

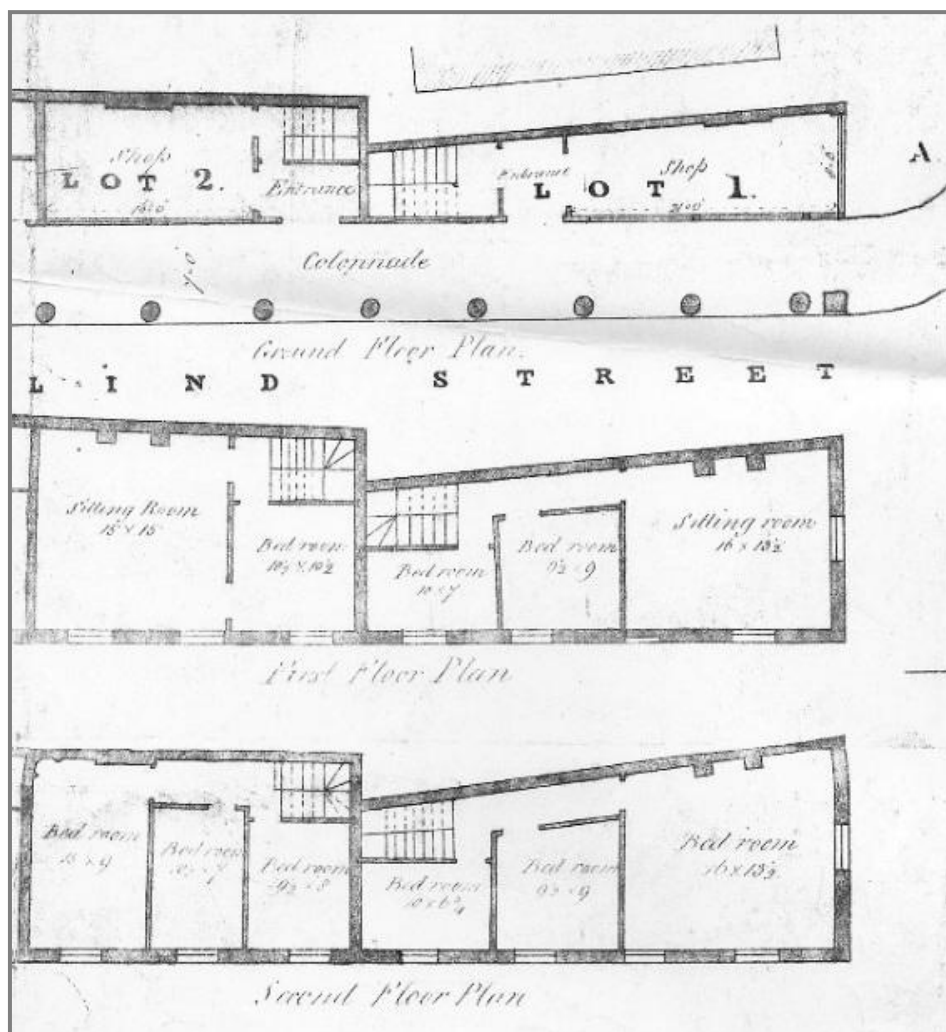
# BEYOND THE GRAVES

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## A is for Architect; B is for Builder . . .

As a town Ryde is rich in buildings designed by leading architects of the day. Some of the very early buildings were designed by James Sanderson, a pupil of Jeffry Wyatt [later Sir Jeffry Wyatville], such as the Town Hall, The Terrace and St. Thomas's Church. Other architects were Island born and they worked closely with the local building companies. On average there were 4 or 5 Architects listed in the Victorian Trade Directories for Ryde, some would have employed an assistant or two, probably providing training in the profession. In the same period there were 14 or 15 builders listed, who, in turn, employed many men from the town as either skilled craftsmen or labourers.

### WILLIAM & JOSIAH CUTLER



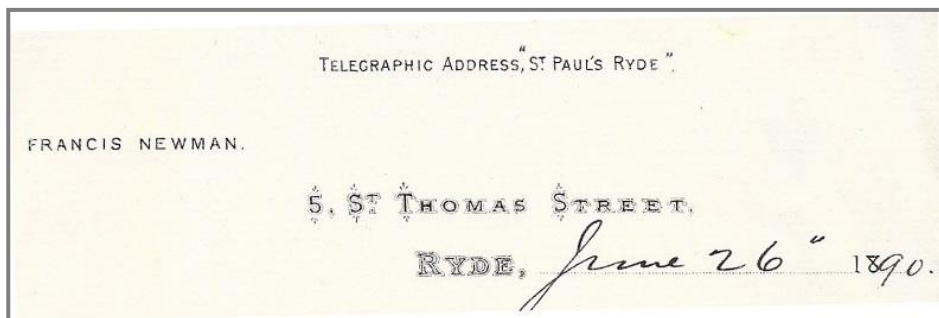
William Cutler came to Ryde from Swanage in Dorset in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a builder, in 1851, he employed 17 men. He was responsible for constructing many of Ryde's public buildings including the Victoria Rooms and The Colonnade, Lind Street. There were shops on the ground floor, with kitchens and cellars below, sitting rooms and bedrooms on the first floor and more bedrooms on the top floor. It would be some time before this type of property had bathroom facilities!

William died in 1871. One of his sons, Josiah, had taken over the family business, but had been retired for some time when, in 1899 he went into Mr Colverson's shop in the High Street, before dashing off down Star Street to catch a train, sadly he collapsed and died before help arrived. His obituary noted that he was prominent in the Temperance movement, even signing the pledge, to save an employee from the evils of drink.

Plans of the Colonnade - RSHG Roy Brinton Collection

## FRANCIS NEWMAN & SAMUEL ROGERS COCKS

Francis Newman's Architects business in Ryde was well established by the time he was appointed the Surveyor of the town in 1854 at an annual salary of £100. As part of the position he was also required to carry out a survey and map of Ryde. He also held other important positions in the town.



### Newman Bill Heading of 1890

In the 1860's Newman submitted plans for the Chapels at Ryde Cemetery [which were accepted and local builder Thomas Sibley undertook the construction]. Other designs included altering and extending James

### RSGH Roy Brinton Collection

Sanderson's Town Hall, and developing the town's water supply. He was also involved in the extension to the Cemetery in 1881. His business was run, by then, from the top of St. Thomas' Street.



In 1891 Newman took his assistant, who had worked for him for the past 19 years, Samuel Rogers Cocks, as his partner. Newman retired in 1896 and died in 1904. He was buried in Ryde Cemetery after a service at Holy Trinity, attended by a large number of Island Freemasons.

Cocks had boarded with the Newman's until his marriage. When his wife, Kate, died in 1921, local builder and undertaker, Charles Langdon, undertook the arrangements. The hearse was pulled by a pair of horses, with a carriage to follow. Including the coffin, all fees, 2 drivers and 6 bearers, the cost was £21 19s 6d.

[Invoice – RSGH Archive]

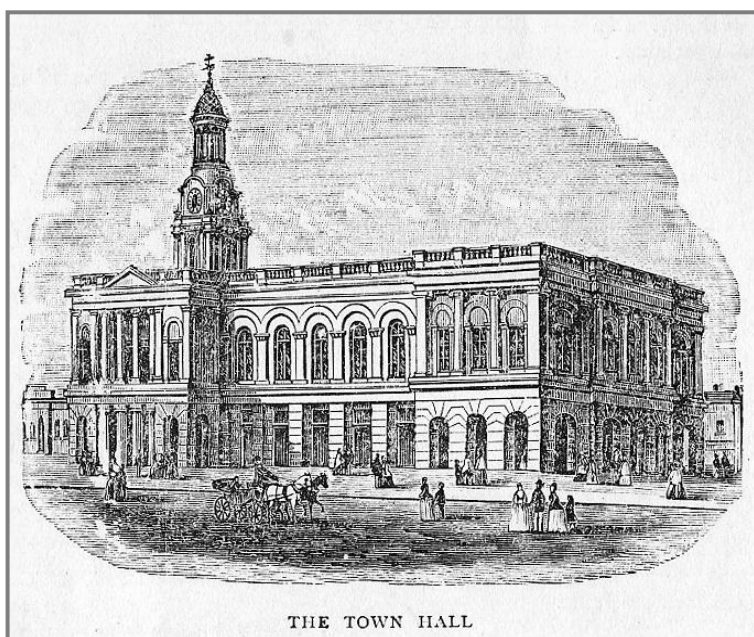
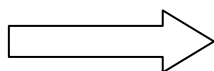
### Samuel Rogers Cocks

Studio Photograph by William Hogg of Ryde.

Samuel died at the advanced age of 96 years in 1946.

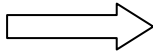
### RSGH Roy Brinton Collection

Ryde Town Hall from an engraving in Minerva's Guide of c.1892 showing the Clock Tower addition. [H. Lloyd]



This is a detail from a Postcard by the Ryde photographer, Frederick Broderick, of elegant Late-Victorian Villas in the Town. Do you know where the Postman was on his rounds?

Answer on the last page.

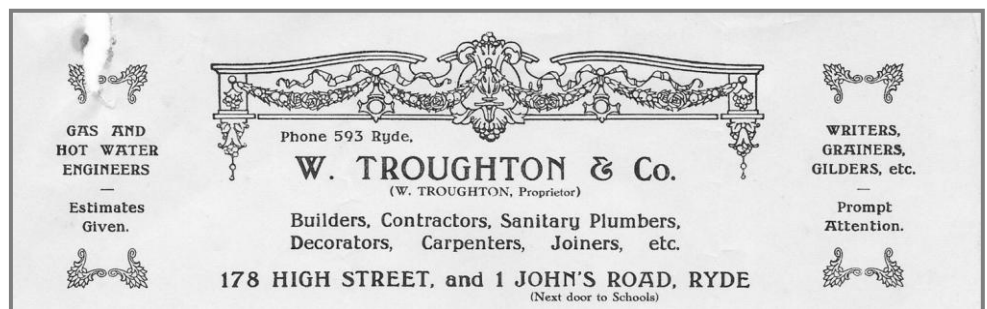


[Postcard H. Lloyd collection]



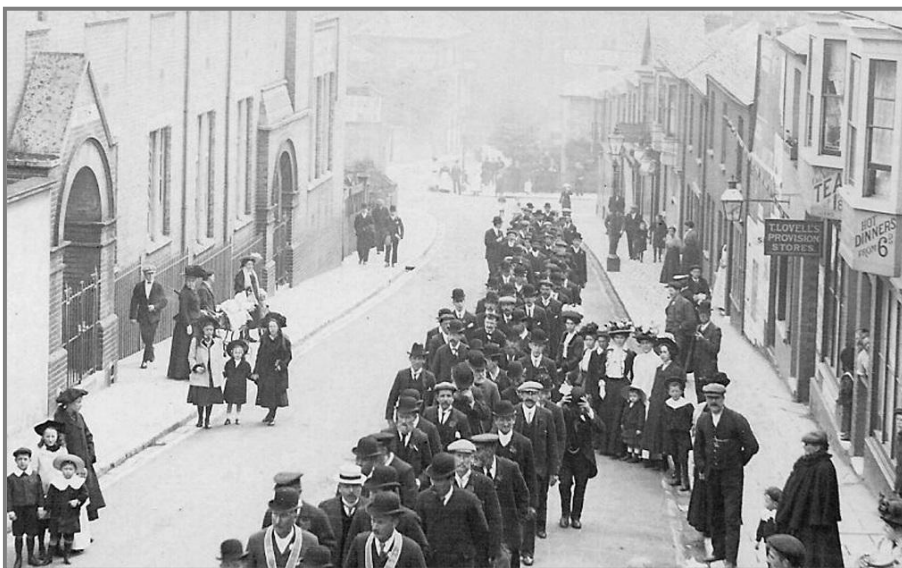
## W. TROUGHTON

Troughton & Co may have started trading as Ryde builders in the 1920's with premises in Albert Place and the High Street. Later they had an office and yard just below the School building at the top of St. John's Road. They also had workshops in Binstead, next to the Fleming Arms. In the 1930's they advertised in the Ryde Town Guides, offering free estimates with 'Special Attention Given at all times to Hotel and Boarding House Requirements'.



Troughton Bill Heading.

RSHG Roy Brinton Collection



A parade passes by the Board School at the top of St. John's Road, with Troughton's Builders Yard situated just below. On the right there is a row of modest terraced houses. 'Attrill's Provision Stores' are advertised on the dark sign.

Detail from a W. Hogg Postcard. [H. Lloyd collection]

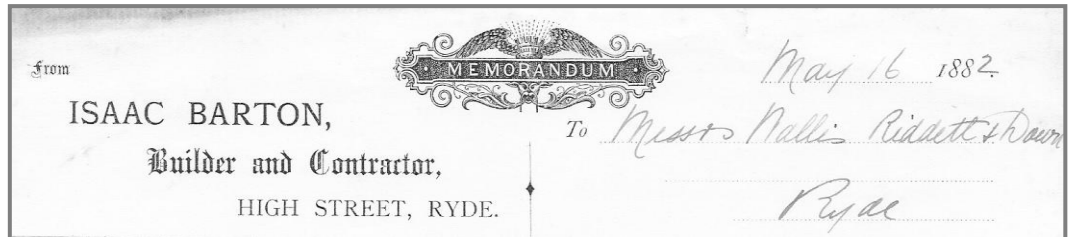


## ISAAC & JOHN BARTON

Isaac Barton was born in Ryde in 1834, and at the age of 14 was apprenticed for 7 years, to Mr Joseph Hansford. By the end of his apprenticeship he was earning 6s. a week, for which he worked a 6 am until 8 pm day, six days a week, with only Good Friday, Coronation Day and Christmas Day as holidays. Later in life he always rose at 5 am. He began his working life in Cowes, marrying a Cowes girl, before eventually returning to Ryde to work for Mr Dashwood. In the early 1860's he set up his own building business. One of his first important jobs was the YMCA building in Lind Street. Most of his work took place in Ryde, constructing many of the houses in Arthur Street and Queen's Road. He completely remodelled the Pier Hotel, inside and out, in just 3 months. After constructing the spire of All Saint's Church in 1883 he, personally, placed the vane on the top.

### Isaac Barton's Bill Heading,

1882.RSHG Roy  
Brinton Collection



**Illustration of the Foresters  
Hall drawn by John Barton  
for the IW Observer of 1897.**

**RSHG Archive Roy Brinton  
Collection**

Isaac was a total abstainer, abhorring drunkenness and gambling. He was always on the best terms with his employees, looking to improve their lot. He also served on many important Ryde Committees and was the town's mayor. He died at his home in Partlands Avenue in 1907.

Isaac and Mary's eldest son was John. He trained to be an architect under Francis Newman. John designed the new Foresters Hall, in Warwick Street, which was built by his father.

On Easter Monday 1897 the street was decorated with flags and thronged with people as two memorial stones were laid at the site where some old cottages had been demolished. The Volunteer Band played. The stones were laid by Miss Brigstocke, who donated £25, and the mayor, Ernest Groves, who gave 10 guineas. The silver trowels were supplied by Messrs. Woods.

The Hall was built of red brick with Bath stone dressings. Six steps led up to the door and entrance hall, which had access to lavatories, cloak rooms and stairs to the gallery. There were also kitchens and sculleries. The Hall was 60 ft. long, 32 ft. wide and 25 ft. high and could seat 800 people. The contract for its erection was £1,749. John Barton died in October 1920, while living with one of his sisters in Dover Street. He had been suffering

from Bright's disease for some time. Flags were flown at half-mast from public buildings in Ryde as he had been prominent in town life, connected with Ryde Carnival and had brought high class military bands to the town in the summer. There was a choral service at All Saint's before the cortege, led by the East Medina Lodge of Freemasons, went to the Cemetery. [Barton Information from IW Observer Articles & Obituaries – RSHG Archive.]



The Ryde Club in Spencer Road with the distinctive façade.

RSHG Roy Brinton Collection

## JAMES WALLIS

Thomas Hellyer, who died in March 1894, was probably one of Ryde's best known architects. The following month the Isle of Wight Observer reported that Mr J. Wallis had taken over Hellyer's business. Wallis had been trained by Hellyer and had managed the business for over 20 years due to Hellyer's infirmity.

The following year he drew up the plans for alterations and additions to Ryde infirmary. Six builders put in tenders and the Hospital Committee accepted that of Charles Langdon. Wallis lived most of his life in Spencer Road and when he died in 1930 the IW County Press noted that he had also been responsible for designing many Island Railway Stations as well as the Ryde Club in Spencer Road.

## CHARLES LANGDON

Several generations of the Langdon family were in the building trade. By 1841 James Langdon was recorded as a builder in Ryde. Details from the census of 1851 show he was based in the High Street, a married man, born in Portsmouth and employing 13 men. Living at home was his son, John, recorded as a mason. By the end of the decade White's directory listed both men at 46 High Street and in Player Street.

In the census twenty years later [1871] Ryde born John Langdon was a married man, aged 43, living in Player Street. He was a contractor employing 56 men. Also at home was his son, Charles, aged 11 years. He would be the next generation to take over the family business.

John died aged 51, in 1879. His widow seems to have run the business on a reduced scale with Charles, as the census of 1881 records her as employing just 8 men. An undated illustrated advert [Copy in RSHG Archive] for M.G. Langdon [late James & John Langdon] lists the extensive amount of work that could be undertaken. They were

*'Builders, Plumbers, Decorators, Gas Fitters and Contractors for House Repairs of Every Description'. All this from their Player Street premises, as well as being "Furnishing Undertakers". No order was too small – a single square of glass could be put in at a 'moments notice'.*

Charles died in 1944, aged 84, and a memorial to him was erected in St. Thomas's Church.

### Langdon Bill Heading of 1921

RSHG Roy Brinton  
Collection



## JOHN DENHAM

The Isle of Wight Observer of 25 April 1857 carried an advertisement for Beldornie Tower "*The residence is stone-built, of recent erection, and of a most pleasing style of architecture, with a tower of graceful elevation, built with red brick with stone dressings*". The builder was John Denham, listed in Pigot's Directory of 1844 as a mason of Star Street, Ryde. He had also built the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, as well as many of the residences in Pelham Fields.



**The south elevation of Beldornie Tower.**

### RSHG Roy Brinton Collection

The IW Observer's report of Ryde Petty Sessions in 1853 saw Denham fined 5 shillings plus the same in costs for obstructing the highway with timber at the bottom of Dover Street.

The same newspaper recorded John Denham's death in February 1861, at the age of 80 years. "*A real old Ryder ... unfortunately he had no education and as he kept most of his accounts in his head, it is not surprising that he did not die rich*".

It would seem that John Denham Junior didn't have a head for finance either as his bankruptcy was reported in the IW Observer in 1866, with debts amounting to £1,000. The cause being "*the executors of the late William Cox having refused to complete the purchase of a house they purchased of me*" John Denham Junior seemed to be more involved with paving and drainage in the town, as well as excavating the pit for the weigh bridge at the Market House.

## JOHN MEADER

- When his father died in 1857, John Meader took over the building business. He created many Ryde streets including Monkton Street, Melville Street, Upper West Street, Green Street and Argyll Street. In the 1880's he was employing as many as 70 men. He lived with his wife and two children at Balmoral Lodge, Player Street. After retirement in 1888 and the death of his wife he lived with his son, also a builder, at Cowes. At his funeral in March 1895 the past mayor, Isaac Barton, and the present mayor, Joseph Ellery, met the cortege in West Street.

- Census & IW Observer Obituary.

## HIRAM JENKINS

- In the 1870's and 1880's Hiram Jenkins was a builder and contractor in Surrey Street. In his early 50's he met a tragic death. Together with his wife, Jane, he had been on a trip to the Crystal Palace organised by the local Temperance Societies. On disembarking at Ryde Pier, he tried to return to the boat to find his wife. In the dark and the wet he mistook where the gangway was and fell into the water, striking his head on the steamer. Sadly he died within a few hours. His last project had been the large reservoir at Ashey.

- IW Observer Obituary.

ANSWER - Pellhurst Road

Sources: RSHG Archive, RSHG website, IW Observer & IW County Press and as listed in text.