



ARCADIA

Autumn 2016



The newsletter of

Ryde District Heritage Centre

Registered Charity Number 1153947

Issue 27

STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...

Badge of Honour!

Well, YOU did it! The Royal Victoria Arcade Porter's Hat Badge is now back home, and the manner in which that was achieved has made me feel very honoured to be chairman of a society with such wonderful members. Thank you very much.

Your response shows to me, and the rest of the trustees, that you have faith in the future of both the Society and the Heritage Centre, and the direction in which we are going. My appeal for financial help was made because, like many other people and organisations at present, we don't have a lot of spare money, although I don't intend doing anything similar in the future (unless, of course, something really special...!).

In the space of just four days, you pledged enough to virtually cover the cost of the badge, and also the hefty buyer's premium. I was staggered at the way you responded to my request for pledges over the weekend, and it meant that Sandy and I were able to go to Salisbury secure in the knowledge that I could have a pretty good go at getting the badge.

We found that the auction house of Woolley & Wallis was somewhat different from those on the Island; no bidding in a room crammed with old clocks, bits of pottery and train sets, sitting on old sofas. Instead, past the reception area with three assistants, a free drinks machine and a huge vase of unusual fresh flowers, and up the stairs to what was more akin to a high-class jewellers, with a dozen or more long glass display counters filled with gleaming silver, tended by half a dozen ladies in smart maroon aprons. To the side was the auction room, with the auctioneer presiding over rows of seats behind which was a bank of nine ladies with phones, ready to literally do their clients' bidding. The reason for an eye-watering 22% buyer's premium was fairly clear!

Sandy and I sat for over an hour and a half while the lot numbers slowly moved on to "our" 642. On a day when



the vast majority of lots in the sale realised well over their upper estimates, and the world record for "castle-top" card cases was broken three times, I was becoming increasingly nervous about the interest that there might be in the badge. I was therefore very pleased and relieved that the bidding for our item stopped when it did. In fact, had the auctioneer been a fraction faster in putting the hammer down, I'd have had the badge for far less.

Starting at £600, the price rose rapidly within the room in £50 stages to my third bid, at £900, and then stopped.

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The auctioneer intoned "Right, for £900 in the fourth row, ...", when suddenly the big screen flashed up INTERNET 950, and my heart sank! Beyond £1000, bids rise in £100 stages; luckily, my opponent risked only one more attempt, at £1100. The screen showed ROOM 1200 for what seemed an eternity, as Sandy and I held our breath, then finally, "Sold for £1200" rang out. As we left the room, the auctioneer even called down to us "Well done", the only occasion on which he spoke to bidders, and the porter who had earlier got the badge from display for me to inspect was waiting for us with a beaming smile.

The whole experience was, although somewhat nerve-racking at the end, very enjoyable, helped by the staff in the auction house knowing why we were there and being interested in the Society's mission, and ultimately being pleased with our success. They are even

publicising the return of the badge to its original home, writing a lengthy piece about it in their press release on the day's sale.

So, a relieved and happy journey home, with a piece of silver with a scrap value of only £25 cocooned in bubble wrap in a fancy auctioneers' jewellery bag clutched tightly to my person - the end of a draining but successful day, all made possible by your generosity and trust. To cap it all, when one of our donors came into the Centre to pay, they stated that they would also pay for a mount and case to match the one on loan from IW Council.

Thanks for your prompt donations; at the time of writing only a couple out of the dozens of pledges are outstanding - another magnificent achievement! Once again, on behalf of the trustees, thank you.

Brian.

End of an era

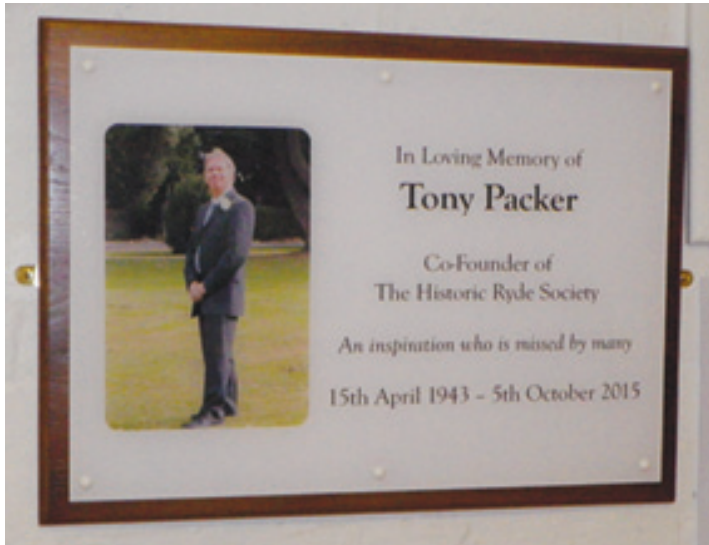
With so many of our High Street shops closing for all kinds of reasons, it is very sad that **just HOME** will be closing on 31st December due to an unacceptable lease. Our best wishes go to Terry and Pauline and their staff for the future.



On an interesting note, the rear area of the ground floor was part of the old (Star?) brewery that used to be behind these buildings, and upstairs the shop still has its original fireplace!



Tony Packer Memorial



Tony Packer's family asked if they could hang a plaque in the Heritage Centre as a memorial for Tony. It is on the wall outside the Ice Well Room and is a loving tribute to the man who co-founded the Historic Ryde Society with Diana Wood. He was an inspiration to us all and is fondly remembered by those who knew him.

The First Lifeboat and Others

On Wednesday 20th July Mike North, naval historian gave an interesting talk on the history of the Lifeboats on the Island to an appreciative audience.



Mike reaches for refreshment at the end of his talk

East Wight Seniors

And on July 21st David Newman and Brian Harris gave a talk about Early forms of Transport on the island at the Lions Centre in Lake to East Wight Seniors, and they gave us a £25 donation which was gratefully received.



Brian setting up the equipment.

Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em

On September 21st, Ray Allen - creator of Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em gave a wonderful talk to a packed house at Yelfs Hotel about his life and times as he wrote the well known sit-com and struggled to get it aired on tv - very witty and hugely entertaining it was a great evening.



Above: Ray Allen prepares to start his talk, and in mid flow, right.



Currently on display at Ryde Heritage Centre...

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



Pifco curling tongs bought at Youngs, The Radio Specialists, 16 High Street, Ryde.



Second World War Fire Helmet from Ryde Pier Head.



Vintage Gas Meter from the Ryde Gaslight Company.

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

Making it easier to choose



The Donald McGill cards for sale are now displayed on this rotatable wooden stand so that they can be seen at a glance, and a pen and paper is provided to write down the reference numbers of the cards that people want to buy.

Welcome back!



The statue from the fountain that used to be on the ground floor of the Arcade below the rotunda has now been returned to the Centre.





WANTED!

We need somebody with a video camera or Smart Phone to make a short film about the Heritage Centre that we can use to show to disabled people and OAP's who are unable to access the site.

If any of our members are interested in producing a film for us ultimately in DVD or download format please contact Brian Harris or David Newman at the Ryde District Heritage Centre (see back page for details).

November 16th - A talk by Adrian Searle on his latest book "Churchill's Last Wartime Secret" at Yelf's hotel, 7pm for 7.30 - 9.00pm. £4 members, and £5 for non-members.

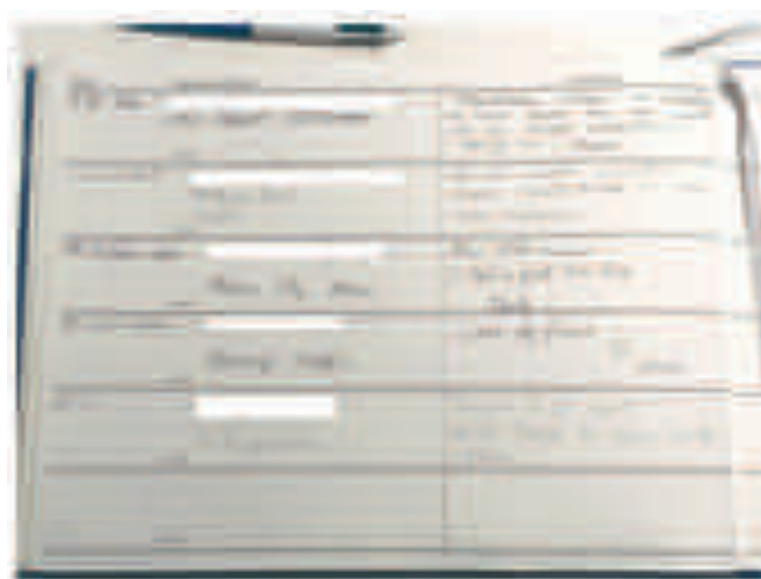


From our Visitors' Book

It's good to know that our visitors appreciate us, and what we do. They usually say so, and some put it in writing. These are the latest five comments (at the time of writing), in the space of four days, from the 17th to 20th October.

The origins of our visitors are widespread. Leafing through the book shows that the appeal of Ryde history, as well as Donald McGill, is international; a surprising number of Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans and Canadians have come here over the years to help with or follow up on family history research.

Many Australians are quite proud of their "transported criminal" background, and relish in showing how their ancestors had the courage and perseverance to prevail against both the harsh convictions and the harsh conditions that they had to endure.



Lovely visitors' comments from Nottingham, Potters Bar, Mexico City, Merthyr Tydfil and Netheravon in Wiltshire.

Member's Letter

Thank you for all the wonderful and historic information on Ryde which the Historic Society gives, we are so lucky to have a devoted team of volunteers and people past and present to keep the information flowing.

Thank you
Josephine Palette

Fundraising

The Collectors' Fair on 25th September at the Masonic Lodge in John Street raised a grand total of £205.25, after all expenses of nearly £150 (room hire, advertising, etc.). Jerry says that's an increase of 25% on the previous fair.

Many thanks (in reverse alphabetical order!) to Pauline, Molly, John, Jill, Jerry, Derek and Alan for all your hard work, and being cheerful - in the immortal words of Young Mr Grace, "You've all done very well!"

Membership Update

Membership now runs on a rolling basis. Members receive free entry to Ryde District Heritage Centre, Donald McGill Postcard Museum; 20% discount on talks (a minimum of four a year - six this year), four newsletters and 10% discount on Hovertravel.

As of Autumn 2016, HRS has 157 Individual and Family memberships.

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

Ice Well Room update

Jerry and Mike are still doing a sterling job getting rid of the damp in the Ice Well room and have now hopefully won the battle of the alcoves directly beneath the pavement. The ceiling supports have been painted white and the room is looking much improved.



The Ice Well. Still lots to be done...

Dates for the Diary

November 16th - Talk by Adrian Searle - **Churchill's Last Wartime Secret** - Yelf's hotel, 7pm for 7.30 - 9.00pm. £4 members, and £5 for non-members.

November 24th - Pub quiz - Yelf's hotel, 7pm for 7.30 - 9.00pm. £3 a head - raffle as usual.

November 27th - Collectors' Fair - Masonic Hall, John Street, Ryde. 10am - 3.30pm. Free entry.

Historic Ryde Society Patron: Lady Lucinda Lambton

President: Gioia Minghella-Giddens

HRS Board of Trustees: Autumn 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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