

Brook Bay

sea breezes and far-reaching views on the former Seely Estate, where "Galloper Jack" rode

The Warrior Trail

Early days

John Edward Bernard Seely – known as Jack – son of Sir Charles Seely, was born in 1868 and grew up at Brook, on the south west coast of the Isle of Wight. An adventurous boy, at the age of nine he fell 100 feet from the local cliffs but was fortunate to land on the turf that had collapsed from the cliff edge. As a young man he joined the local lifeboat team and, in 1891, was involved in a daring rescue. The *Henri et Leontine* had weathered Atherfield Ledge, but then ran aground at the top of the water to the east of Brook Chine. An attempt to launch the lifeboat was unsuccessful. Jack Seely, then 23 years old, swam out to the wreck with a line. He helped the captain, who, on impact, had been scalped by the bulwarks, and together with Brook blacksmith Tom Hookey, rigged a breeches buoy to get the captain ashore. The rest of the crew were helped ashore as the tide receded. For his efforts Jack Seely received the French gold medal of honour.

In 1900 he joined the Hampshire Yeomanry and fought in the Boer War, taking own his white horse *Maharaja*, which he dyed brown as camouflage. Jack Seely was awarded the DSO medal. In 1901, along with his friend Winston Churchill, he entered parliament as member for the Isle of Wight. They both joined the army reform group and in 1912 Seely became Secretary of State for War. But in 1913, disaster struck when his wife, Emily Crichton, died in childbirth, leaving seven children. He resigned his ministerial post over the Ulster home rule crisis.

Main picture Brook Bay and Harover Point with Tennyson Down behind
Inset, top Lifeboat memorial plaque in Brook Church. Jack Seely served on the *William Stanley Lewis*
Inset, bottom Royal Canadian Dragoons

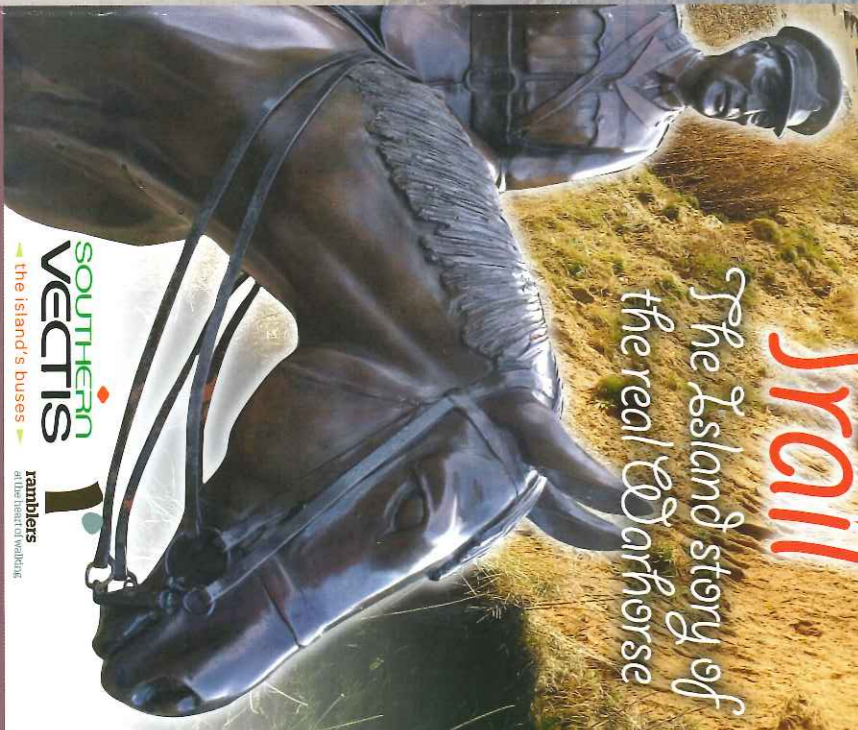
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The Warrior Trail

The Island story of the real Warhorse



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Follow in the footsteps of General Jack Seely and Warrior the War Horse in this circular coastal trail on the Island's south west flank

World War I

Jack and Warrior went straight into battle and spent the next four years together on the Western Front. Initially Jack became a runner or "galloper" for Sir John French, liaising between the British expeditionary force and the French army. Jack wanted his own command and was placed in charge of the newly-formed Canadian cavalry brigade. Mechanised trench warfare was an horrific environment for both men and horses. The static nature of the western front meant that until 1916 General Seely and his cavalry were deployed as infantry in the battles of Festubert and Givency. Later that year, for the allied Somme offensive, Jack's brigade joined massed ranks of cavalry that were reformed ready to exploit the 'gap in the line' that never materialised.

In support of the tank-led Cambrai attack in 1917, a total of 27,000 cavalry were waiting in reserve. For part of the advance Jack and Warrior followed a leading tank. However, cavalry action was limited to a Canadian Garrys squadron charging German machine guns and an artillery battery for which their leader Lt Strachan was awarded the Victoria Cross.

A second VC was won in 1917 by Lt Harvey when Jack's Cavalry rapidly captured French villages as the Germans made their strategic withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line. Jack's eldest son, Lt Frank Seely, fighting with the

Jack had obtained a thoroughbred horse, *Cinderella*. She was a gentle horse and followed him wherever he went. In 1908, she had a foal named *Warrior* in anticipation of duties in the cavalry. Jack took *Warrior* to the beach at Brook where the horse learned to accept the incoming waves.

Countryside Code

Respect other people

- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

Protect the natural environment

- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home
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The Battle of Moreuil Wood

Spring 1918 saw the Germans advance 45 kilometres between the British and French armies. They threatened the strategic railroad at Amiens. The Canadian cavalry brigade was able to move rapidly to help check the German threat at Moreuil Wood on the ridge overlooking the town. On the 30th March, General Seely, with *Warrior*, led his signal squadron to the edge of Moreuil Wood as pathfinders for the rest of the brigade. The Canadian cavalry – both mounted and on foot, with support from Royal Flying Corps planes – engaged in sustained and grisly hand-to-hand fighting with the German 101st Grenadiers. The brigade won its third VC, awarded to Lt Flowerdew who led a charge of 100 troopers against a group of 300 retiring German infantry. Eventually the woods were cleared of Germans, but at a cost to the Canadians who had lost a quarter of their men.

Two days later the position had been reversed and Jack was given command of a mixed group of cavalry to take the woods again. Over a period of seven days Moreuil Wood exchanged hands five times as the Allies stopped the German army reaching Amiens. Thankfully, the Battle of Moreuil Wood was one of warfare's last major cavalry engagements. During these actions *Warrior* became lame and Jack was gassed while rescuing one of his men. He was invalided home but *Warrior* remained at war. They were later reunited to serve to the end of hostilities.

St Mary the Virgin Church, Brook

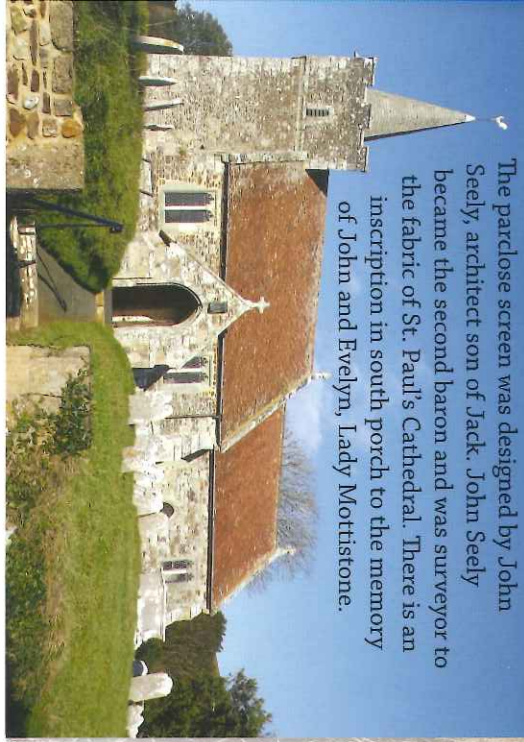
The 13th century church was almost totally destroyed in 1862 when a new gallery made from cedar wood salvaged from the wreck of the *Cedrene*, caught fire.

Jack Seely will always be remembered locally for the outstanding part he played as a member and coxswain of Brook Lifeboat. Lifeboats had to be rowed and sailed and their crews accomplished incredible feats of bravery. Between 1860 and 1937, 381 lives were saved, and there are painted boards in the church recording rescues and showing appreciation of the lifeboat crews. Opposite the church is a field called *Sidling Paul* where *Warrior* spent his young days.



The Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Mottistone
Here, Jack Seely's ashes lie in the Cheke Chapel, notable for the unusual use of oak. It is enclosed by a parclose screen of oak, around the top of which is a long Latin inscription in memory of General Jack Seely. One section reads "Much gifted, he lavished his talents in the service of all men. Wise in counsel and vigorous in action, his simple gaiety and imperturbable courage were the inspiration of many, and his loving kindness the delight of children".

The parclose screen was designed by John Seely, architect son of Jack. John Seely became the second baron and was surveyor to the fabric of St. Paul's Cathedral. There is an inscription in south porch to the memory of John and Evelyn, Lady Mottistone.



Route From Mottistone Manor, by the steps near the manor entrance **1**, go right on footpath BS43 and follow this towards The Longstone. At a fork go right to follow the winding path to steps leading to a track at a kissing gate. Continue straight ahead on the track which then leads to The Longstone **2**. Go left by the house along a track where there are panoramic views of the coast. At a wooded area, go through a Ramblers gate. Then go through a horse stile at BS39 onto a private drive which leads to Brook Hill House. Go right along the drive to reach a lane. Carefully follow this lane to a bend **3**. Here cross the lane onto a byway, S26, by a small car parking area. Go through a wooden gate onto Brook Down. After 50yds take the left fork which takes you uphill and turns left on byway BS89. Go downhill and go through a 7-bar metal gate. Go left on BS86, and at a farm lane, **4** go left. Here there are good views of Brook Hill House. At a lane **5**, you meet Brook

Church high on its hill. After exploring Brook Church cross over the road and go left into the village road. Take care for traffic, keeping to the right to face oncoming vehicles. Pass the entrance to Brook Hill House and at the cross to the green and follow this by the stream passing Seely Village Hall.

Continue along the road to the junction with the Military Road **6**. Here turn right following the verge along the Military Road and then cross into the NT car park Brook Chine. Continue straight on through a gate leading to Brook Bay. This is where Warrior first learned to brave the oncoming waves. Return to the car park at the gate and turn right to follow a field which leads to cottages by the Chine. Follow the path around to the old Lifeboat Station. Continue on the path which goes left along the coast.

Follow the coast path through gates and stiles, passing Sudmoor which is part of the Mottistone Estate. At a public footpath sign **7**, go left over a stile and cross the field to a metal farm gate by the Military Road **8**. Cross over into Ridget lane, a public byway BS100. Continue to Mottistone Church.

Cross the road to reach Mottistone Manor.



Top The Cheke Chapel, showing the oak parclose screen. In Mottistone Church
Bottom Brook Hill House with Brook village in the foreground

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By accident – and not design – the Warrior Trail, rotated slightly anti-clockwise, is a very similar shape to the silhouette of a real horse...

