



# HISTORIC RYDE SOCIETY

March 2010

*Ryde into the Past*

Welcome to Historic Ryde Society and thank you very much for your interest. The group formed in October, 2009, with the idea of celebrating the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Royal Victoria Arcade in Union Street, which falls in July, 2011. It was thought this could raise some money for local causes. The idea grew, and soon the plans were to raise funds to create a permanent heritage centre in Ryde. This is an ambitious project, but there has been a lot of interest amongst the local community and Ryde Town Council has shown its support with a grant which will do much to help with initial costs. We have been invited to return in three months' time to give an update on the progress we have made. The council indicated they may be willing to give us further funding in the future. We also need to attract corporate sponsorship and would welcome ideas as to who we should approach.

Over the last weekend of May, 2010, we hope to have a recruitment campaign, based in the arcade, with more information about the group and the plans for July, 2011. If you would like to help with this, please contact Wayne at Framers, or Liz or Lynne at Splash, both Union Street. Membership application forms are also available at these shops or at Collectors' Haven, and in other shops in the arcade and around the town.

We will also be happy to accept any items of local interest of any era, which you would like to see on display for the community. Thanks again for your interest and please encourage friends and family to become involved and help to return Ryde's history to the people.

Below is an early engraving of the Royal Victoria Arcade, which appeared in the local press in 1935, marking the foundation stone centenary. This plate was produced before the frontage was altered in the autumn of 1856, so within the first 20 years of the arcade's existence. The shop on the left, now Splash, was Edward Thurlow's jewellery business, and he used this image for advertising purposes. It would be wonderful to be able to reproduce this image – does anyone know the whereabouts of this plate?



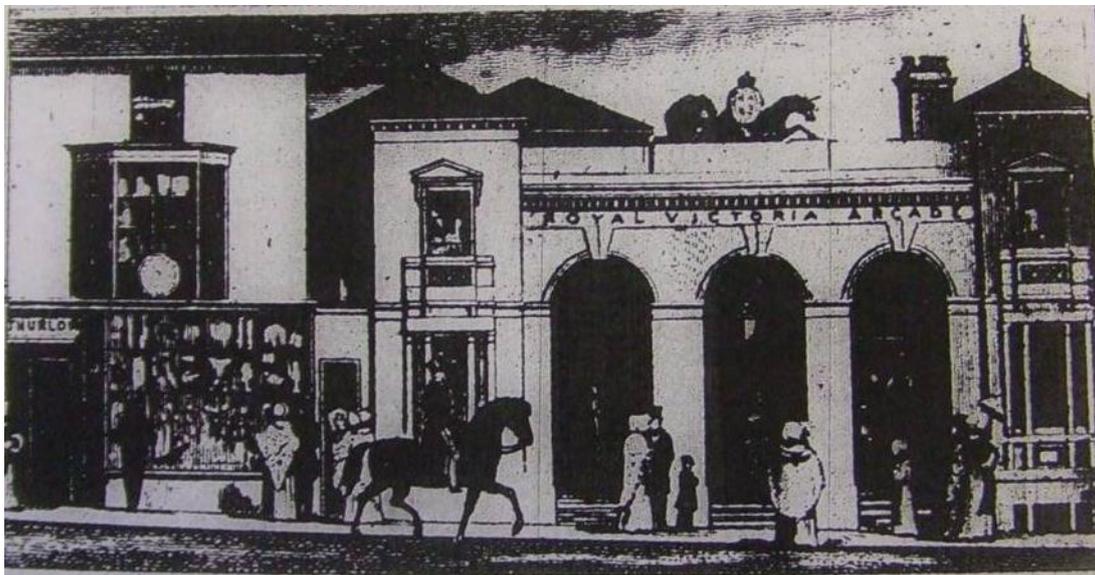
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The arcade has a claim to fame as the home of Henry Knight, who invented a tin opener, the patent of which was later sold to the firm of Crosse and Blackwell. An example is on display in Newport Museum. The County Museums Service also has one of the hat badges worn by the early porters of the arcade.



Henry Knight lived in Numbers 8 and 9, the Arcade, and bought the whole building for £3000 in 1856, when he changed the frontage to how we see it today. Henry was an importer of Italian marble and sculpture, holding sales in the arcade on a regular basis. One of his sales had a lot described as 'A MAGNIFICENT pair of matchless Ewers, in agate, 9ft high!' Henry's daughter Mary was born and lived in the arcade from 1851 to about 1910. His son Charles became one of the several



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photographers who worked from Number 6, the Arcade, and took a photograph in Newport of Queen Victoria laughing!



The Royal family often came to the arcade to have their photograph taken, and Cornelius Jabez Hughes also owned Number 6, before building and moving to Regina House, number 60, Union Street in 1865. If you look up at the gables of the building you can still see the large blue enamel plaques advertising Hughes and Mullins.

We are currently working on our website and we hope it will be live before long. We will let you know when this happens.

If you would like to volunteer to help Historic Ryde Society in any way, please get in touch, as we are keen to involve the local community and school groups. The children of today are the people who will be looking after the history of Ryde in the future.....

For the sake of those people who do not have e-mail addresses or access to the internet, I shall add some snippets from the website. The website is a work in progress and more is added daily, so everyone else please continue to look at it from time to time. We also encourage suggestions as to what you'd like to see on the website. At the moment Claire, Wayne and I are just cracking on with it!

We have a history page, subdivided into various categories – Buildings, Royals in Ryde, Treasures, Leisure, Observations, Poetry and Letters. On these pages we give a glimpse into what was happening in Ryde in Victorian times. The observations, poetry and letters pages are taken directly from the newspapers of the day – interesting snippets, poems sent in by readers (often relating to local politics!) and letters to the editor. We also have several galleries with old photos of Ryde and the Isle of Wight, as well as advertisements for businesses in Ryde from the 1850s onwards.

We hope in the near future to have a social gathering where there will be internet access for those who don't have it at home. They will then have an opportunity of seeing what we're doing.



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**RECRUITMENT DAY, SATURDAY MAY 29, 2010 -JOIN US IN THE ROYAL VICTORIA ARCADE, RYDE between 10am and 4pm - SMALL EXHIBITION: THE ARCADE IN PICTURES** The impetus behind our organisation is the 175th anniversary of the Royal Victoria Arcade. It was named for Princess Victoria and the Foundation Stone laid on her sixteenth birthday, May 24, 1835. The arcade finally opened on July 1, 1836. A full account was written by the Freemasons and other eyewitness accounts exist. We intend to hold a three day Victorian extravaganza over the first weekend of July 2011. This will coincide with the World Island Games, Ryde Arts Festival and Ryde Regatta, so a wonderful celebration for Ryde next year! We are looking for people to become involved, so please let us know if you would like to help with this exciting event.

**ANTIQUE FAIR - SUNDAY JULY 4 2010** On Sunday July 4, 2010 we will be holding an Antique Fair in the Masonic Hall in John Street, Ryde, between 10am and 4pm. Please come along and support us - you never know what you might find! This is a rare opportunity to get a glimpse behind the facade of this wonderful building. We have been lucky enough to have been shown the solid silver trowel, currently in the possession of the Freemasons, used to lay the Foundation Stone of the Town Hall and Market House on Friday, the 14th of May 1830.

In newspaper terms, the Isle of Wight was quite late jumping on the bandwagon. Although started a few years earlier, the Isle of Wight Observer became established in September, 1852, and was printed by George and Hannah Butler, of The Colonnade, Lind Street, Ryde. It was to be another thirty years before the County Press was founded. This advertisement appeared in the Isle of Wight Observer, November 20, 1852. The island's newspapers,

which include the Isle of Wight Times, The Isle of Wight Advertiser and The Ryde Ventilator, can be viewed at the Isle of Wight County Record Office.



A priceless treasure handed down through the years is the solid silver trowel used to lay the foundation Stone of Ryde Town Hall and Market House. This was given to the East Medina Lodge no 175 by Brother G Rendall, PM PPSGW, on January 21, 1880. It is still in the possession of this lodge and used on a regular basis. The trowel was used twice - to lay the Foundation Stone in 1830, and the Copestone in 1831.



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Snippets from the Isle of Wight Advertiser 1875 and 1879.....

## Ryde News.

**FURIOUS DRIVING.**—On Tuesday a chimney sweep's cart, which was driven at a furious pace down the High-street, knocked a child over who was crossing the road, and who had no possibility of escape. Passing over it, its head was much lacerated, and its body bruised. We think in no part of England is furious driving indulged in to the extent that it is in the Isle of Wight.

**ODDFELLOWS.**—The 30th anniversary of the East Medina Lodge of Oddfellows, M.U., was celebrated by a dinner at the Town Hall on Tuesday evening. The repast, prepared by the committee, was as usual a capital one, and evidently appreciated by the large company. The tables were laid and decorated by Mr Smith,

As the paddle-wheel steamer the Princess Alice was leaving the Ryde Pier on Wednesday, the steam not only "up" but the kettle boiled over, sending a stream of dirty water over the passengers on the main deck, most of whom received some part of the overflow, some being drenched. Heavy claims have been sent in for destroyed clothing of both ladies and gentlemen. Some who were witnessing the departure of the boat received a parting spurt from the excited boiler. Some of the passengers in their vexation refused to pay their fares, and hence something very near a fight with the ticket takers at Southsea, who could not see why the ducking with dirty salt water should be urged as any reason why unwilling victims should not pay for the opportunity of being so favoured.

**BATHING ON THE SHORE.**—There have been a great many complaints lately of men bathing from the shore underneath the sea wall at Appley, and as it appeared that they were soldiers belonging to Puckpool Fort, the St Helen's Local Board called the attention of the commanding-officer to the matter. From the discussion which took place it appears that this portion of the shore really belongs to the fort, and the commanding-officer declined to give up the bathing parades of the men—but promised to station a person to warn any ladies who might be coming along the wall, when bathing took place. This is felt to be somewhat a grievance, as the wall along the shore is the nearest road to Sea View, those going by road from Ryde having to make a circuit of at least a mile.

ESTABLISHED 25 YEARS.  
C. TURTLE,  
DYER, CALENDERER, HOT PRESSER, &c.,  
47, PIER STREET.

Removed from 1 and 2, Royal Victoria Arcade,

IN advertising his REMOVAL to 47, Pier Street, I take the opportunity to thank his many Friends for the support they have afforded him for so long a period, and to inform them that he has no connexion whatever with the Agent occupying the premises in the Arcade so recently occupied by himself. He thinks it necessary to direct attention to the fact, as otherwise work might be left there under the impression that C. Turtle will execute it.

Indian, French, and other Shawls cleaned in a superior manner, specimens of which may be seen at any time at his shop in Pier Street. C. T. invites a close inspection of his Work in this Department, many valuable Shawls being sometimes entirely spoilt by persons ignorant of the chemical nature of the colors. In no case can the results of bad cleaning be so remedied as to restore the Article to what it might have been in efficient hands.

Chintz, Drawing Room Covers, Crumb Cloths, and every description of Printed Furniture cleaned and glazed.

Moreen and Damask Furniture cleaned, dyed, and watered.

Silk, Satin, Merino, and De Laine Dresses, &c.  
Blankets, Counterpanes, Table Covers, Brussels and Kidderminster Carpets, Rugs, Wool Mats, &c., cleaned.  
Straw Bonnets dyed.

Mourning dyed an entirely new and incomparable black on the shortest notice.

Kid Gloves cleaned and dyed.  
Gentlemen's Clothes cleaned.