

# ARCADIA

Spring 2015

The newsletter of  
Ryde District Heritage Centre

Registered Charity Number 1153947

Welcome to the Spring edition of Arcadia. We have been very busy over the winter, cataloguing and preparing new areas for displays which will be open to the public later in the year.

We welcome our new Secretary David Newman, and Volunteer Co-ordinator Derek Tomkinson who have both been working very hard behind the scenes to ensure the smooth running of the centre.



## Historic Ryde Society AGM

The fifth Historic Ryde Society AGM took place on Wednesday, February 11, 2015. The venue was Yelf's Hotel, Union Street, Ryde.

The Society welcomed new President, Gioia Minghella-Giddens, who follows in her mother Gloria's footsteps.

Nearly thirty members attended.

## Martin Simpson – The Fossil Man

A fascinating talk was enjoyed by members and visitors at Yelf's Hotel on the evening of Wednesday, November 12. Martin Simpson, aka The Fossil Man, enthralled a rapt audience with

stories and examples of thirty years of fossil hunting on the Isle of Wight.

With the help of his glamorous assistant, Jenny, a wide range of fossils of creatures which roamed the Island many millions of years ago, were brought to life by Martin's informative and humorous style.

The audience learned that there exists a dinosaur called the 'Irritator'. The term 'dinosaur' was created by one Richard Owen, on a visit to the Isle of Wight. There are cottages in Brook, the walls of which contain fossils, once thought to be stone.

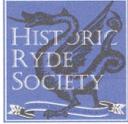
The audience was also invited to pass round a large lump of coprolite – dinosaur poo, with a highly polished base. Fascinating stuff!



HRS Chair Brian, and Martin getting to grips with some local fossils.

Coming Soon

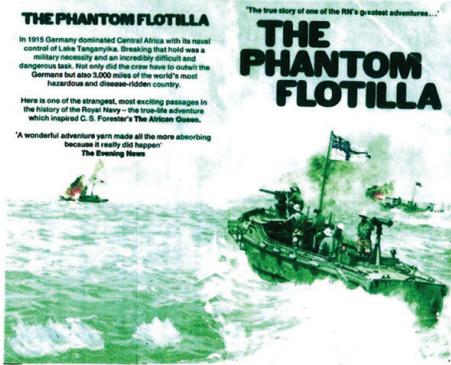
## Roger Whitby-Smith - 'The Phantom Flotilla'



**Historic Ryde Society**  
*Giving Ryde's past to the future*

Patron: Lady Lucinda Lambton  
President: Gioia Minghella-Giddens

Guest Speaker Mr Roger Whitby-Smith  
Yelf's Hotel, Tuesday March 17th,  
7 for 7:30.



**THE PHANTOM FLOTILLA**  
The true story of one of the RN's greatest adventures...

In 1915 Germany dominated Central Africa with its naval control of Lake Tanganyika. Breaking that hold was a military necessity and an incredibly difficult and dangerous task. Not only did the crew have to outrun the Germans but also 3,000 miles of the world's most hazardous and disease-ridden country.

Here is one of the strangest, most exciting passages in the history of the Royal Navy - the true-life adventure which inspired C.S. Forester's *The African Queen*.

'A wonderful adventure yarn made all the more absorbing because it really did happen'  
The Evening News

Free for members of Historic Ryde Society.  
A small donation is requested of non-members.  
Raffle.

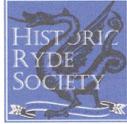
Historic Ryde Society, c/o Ryde District Heritage Centre, Royal Victoria Arcade,  
Union Street, Ryde PO33 2LQ tel: 01993 717435 www.historicrydesociety.com

Registered Charity Number 1153947



On March 17th Roger Whitby-Smith will be giving his talk on 'The Phantom Flotilla' at Yelf's Hotel, starting at 7pm.

## Philip Norman - 'Afternoon Tea and Babycham Night'



**Historic Ryde Society**  
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**CREAM TEA AND BABYCHAM NIGHT  
WITH PHILIP NORMAN.**

An acclaimed author, Philip will talk about his boyhood on Ryde Pier in the glory days of the Seagull Ballroom.



Yelf's Hotel, Tuesday, May 19, 16:30.

Tickets £10  
(to include refreshments and a glass of Babycham)  
available from Splash and Ryde Heritage Centre, Royal Victoria Arcade  
Booking essential!

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On May 20th Philip Norman will give his talk 'Afternoon Tea and Babycham Night' also at Yelf's Hotel, starting at 4.30pm.



**Antiques and  
Collectors'  
Fair**

**Masonic Hall**  
John Street, Ryde  
Sunday 5th July  
10:00am to 3:00pm  
Raffle and refreshments  
Admission: 75p

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We are pleased to announce that our next Antiques & Collectors Fair will be taking place on Sunday 5th July at the Masonic Hall in John Street, Ryde.

Doors open at 10.00 am until 3.00pm.

Entrance fee £0.75.

There will be a raffle and refreshments available.

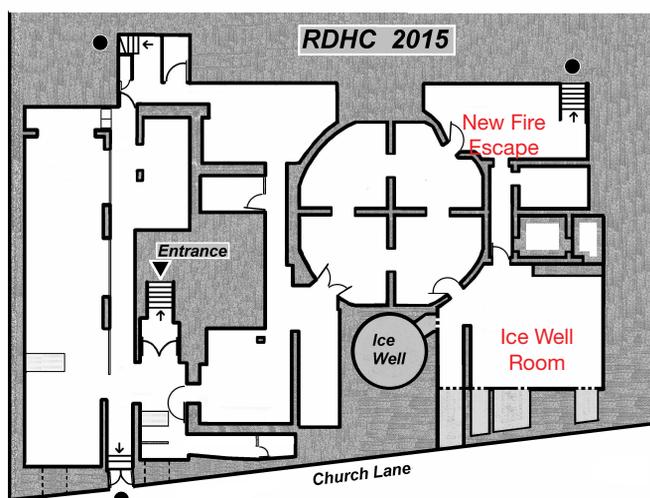
If you are looking for something different to give a loved one for Christmas, this might be just the place to come for that unusual gift.

All monies raised will go towards the running of the Heritage Centre.

We look forward to seeing you all there.

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## Work in progress - an update on the renovation

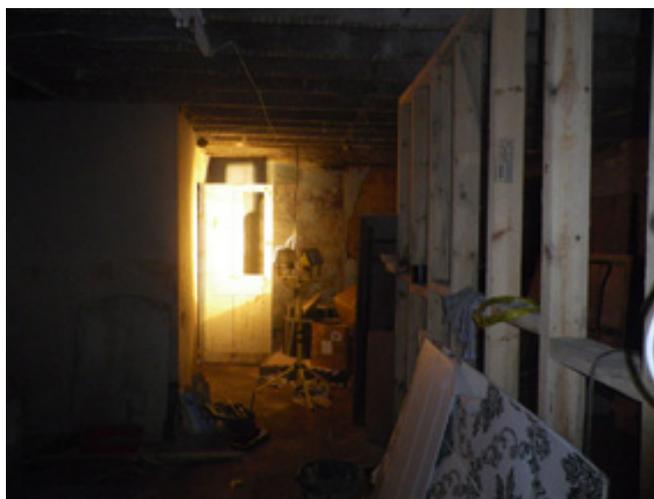


The work in the ice well room is progressing - the ceiling fire boarding is almost complete thanks to Jerry, Mike and Tony. Acknowledgement to Roy, who has installed columns and support beams for the ceiling, and fitted fire doors, as well as sourcing and transporting all the materials.

Martin and his brother from the Vectis Military History Association moved all the radios to their new home at CHARM, the old tank museum at Northwood. Work will begin shortly on the ceiling and the new fire escape in the far end of the basement.

If there are any members who fancy a bit of serious DIY, please contact us!

A big thank you to Roy, who's had to give up helping for the moment due to other work commitments.



## The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service...

As you may be aware, the Society has been nominated for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (the MBE for voluntary groups), and a presentation was given to the assessment panel just before Christmas. The award winners will be announced in the summer, so fingers crossed until then!

Being so closely involved with the Society can cause one to take its achievements for granted. Reading the letters of support for our QAVS nomination made us realise that we should all be very proud indeed of those achievements. Some extracts from three supporters:

*"I firmly believe that the Society's work is an asset to Ryde and its citizens...This would not be possible without the support of a dedicated and knowledgeable set of volunteers, who have done so much to enhance the lives of those who are interested in the story of the town."*

*"The THI grant was small, and limited the extent of professional involvement with the physical conversion, and as a result the volunteers had to work incredibly hard to create the heritage centre we see today."*

*"As regards to the volunteers who run the Historic Ryde Society, I really do admire their dedication. They are well organised and always seem to have a wealth of very interested members, who manage the day to day running of the museum. They are always cheerful and most helpful with any questions asked."*

Additionally, extracts from the Visitors' Book:

*"Staff so helpful, and spent one of the best visits during our stay in Isle of Wight."*

*"Brilliant fascinating staff. Fun, friendly and knowledgeable, but not boring. Loved it!"*

*"What a fantastic exhibition! Worth ten times the entrance fee!"*

*"So well presented. Scenes of places in our memory. Thank you all. What would we do without tireless volunteers?"*

It must be remembered that we're all volunteers, and whilst we're all committed to the Society and Heritage Centre, we can also have other, equally important engagements at times.

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## Dates for the Diary

**March 17th** - Roger Whitby-Smith - 'The Phantom Flotilla'. Yelf's Hotel, 7pm.

**March 26th** - Pub quiz - Yelf's hotel, 7pm.  
£3 a head - raffle as usual.

**April 30th** - Pub quiz - Yelf's hotel, 7pm.  
£3 a head - raffle as usual.

**May 20th** - Philip Norman - 'Afternoon Tea and Babycham Night' - Yelf's Hotel, 4.30pm.  
£10 a head (includes cream tea and a Babycham!).  
Tickets are available from the centre, and from Splash in Union Street next to the Arcade.

*Raffle prizes are always needed, so please don't throw anything away if you have something which may be a useful prize!*



Christmas dinner 2014. Volunteers at the Appley Manor House Hotel.

## How you can Help

Historic Ryde Society is always looking for more volunteers, particularly to help with administration tasks. The Society is dependent on people bringing items for copying, photographing, or loan. Please look in attics and sheds to find anything relating to Ryde in the past. It doesn't matter how old or unimportant you think things are, everything has a story to tell, which we can share with a wider audience! We can copy or photograph items, or they can be loaned or donated for future display. All items brought into the Centre for display are catalogued and given a unique number, a note is made as to whether a loan or donation, and details of the donor or owner recorded. Items are then put on immediate display, or stored safely for a future project.

## Membership Update

Membership now runs on a rolling basis. Members receive free entry to Ryde District Heritage Centre, four talks, four newsletters and 10% discount on Hovertravel.

Well worth the money!

As of Spring 2015, HRS has 173 Individual and Family members.

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### Historic Ryde Society Patron: Lady Lucinda Lambton President: Gioia Minghella-Giddens

#### HRS Board of Trustees: Spring 2015

Chair: Brian Harris, Treasurer: Tony Packer, Secretary: David Newman

Members: Alan Brading, Martin Jenkins, Claire Kay, John King, Peter Lawrence, Vic Scovell,  
Derek Tomlinson, Ron Watts

Derek is the Volunteer Co-ordinator. He can be contacted via:

[volunteercoordinator@historicroydesociety.com](mailto:volunteercoordinator@historicroydesociety.com)

Peter is the Membership Co-ordinator.

Registered Charity No: 1153947

If you would like to contact anyone on the committee, please email [admin@HistoricRydeSociety.com](mailto:admin@HistoricRydeSociety.com)

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