



ARCADIA

Winter 2015



The newsletter of Ryde District Heritage Centre

Registered Charity Number 1153947

Issue 24

Mr Tony Packer



It was with the deepest regret that the Society announced the death of Tony Packer in October, Historic Ryde Society's treasurer since inception and co-founder of Ryde District Heritage Centre.

Tony's vision and inspirational drive to give Ryde its first museum since the 1880s has always been in the background, and he will be hugely missed.

Although not born on the Island, Tony was evacuated here during WWII, and by the age of eighteen, was managing The Seagull Ballroom at the end of the pier. He had many tales with which he regaled the Centre volunteers – the grand piano, which was thrown off the pier, and expected to sink, had floated off and

narrowly escaped being hit by the ferry. A fruit machine also went the same way, but was later retrieved.

The mists of time obscure the initial exchanges between Tony and Diana, but by mid 2009, it was apparent plans were afoot to create a Centre for the town. Tony was right behind this, with a lifelong interest in all things Ryde – brewers, chemists, photographers – you name it, Tony was there buying it up.

He instigated and organised the monthly pub quizzes, along with his late brother Allan's son, also Tony, and the Antique and Collectors' Fairs with long-time friend and HRS volunteer, Jerry Bryett.

The Society was recently the centre of a media frenzy, with the bi-centenary of Ryde Pier. Tony and other volunteers were interviewed by the media, and Tony also joined volunteer Vic Scovell being interviewed by Countryfile's Matt Baker about his long working life on the pier.

Tony's passion was instrumental in the Society gaining recognition in achieving The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2015. He and Diana attended one of Her Majesty's Royal Garden Parties in late May. The Society, and the town, owe him a great debt of gratitude for his legacy – Ryde District Heritage Centre.



The Queen's Award Presentation



Following the announcement of Historic Ryde Society being given The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in June, the Society was delighted to welcome Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant, Deputy Lieutenants and other dignitaries and friends to the presentation of the Award in The Royal Victoria Arcade on the evening of Thursday October 1, 2015.

Guests included volunteers from as far back as the



Royal Victorian Ryde 2011 weekend, when we officially opened, to current volunteers from the Heritage Centre, all of whom helped to make this Award possible. Other guests included the artists who painted the pictures currently installed in the rotunda of the arcade, and the actors who took part in the Royal Victorian Ryde 2011 weekend, which marked the 175th anniversary of the opening of the building in 1836.

Life and Death on the Mary Rose



On September 23rd, dressed in costume of the time, Trevor Sapey of the Mary Rose Trust gave a fascinating talk about what it was like to live on Henry VIII's flagship the Mary Rose in the 16th Century.

Trevor also brought along many artifacts for us to look at, and made it an interesting and entertaining evening.

The Isle of Wight Rifles in 1915



An audience of nearly 30 souls turned out on a miserable November evening to hear Island historian John Medland talk about the role of the Isle of Wight Rifles in WWI.

Over £100 was raised for the Society.

Clarries Club

On November 20th we gave a presentation about transport in bygone Ryde to over 30 members of Clarries Club in East Cowes from Brian Harris and David Newman.



Martin Jenkins

It was with utter disbelief that the Society had to announce the death of a second trustee in as many weeks.

Martin arrived quite recently on the Isle of Wight, with his wife, who was suffering from cancer, and who died less than a year later. Having worked at the British Museum, Martin decided to join Historic Ryde Society and he very shortly afterwards became a dedicated volunteer and trustee.

He said he owed much to the Society for providing him with a new friendship group, and a new interest, to which he added another bow, by running Appley Tower for James Bissell-Thomas.

Although a relative newcomer to the Island and to Historic Ryde Society, Martin will be sorely missed.



Scooter Rally



In August we had a stand at the scooter rally's 'Ticket to Ryde' event at the Ryde Arena Ice Rink which tied in quite nicely with our Ticket to Ryde leaflets promoting the Heritage Centre.



Classic Car Rally



In September we had a stand at the Classic Car Rally on the Esplanade.



£500 Donation

In August, Steve King the Ryde Town Crier generously donated his £500 annual honorarium from Ryde Council to the Ryde District Heritage Centre.

The cheque was welcome received by our president Gioia Minghella-Giddens, pictured here with Steve and HRS Trustee Ron Watts.



Dates for the Diary

November 26th - Pub quiz - Yelf's hotel, 7pm - 9.30pm. £3 a head - raffle as usual.

November 29th - Antique and Collectors Fair - Masonic Hall, 10am - 3.30pm. 75p entry.

December 29th - Pub quiz - Yelf's hotel, 7pm - 9.30pm. £3 a head - raffle as usual.

January 20th - Richard Smout - Isle of Wight Heritage Service Archivist - **Ryde in WWI** - Yelf's hotel, 7pm - 9.30pm. £4 members, and £5 for non-members.

Membership Update

Membership now runs on a rolling basis. Members receive free entry to Ryde District Heritage Centre, Donald McGill Postcard Museum, four talks, four newsletters and 10% discount on Hovertravel.

As of Winter 2015, HRS has 174 Individual and Family memberships.

Historic Ryde Society currently has over 650 followers on Twitter.

Historic Ryde Society Patron: Lady Lucinda Lambton President: Gioia Minghella-Giddens

HRS Board of Trustees: Winter 2015

Chair: Brian Harris, Treasurer: Joseph O'Driscoll, Secretary: David Newman

Members: Alan Brading, John King, Peter Lawrence, Ron Watts

Peter is the Membership Co-ordinator.

Registered Charity No: 1153947

If you would like to contact anyone on the committee, please email admin@HistoricRydeSociety.com

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