

STOP 1 – LIND STREET

You should be standing on Lind Hill, across from the telephone box, and facing towards the Solent, with the Town Hall and its clock tower to your left.

The name Ryde first appears in the 13th century, and means "small stream". The growth of modern Ryde was helped by the lords of the Manor – the Player family – in the 18th century. They took advantage of the growth of Portsmouth's dockyard, and the new fashion for the seaside, by investing in the town and supplying the navy with fresh local food.

Lind Street was developed in the 1820s and '30s and named after Dr John Lind, a physician at the Royal Naval Hospital at Haslar, across the Solent in Gosport. His father's research into scurvy was an important medical advance. John Lind was one of many men with links to the navy who chose to live in a quieter, more exclusive, area than densely populated Portsmouth. He married Elizabeth Player and the two families, owning the land on which Ryde developed, did much to ensure the resort's quality and prosperity.

On your left towards the end of the road is St James Church, built in 1827. It attracted congregations of over a 1000 under the Rev. Waldo Sibthorpe in the 1830s, whose preaching was described as "not quite orthodox". Some members of the congregation could be unruly; in January 1828, Thomas Harvey went up to the balcony and hurled oats down onto the worshippers below. When he was thrown out he made a great noise dancing in the lobby within the church. He was committed to gaol in Winchester.

In front of you, the large building with the clock tower is the market house and town hall, which opened in 1831. The tower was added in 1868, when the building was extended. The market was a lively spot. In May 1833, James Lock was prosecuted for sticking his hands into the basket of shrimps owned by Martha Seymour and then attacking her when she told him off. He was fined £5.

The Town Hall could be hired for public meetings, concerts and balls. Among those who spoke here was Oscar Wilde, who lectured on fashion in October 1884. Alongside us, opposite the Town Hall in the Town Chambers, were the Victoria Rooms, another social centre; hosting concerts and, at times, a roller skating rink and a glass-blowing exhibition.

Now walk towards the Town centre, staying on the same side of the street, past the colonnade opposite, and choose a seat in St Thomas' Square.