

Isle of Wight

Literary HEROES

TENNYSON to MINGHELLA
An inspirational trail around the Island



Travel around the Island without a car and you'll discover so much more. We have miles of footpaths, cycle and bridleways, an excellent bus network and our own unique train line.

To find out more about travel, accommodation, things to do and places to eat and drink go to

visitisleofwight.co.uk



By Sea

CAR FERRY	
Wightlink Portsmouth – Fishbourne	45 minutes
Wightlink Lymington – Yarmouth	40 minutes
Red Funnel Southampton – East Cowes	1 hour

PASSENGER FERRY	
Red Funnel Red Jet Southampton – West Cowes	25 minutes
Wightlink Catamaran Portsmouth Harbour – Ryde	22 minutes
Hovertravel Southsea – Ryde	10 minutes

This brochure was funded by the Isle of Wight Business Improvement District.



Call me a fanciful idiot, but whenever I visit the Island by way of the Lymington-Yarmouth ferry, I look at the silhouette of the glorious Isle of Wight opening up before me and I think, "It's a book! It's like an open book!"



I'm not the first writer to be inspired by this jewel of an island. From Alfred, Lord Tennyson to Anthony Minghella, writers have breathed the air here, walked the cliffs and gazed at the glittering sea – and then dashed home to put pen to paper.

The contemporary author Isabel Ashdown describes a "gentle energy in the air" here that makes her want to write, and I know exactly what she means. Dickens felt it; Keats felt it. As a lucky visitor to this special place, I hope you feel it too.

Lynne Truss



Continuing the rich literary tradition of the Island, the Isle of Wight Literary Festival was founded in 2012. Offering a diverse and thought-provoking programme, events feature poets, politicians, historians, biographers, journalists, fiction writers, actors and scientists.

Past speakers include Max Hastings, Mary Berry, Victoria Hislop, Simon Callow, Alan Johnson, Kate Mosse, Michael Morpurgo, Celia Imrie, Peter and Dan Snow. There is also a vibrant youth programme.

The Literary Festival takes place in October and is mainly based at Northwood House, a Grade II* Georgian manor house set in 20 acres of parkland in the heart of Cowes.

isleofwightliteraryfestival.com



Northwood House

"Take it and come to the Isle of Wight: Where, far from the noise of smoke and town, I watch the twilight falling brown All around a careless-ordered garden, Close to the ridge of a noble down."

Tennyson

"She thinks of nothing but the Isle of Wight, and she calls it the Island, as if there were not another island in the world."

Jane Austen, Mansfield Park

"It is the prettiest place I ever saw in my life."

Dickens on Winterbourne, Bonchurch

"I sometimes wish I was back on the shore at Sandown; don't you?"

Lewis Carroll

"It's a great day for the Isle of Wight."

Anthony Minghella – accepting his Best Director Oscar

"It is impossible to imagine a prettier spot."

Queen Victoria

WIN A CHRISTMAS TO REMEMBER AT KEATS COTTAGE, SHANKLIN

Win a 3 night stay for two in this delightful boutique B&B in the heart of Shanklin Old Village this Christmas (24th, 25th & 26th December 2017). Beautiful beaches and walks are close by and with meals and accommodation taken care of, all you'll need to do is relax and enjoy a magical Christmas on the Isle of Wight.

Prize includes: Three nights accommodation in the stylish Keats Cottage B&B, named after respected poet John Keats who stayed and wrote here in the 19th century.



Cross Solent ferry travel included

Find out more and enter the competition at visitisleofwight.co.uk/keatschristmas

Christmas Eve - afternoon tea with a glass of Prosecco followed by a 3 course dinner and complimentary bottle of wine.

Christmas Day - leisurely breakfast with a glass of Bucks Fizz, 4 course Christmas lunch including a glass of Prosecco & a glass of Port with your cheese.

Boxing Day - hearty breakfast and three course dinner with complimentary bottle of wine.



Discover more about historic Keats Cottage keatscottage.co.uk

COMPETITION CLOSES 31ST OCTOBER 2017

"My favourite view in the world is of the Tennyson Down, as seen from the Military Road at sunset. Sheer beauty."

Lynne Truss

"Some locations possess a special quality, a gentle energy in the air that makes me want to write; the Isle of Wight is one of those places."

Isabel Ashdown

'..the tinny whirr of the candyfloss machine, the thump of the rubber fridge-lid, the rustle of sweets on weighing scales, the chip of coins being thrown into the open till.'

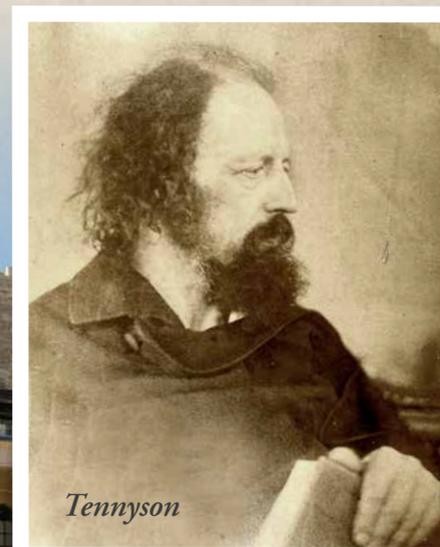
Philip Norman – Babycham Night

"There was a Young Lady of Ryde, Whose shoe-strings were seldom untied. She purchased some clogs, And some small spotted dogs, And frequently walked about Ryde."

Edward Lear



To read more quotes from our Literary Heroes please visit visitisleofwight.co.uk



Tennyson

From 1853 until his death in 1892, Farringford was the main home of the renowned Victorian poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

In this secluded spot on the Isle of Wight the new Poet Laureate produced some of his most famous works: Maud was composed in the attic, Enoch Arden in the summer house and Idylls of the King in the library. Farringford also attracted many of Tennyson's eminent friends, becoming a locus of literary and artistic activity.

The writers Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, Charles Kingsley, William Allingham, Coventry Patmore and Henry Longfellow were among many accomplished visitors.

Since 2012 this dramatic Gothic house has been meticulously restored and decorated in a late 19th-century style that reflects the Tennysons' tastes and interests. The grounds have also been returned to their authentic Tennyson-era appearance, complete with enchanting walled garden.

Farringford is now open to the public as an historic home. Holidaymakers also have the opportunity to enjoy a stay in our self-catering accommodation, situated in the house and grounds.

Please visit farringford.co.uk to book a trip and learn more about Tennyson, his circle and the enduring appeal of his magnificent poetry.

The air,
as somebody said,
is worth
Sixpence
a pint

Tennyson

Freshwater Bay and Tennyson Down



Isle of Wight
Literary
Connections

1 Freshwater

The scenery of the Isle of Wight so inspired the Poet Laureate, Alfred, Lord Tennyson that he made his home at Farringford, Freshwater in the 1850s as a tranquil escape from his fans.

Tennyson's 'Freshwater Circle' grew and included Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear and William Allingham as well as other artists including Victorian photographic pioneer Julia Margaret Cameron.

Playwright George Bernard Shaw and his new wife honeymooned at Ocean View, Coastguard Lane, Freshwater in 1898.

The lure of Freshwater continued into the 20th century. Author Virginia Woolf (great niece of Julia Margaret Cameron) stayed at her house, Dimbola and created a play 'Freshwater - a Comedy' based on the Freshwater Circle. DH Lawrence, stayed at Freshwater Bay in 1909 and went on to use the location in his novels.

More recently, Lynne Truss lived in and wrote about Freshwater for her novel Tennyson's Gift in 1996. She calls 'Freshwater' her favourite word.

2 East Cowes

A prolific diarist, Queen Victoria was inspired by stays at her holiday home Osborne House. Edward Lear, member of the Freshwater Circle, visited the monarch there to teach her drawing.

After WWI, Osborne was a convalescence home. Poet Robert Graves and author AA Milne met there and became friends.

3 Sandown

Lewis Carroll (Charles Dodgson) took holidays in Sandown. It was here, in 1875, he began writing his nonsense poem The Hunting of the Snark.

It is believed that Charles Darwin began Origin of the Species at the Ocean View Hotel, High Street, Sandown in 1858.

Isabel Ashdown uses the whole of the Isle of Wight landscape for inspiration for her novels. Her book The Summer of '76 (2013) was set in Sandown.

Literary HEROES

4 Ventnor

Before Tennyson arrived on the Isle of Wight, Charles Dickens rented Winterbourne, Bonchurch in 1849. Here he began the novel David Copperfield. He wrote to his wife "It is the prettiest place I ever saw in my life."

Poet Algernon Swinburne grew up at East Dene, Bonchurch and is buried at St Boniface Church, Bonchurch. His funeral was a major event. One newspaper reported: "tourists...trampled the primroses and violets in search of a convenient point of view".

Thomas Hardy travelled to the Island to visit Swinburne's grave in 1910.

A regular to the Isle of Wight for health reasons, Karl Marx visited the Island a number of times. His favourite place for a walk was Ventnor Downs.

5 Shanklin

A popular tourist destination for 200 years, Shanklin Chine was opened to the public in 1817. The Old Village was a regular haunt of the poet John Keats. Today you can dine and stay in the house he rented - Keats Cottage.

The American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow visited in 1868 where he wrote a poem for the fountain outside The Crab Inn.

In 1813 Jane Austen visited Shanklin and wrote: "we hired a sociable and drove round... Shanklin Chine, lovely"

6 Cowes

With its stunning sea views and annual yachting regatta Cowes has been an inspiration to Alan Titchmarsh, TV presenter and author who lives in the town. He set his novel 'Rosie' (2004) partly in Gurnard and Thorness Bay.

In 1793 it is believed the poet William Wordsworth inspected the Napoleonic Fleet at Cowes.

7 Ryde

The home town of Oscar-winning screen writer and director (The English Patient 1996) Anthony Minghella. Minghella's creativity was inspired by walking on the sands of Ryde with his grandmother. Ryde was also where he directed his first film "A Little Like Drowning".

Other visitors to Ryde included poet and illustrator Edward Lear, who wrote a limerick about Ryde in 1846, and Karl Marx who stayed in Nelson Street in 1874.

Respected music journalist Philip Norman grew up in Ryde and wrote Babycham Night, a nostalgic memoir of his Isle of Wight childhood - his father ran the entertainments on Ryde Pier in the 1950s.

8 Seaview

In 1934, author Enid Blyton and her husband stayed in a cottage in Seaview, a pretty sailing village along the coast from Ryde.

9 Newport and Carisbrooke

When imprisoned in Carisbrooke Castle in 1648, King Charles I was inspired to write poetry.

Charles Kingsley wrote The Water Babies (1863) after reading the true story of child chimney sweep Valentine Gray. Today you can see the memorial to Gray in Church Litten, Newport.

Novelist Patrick Gale was born on the Island in 1962 - his father was then Governor of HM Prison Camp Hill.

John Keats began his poem Endymion (1818) which starts 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever' in Castle Road, Newport.

This
Island
is a little
paradise

Karl Marx



10 Chillerton

JB Priestley, author of An Inspector Calls, lived in Chillerton in the 1950s where he was known for throwing extravagant parties!

11 Mottistone

General Jack Seely, of Mottistone Manor, wrote about his famous war horse Warrior who he trained in the sea at Brook. Sir Winston Churchill, politician and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, regularly visited Brook (near Mottistone) in the early 1900s.

12 Lake

Crime writers Bob and Carol Bridgestock lived in Lake. Together, under the name R.C. Bridgestock, they publish detective novels and are consultants to the TV series Happy Valley.

13 Niton Undercliff

Rudyard Kipling stayed at The Royal Sandrock Hotel, Niton in 1891. His father Lockwood designed the Durbur Room at Osborne.

14 Havenstreet

M. J. Trow, author of the 'Inspector Lestrade' series of books, lives in Havenstreet.

15 The Needles

Author Isabel Ashdown stays close to the Island's iconic attraction when working on her novels.

Children's Authors

Lewis Carroll is not the only author to take inspiration from the Island for his characters.

There are plenty of children's authors and illustrators who live, write and publish surrounded by sea including, Jules Murriner and Zoe Sadler.

Many base their stories on the Isle of Wight like Frank Fenwick's *Sailor Ted* series, and Philip and Eleanor Bell of Island-based publisher *Beachy Books*, whose Jack and Boo picture books of fossils and dinosaurs, wild woods and beaches, mirror the island's unique landscape.

Kieren Larwood, who won the 2017 Blue Peter Book Award for his fantasy tale about a warrior rabbit called *Podkin One-Ear*, also lives on the Island.

Golden
summer hours
and whispers of a
Summer Sea

Lewis Carroll

Sandown Bay