



# ARCADIA

The newsletter of  
**Ryde District Heritage Centre**

February 2012

**STOP PRESS! Please don't forget the first HRS pub quiz to be held at 7.30pm on Thursday, February 23rd, at Ryde Castle Hotel. £3 per person, bring a team, or come along on your own and have some fun. Raffle.**

## AGM Chairman's Report

**D**ue to family commitments and increased workload, Chairman Wayne Jones resigned from his post with effect from December 2011. Historic Ryde Society Committee would like to thank Wayne for his leadership over the past eighteen months, and is delighted he is able to remain on the committee. Acting Chairman, Liz Jones welcomed the assembled company to the Historic Ryde Society 2012 AGM in Ryde Castle on Thursday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, and made no apology for her lengthy report:

Last year's AGM was held in the George Street Centre on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011. This marked the start of a very busy year. In March HRS held a very successful ceilidh in the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, Fishbourne. This was organised by Lesley Ford, assisted by Tina Stanley, and the evening raised a tremendous £550. Many thanks to the girls for such a wonderful event. Also in March, HRS committee was delighted to be invited to take part in Hovertravel's late night service launch in Southsea. We were very pleased to support Hovertravel, one of our sponsors, at such an exciting time. This evening also marked the beginning of our relationship with Julian and Emma at Ryde Castle, and HRS is enormously grateful to the Ryde Castle team for their continuing support, providing us with venues for our events.

**A**pril began with an invitation to exhibit in Ryde Library. We were approached after the successful rotunda images project, and a small exhibition, detailing our plans for the basement of the arcade, were in Ryde Library for the whole month of April. The Members' meeting was held at the George Street Centre, when Steve Sweetman, from Portsmouth University gave an informative talk 'In the shadow of the Isle of Wight dinosaurs'. An appreciative audience learned much about the many tiny creatures which shared the Island at that time.

**T**he most exciting event in April was the news of our successful HLF bid. We were granted £49,300 to create Ryde District Heritage Centre, to add to the £30,000

Ryde Townscape Heritage Initiative gave for the restoration of the fabric of the building. All HLF monies are earmarked for specific projects, which we are currently delivering, so fundraising is a continuing, and never-ending process.

**L**ynne Gregory Phillips' ghostwalks were the highlight of June, prompting some public-spirited residents in St Thomas' Street to come out to rescue Liz! Friends and even committee members got involved, and the walks ended at the Swan's Nest with an impromptu ghost story. Well done to all involved. The Royal Victorian Ryde 2011 weekend, marking the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Royal Victoria Arcade, was a magical weekend. The sun shone, Windmill Carriages, Southern Vectis, Masqueriede, our MP, Greenmount and Fiveways, Bloodstone, all donated time and effort to contribute to an amazing PR exercise. An international harpist, model theatre, street organ, Unity Stompers, and much more, culminated in our President, Gloria Minghella, hosting a Gala screening of Young Victoria, at Ryde Castle Hotel. We were pleased to welcome special guest, Sir Robert Peel, aka actor Michael Maloney. Gloria's face when Rhea Campbell-Smith appeared before her in her marvellous costume, supplied by Masqueriede, was a picture! Rhea did an amazing job, and even said, when considering whether or not to join the committee on one of our Magical History Tours – 'No, I don't need to ask my mother.....I'm the Queen!' We were particularly delighted to welcome Lady Lucinda Lambton, whose 3x great grandfather laid the foundation stone of the arcade in 1835.

**R**yd District Heritage Centre opened later than planned, on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011. It is going from strength to strength, and we have welcomed more than 2000 visitors since that time.

September's Members' meeting had Adrian Searle persuading us all to talk in Isle of Wight dialect, much to everyone's amusement. We also trained 17 volunteers in Oral History techniques, and they are now going out into the community recording valuable memories and helping to build Ryde Memory Bank. In October, we welcomed Paul, Heather and the IW Spirit Chasers to the arcade, where they conducted two paranormal investigations. An intriguing evening, which ended with two of the committee chatting with Cornelius Jabez Hughes, one of Ryde's foremost Victorian photographers. Noel Stimson enthralled our November Members' meeting audience with his Titanic conspiracy theory.

**H**istoric Ryde Society's Antique and Collectors' Fairs are becoming well established, and the December 4<sup>th</sup> event, in John Street Masonic Hall, raised over £500. We joined with the Vernon Square Preservation Society for a new event in the arcade on December 9<sup>th</sup>, when Ryde School Brass Band played for a Carol Service in the arcade. We then invited the assembled company into the Heritage Centre. That day was also chosen for our voucher raffle, again showing how much support we have in the local community. Many thanks to all businesses which supported this event and donated vouchers.

What a fantastic year!

**This brings me to the present.** We desperately need more volunteers if we are to keep the momentum going. Wayne Jones has stood down, and we are also very sad to lose Erica Manley, one of our founding members, who has done a stalwart job as Minutes Secretary since inception. Erica was also a driving force in the creation of the Heritage Centre, and very handy with a paint brush! If anyone feels they may be able to offer three hours a month to take on the job of Minutes Secretary, please get in touch. We also need more volunteers to keep the Centre open, and to take on many other volunteer roles to help deliver the HLF project. Fundraising is a huge, and constant task, and we can never have too many volunteers to help with this.

Recently, we were given the opportunity to look through the Wightlink archive. Remembering a recent throwaway conversation, Diana contacted the wife of one of the committee members and asked if she might be interested in helping with this. Sandy was delighted to help, and thoroughly enjoyed her day across the water! Please let us know your interests, as you'd be amazed how many different aspects of running a centre there are!

**The future:** Richard Smout, Isle of Wight Heritage Service Manager, is leading two free House History Workshops, and we will arrange more later in the year, as these are now fully subscribed. On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, HRS will host a Pub Quiz in Ryde Castle Hotel, at 7.30 pm. At £3 per person, please bring a team, or come along on your own. A new event at Smallbrook Stadium on March 24<sup>th</sup>, will be The Arcadians – an evening at the Musicals, organised by member Ron Watts. Please talk to the committee if you wish to learn more about this event. On April 12<sup>th</sup>, Tony Gale will tell all about the Ryde Election Riots, again at Ryde Castle Hotel. HRS is involved in the procession to mark the Queen's Jubilee in June, which should be an amazing weekend. The summer Antique and Collectors' Fair will be held at Ryde Castle Hotel on Sunday, July 1<sup>st</sup>, to be followed over the weekend of Friday to Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> July, by the 'Start of the Pier Show', a celebration marking the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of Ryde Pier Act, and the completion of the HLF project. More details to follow, but Lucinda Lambton has already agreed to come and give an after dinner lecture.

None of these events can happen without help, and no offer of help is too small. We have been encouraged by the dedication of the small team of volunteers who have come forward to run the centre, but, if we are to open seven days a week in the summer, we need many more. Even one hour a week will do a great deal to ease the burden on the stalwarts, so please do think about it – and come along and see what a laugh and fascinating time they all have!

Thank you for listening, and I hope you enjoy the evening.

**Roger Whitby Smith** then gave a fascinating talk on 'Ryde – a Regency town'. HRS is delighted that Roger has also agreed to lead guided walks around the town later in the year, so please look out for further details on the website and around the town in due course.

**For internet users**, there are two simple ways of raising funds for Ryde District Heritage Centre. Both are mentioned in the Stop Press box at the top of the homepage. Easyfundraising is for those of you who buy online. There are over 2000 participating stores which donate a percentage of what you spend to HRS, at no extra cost to yourself, once you've signed up to support our cause. There is also a button marked 'Raise more' at the top of the easyfundraising page. Every time the Find and Remind bar is downloaded, another 50p comes directly to us. Please spread the word and sign up now! We have over 100 email addresses on our database, which is another £50, were everyone to join.

**HRS** has recently been invited to have a three month free trial of localgiving, as part of the Hants and IW Community Foundation(HCF). The link to the webpage is on the HRS homepage. During March, any funds donated to HRS will be match-funded by HCF. This is a wonderful opportunity to boost the coffers - much needed, as we take on 'The other side'...

Below are some recent images. L to R: Ryde District Heritage Centre as it looks currently; Ryde Rotary Club visit the Centre, January 2012; Sandy rummages through the Wightlink archive in Portsmouth; Dr Kennedy's trunk - part of the Thornbrough collection; Brigstocke v Brigstocke - an 1880 Deed of Partition with fascinating insight into the Brigstocke estate, now conserved and copied.



## 2012 Dates for the Diary

Our Open Meetings in 2012 are being held at 7pm at Ryde Castle Hotel, by kind permission of Emma and Julian. Write them in your diary!

**March 24th** - The Arcadians  
Smallbrook Stadium

**April 12th** - 'Ryde Election Riots' - by Tony Gale

**July 1st** - Antique and Collectors' Fair  
- 50p admission

**July 13th - 15th** - 'Start of the Pier Show' - a weekend of events celebrating 200 years of Ryde Pier.

**Events will be held at All Saints' Church, and Ryde Castle Hotel, and will include, on July 15th, 'An evening with Lady Lucinda Lambton'.** Lucinda very kindly agreed last July, to be our patron.

**September 6th** - 'Diaries and Correspondence' by Richard Smout

**November 1st** - Adrian Searle, subject yet to be decided.

**December 2nd** - Antique and Collectors' Fair - John Street - 50p admission

**December 8th** - Voucher raffle

## Membership Update

Membership for 2012 is now due. Membership runs from February to February each year. Members receive four quarterly newsletters, free entry to four talks, free entry to the Heritage Centre, and 10% discount on Hovertravel. Well worth the money!

Individual Members - 76  
Family Members - 46  
Corporate Members - 16

## House History Workshops



**County Archivist Richard Smout** is leading **House History** workshops in the Heritage Centre this year. The first two are fully subscribed, but it is hoped to repeat these in the autumn. Dates will be announced in due course. This is a very popular course, so please book early, as spaces are limited, call 01983 717435

# Historic Ryde Society

in association with  
**Island Speedway (IOW) Ltd**  
proudly presents

## **The Arcadians** **- a tribute** **to musical theatre**

**Saturday March 24th 2012**  
at the  
**Premier Bar, Smallbrook Stadium, Ryde**

**Doors open 6.30pm**  
**Curtain up 7.30pm**  
Licensed Bar and Refreshments available  
**Free Parking or taxis can be arranged**

**Box Office - Splash, 57 Union Street - 616257**  
**- Ron Watts - 563742**

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