



## ARCADIA

# The newsletter of Ryde District Heritage Centre

April 2013

The extension opened last July by HRH The Duke of Gloucester, is now fully established and has four distinct identities: the Commercial Room, the Office, the Flightpath and the School-room.

The Commercial Room has exhibits relating to chemists, mineral water manufacturers and brewers of Ryde, as well as photographs of shops long gone, including The Doll's House, in the Upper High Street.

The Office is a small useful space, which has become a dedicated storage area.

In the Flightpath are displays relating to Ryde Airport and the development of the hovercraft. Video footage of both subjects has been donated by Christopher Balfour and Barrie Jehan respectively. These films can be viewed on the screen in this room. Christopher has also donated the wooden sign which used to stand on the taxi rank on Ryde Esplanade to advertise the airport.

The School-room has information about the development of education in Ryde, since the establishment of the First National School in Melville Street in 1812. Many school photographs have been donated to the Centre, which are on display. The phoenix from Swanmore Middle School has been given a new home here. The room also contains an area for temporary exhibitions, and has been used since the end of 2012 as an opportunity for local artists to display their work. HRS founder member Lynne Gregory-Phillips and HRS member Martie Cain have exhibited in this area and both have sold a painting, 10% of the sale being donated to Ryde District Heritage Centre.

A further extension of the Heritage Centre is about to start, with the opening of the rotunda basement, the ice well and the adjoining room. This is likely to take several months, as we continue to raise funds for the project. If you would like to help with this part of the development of the Centre, please get in touch by phoning 01983 717435 during opening hours, or by emailing: [admin@historicroydesociety.com](mailto:admin@historicroydesociety.com). Extra help always welcome!



Historic Ryde Society would like to pay tribute to HRS member Terry Manley, who passed away in February. A keen volunteer, eager to muck in with anything asked of him, Terry is sorely missed.





The Flightpath RDHC



The Commercial Room RDHC



The Commercial Room RDHC



The School- room RDHC

During the clearing of the ice well, many artefacts made of wood and metal were brought to the surface. It is hoped to clean these over time and incorporate in the display, as they are part of the history of the building. HRS member and volunteer Jerry Bryett has taken advantage of the bad weather to come along and clear rubbish and bricks from this area and has taken it upon himself to scrub the floor, removing sixty years of accumulated dirt. A worthwhile task, as the flagstones have cleaned up beautifully, and, although there's several months to go, there's an inkling of how well the area will look once finished. An old tar boiler with associated tools has also been found. This was used by the current owner's father, Mr Cartwright, when he saved the building from demolition in the early 1970s.



The images show the tar boiler, containing jugs and a bucket, and another old bucket with a very large ladle, recently uncovered in the basement of the arcade. Anyone fancy cleaning duty?



From the left, the images show the build up of over 100 bags of silt removed from the well before being taken to the dump. The third image shows half of the cleaning work done, and the fourth the floor as it is at present. Interesting features in this passage are a round basin at the far right, as yet unidentified, an inverted arch on the lower step - any ideas? - and the sloping course of flagstones abutting the left hand wall of the passage, presumably to aid drainage. This area has been earmarked for a display about the 19th century International Ice Trade, which began in 1833.

As well as metal work and wooden artefacts, these Randalls of Ryde bottles and Victorian cream jars were recovered from the silt in the well. They are now on display in the Heritage Centre. Once the other items have been cleaned and conserved, the ice well display will contain as many of the finds as possible, to enhance the history of the Royal Victoria Arcade.



As we go to press, HRS committee has just been informed that our latest Heritage Lottery fund application has been unsuccessful. This means that all fund-raising efforts need to bring in a lot more money, to ensure the highest possible standard for the extension of the Centre. If anyone has any wonderful ideas, contacts in the corporate world - anything at all regarding fundraising - the committee would love to hear from you!

The recent decision to raise the admission charge to the Centre from £1 to £2 appears to be going well. The first couple gave £5 without complaint, asking for the extra pound to be put in the donation box.

The first coffee morning to be held in the Heritage Centre was a great success, and two of the members of Bridget's Group became members of Historic Ryde Society on the day. If you belong to, or know of any group which may be interested in holding a Coffee Morning in the Centre, please get in touch. The charge is £3 a head, which includes tea, coffee and refreshments, a private visit to the Centre, and an explanation of the formation of Historic Ryde Society and the creation of the Heritage Centre by one of the volunteers. Telephone 01983 717435 during opening hours, or email [admin@historicroydesociety.com](mailto:admin@historicroydesociety.com) to book.

HRS also takes presentations out into the wider community. If you belong to a group which may be interested in having a speaker, please get in touch via the means above.

## Dates for the Diary

**April 10** - Illustrated talk by Brian Puttock. 'The Snark and the Magic Cube'. Yelf's 7pm. Members free, small donation asked from non-members. Raffle.

**April 25** - pub quiz, Yelf's Hotel 7pm. £3 per person. Come on your own or bring a team.

**May 30** - pub quiz as above.

**June 27** - pub quiz as above.

**July 25** - pub quiz as above.

**August 29** - pub quiz as above.

**September 11** - illustrated talk by Tony Gale. Yelf's 7pm. Members free, small donation asked from non-members. Raffle.

**September 26** - pub quiz as above.

**October 31** - pub quiz as above.

**November 13** - Illustrated talk by Mark Earp, on the history of Ryde. Yelf's 7pm. Members free, small donation asked from non-members. Raffle.

**November 28** - pub quiz as above.

**December 26** - pub quiz as above.

Two Antique and Collectors' Fairs will take place this year - one in July and one in December. Dates yet to be finalised, but will be published in due course.

## Bric-a-brac plea

HRS is planning a bric-a-brac sale to raise funds for the Heritage Centre. If you have anything which you think may be suitable, please bring it into the Heritage Centre. We need all kinds of bric-a-brac, books, nearly new clothes, etc., etc., etc. Many thanks in anticipation.

**Newsletter plea: Is there anyone out there who would be willing to help with the newsletter? Please get in touch via RDHC - 01983 717435.**

Historic Ryde Society, creators of the Ryde District Heritage Centre, Royal Victoria Arcade, Union Street, Ryde. PO33 2LQ tel. 01983 717435 [www.HistoricRydeSociety.com](http://www.HistoricRydeSociety.com)

## Membership Update

Membership runs from February to February. Members receive free entry to Ryde District Heritage Centre, four talks, four newsletters and 10% discount on Hovertravel. Well worth the money!

As of April 2013, HRS has:

Individual Members - 52  
Family Memberships - 32  
Corporate Memberships - 7

**County Archivist Richard Smout will lead three House History Workshops annually, in Ryde District Heritage Centre, from 7pm to 9pm. This is a very popular course, and places are limited, so please book early, to avoid disappointment, on 01983 717435.**

**The next course will take place in the autumn, on a date yet to be decided. Details in due course.**

HRS committee: April 2013

Chair: Liz Jones

Vice Chair: Brian Harris

Treasurer: Tony Packer

Secretary: Diana Wood

Members: Alan Brading, Claire Kay, John King, Linda McArdle, Vic Scovell, Derek Tomlinson

HRS committee has appointed member Judith Lazell as Youth/School liaison. If you would like to contact the committee, please email [admin@HistoricRydeSociety.com](mailto:admin@HistoricRydeSociety.com)

HRS is currently looking for volunteers to help with admin tasks. Please contact as above.

