

Issue 6

January 2011

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The perceptible amongst you will have noticed that, during the year, we have had a change of Chairmanship. Robert Bullivant has, due to work commitments, had to stand down, and I must express our greatest thanks to him for all his hard work and support in the past and good luck and prosperity for the future. It now falls upon me to present a brief Chairman's Report for 2010.

By the very nature of our society we tend to look back, at a photograph, a document, newspaper cutting or simply an object, and often too easily come to very simplified conclusions based on the facts in front of us. Looking back over the last 12 months of Historic Ryde Society the casual observer could be guilty of the same, but the achievement of the last year should not be understated. Nor do we wish to blow our own trumpet prematurely as, although we have made great strides towards our many goals, it is a long road ahead.

2010 could be broken down into four main areas which are:

Membership: We have steadily grown in membership, and now have over 100 members. This was never beyond our wildest dreams but is nevertheless a fantastic success. Retention is now going to be an important factor as we want and need all of your support now and most definitely over the coming year.

Rotunda Images: By the time you read this we hope that the fabulous paintings will have been installed in the Royal Victoria Arcade's rotunda and as this project comes to a conclusion our sincerest thanks must go out to both the artists and sponsors who have made this possible.

2011 Victorian Weekend: This I believe to be a most ambitious project. The work which is going on to bring this together is phenomenal and Liz will need a lot of help and support leading up to July and especially during the weekend. We are hoping to put Ryde on the map, and call on you all to try and help make it the success we know it can be. If you would like to be involved, please make yourselves known to Liz Belcher at SPLASH in Union Street as there will be everything from leafleting and acting, to marshalling and 1000 other jobs in between.

The Heritage Centre: Well, where to begin? Some things are in the public domain and some other things are at very delicate stages of progression. What I can tell you is that the lease for the basement of the Royal Victoria Arcade has now been finalised and substantial funding has been secured for the upgrading of the fabric of the building. This might not sound like a lot but believe me it is. It would be inappropriate at this stage to start naming names and thanking individuals. That is for the future, but what I will say is that we have a fantastic architectural team working on our behalf. We also have had full support and advice from Lee Byrne, and Ryde Townscape Heritage Initiative. With the dedication of individual members, it is easy to see why such progress has been made. Contractors should be starting work very shortly, and we hope to have phase one up and running by the summer.

Looking to the future it may be necessary to split ourselves into two smaller groups to keep tight control and this is being looked at by the committee. Fundraising and awareness will always be an uphill battle - more especially in the current climate, but it is paramount we keep up the momentum. We will be continuing with events such as the Antiques and Collectors' Fairs, and will also deliver a programme of guest speakers for Members' meetings to inspire and educate us in local history. These will only be a success if members support these talks.

The museum, heritage or visitor centre (title yet to be decided) is a much longer term project which is hoped will provide Ryde and the community with a local history centre/museum but also an historical archive and resource centre. This will take time, money and effort to accomplish.

Finally I hope that by 2012 we will be looking back with pride on a fantastically triumphant Victorian weekend and the opening of our very own Ryde Museum.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report and I look forward to meeting you all over the coming months.

Wayne Jones

Chairman – RYDE HISTORIC SOCIETY

Open Meeting and AGM

Historic Ryde Society's first meeting of the year will take place at 7pm, in the George Street Centre, on Thursday February 10, 2011. This will take the form of our first AGM. A copy of the Constitution and Accounts will be available for inspection. This will be followed by a talk, 'The Brannon Family', by Ken Hicks. Ken has recently staged a very successful exhibition of Brannon prints at Brading Roman Villa, and has offered to bring along some early engravings of Ryde, not all Brannons.

Refreshments and raffle will be available as usual. Members free, but please feel welcome to bring guests, who will be asked for a small donation. Please try to support us and come along to hear the story of the family which founded the Isle of Wight County Press, and left a legacy of wonderful engravings of many places around the Island. If anyone would like transport to attend the meeting, please get in touch with Wayne, c/o Framers, Union Street, and we will arrange to pick you up.

If you have any unwanted items you might wish to donate for future raffles, please bring them along. Everything gratefully received!

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the Election of Committee and Officers, held at Seaward, on January 19, 2010.
3. Approval of those Minutes.
4. Chairman's Report.
5. Presentation and Adoption of Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2010
6. Election of Committee Members
7. AOB

If you wish to put forward your name for election to the Committee, or have any matters you wish to propose for discussion under AOB, please put this in writing and deliver to Framers, Union Street, by January 27, 2011.

Fundraising



Wayne and Ted at the Fair.

We held our second Antique and Collectors' Fair in the Masonic Hall on Sunday, December 5th. Although some thought it wasn't as busy as the July event, nearly 170 people came through the door and we raised £312 for funds, which was excellent. We have decided to make this a quarterly event, so please tell all friends and family about these new events

Ryde. We decided to hold a voucher raffle during the day of the late night Dickensian shopping event in the town. Our new fundraising queen, Lesley, received a stunning 21 vouchers from local businesses willing to support our cause. Lesley, Erica and Tina manned the sales tables in Splash and the arcade and, by the end of the day, a massive £277 had been raised from the raffle alone! Takings from the sales table took the total to over £300, which is remarkable. Well done, girls!

Fundraising will be an ongoing process from here to eternity! Please keep a lookout for advertisements of events being held throughout the year. As well as the Antique and Collectors' Fairs, which we hope to establish as a regular event in Ryde, these will include a barndance, raffles, and, of course, our major event over the first weekend of July, celebrating the 175th anniversary of the opening of the Royal Victoria Arcade.

We are always looking for more people to become involved with this, so please contact Liz, at Splash. There are many different tasks with which assistance is needed, so we're sure we can find something which will suit everyone!

Rotunda Images - the end is in sight!



The rotunda images are on the point of installation! We hope they will be installed within the next week, and we plan a celebration at the end of the month. Once we have seen the images in situ, we will be sending out invitations to all Members, the artists and sponsors, and other interested parties. As you will understand, it is a very difficult task which lies ahead, and we need to be sure everything is in place before any arrangements can be finalised.

The above photographs show Loraine Payne with her painting of August, and Jeff Please with his depiction of March. All 12 images are available to buy as notelets, singly or as a set, at Splash, or Collectors' Haven, in the arcade, or from the website. They cost 80p each, or £6.99 for a set of 12.

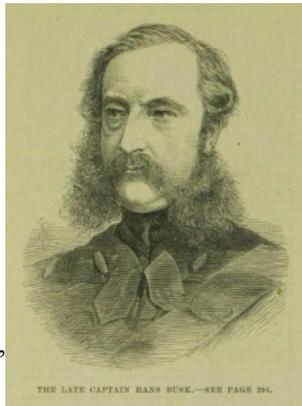
Website Snippets for Unconnected Fans...or, those who don't look at the site very much.....

Captain Hans Busk.

In the course of uploading information to the website, one interesting character stands out. Captain Hans Busk is generally recognised as the originator of the Volunteer Rifle Corps, and wrote several books on drill and the use of the rifle, as well as naval works. He was a magistrate for Middlesex and was called to the Bar at the Middle Temple in 1841. He founded, and for a time edited, the *New Quarterly Review*. His association with Ryde came about after a subscription, raised in recognition of his services, was used to build the first lifeboat, and lifeboat station, for the town. The *Captain Hans Busk* was launched from her station on Ryde Pier on May 5, 1869. Another anniversary ahead in 2019!

This engraving of Captain Hans Busk appeared in the *London Illustrated News* of March 25, 1882, at the time of his death.

The *Captain Hans Busk* was involved in a life-saving rescue in September, 1869.



Mr Henry Knight.

As our thoughts are connected very closely with the Royal Victoria Arcade, it might be a good time to introduce Henry Knight, who owned the arcade from July, 1856, until handing it over to his daughters in 1890. They continued to own the arcade until around 1910. Henry was a fascinating character, who traded in Italian marble and sculpture, from Numbers 8 and 9, currently Past and Present, Maddison Avenue and Uriah's Heap. He was elected to the Town Council in November 1871, and effectively split the town in two, - Knightites and Anti-Knightites - with his radical ideas of how things ought to be. He became a champion of the ratepayers of the time, and was a thorn in the flesh of anyone who took alternate views to his own.

Ryde Petty Sessions - June 4 1864

Tuesday - Before Thomas Thorpe Fowke, esq.

Mr H Knight, of the Arcade, attended to lay an information against the Churchwardens and Overseers of the parish of Newchurch for not producing the rate books, and allowing him to take extracts therefrom. The application involved a point of law as to who should have the custody of the parish documents, Mr Knight strongly contending that the overseers, and not the assistant overseer, were the proper persons to have the custody of the

books. He had made application to Mr Churchwarden Dashwood and Messrs Marvin and Yelf, overseers, and they said they knew nothing about it; he must apply to Mr Fairall. Now, he would point out to his Worship that, there being no vestry clerk, the overseers alone were responsible for the custody of the books. He intended to have appealed against the rate, but in the present state of affairs, and with such a seeming divided responsibility, he had been "bothered" about till it was too late to give the requisite notices. - The Bench was decidedly of opinion that every ratepayer should have full access to the books; and as to the application for a summons against the Churchwardens and Overseers, Mr Hearn, who was absent, had better look into the law of the case, and if necessary issue the regular notice for its hearing at the sitting of the Court on Tuesday next. - Mr Knight, who was fortified with all the Acts of Parliament on parish affairs for the last century and a half, then withdrew.

June 25 1864

The telegraph wire in Ryde was laid underground, which was easily and cheaply done; but, as the office is to be removed from the Town-hall to the Pier, the wire is carried thence over houses and across several streets. Many persons objected to this, as giving to a fashionable town a mercantile appearance without its profits; and the mildest objector was one Knight, because the Arcade was crossed. On Tuesday, at dusk, the wire was severed near the Arcade, and came down by the run, nearly cutting off the ear of a gentlemen in Union-street, and flooring another in Church-lane. But the funniest part of the business is that Knight should publicly disclaim knowing anything of the matter till 9am on Wednesday.

December 25 1886

We understand that Mr Henry Knight, of the Arcade, has lately been busy with an invention which he has recently patented, and which he describes as "Improvements in self collecting and checking tolls for, and controlling the use of, weighing machines." Mr Knight is of an ingenious turn, and some of his inventions have been undoubtedly very clever. The horse clipping machine which he invented, although a most useful little instrument, was not exactly profitable. We understand that someone else took up the principle, introduced a few alterations, and has been making a good thing by selling clippers, substantially the same as Mr Knight's. Mr Knight's tin opener was another useful invention, and this we believe brought him more profit than the last. A discovery of a new paint patented by Mr Knight was not a success, although the paint was undoubtedly good. We wish Mr Knight success with his new invention.

(Henry Knight sold the patent of his tin opener to the firm of Crosse and Blackwell. It was his most successful patent. An example is in the Guildhall Museum Newport.)

UPDATES

Membership at the start of January 2011

Individual Members - 44

Family Members - 19

Corporate Members - 14

The website currently has just over 400 pages and continues to attract many visitors, averaging three page views per visit. Popular pages include the Galleries and the Events page. Since its launch at the end of March, 2010 until the end of the year, there were nearly 120,000 page views. A remarkable beginning!

MEMBERSHIP

It has been decided by the committee that it will be much easier for everyone concerned, if Membership renewals become due on one date annually. For this year, this will be on Thursday, February 10, at the AGM.. For those Members who joined after July 2010, fees will not be expected until February 2012, therefore any Members will be gaining an extra six months' membership free. If, of course, anyone wishes to renew early, we will be delighted to accept! Membership remains at the same price: Individual Membership - £10, Family Membership - £15, Corporate Membership - £30. Fees can be paid at the AGM, to Wayne, c/o Framers, Liz, c/o Splash, or Tony, c/o Collectors' Haven, in the Royal Victoria Arcade. Cheques should be made payable to Historic Ryde Society. If anyone wishes to renew by Direct Debit, please contact Tony, as above.

HRS COMMITTEE 2010-2013

PRESIDENT - Gloria Minghella

CHAIRMAN - Wayne Jones

VICE-CHAIRMAN - Liz Belcher

TREASURER - Tony Packer

MINUTES SECY - Erica Manley

PROGRAMME SECY - Diana Wood

MEMBERSHIP SECY - Gillian Webster

Committee Members:

Lesley Ford

Claire Kay

Lynne Phillips

Geoff Scott

We currently have two vacancies on the committee. If you, or anyone you know, are interested in joining the committee, please let Wayne know before January 27th.

EVENTS FOR THE DIARY

All meetings are free for Members. Guests welcome, but will be asked for a donation towards funds.

HRS AGM and Talk

Thursday February 10th 2011

George Street Centre, Ryde 7pm.

Followed by 'The Brannon Family'

by Ken Hicks.

April Open Meeting

Thursday April 14th 2011

George Street Centre, Ryde 7pm

'In the Shadows of the Isle of Wight Dinosaurs'

Steve Sweetman, Portsmouth University

Friday - Sunday, 1st - 3rd July, 2011

Royal Victorian Ryde 2011

**Ryde will be filled with music, theatre and
spectacle! Fun for all the family.**

September Open Meeting

Thursday September 8th 2011

George Street Centre, Ryde 7pm

Adrian Searle

November Open Meeting

Thursday November 10th 2011

Titanic - Revisited

Noel Stimson

Antique and Collectors' Fair

Sunday December 4th 2011

Masonic Hall, John Street, Ryde

10am - 3.30pm

Other events to be held throughout the year, including barndance, raffles, and fashion show. Please keep a constant lookout in the press for more details. Please encourage family and friends to support these events, and help Historic Ryde Society to achieve their hopes of a wonderful centre for the whole community.