



The High Slide



It was often called 'the Jack and Jill' and stood on the Eastern Esplanade in the early 1950s. There were stairs up the middle to a house-like structure at the top and then slides either side with two bumps on the way down. It was a sort of helter skelter. The image above is taken from Shore Hill, the one below is a more distant view from the end of the Western Esplanade and conveys a clearer idea of the slide's height: some 70-80 feet.



The slide was remembered in a series of short entries in the South Wight Chronicle almost exactly 20 years ago. Suzanne Whitwood, as a young girl, recalled climbing to the top and feeling terrified of the height. You went down the slide on a rush mat which was very 'uncomfortable under one's bottom'. Pat Day-Smith subsequently wrote to say that the slide was later bought by her parents, Billy and Nelly Day, who were travelling showmen. It then circulated alongside the family's travelling fairground around Gloucestershire and Wales.

Sadly, a freak wind caught the slide one season and caused much damage. As it was made out of mahogany, it proved too expensive to replace.

If any reader has any further recollections of this remarkable contraption, please do let us know. There was once a large photograph of it in the Bell Bar of the Winter Gardens.

Michael Freeman, [Ventnor & District Local History Society](#), from the files of the late Fay Brown in Ventnor Heritage Centre. Thanks to Steve Berden for the photograph of Ventnor Winter Gardens showing the High Slide.