

MARRIAGE: 4th March 1888 at St. Helens Church, IW.
George WILLS. 45. Bachelor. (father: George WILLS)
& Charlotte BOOBIER. 40. Spinster. (father: William BOOBIER)

1871 CENSUS: RG10/1165. folio 49. page 49.
Address: 16 Pier-street, Ryde, IW.

George WILLS. Head. Mar. 58. Tobacconist. Brading, IW.
Matilda WILLS. Wife. Mar. 50. Ryde, IW.
George WILLS. Son. Unm. 25. Tobacconist's Assistant. Ryde, IW.
Walter E. WILLS. Son. Unm. 17. Scholar. Ryde, IW.
Ida WILLS. Dau. 4. Ryde, IW.

1878 WHITE's DIRECTORY of Hampshire & Isle of Wight - page 484
WILLS George, tobacconist, 16 Pier-street, Ryde, IW.

1881 CENSUS: RG11/1178. folio 72. page 33.
Address: 16 Pier-street, Ryde, IW.

Geo. WILLS. Head. Mar. 62. Tobacconist. Brading, IW.
Matilda WILLS. Wife. Mar. 58. Tobacconist. Ryde, IW.
Geo. WILLS. Son. Unm. 38. Tobacconist. Ryde, IW.
Walter E. WILLS. Son. Unm. 27. Merchant Service. Ryde, IW.
Ernest WILLS. Son. Unm. 21. Asst Architect. Ryde, IW.
Jane ACTON. Visitor. Unm. 29. Estate. Hants.

1910 KELLY's DIRECTORY of the Isle of Wight - pages 272 & 324
WILLS George & Co., tobacconist, 16 Pier-street, Ryde, IW.

1920 KELLY's DIRECTORY of Hampshire & Isle of Wight - page 723
WILLS George, tobacconist, 16 Pier-street, Ryde, IW.

1927 KELLY's DIRECTORY of Hampshire & Isle of Wight - page 737
WILLS George & Co., tobacconist, 16 Pier-street, Ryde, IW.

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS Saturday 20th February 1937 front page

Death Notice:-

WILLS .. George WILLS, tobacconist, 1 Esplanade, Ryde, died on 13th inst., aged 94,- highly respected.

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS Saturday 20th February 1937, page 8

DEATH OF MR. GEORGE WILLS

By the passing of Mr. **George WILLS**, of 1 The Esplanade, on Saturday, the town loses one of its most notable characters of 50 years' standing. Until stricken with illness just before Christmas he was the oldest active tradesman in the borough; at a great age of 94 he would mount steps to arrange his shop blind. His old-fashioned tobacconist's shop and cigar divan was known to thousands of visitors, whose curiosity was attracted by a display of pipes and smokers' requisites, the variety and antiquity of which were probably unique. Day in and day out Mr. WILLS could be seen sitting in the shop smoking his pipe and reflecting on the halcyon days when the premises were the Mecca of yachtsmen, and his cigar divan was wreathed in smoke from their choice cigars. In later years Mr. WILLS, who was very opinionated, developed little eccentricities, which won him greater local notoriety. For 50 years he had never crossed the Esplanade or walked into the Western Enclosure, and in fulfilment of a vow he made half a century ago his figure was never seen in Union-street from that time onwards. In early years he went to sea, and after making 18 voyages to Australia and back in the old windjammers over 70 years ago, came ashore on account of impaired hearing and entered into his father's business. On the death of his father he inherited the business, which has now been established for 102 years, and his soubriquet of "Barber," derived from his father's occupation as a hairdresser on the opposite side of the street. His wife predeceased him 16 years ago. The funeral took place on Thursday, the interment being at the cemetery in the same grave as that of his wife.

ISLE OF WIGHT TIMES Thursday 18th February 1937 page 5

MR. GEORGE WILLS
Death of a Remarkable Ryde Character

A remarkable character has been lost by the death of Mr. **George (Barber) WILLS**, proprietor of a tobacco shop on the Esplanade.

Mr. WILLS was 94 years of age, was behind the counter of his quaint shop until quite recently. By reason of his great age he was deaf and somewhat infirm, but he took a great delight in his business and liked to serve customers himself. The business had belonged to his family for over a 100 years.

The window of his shop was something one would expect to find in some forgotten corner of a seaport town rather than on the Esplanade of a modern seaside resort. It was still dressed as it was in Victorian days, though here and there are a few comparatively modern advertisements of well-known brand of cigarettes and tobaccos. Peering through the dusty window one can see pipes of all ages and of every conceivable shape and size. A cherrywood was of amazing length, jostles Gambier clays, quilled cigarette holders, tobacco boxes with pictures of old time steamships on their lids and cigarette cases with pictures of beauties of the Marie Lloyd type. Fuses which were in use as far back in the last century are displayed next to 6 boxes of wax matches advertised "as used 100 years ago". In another part of the window are coils of tobacco as thick as rope and the plug tobacco greatly relished by the old time sailor.

Mr. WILLS had some strange prejudices. He would never walk up Union-street and if he was obliged to go to High-street he would take the St Thomas-street route. He never set foot on the Western Gardens and it is said that when his wife died he locked the door to her room and never entered it again.
