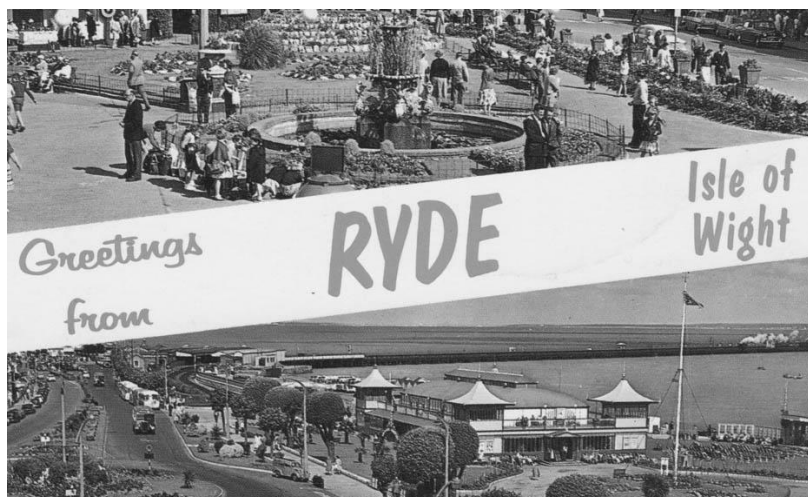


BEYOND THE GRAVES

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Wish You Were Here.

In Victorian times the introduction of the postal system and the invention of photography led to the emergence of the postcard industry. Ryde was in a perfect situation for the development and promotion of this new business venture.

It had become fashionable in mid-Victorian days for the wealthy and aristocratic members of society to visit a studio photographer and pose in front of their props, [usually an aspidistra!] for several seconds, hence their rigid and unsmiling appearance. The less well-off would put on their Sunday best and visit the studios for significant events, such as marriages. They would buy the small carte-de-visites or the larger cabinet photographs to give to family and friends.

Ryde had the greatest number of studio photographers of all the Island towns, being home to some of the earliest known photographers. William Boyer and Mr Leslie advertised their studios in the IW Observer of 1853. In that decade there were seven photographers in Ryde, rising to 13 in the 1870's.



These studio photographers soon went out and about to their client's big houses to capture interior and exterior images. Despite the cumbersome glass plate cameras of the time it was but a short step for them to take general scenic views to sell in their shops.

Right: An unnamed sailor and his family as a printed postcard (Hilary Lloyd Collection)

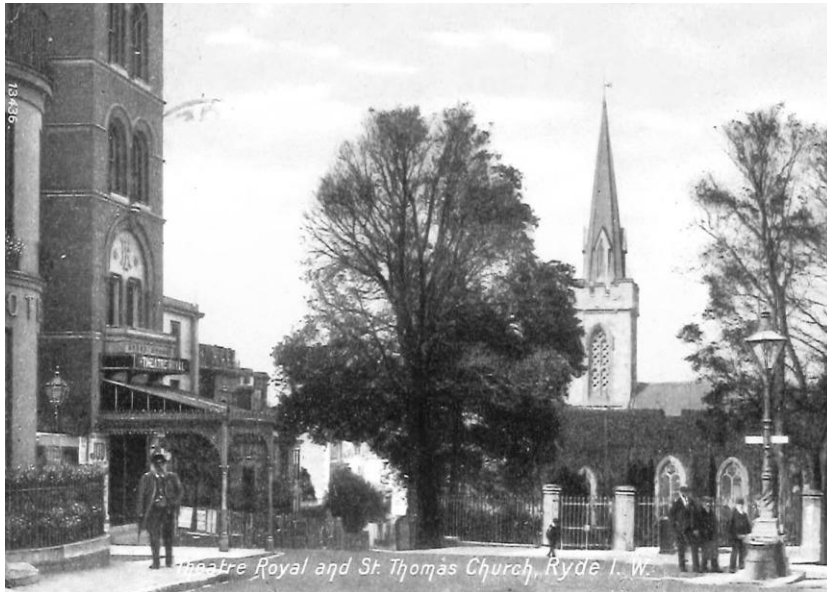


Left: Marie Studholme, actress (Ann Barrett Collection)

Due to advances in the science, by the end of the 1890's the postcard format as we know it today had been introduced. With the excellent postal service, up to four collections and deliveries a day in towns, the postcard became the text message of the day, reaching its heyday in the years up to the Great War. Not only were there topographical views, families could afford to have their portraits printed in the new postcard format, ideal for servicemen off to war or showing off the latest baby to mainland relatives. Collecting postcards of stage stars or other subjects became a craze.

F.N. BRODERICK

Frederick Nutt Broderick was one of Ryde's most successful photographers, active from about 1878 to his death in 1913. Already well-known for his photographic views he soon began to produce postcards as well, often from the same plates. In fact, it was possible to buy one of his views as a postcard, a larger print on card ready to frame, or even one on glass ready to hang on the wall, depending on your budget. Many of these were entitled '*The Aurora Series*' after either his house in West Street, or his daughter. With an eye to commerce he went out all over the Island photographing events such as the hunt, carnivals or even wrecks, such as the '*Gladiator*'. All these images he produced very quickly, usually dated, to sell while the event was still fresh and hoping someone would spot themselves in the background crowd and purchase multiple copies to post off to friends. One best seller was, no doubt, the great snowstorm of 1908. As well as local scenes Broderick travelled to the mainland and even abroad. Many of his stunning Island photographs, together with a more detailed biography, can be found in Mr Roy Brinton's book '*Edwardian Island – IW Photographs of Frederick Broderick*'.



ENTERTAINMENT

Broderick had his studio in St. Thomas' Square near the Church, while on the opposite side was the Theatre Royal. Performers there would have their portrait postcards for sale at the performance.

A postcard was sent to Miss E. Hill in Worcester on April 18 1905, from HK, who reported '*went and heard Sousa at the Theatre on Monday*' John Philip Sousa [1854-1932] was the famous American composer and conductor who frequently undertook world tours.

Other entertainments featured heavily in postcards, especially days out on the beach which are wonderful social history sources.

This Edwardian scene on Ryde beach shows little girls in their dresses and boaters, and is that their mother in the centre, dressed for a visit to the Theatre Royal rather than for getting sand in her shoes? On the extreme right can be seen the Bathing Machines to protect modesty.

(Postcards of Theatre Royal & Ryde Beach from the Ann Barrett Collection)



PLACES TO STAY Where would tourists be without places to stay? Ryde Castle was built in the mid-19th century as a private house, later to become a Hotel, while the new Royal York was purpose built in 1938, a masterpiece of Art Deco design. Both they and the smaller hotels which abounded in the town produced postcards as a form of advertising, what better than for their guests to send them off to friends all around the country. *(Melville Hall postcard from Ann Barrett Collection)*

After the Second World War there was another boom in the buying and sending of postcards.



This was the start of the Holiday Camp era, lasting until the coming of cheap European holiday package deals of the 1970's. Warners camps at Puckpool and St. Clare were two of the largest in the Ryde area. The happy campers could buy exterior views, all taken in brilliant sunshine of course, or interior views showing the latest up-to-date facilities.

Left: Puckpool Holiday Camp
(IOW Record Office)



A visitor called Marjorie chose this view of Puckpool's Shop and Lounge to send to Miss May Hammond on September 22 1949, writing 'Dear May and All, Enjoyable Holiday, lots of Dancing, Housey Housey, Pennies on the drum tunes, Whist Drives, Rambles, Talent Competitions. Everything for fun Love Marjorie.' What innocent times – we can almost hear the Green Coats calling 'Hi-Di-Hi'!

Right: Warners Holiday Camp
(Ann Barrett Collection)



SOME POSTCARDS FROM

AROUND RYDE

Among the more unusual subjects are School postcards, not only of the pupils sat at their desks or neatly rowed up in the playground, but general interiors as well. Mademoiselle Jeanne Wadham received this postcard [illustrated right] of the Art Room of the Boarding School of the Convent of the Cross, Ryde, written on August 20, 1913. It wishes her '*Bonne fete! Heureux Anniversaire!*'

(Convent Postcard from IOW Record Office)



Art Room.—Boarding School of The Convent of the Cross, Ryde, I.W.



Hazelwood opened in 1873 as the first purpose built YMCA Holiday Home in Britain. Outside in the wall was a Post Office Letter Box and they had no lack of postcards, exterior views, interior views, multiviews and even the young men taking part in events – was this a reminder for the young men to write home? In the First World War the House was used as a Red Cross Hospital and there are postcards of staff and patients from that period. Sadly, the property was destroyed by bombing in the Second World War.

Left: Postcard View of the Dining Room at Hazelwood (IOW Record Office)

Right: Postcard by William Hogg showing four hotels along Ryde Esplanade (Hilary Lloyd Collection)

Another leading Ryde photographer who turned his hand to postcards was William Hogg. He captured many Ryde street scenes on his glass plate negatives. His Post Office and Tobacconist shop was just at the bottom of George Street, where he had racks of postcards displayed outside. Being a Post Office of course they also sold stamps.

With thanks to Gordon Childs for information on Ryde photographers.

