by donating to a charity shop, or taking to the tip.

David Groom

Cover Disk

New on the cover disk is **Mozilla Thunderbird**, the free email client from the same organisation that produces the Firefox web browser, and which I demonstrated at the June meeting. Thunderbird aims to be a simple e-mail, newsgroup and news feed client. Thunderbird can manage multiple e-mail, newsgroup and news feed accounts and supports multiple identities within accounts. It has features like quick search, saved search folders ("virtual folders"), advanced message filtering, message grouping, and labels help manage and find messages. Additional features can be added through the use of extensions

Also new is an **anti-malware** program from MalwareBytes which was recommended by Craig & Jonathan, from PC Consultants, at the April meeting. The version on the disk is free, but a paid for version has realtime protection, scheduled scanning, and scheduled updating. For consumers and personal use, it is a one time fee of \$24.95.

The last new featured program is **Nuance PDF reader** recommended by Michael Hodge. Nuance PDF Reader enables you to do much more than just view PDF files. You can convert PDF files to Word, Excel, and RTF via a hosted web service. Use annotation tools to highlight, cross-out, and underline text for more effective collaboration. Even fill out and save PDF forms. Nuance PDF Reader takes up less disk space, is claimed to be more secure than Adobe Reader, and works with virtually any PDF file. Best of all, it's absolutely free, proving that you really can get a whole lot of something for nothing.

The majority of the other programs on the disk have been updated to the most recent versions, and the "Utilities" section includes many programs recommended by Roger Skidmore

David Groom

Quick Tip

If you want to extract an image that is embedded in a Microsoft Word document, try saving the document in HTML format, and you will find the image gets saved as a separate file.

David Groom

Wootton Historical Web Site



Since I wrote the last article for the Hot Key and gave a lecture to the club in November 2008, the historical web site www.woottonbridgeiow.co.uk has been transformed and is now unrecognisable when compared with the original format. The person who had been assisting in uploading data on our behalf into Front Page ceased to provide any assistance in the early part of 2009 due to ill health, so we were yet again left high and dry. As on previous occasions we made inquiries with various organisations for help including Rural Action, but to no avail. We were individuals, not an organisation. Two web design companies were approached, one quoted at least £3000 for a basic programme and the second one £2500 for a licence to use an existing programme which would then need modifying at a cost of £20.00/hr. Due to our lack of funding, this kind of expenditure was neither viable nor affordable. As a last resort to move forward, an advert was placed in the County Press in August 2009 appealing for someone to help us and we received a call from a professional web designer [Tony], who agreed to help.

In conjunction with him, we discussed what needed to be done to make our existing site more attractive and vibrant. We had to accept that some of our original “fixed” ideas were not web friendly and needed to be modified in line with current trends. After some heart searching, we agreed to modify these and move forward to meet the requirements of a professional designer.

The first question to be considered was the name of the new site, did we retain or change? It was decided to keep the existing title as it was now known to a number of people and organisations. However, the layout would need to be modified and incorporated into a new background colour. We would also need a new picture of Wootton Creek. Two photographs were taken and stitched together. With the header agreed, we now had to consider how to present the site content; should we stay with the existing format, or go for a completely different format ? With guidance, a compromise was reached.

By August 2009 the web site content now consisted of some 250 written historical articles and approximately 750 pictures, and we had already identified more pictures that we could add to the site. Due to the sheer volume of data that we had available it was decided to retain the segregation of the written and photographic information in a similar format, but slightly modify the presentation. There would also be a number of additional main headings that needed to be created to cover other areas of information that we had gathered since the original web site was produced. The historical articles would now be split into two sections, one entitled “Wootton” and the other “Districts”. In the case of Wootton it would contain all articles relevant to the village and the other section would have the surrounding area. Within these headings would be a series of sub sections into which the relevant articles would be broken down.

The method of presenting the photographs was more challenging, due to the wide selection of material now available. It was decided to create a separate section for each major group of pictures the within the main gallery. Prior to reloading, a considerable amount of retouching and cleaning of the photographs was done to endeavour to improve the presentation.

Having agreed a way forward, the first thing the designer advised us to do was to change our service provider who has offered little or no support or statistics, [it must be added that no charge had being made for the service] and transfer to Heart Internet, who offered an attractive package and range of options at a reasonable cost, we agreed to this.

We were now faced with a complete redesign of the previous picture gallery, which had simply been a series of pictures without sequence, in other words search until you find. Not the best way of attracting visitors. After discussion it was agreed we would retain the Gallery principle but create a series of sub sections within the gallery to accommodation the different groups of pictures we had acquired.

Next, we had to consider how to accommodate the additional information we had gathered and were gathering. We decided to increase the number of main index headings to nine; this was the maximum number that we could accommodate in the space available. The total number of sub

headings within these groups now amounts to fifty-five. A change to the web site policy resulted from requests of people visiting the site, they wanted a wider coverage, therefore we expanded to cover all areas of the Isle of Wight and the number of pictures in all areas now exceeds 1300 and will slowly climb as we collect or receive further inputs.

So, what additional subjects are now included within the web site ? The range includes pictures of buses which were taken in the 1980's, it's the background which is historically interesting. Some months ago I found an old handwritten recipe book of my mother's dating from the period 1920-1950s. As most old cooking recipes have been thrown away it was decided to preserve some of those that remain. Since the project was started, it has grown considerably and we have received contributions from overseas.

It was found that part of a collection of some 20,000 J.A.Dixon post cards from the period 1950-1975 contained over 300 pictures of the Isle of Wight. These have been added to the site in the form of an island tour. Within the same collection were almost 60 postcards of yachts of the Solent, these have also been added.

In order to help visitors and islanders, we have attached the "Wootton Village Walks" leaflets which can be download free. "Google Street Map" has also been linked into the site and it would appear it is being used. In order to raise a small amount of revenue to help fund the running of the site we have included a small number of village businesses.

Two recent additions to the site have been the natural history section where we are offering amateur photographers the opportunity to display their Island wildlife photographs and a video, taken in 1999 to commemorate the Wootton Millennium, has just been added.

We are averaging around 60 visits a day from all over the world and are receiving requests for help. If you can help us preserve Island history in any form and are willing to allow the information to be shown on the web please contact me.

Roy Murphy

Emerging trends in Web design

History

When the internet first started web pages were pretty boring. In fact the very first were pages containing nothing more than pure text with hyperlinks to other pages. Very soon the ability to include images was added and the ability to add colour, change fonts, and add tables. All this was achieved through changes to the basic html standards, and a web page still consisted largely of a text document.

Sometime later scripting languages were used to enable input from the user to be processed, pages became "dynamic"- in that the content was not necessary written in stone by the web designer, but rather what was delivered to the page depended upon certain other criteria.

Requirements for more advanced formatting and layout led to the development of CSS and web pages became much more attractive.

JavaScript had emerged in versions of Netscape Navigator in September 1995. It was quickly adopted as a means of "popping up" new windows, quite often used for spam and other annoying messages. For this reason many people in fact turned off the ability of their web browser to run JavaScript, and many web designers shied away from its use.

Throughout all this time the way users interacted with Web pages remained largely the same, a web server delivered a web page to the browser, the user read what was on the page, and if they wanted more information they would either click link, or push a button on a form, to instruct the server to deliver a new page.

Current situation

Over the last few years "websites" have started to deliver a much richer user experience. These days on many websites the experience delivered by the web browser is much more akin to using a program rather than simply reading information. Think here of sites such as Google Docs, and Windows Live Mail, in fact Google Docs is so far removed from a traditional web page that you may even forget that it is running inside a web browser and basically using just HTML markup and JavaScript.

The main thing which has made this possible is that web designers have discovered that JavaScript can be used in a much more productive way than simply putting up annoying pop up boxes. Firstly it can be used to manipulate elements of on a web page, without the need for the page to be refreshed. Secondly, it was noticed that JavaScript could send a query to a web server, listen for a response, and then take some appropriate action.

A small example of can be seen on the cover disc under item "jQuery Example"-linked from the index page, where you can use the mouse to drag boxes up and down, thereby reordering them on the page, when you do so the message box at the bottom changes both in content and colour. So what is happening here? JavaScript has been used in a number of ways, firstly it allows certain elements of the page to be dragged with the mouse, secondly when the dragging is stopped it sends a message to the server which then sends back the message "thank-you we updated your preference", lastly JavaScript updates the web page with this content and changes the message box colour.

This above example is rather limited because I can't get a webserver running on the cover disc CD, so the response which I can send back is rather limited. But in real life such a page could be used as part of a survey, when the order of items could be stored on the server, and a more appropriate message sent back.

A look at the code of this example illustrates one of the main things powering this method of interaction. In this case I decided to use a JavaScript library called jQuery, but there are other libraries (Mootools, Prototype, & Scriptalicious, being three) which have also been developed. Currently I prefer to use jQuery, partly because it is a smaller library, but also because the documentation and examples seem better.

You could write that JavaScript from scratch and not use these libraries, but the advantage of using them is that it cuts down development time, plus these libraries have been tested across many browsers, taking into account differences between them, in order to do this from scratch a web developer would need access to all of the various web browsers running on Windows, Linux, & Mac.

More examples of the use of jQuery can be found at http://docs.jquery.com/Tutorials:Live_Examples_of_jQuery, though to be honest to see the real benefit you have to look at live were pages that are using it.

Future

So what of the future?

CSS3 - the latest specification, is under development, with certain elements currently being supported by a few browsers (though not into Explorer). Full adoption of CSS3 will allow new design elements such as rounded corners, shadows, and transitions to be displayed on web pages.

The latest HTML specification (HTML5) is also under development, one of the major new things introduced will be direct support for video without the need for a plug-in. But there will also be new html tags added, and some old familiar ones removed (including some common ones like "center", "font", and "frames"). Though we are still probably talking at least three years before any meaningful support in browsers appears.

Conclusion

The web is changing. No longer are static pages enough. The new technologies outlined above, together with increased broadband speeds, will mean web pages serving up richer content (more video, pictures, immediate interaction between the user and the web server), leading to Web pages and websites which look nothing like what we used to today.

David Groom

The Annual Club BBQ on Wednesday 4 August

This will be held again at Bembridge Lodge, 114 High St, Bembridge.

Starting at 7:00pm

It would assist catering for the event if you could let me know if you are planning to come, no definite commitment needed just some idea of the numbers expected. It would be appreciated if you could either call on 873853, or email david@vectiswebdesign. com before 2 August.

David Groom

Photography Competition

Congratulations to David Broughton who wins this months' photo competition, with a picture of Rhododendrons at Mottistone Manor gardens. The picture is on the front cover. I promise it is not a fix that David won it, though it is very appropriate that after setting the puzzles for so many years he should be the first winner of the replacement for the monthly puzzle competition.

Entries for the autumn competition should be emailed to me by 7 September (please keep to under 2Mb), and the winner will be announced, and the photo published, in the October issue of HotKey. The theme for this competition will be "**Bits and Bytes**".

David Groom

Joining the Email Group

Send an e-mail to: **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.ipcug.org**

Email Etiquette

By Karen Hammond

Have you ever thought you were looking at a foreign language when you opened your email? Email seems to have its own set of rules and sometimes even its own language, consider the following message:

“Seeya:) BBFN J.”

Is that an email? Unfortunately it is. The above 12 character message just said:

Dear Judy,

Thank you for telling me about the going away party for Tim on Tuesday at 12:00pm. I will be attending. I will talk with you again before then.

Jane

We have been hearing about email etiquette being on the decline since email started, and unfortunately, it's true. The well thought out email is not on the decline, it is dead! Things were getting bad as it was, but since instant messaging, text messages, and all the other short quick abbreviated ways to send information, the written word has been truly mangled.

The reality is that you can never take back an email. It is important that your written communication be as clear, meaningful, and precise as your vocal conversations. You would not use the term “rolling on the floor laughing” (ROTFL) while talking to your pastor/preacher so why use it with someone who is an informal acquaintance at best. There are many things that make your email look, read, and convey your message much more eloquently. Here are a few tips to help you present yourself as a more conscientious email user with proper email etiquette.

‘Smilies’

First and most importantly, keep the use of acronyms and *smilies* to a minimum. These can be hard to follow and more importantly, they may be misunderstood. The acronym “lol” can mean lots of laughs, laughing out loud, lots of love, and love of life or 66 other meanings that can be looked up on the internet at www.acronymfinder.com. The obvious question is, which one is the most appropriate or inappropriate and how will the recipient know the difference?

Salutation

Addressing the recipient is just common courtesy. You do not always have to be formal when writing to friends but you should always be formal in a professional email. Even when writing emails to friends a simple heading like “Jane,” at the top followed by a blank line and then the message is very courteous and make people know you are remembering and talking to them. At the same time you should choose the same words for a professional email as you would for a formal letter. Just as you would not go up to an unknown client or guest in your business office and say “hey Dude!” You should not send an email with out a heading to address the person with respect such as “Dear Mrs. Jane Smith,”

Who are you sending this to?

The next point relates to the question of to who should you address an email? “Reply to all” is not necessary the best option for responding to every email. If you received an announcement addressed to several people everyone does not need to know your answer all the time. The ‘reply to all’ feature is to be use very sparingly.

Do not over use punctuation.

Putting a single period or exclamation mark gets the point across. Ten exclamation points at the end of a statement takes away from the seriousness of your message. As well never use caps lock when writing an email. Capitalizing everything is the equivalent of shouting in the recipients face, using all capitals is therefore, extremely obnoxious. It is also hard to read. Concentrate on quality content and the punctuation will not need to be as flamboyant to get the same message across.

Add a proper signature.

It is not always clear who the person sending an email is. Many times the email address is not enough to remind the recipient who the sender is. This is especially true if you are using an alternate email address. Include a standard informational signature including name, title of business, if related, and email address at the least. More can be added if appropriate.

Take it easy on the attachments.

Keep the attachments under the one megabyte limit unless it is a very special occasion. While high speed internet is here and more and more people are connected via high speed connections, the email client or the ISP host may still limit the size of the attachment. In this case it may be lost or simply deleted, not to mention the fact that large email attachments clog up the inbox and take up valuable space. If you are sending pictures then use a photo editing program to reduce the size of the picture. The quality is retained remarkably well and the size can be reduced to a tenth of the original picture.

Keep these tips in mind the next time you send an email and your attention to detail will be appreciated. If you have questions or need help setting up functions like signatures, spam settings or enabling the Bcc: line on your browser you can ask a friend or call Residential Computer Services for further assistance.

Toward a Universal Library

By: Reid Goldsborough

Pundits have described the Internet as the greatest boon to literacy since Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press in the fifteenth century. Despite the Internet's multimedia versatility, communications over the Internet remains largely words typed on a keyboard and read on a screen. Some have even predicted that the Internet will do away with conventional printing just as paper replaced papyrus, clay, and lambskin. This may eventually happen, but the paper industry shows no signs of going away any time soon, and the paperless office remains a futuristic fantasy.

Still, the Internet has complemented many traditional print media. Books, however, have been a technological laggard. Lately, significant inroads have been made in the areas of printing books, buying books, reading books, and perhaps most interestingly doing research with books. Major players are involved, including Google, Microsoft, and Yahoo, as well as some of the top libraries in the world. Google, the Internet's most popular search engine, is getting the most attention and creating the most controversy.

Google Book Search (books.google.com), formerly Google Print, lets you search for free through books just like Google lets you search through the Web, with Google earning profits through advertising. In cooperation with university and public libraries as well as book publishers, Google is digitizing both out-of-copyright books and more recent books still subject to copyright protection.

On balance, giving people quick access to book knowledge is a good thing. The ultimate goal is the same as envisioned by the builders of the great Library at

Alexandria, completed by the Macedonian rulers of Egypt around 300 BC: Archiving the world's knowledge in printed form.

Google has been as aggressive as these ancient archivists, employing thousands of workers around the world to scan books to create its own universal library. It has also been aggressive in how it interprets the fair use aspect of the copyright law, including books in its repository unless notified by the copyright holder not to. Both moves have led to the controversy.

The Authors Guild and the Association of American Publishers separately sued Google for copyright infringement, contending that Google Book Search will hurt authors. But you can see only a very limited amount of any book still in copyright. Google contends that the current book component of its service is more a book marketing program rather than an online library. Depending on the permissions given by the copyright holder, a viewer is typically able to view either snippets of text or a small number pages surrounding the search term. Google also gives copyright holders the option of removing a book from Google Book Search.

The way Google scans books has also been criticized. Google won't disclose its techniques, but reports indicate that it uses at least in part a robotic technique without a human being checking the results, which causes some pages to be unreadable, some to be scanned more than once, some to be in the wrong place, and some to be cut off.

Much of this scanning takes place abroad. It's significantly less expensive to scan a book in China than Des Moines. But this leads to the descriptive data associated with any book, including its title, author, date of publication, and category, to be wrong more often than it should be, making the archive less useful.

Google Book Search has been operational since late 2004, though Google still indicates it's in the beta, or testing, stage. Google isn't the only guy in town trying to create a universal library. Microsoft is engaged in a similar effort associated with its Live Search service (www.live.com) called Live Search Books. The Open Content Alliance (www.opencontentalliance.org), affiliated with Yahoo, is also undertaking a similar effort, one that like Microsoft's duplicates what Google is doing. But while Google and Microsoft make the content of their digitized books available only through their respective services, the Open Content Alliance makes its content available through any search engine, including Yahoo. Given the inherent quality control problems, this redundancy isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Some of the criticism of Google Book Search stems from the fact that most books scanned are in English. The French, as expected, have led the way here. But the National Library of France (Bibliothèque nationale de France) is engaged in its own book scanning project called Gallica (gallica.bnf.fr). Until a way is devised to compensate authors, don't expect the entire contents of current books to be freely available through any service. That, in fact, is the true Holy Grail of online research.



Tracking Ocean Going Ships

One of our Chairman's brothers has just been on a cruise from Southampton to the Northern part of the Mediteranean and on my radio equipment and from the Internet I was able to keep track of his ship (Grand Princess) throughout virtually the whole voyage.

As the ship departed, I followed it down Southampton Water, saw it pick up a pilot just past Fawley, drop him as they entered the Solent and Pick up another pilot for the passage to the Nab Tower. On my other radio I could hear the pilots discussing who was going to take this ship. I lost touch with the ship north of Cherburg, either it had gone out of range of my setup or it had switched off the transmitter. This was on my equipment. I then had to use the Internet.

Cádiz was its first Port of Call and the picture above shows the sort of information that's provided. The blue line is the ship's course and the small triangles indicate the successive reporting points. That course line shows how the ship made a “ 3 Point Turn “ in order to get to the berth in the right direction for departure later that day.

The “ information icon “ gives such details as Ships Name, Country of Registration, length and breadth, draught, destination, course and speed, etc. and ETA at next port. The picture, of course, is of that particular ship. I had pictures like this from each port of call and in mid-ocean.

The picture is from the website www.marinetraffic.com/ais

Editor

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