

Picture This 1875 portrait of Emily Peacock was made for Tennyson's work *Idylls of the King*

## Victorian photographer Julia Margaret Cameron

Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879) was one of the most important early photographers and is now recognised the world over as a pioneer of photography as fine art.

A woman ahead of her time, she was ambitious and free-thinking when most Victorian women were passive and demure. She was renowned for her portraits of "famous men and fair women", the majority of which were created at her house Dimbola, in Freshwater Bay, near the Tapnell Trail. Here she photographed many towering figures of Victorian literary and scientific society who clustered around Alfred, Lord Tennyson at Farringford, during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Dimbola is now preserved as a museum to Julia Margaret Cameron, with galleries devoted to her work, as well as more recent photographers and artists. A good way to round off a walk on the Tapnell Trail is to visit Dimbola Museum to view some of Julia Margaret Cameron's remarkable works – you'll also find displays of vintage cameras, the Cameron Tea Rooms and a museum shop.

## Afton Site of the iconic 1970 Festival

In August 1970 Tapnell and East Afton echoed to the sounds of Jimi Hendrix, Chicago, The Doors, The Who, Miles Davis, Joan Baez, Joni Mitchell, Jethro Tull, Sly & the Family Stone, Ten Years After, Emerson, Lake & Palmer and Free. These were just some of the acts that headlined at the Isle of Wight Festival of Music that year.

Six hundred thousand fans descended on Afton from all over the world. It was reckoned that this Festival was bigger even than Woodstock, which had taken place in the USA the year before.

Political and logistical difficulties resulted in the organisers eventually realising that the Festival would not make a profit and declaring it to be "a free festival", even though the majority of the audience had paid for tickets in advance. But at the time, the commercial failings of the Festival ensured it would be the last event of its kind on the Isle of Wight for thirty-two years.

Walking the Tapnell Trail today, it is hard to imagine that this area was – for a few short days more than forty years ago – the centre of world attention. But even if the echoes of Hawkwind and Tiny Tim have been lost on the sea breezes that blow across the site, you'll still be walking in the footsteps of rock giants.

Main picture Overlooking the main arena from the Down (Image courtesy Julia Margaret Cameron Trust)  
Inset Poster artwork for the Festival



## Downland wildlife Diverse habitats

As you walk the Tapnell Trail, you will move through two distinct habitats: chalk grassland and downland grazing.

Chalk grassland will be found at East Afton, where a range of flowers and grasses can be seen. Look out for anthills which indicate very old grassland which has lain undisturbed for hundreds of years.

Tapnell Down is composed of sands and clays where fewer flower types will be found. Look out for Galloway cows and their calves. Grazing is important for keeping areas of grassland open, which promotes wild flower growth.

Both areas have a lot of thorn scrub. This is important for birds and provides shelter for insects. Some areas of scrub are cleared by machine to create a mosaic of grass and scrubland to benefit wildlife.

The area is looked after by the National Trust and a tenant farmer.

Main picture Galloway cattle  
Inset, top to bottom Gatekeeper butterfly; Old anthill with thyme; Speckled wood butterfly; Blackcap; Pyramidal orchid; Whitethroat  
Images courtesy of National Trust



**Description** An accessible walk in open countryside and the lower slopes of the downs with panoramic views of much of West Wight. **Distance** 6.5 miles **Access information** Fairly flat terrain, no stiles or steps. Farmland which can be muddy and rutted in parts. NB: the short cut shown as A-B does have two stiles. **Refreshments** Red Lion pub at Church Place or Kings Manor Farm Shop and Café on the Freshwater Way. Also several pubs and cafés at Freshwater Bay. **Toilets** At pub or café or at Freshwater Bay near HF Holidays.

Waypoint	OS grid reference
001	SZ 38586 86618
002	SZ 34921 87031
003	SZ 35746 86900
004	SZ 36415 86852
005	SZ 36646 86759
A	SZ 36750 86483
B	SZ 36876 85968
006	SZ 36976 86521
007	SZ 37429 86498
008	SZ 37460 86835
009	SZ 38001 86922
010	SZ 38668 86892
011	SZ 38565 85714
012	SZ 35370 85891
013	SZ 35114 86543



### Countryside Code

Please follow the Countryside Code and help to protect the wildlife when you walk the Tapnell Trail.

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs,
- Leave gates and property as you find them,
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home,
- Keep dogs under close control,
- Consider other people.

### The Isle of Wight Ramblers

The Isle of Wight Ramblers' *Access for All* project aims to encourage everyone to take up walking and to make it easier for people of all abilities to access the countryside. It includes the provision of gates and boardwalks which will assist dog walkers and people who may be less mobile. For more information please visit [www.iowramblers.com](http://www.iowramblers.com).

This leaflet was designed and produced by the Isle of Wight Ramblers with funding from West Wight Landscape Partnership.



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# THE TAPNELL TRAIL



**Dramatic West Wight views**  
**Diverse wildlife**  
**The 1970 Isle of Wight Festival of Music**  
**Pioneer Victorian photography**

**6.5 miles • Gentle slopes**  
**No stiles • No steps**

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