



Issue 2

April 2010

www.historicrydesociety.com

Welcome to the second issue of the Newsletter. Great progress has been made over the last month! We received a generous grant of £1000 from Ryde Town Council, who indicated they may be willing to give further funding in the future. They invited us to return in June to give an update on progress to date. We're also beginning to learn all sorts of things about historic items relating to Ryde which are tantalisingly close! The doors of the Royal Pier Hotel (sadly demolished in 1931) spent many years in a barn next to the Ponda Rosa. No trace of them now. The plans of the original Pier Pavilion (built 1895) have come to light and we've been promised at least copies of these. There are four large sheets, with wonderfully detailed architectural drawings of the building. The fountain which used to sit in the rotunda of the Royal Victoria Arcade is in a garden pond in Ventnor. The arcade is on the brink of a major overhaul, due to begin this month and which will last for about sixteen weeks. The plan is to start on the roof, but there are also plans to sand blast the front of the building and repaint the exterior. There will also be a new floor. Sadly, this will mean the original stone flags will be lost to view, but saved for the future.



We're lucky enough to have the trowel which was used for the laying of the Foundation Stone and the Cope Stone of Ryde Town Hall still in the town. It's in the possession of one of the Masonic Lodges, and is a priceless item in terms of the history of the town. A full

transcription is on the History dropdown menu - Ryde Treasures page of the website.

We have been in discussion with Roy Cartwright, the owner of the arcade, with a view to renting part of the basement for the exhibition area we've been planning. Wayne has arranged for an architect to come along



next week to draw up some plans. We are also thinking about recreating some decoration in the ceiling of the rotunda in the arcade. Roy Brinton owns an early engraving which shows figures in the panels in around 1840-50. Although it is impossible to say what these figures are, they may represent the months of the year, as there are 12 panels. We have 12 eager artists, with brushes poised ready for the off! This plan has to be run past English Heritage, as the arcade is a Grade 2* listed building. Lee Byrne from the Isle of Wight Council is dealing with this for us. This will all take some time, but we hope for a positive outcome! These pictures will use the latest technology, - printed on adhesive vinyl and stuck on the ceiling. In this way, they will be easily removable if necessary. Lee mentioned that this technique would probably stand us in good stead from the point of view of being given the go-ahead from English Heritage, as it will not affect the

fabric of the building in any way. Keep your fingers crossed!

The Membership Recruitment Day we plan for the end of May will include a small exhibition in the arcade entitled 'The Arcade in Pictures'. We'd like to recreate a photographer's studio setting and are looking for a Victorian chair, a long velvet drape, and an aspidistra.....anyone got anything like



this? We are also looking for willing helpers who may enjoy dressing up in costume to stand around the arcade and perhaps wander up and down Union Street to alert people to

the fact that there is something going on! This is a photograph taken in Cornelius Jabez Hughes' studio in Number 6, between 1861 and 1866. This young lady would have walked through the arcade to have her photograph taken, possibly in what is now called The Lanes. You can see more photographs of people who had photographs taken both in the arcade and around the town in the People Gallery on the website.

Claire and Diana travelled over to Ventnor to have a look at the fountain said to have been in the arcade before the renovations were done in the 1970s.



Sadly, it proved not to be the fountain shown in the 1840s engraving, which appears on the website, but a solid lead cherub bearing a large dish.....

At least we know! The story is that at one time it spent time in the Sandrock Hotel in Niton, being used as an ashtray!

On Tuesday, April 20, at 7pm, we will have a social evening event for all members, which will give us an opportunity of meeting each other. This will be in the upstairs room of Liberty's, and Diana will give a Powerpoint presentation on her research into the history of the Royal Victoria Arcade. We also hope to have internet access, so we will be able to show off our website! Everyone will also be able to hear at first hand the plans we have for the future.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Social Evening and Arcade talk –
Liberty's, Tuesday, April 20th – 7pm.

Saturday May 29, 2010 –
RECRUITMENT DAY! Royal Victoria
Arcade, Union Street – 10am-4pm

Exhibition – The Arcade in Pictures

Photographer's Studio mock-up

Information and Recruitment Stall

Sunday July 4, 2010 – Antique Fair
Masonic Hall, John Street – 10-4pm

Information and Recruitment Stall

Information – Framers, Union Street,
Ryde....(next but one to the Royal
Victoria Arcade.)