



ARCADIA

Summer 2016



The newsletter of
Ryde District Heritage Centre

Registered Charity Number 1153947

Issue 26

Happy 5th Birthday to us!



Official opening of the empty space, July 2011

Back in July 2011, Ryde witnessed a superb weekend long celebration of the 175th birthday of the Royal Victoria Arcade and the creation of the space that was to become Ryde District Heritage Centre. HRS Chairman Wayne Jones helped our patron, Lady Lucinda Lambton, Andrew Turner MP and a young Victoria, portrayed beautifully by Rhea Campbell-Smith, perform the opening ceremony. Six weeks later, on August 15th, after a lot of hard work installing TV screens, artefacts and pictures, the centre finally opened to the public.

Since those early years, the Committee/ Trustees/ Board personnel have changed substantially. Our wonderfully supportive President, Gloria, passed away in 2014, to be replaced by her equally supportive daughter, Gioia. Wayne's role was filled first by Liz, and then myself. Lynne, Lesley, Erica, Wayne, Gillian, Claire and Liz departed, to be replaced by John, Alan, Ron and Peter, with Derek, Linda, Vic and Martin also joining in for various lengths of time. Claire returned briefly until David took over the reins of Secretary, following Diana's sudden resignation in 2014.

Sadly, last October Tony was taken from us following his sudden short illness, followed swiftly by Martin; fortunately, Joseph came on board to take on Tony's role of Treasurer. Gillian has returned, thus making her the only one remaining from the original committee.

My sincere thanks to all the above-mentioned (and their spouses or partners for allowing them to be elsewhere for great lengths of time!). Whatever their talents, interests, strengths or weaknesses, they have all devoted a part of their lives to help push forward the vision of a permanent place for Ryde's history, a vision that has been accomplished more successfully than could have been imagined.

The society itself has also changed, becoming a registered charity in 2013, and is soon to become a charitable incorporated organisation, allowing the society to be a legal body in its own right, although it is still "Giving Ryde's past to the future".

Five years ago, the centre opened with a lot of pictures and a number of artefacts in display cases in just the pier section and associated corridor.

A year later, our first Royal visitor, the Duke of Gloucester, opened the extension into the commercial room and the flight path. Soon afterwards, our intriguing ice well was discovered behind a brick wall. Subsequent years have seen the four rotunda rooms refurbished to become a home for Royal British Legion and Isle of Wight Rifles memorabilia. Then, a couple of years ago, we took on the Donald McGill postcard collection, following the closure of The Orrery.



Ready for the Duke of Gloucester to open, July 2012



Tony in the Ice Well

All of the later work has been achieved with very little professional help, other than Andrew, our architect, overseeing the legal side of working on the building, and occasionally hiring in an electrician to ensure we didn't disappear in a shower of sparks!

None of that would have been achieved without our great band of volunteers, to whom go my grateful thanks. They've all given up huge amounts of their own time to help us build something that is truly remarkable, and is a credit to those with the foresight and faith to establish both the society and the heritage centre.

Of course, the role of volunteers in our society was recognised by Her Majesty last year with the award of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, of which we are all rightly very proud.

Following both the recent events within the society, and the cataclysmic changes within the country and abroad, I'm not going to be brave enough to try to predict what the society and centre will look like in the next five years. However, knowing HRS and its members and volunteers, things will be carrying on cheerfully in one form or another, with the big red button proclaiming "That was easy!"



Opening of the Donald McGill Museum, August 2014

Plus ca change, plus ...

Sorry - since Brexit, this column will be in English! Historic Ryde Society - the more it changes, the more it stays the same. So, turmoil in the political world in both Britain and Europe, but, deep within the bowels of the Royal Victoria Arcade, things looked as though they were calming down and returning to some sort of normality.

However, there's been yet another significant change within HRS - Diana has parted company from the society she founded nearly seven years ago. Unhappy with Tony (and me) at changes within the heritage centre, especially the arrival of McGill: "I told him two and a half years ago it was me or Donald McGill... .. I kept my word - and, indeed, lasted more than 18 months after that", and free of the demands of running a guesthouse, Diana has decided to devote her time to leisure interests elsewhere. We wish her well and many thanks for her input over the years. Without her initial idea, drive, enthusiasm or time, we wouldn't have the successful organisation and museum that we have now.

Whilst the installation of the McGill display was not wholly popular within the committee, with Diana its loudest opponent, there is no doubt that the society would be in a financially parlous state without the income it generates; it attracts three quarters of the visitors, and the increased numbers make the volunteers' time on reception more worthwhile. Unfortunately, the appeal of a purely Ryde-based historical display is somewhat limited for holidaymakers, whereas McGill's reputation is global, drawing people from literally all around the world.

Keep smiling!

Brian.



Diana with Gyles Brandreth and Timothy West, Patrons of the National Pier Society, July 2014. HRS was asked to help with the NPS Annual Convention at Ryde Castle, and their celebration of 200 years of Ryde Pier. Diana and Brian provided static and audio-visual displays for a packed house.

“Chatting up the Stars”

At the end of March, John Hannam gave us a very interesting talk on his “40 years of interviewing famous people”, an insight into various celebrities that he has interviewed for radio programmes which was fascinating, and he has promised to return again in the near future.



“In Darkest Ryde”



In May, Angela Buckley - crime writer and author, gave a wonderful talk about murders and nefarious deeds from Ryde’s Victorian past, including crimes of passion, poisoning and cannibalism.

Hobbs 70th Birthday



Celebrations get under way with an announcement from the Town Crier

On the 23rd April, Hobbs the Jewellers in Ryde celebrated their 70th birthday in style - a Vintage Tea Party with live music and tea and cakes a fancy dress competition and much more. A raffle raised funds for the hospice.



We were invited to have a stand showing some of Ryde’s local history which provoked quite a lot of interest, and a great time was had by all.

All part of the service...

The manager of the Salvation Army Charity Shop in Ryde asked if we could find out about the shop's history due to the elaborate top half of the building.



Originally an Oddfellows Meeting Hall 1880, later Hepworths Tailors, then Turners Leather Goods with an Oddfellows Moose Hall above, now Salvation Army Charity Shop 2016 with Queensway Gymnastic Club above. (153 High Street). Delighted to help.

Surname Cory?

Are you interested in this name in Family History
If so please contact us

- Secretary's phone 07808 294040
- www.corysociety.org.uk

We are studying 2 families associated with the island:

ALEXANDER CORY 1890-1973, Vicar at Ryde 1946-52 and Archdeacon for Isle of Wight 1952-61. His children were Paul and Joan Cory.

CORY CHEMISTS of Newport and Cowes, Henry Cory 1815-64, and sons John Henry Cory 1839-1908 and Francis Cory 1857-98.

Currently on display at Ryde Heritage Centre...

A selection of new and old items you may have missed.



A Prussian Guard's Helmet from WW1.



A selection of war artifacts and medals.

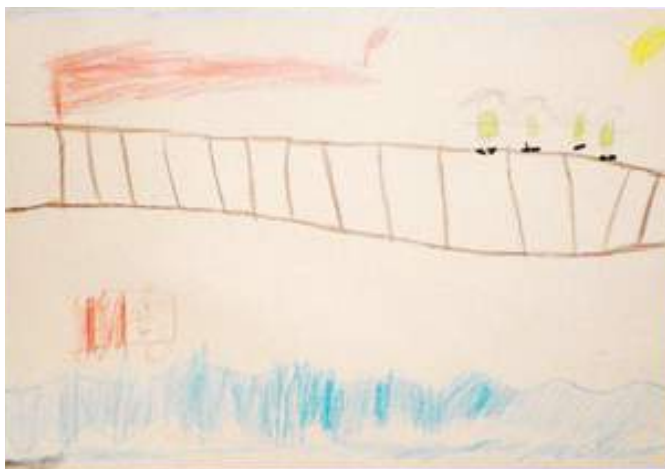


Trolley from Ryde Pier c.1910 used to transport barrels to First and Last pub.

We have many more interesting items, each with a story to tell, waiting for you to come and take a further look.

Gatten and Lake Primary School

Thanks for the memories...



After HRS supplied photos/books for their project on Ryde Pier, the 4-5 year olds made this wonderful card for us with a picture they drew of the pier and they all signed it. Our many thanks to them all.

Ryde Rowing Club Talk

Following an invite from Ryde Rowing Club, on 30th June we gave a talk on transport in Ryde from its early beginnings, which went down well and we received a £35 donation and a fish and chip supper!



Brian talking on transport to a packed house



July 2011

Nov 2011



Sept 2012

Dec 2013



Aug 2014



Oct 2015



Apology from last issue

In the last issue I said that the Arcade was Grade II Listed, whereas it is actually Grade II* Listed. This is important, as architect Andrew Laitt points out:

“Interestingly Grade II* is more akin to Grade 1 than Grade II.

92 - 94% of all listings are Grade II.

According to Historic England only 5.5% of all Listed Buildings are Grade II* and are “particularly important buildings of more than special interest”.

Grade 1 buildings are of “exceptional Interest”.

So now we know, and our thanks to Andrew for the clarification.

If you would like to volunteer at the Centre, and can spare a morning or afternoon please call in and have a chat (usual shifts are 11am - 1.30pm and 1.30pm - 4pm).

Membership Update

Membership now runs on a rolling basis. Members receive free entry to Ryde District Heritage Centre, Donald McGill Postcard Museum; a minimum of four talks per year (six this year), four newsletters and 10% discount on Hovertravel.

As of Summer 2016, HRS has 162 Individual and Family memberships.

We are open all year Monday to Saturday 11am - 4pm, and Sundays in July and August.

Our two resident basement dwellers, Jerry and Mike, have been working tirelessly for many months out of sight of visitors, in their heroic attempts to prevent water entering the Ice Well room. Two alcoves are now free of damp, and they're successfully tackling a third. Huge thanks to them both for carrying on after Tony died - all three spent several weeks last summer fireproofing the walls and ceilings in this room, the Radio Room and the linking corridor.

Having unsung volunteers like these will ensure the continuing success of the society.



Dates for the Diary

July 28th - Pub quiz - Yelf's hotel, 7pm - 9.00pm. £3 a head - raffle as usual.

August 25th - Pub quiz - Yelf's hotel, 7pm - 9.00pm. £3 a head - raffle as usual.

September 21st - Talk by Ray Allen - creator of Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em - Yelf's hotel, 7pm - 9.00pm. £4 members, and £5 for non-members.

Historic Ryde Society Patron: Lady Lucinda Lambton

President: Gioia Minghella-Giddens

HRS Board of Trustees: Summer 2016

Vice President: Ron Watts, Chairman: Brian Harris, Treasurer: Joseph O'Driscoll,

Secretary: David Newman, Membership/Editor: Peter Lawrence

Trustees: Alan Brading, Gillian Drewett and John King.

Registered Charity No: 1153947

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

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