

BEYOND THE GRAVES

Volume 13: Number 4: October 2018

AUCTIONEERS & LAWYERS ~ GOING; GOING; GONE!



A typical auction saleroom scene. Auctioneers developed their own individual styles, building up a rhythm of bids before knocking down the lot with the gavel.

[RSHG Roy Brinton Collection]

AUCTIONEERS.

See also Valuers.

Merryweather Geoffrey H.,
A.A.L.P.A. 28 Union st

**PITTIS SIR FRANCIS &
SON** (chartered), 1 & 2 The
Colonnade, Lind st. Telephone,
Ryde 3241

STEADMAN HARRY & CO. 65a,
Unionst. Tel. Ryde 2523

WALLIS, RIDDETT & CO. Town
Hall chambers, 10 Lind street.
Phone 2255/6. See advert

Kelly's Directory of 1951.

At the sale conducted by Messrs Coombes of the remaining portion of the effects at Melrose House, Belvedere Street, on Tuesday, were several items of interest, including a fine old inlaid mahogany buffett which realised £55 13s.: Chippendale wardrobe, £30; suite, 16½ guineas; black wood cabinet, £9; hot water dish and cover, £6; Bohemian ewer, £2 5s.; and a rare old print of Island interest, £2 5s.

as befitting a one-time mayor of the town, there were many moving tributes. Mr Sweetman called him 'a straightforward, honourable, and right-minded man.' [Obituary IW County Press 25 September 1909]

An advert for H.E. Cook of Cross Street - Kelly's IW Directory of 1910

Direct communication
with London Stock
Exchange.

Business in Local
Securities.

H. E. COOK & CO.

Auctioneers,
Valuers,
Surveyors, House
and Estate Agents,
13, Cross St., RYDE.

TELEPHONE No. 355 RYDE.

LIST OF AVAILABLE PROPERTIES FREE ON APPLICATION.

Property sales nearly always involved solicitors as well, in the case of Haylands Manor Estate it was Messrs Fardell. Advert in IW Observer 13 March 1922.

IW Times 15 August 1968
– Former Inn sold – At an auction on Thursday, Messrs. Francis Pittis and Son, submitted numbers eight and 10 Ashey Road for sale. Number eight was formerly the Swanmore Inn.

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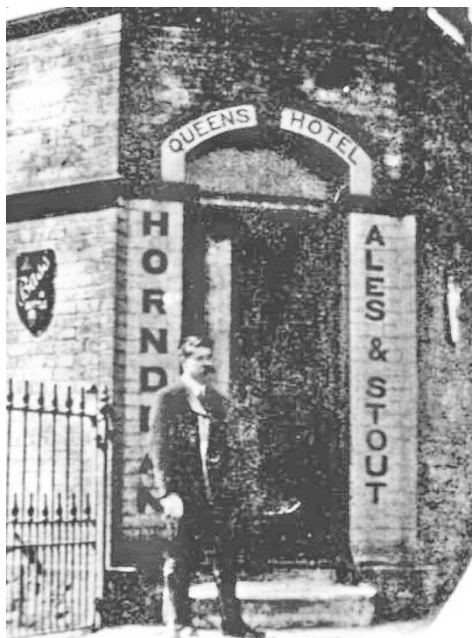
Adverts and reports abounded in the local newspapers for auctions. A report in the IW Observer dated 1 September 1917 for Messrs Coombes sale at Melrose House shows the prices achieved despite the War.

Alderman Albert Coombes died in 1909. In his early life he had been connected with the firm of Marvin & Sons, auctioneers in Union Street. Around 1874 he started up in business with his brother forming the well-known firm of A.J. & W. Coombes in Monkton Street, before they moved to Cross Street. At his death,

ON THURSDAY NEXT MAY 18th
Sale of
THE HAYLANDS MANOR ESTATE
RYDE.
Including Haylands Manor House, grounds,
stabling and meadow with vacant possession
and about 24½ acres of valuable land, with
long frontages to road.
Sale at Town Hall Chambers, Ryde, at 3
o'clock.
Vendors Solicitors, Messrs. Fardell, Ryde.

White's Directory of Hampshire & Isle of Wight – 1878

SCOTT John Edmund, auctioneer, appraiser,
upholsterer and cabinet maker, house agent and agent
for Phoenix Insurance Co. 75 Union-street, Ryde.



An advert appeared in the IW Observer of 7 September 1889 placed by Messrs. Wallis, Riddett & Down for the auction in one lot of No's 34 & 35 Park Road, built of stone and white brick, each being a shop with plate glass windows and living accommodation. No 34 was let to Miss Knott at a yearly rent of £17, No 35 was 'in hand'. Also in the lot was the adjoining 'Queen's Hotel'. The auction was to take place at Yelf's Hotel at 7 pm on Thursday 26th September.

Left – The Queen's Hotel,
[Kevin Mitchell]

Right – A circa 1960's
Way Riddett 'Sold' sign
[Hilary Lloyd]

Way Riddett's former premises in Lind Street had once been the Victoria Rooms, a venue for balls, concerts, etc. – [RSHG]



Another former premises of Way Riddett was the Pantechicon in Union Lane The IW County Press of 31 January 1914 had an advert advising it had been purchased by Chaplins.



THE
**ISLE OF WIGHT
PANTECHNICON,**
UNION ROAD, RYDE.

January 1st, 1914.

NOTICE.

MESSRS. CHAPLIN & CO.
beg to inform the residents of the Isle of Wight that they have purchased from MESSRS. WALLIS, RIDDETT, & Co., Town-hall Chambers, Ryde, the above

FURNITURE WAREHOUSE,
and that they are in a position to deal with all kinds of

Removals, Warehousing, &c.
All communications sent to the address below will receive prompt and careful attention.

Removals by Road, Rail, and Sea
carried out expeditiously by Experienced Packers.

CHAPLIN & CO.,
1 Pier Street, Ryde,
Isle of Wight.

The Pantechicon being demolished
to make way for Hawk House flats.
[1986 photograph Ann Barrett]



In White's 1878 Directory of Hampshire & the Isle of Wight John Alfred Purnell is listed as auctioneer, upholster and undertaker of 7, High Street, Ryde and at Sandown. The census of 1881 records him as aged 42, with his wife and 8 children, the two eldest, Alfred and James, assisting in their father's business. He was active in public matters and was one of the originators of Ryde Regatta and the Esplanade bicycle races. Due to ill health he and his wife went to Beulah Spa, Upper Norwood, but sadly he died of heart disease on 6 October 1884 at just 46.
[Obituary IW Observer 11 October 1884]

J. A. PURNELL,
AUCTIONEER AND VALUER,
UPHOLSTERER AND GENERAL FURNISHER,
Carpet Warehouse and Bedding Manufactory.

**LARGE AND WELL-ARRANGED SHOW ROOMS,
RYDE,—8, HIGH STREET—RYDE,**

Axminster, Wilton, Brussels, Tapestry, Kidderminster, and Felt CARPETS.
EVERY DESCRIPTION OF CABINET FURNITURE.
LINOLEUM, MATTINGS, CURTAINS, VENETIAN AND OTHER BLINDS, &c.
Funerals conducted. Valuations made for Probate, Transfer, and Mortgage.

AND AT VECTIS HOUSE, HIGH STREET, SHANKLIN.

J.A. Purnell advert
[IW Observer
22 September 1883]

Purnell & Purnell's
advert for the
auction of fruit trees,
etc. to be held at
their premises
[IW Observer 21 November 1903]

Messrs. PURNELL and PURNELL.

**MANOR AUCTION ROOMS, HIGH
STREET, RYDE.**

Sale of Fruit Trees, Shrubs, etc.

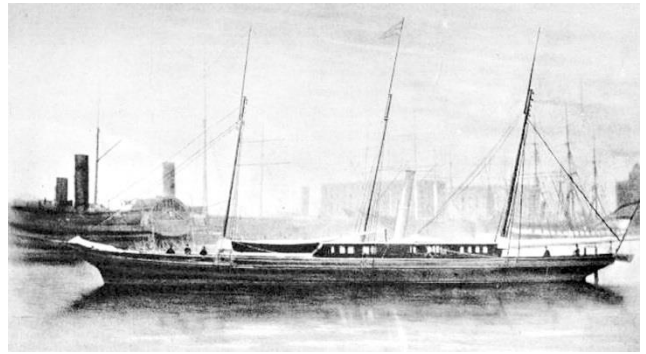
MESSRS. PURNELL and PURNELL
will SELL by AUCTION at their
Large Sale Rooms, as above, on
THURSDAY, November 26th, 1903, at
2 o'clock precisely, a quantity of trained
and pyramidal

FRUIT TREES
(finest varieties, fruiting trees), exhibition
roses, gooseberry and currant bushes,
conifers and other ornamental trees,
evergreen and flowering shrubs, ornamental
shrubs in pots, etc., etc.

On View the Afternoon Previous and
Morning of Sale. Catalogues can be
obtained at the Auction and Valuation
offices, 7 and 8, High Street, Ryde.

Almost anything could be sold by auction. In 1859 John Lancaster, who made his money mainly from coal and iron, purchased the yacht 'Deerhound'. In 1864 he became a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron at Cowes. Just four years later the yacht was auctioned by E. Marvin & Sons at the Pier Hotel.

Images of the 'Deerhound' and owner John Lancaster [Wikipedia] Pier Hotel [RSHG]



W.H. Wallis may not have sold anything quite as prestigious as Landseer's 'Monarch of the Glen' [Image Wikipedia], but they did auction quality artwork as seen by their advert of 18 July 1868 in the IW Observer.



TOWN HALL, RYDE.
Water-color Drawings, Chromolithographs and Engravings, consigned for sale.
W. H. WALLIS will SELL by AUCTION, at the Town-hall, on TUESDAY, July 28th, 1868, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon and at 6 o'clock in the evening, a choice assortment of WATER-COLOR DRAWINGS, CHROMOLITHOGRAPHS, and ENGRAVINGS, from pictures by some of the most eminent masters of modern times, including specimens by Sir E. Landseer, Rowbotham, A. Penley, McArthur, Birkett, Foster, T. M. Richardson, Tidey, B. W. Leader, A. Herbert, W. West, Wainwright, A. Harding, Cox, Roberts, J. C. Reed, and others. — On view at the Town-hall the day preceding and morning of sale.

William Harry Wallis was born at Bembridge. After serving an apprenticeship he set himself up, in 1848, as an auctioneer and upholsterer in the High Street. He was an excellent auctioneer, being very good at repartee. He was active on the local council, but declined the position of mayor.

In later life he liked to paint scenes of his childhood, an artistic talent that had no doubt helped him in his business. He died at his home in Star Street in April 1893, aged 72. [Obituaries IW Times 27 April 1893 & IW Observer 29 April 1893]



An example of B.W. Leader's work, 'After the Rain'
[Image Wiki. Commons]

In the 1861 census George Riddett was listed as 54 years old and born in Ryde. He was an upholsterer and auctioneer at 68, Union

Street and employed 4 men and 1 boy. Ten years later he was employing one of his sons, William Hammond Riddett in the business.

In the censuses of 1871 to 1891 John Down, born in Kent, was recorded as a house agent at 22, Union Street. He died in 1907.

White's Directory of 1878 lists Wallis, Riddett & Down. Many of their auctions were for the contents of properties and detailed catalogues were produced such as this one of 1894 running to several pages It began on the premises 'commencing at HALF-PAST ONE o'clock, punctually.' [Hilary Lloyd]

Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle 16 January 1886

'On Tuesday evening at the Crown Hotel, Messrs Wallis, Riddett & Down submitted for sale some freehold property at Oakfield, in the occupation of Mr Garrett, comprising bakehouse, stables, &c. garden, a six-roomed cottage, and an off licence for beer. The whole was purchased for £420.'

BY ORDER OF THE ADMINISTRATORS OF THE LATE MISS LOUISA UNWIN.

AMPTHILL VILLA,
ST. JOHN'S,
— RYDE, I.W. —

A CATALOGUE
OF THE WELL-MADE
FURNITURE
AND EFFECTS, INCLUDING

A WALNUT DRAWING ROOM SUITE IN SHIRAZ DAMASK,
Ormolu and Marble Clocks, Ornamental China,
A COTTAGE PIANOFORTE IN ROSEWOOD CASE,
6½ octaves by Evans & Co.
Rosewood liquor case, and dressing case,
Walnut Chiffonniere Bookcase with silvered panels
and a mahogany 4ft. ditto with glazed doors, rosewood pedestal
secretaire chest of drawers,
ABOUT 850 VOLUMES OF BOOKS,
most of which are well-bound, Bagatelle Board,
A DINING TABLE AND ENCLOSED SIDEBOARD,
of mahogany, Six Chairs with stuffed seats and six rosewood ditto,
Couches and Lounge Chairs,
BORDERED BRUSSELS AND KIDDERMINSTER CARPETS,
Iron and brass French and Arabian bedsteads with bedding,
Mahogany Bedroom Furniture,
including a 4ft. 6in. wardrobe, a large painted wardrobe, cheval glass,
A Small Quantity of Silver Plate, Plated Articles and Household Linen,
a valuable Lowestoft tea and coffee service and a gilt and painted
ditto, the usual requisites of the domestic offices and numerous
other effects, which will be Sold by Auction, by Messrs.

Wallis, Riddett and Down,
ON THE PREMISES, AS ABOVE,
ON FRIDAY, JUNE 22nd, 1894,
Commencing at HALF-PAST ONE o'clock, punctually.
May be viewed on the preceding day. Catalogues may be had of
The Auctioneers, Ryde, Sandown and Shanklin.
The House to be Let Unfurnished—Apply to the Auctioneers



The IW Observer 13 June 1868 copied a snippet from a London newspaper – ‘ ‘In 1700 there was no lawyer in the Isle of Wight. In 1588 one came to live there, and was driven out of the Island. The Islanders at that period having no legal business to attend to at Winchester or London, seldom left the Island.’ Our ancestors certainly lived in glorious times.’

Scales of Justice - Wikipedia

Insert – Solicitors listed in the 1951 Kelly's Directory

SOLICITORS.
Marked thus * are Commissioners to Administer Oaths.

- *Adams Geoffrey Clifford, The Hermitage, West street. Telephone, Ryde 2558
- Bailey & Adams, The Hermitage, West street. Tel. Ryde 2558
- *Eldridge Jas. & Sons (incorporated with Strattons), 17 Lind st
- *Fardell Geo. 2 Market st
- *Fardell J. G. 2 Market st
- *Fardells, 2 Market st
- Gunner Wilson & Jerome, High st. Bembridge
- Merrill Crichton LL.B. 3 St. Thomas st
- *Robinson John & Jarvis, Portland ho. 18 Melville street. Tel. 2201/2202
- *Vincent Charles Worsley, 4 St. Thomas street. Phone 2046
- *Webster Regnd. E. A. 2 Market st

SOLICITORS at Ryde listed

in the 1910 Kelly's Directory for the Isle of Wight

Those marked thus * are Commissioners to administer Oaths

DASHWOOD Alfred, 1 St. Thomas street Ryde. *
ELDRIDGE James and Sons, 17 Lind street, Ryde. *
FARDELL George, Market street, Ryde. *
FARDELL John, Market street, Ryde. *
RATCLIFFE Edgar R., 14 Lind street, Ryde.
ROBINSON John, "Ashburton," 12 Melville street, Ryde.
THIRKELL William Henry Percy Fairclough, 3 St Thomas street, Ryde. *
VINCENT Charles Greaves, 4 St. Thomas street & Town Hall, Lind street, Ryde. *
VINCENT Charles Worsley, 4 St. Thomas street & Portland House, 18 Melville street, Ryde. *

*Ryde S.W.
19th Jan'y 1864*

Sir

I am acting for the owners of the Theatre which is let to Mr Williams Power of Portsmouth Nine Merchants and is by him sublet every season and to whom your application should be made

I am Sir

Yours Obedt

J. Henry Hearn

per 21st

H. Lidner Esq

An example from the Letter Books of John Henry Hearn courtesy of the IW County Record Office. Dated 19 January 1864 they are dealing with the leasing of the theatre.

John Henry Hearn was the head of one of the oldest firms of solicitors on the Island and was frequently engaged as legal advisor of the governing body of Ryde. He was taken ill while attending an auction sale in Newport. He then left some of his duties to his son-in-law, Mr J.W. Fardell. Hearn died fifteen months later at his home in St James' St., in his fifty-fifth year.

[Obituary Hampshire Telegraph 18 October 1871]



The Fardell's were a Lincolnshire family. John Wilson Fardell marrying J.H. Hearn's daughter. Both John Wilson and his son, John, were highly esteemed figures in the public life of the Island. John was secretary to the fund for the children's ward at the hospital. He died in 1938 at his home, Morton Manor, Brading.

John Wilson Fardell [near right] & John Fardell [far right]
[IW County Record Office]

TELEPHONE Nos 2238 & 2239.
TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS,
FARDELLS, RYDE.

G. FARDELL.
J. G. FARDELL.
R. E. A. WEBSTER.

FARDELLS,
Solicitors.

*Market Street,
Ryde, I.W.*

IW Observer 28 August 1886 – General Phillips deceased – ‘All persons having claims against the estate of the above are requested to send particulars on or before Saturday the 4th day of September next to us, the undersigned, solicitors to the executrix. Dated, this 26th day of August 1886, Fardell & Dashwood, The Offices, Market-street, Ryde.’

Fardell's headed notepaper, 1950. [RSHG Roy Brinton Collection]

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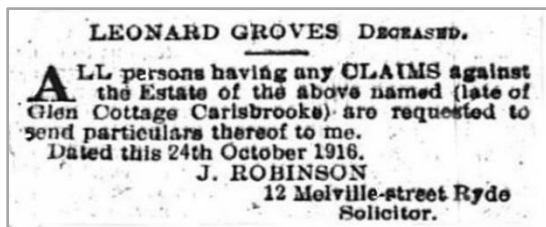
Henry Dyson Brooke, lately the organist of St. Michael's, Swanmore, well known in Ryde as "Dr. Brooke", the warden of St. Augustine's College, who was declared bankrupt in June last, is now engaged as the warden organist and choirmaster at St. John's Church, Torquay. Many admiring friends may be glad to know of the "*Doctor's*" present whereabouts. No doubt local solicitors were also interested in his whereabouts and the College was advertised to let by Marvins in the IW Observer 3 May 1884.

William Ratcliffe was born in 1820 in Derbyshire. In 1841 he was admitted as a solicitor and practised in London for nine years. Coming to Ryde in 1850 he entered into partnership with Mr Cole, the surviving partner of Cole & Russell. Mr Russell had not long previously lost his life through being accidentally thrown from his trap while driving from Sandown. Then, during the parliamentary election of 1851, Mr Cole was '*assaulted by a gang of roughs in Brigstocke Terrace, and in the melee was hit on the head by a brick.*' Mr Ratcliffe continued the business alone (in fact even living at No 7, Brigstocke Terrace for a time) until his death in 1908, in his 88th year, one of the oldest practising solicitors in the country.

He was solicitor to the Ryde Pier Company and the Ryde Gas Company, as well as honorary solicitor to the Royal Victoria Yacht Club. When the Ryde Working Men's Conservative and Unionist Club was established he assisted in the legal work without charge. His obituary stated '*Mr Ratcliffe was at all times the most courteous and kindly of men ... that type of English gentleman which belonged to another generation ... honourable in all things.*'

[Obituary IW Observer 27 June 1908]

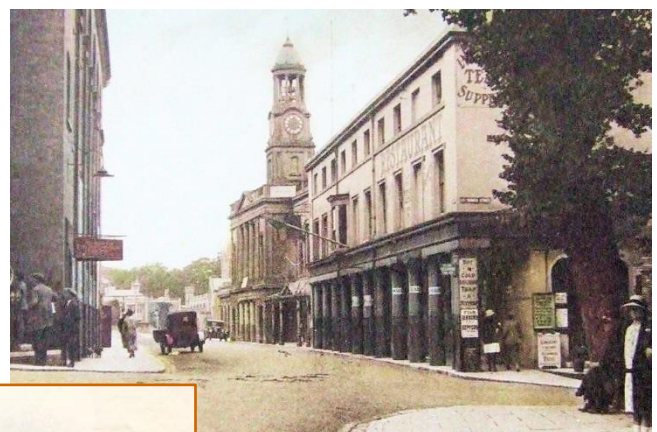
Solicitors placed adverts in the newspapers for claimants against deceased estates to come forward, such as this one by J. Robinson, IW County Press 4 November 1916 and the rather more detailed one by W.E. Ratcliffe, IW County Press 7 November 1903.



Postcard of Melville Street, showing Portland House, premises of Charles Worsley Vincent and then of Robinson & Jarvis.

Postcard of Lind Street, where Eldridges had their offices.

[Both from Ann Barrett's collection]



Eldridge's headed notepaper, 1949. [RSHG Roy Brinton Collection]

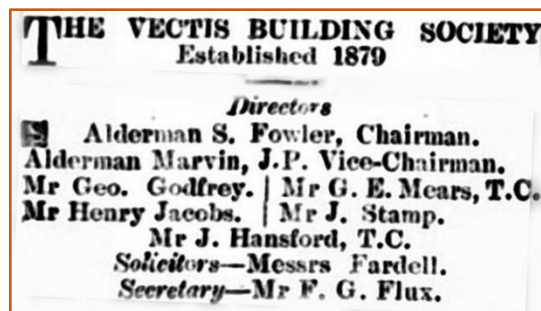


Excerpt from a Letter to the Editor IW Observer 10 December 1887

I went into a lawyer's office the other day, and to my delight got safely out again. They are all LL D's, but what that stands for, who can tell. Someone said that these mystic letters mean two for the lawyer and one for the poor debtor who may go to him. There is another sort of lawyer I believe, and he is a D C L; he practises in the Court of Final Appeal, and I understand the letters stand for the Devil Comes at Last, which is Doubtful Civil Law.

Some mischievous wag one night pulled down a turner's sign, and put it over a lawyer's door. In the morning it read: "All sorts of turning and twisting done here."

Local societies all had to appoint solicitors such as the Vectis Building society
[IW Observer 9 March 1901]



IW Observer 12 Feb 1869 left.

Crichton Merrill came to the Island as a child and attended Ryde School. After obtaining his law degree at the London Law School he was articled with Roach Pitts in Newport before establishing his own practise in Ryde, later moving to St. Thomas' Street.

He joined the IW Law Society in 1935 and was later their president. He died at his home in Newnham Road, Binstead, in 1963. He had been a member of Binstead Methodist Church and active in local politics.

Following Mr Merrill's death, Sir Charles Baring paid one of many tributes to him for *'the high integrity he always displayed. He was zealous in promoting his client's case but he always maintained the high standard of professional duty.'*



[Obituary IW County Press 8 June 1963]

Photograph of Mr Merrill courtesy of his grandson, Chris Merrill.



Former Premises of Gray, Merrill & Co., St. Thomas's Street.
[Photo Tracy Welstead]

Death of Mr C.G. Vincent – IW County Press 9 November 1929

The late Mr Vincent came to Ryde in 1864 as partner to his cousin, Mr Jonathan Worsley. He was Ryde Town Clerk from 1893 to 1920. He took a deep interest in Church matters. At his death he was, with Mr Robey F. Eldridge of Newport, one of the last perpetual Commissioners in the country. He left a widow, one son, Mr C.W. Vincent, solicitor, and eight daughters.

IW Times 19 December 1935

It is with deep regret that we have to report the death of Mr William Percy Fairclough Thirkell ... [he] was 77 years of age, [and] had been in active practise as a solicitor in the town for over half a century. ... Two of his greatest hobbies were music and Dickens. In his youth he was a prominent sportsman. He headed the Ryde batting averages. He was a member of Ryde Rowing Club, and a keen cyclist in the early days of cycles. ... A man of upright character and unfailing courtesy.

The IW Observer of 1 July 1893 quoted from a piece in the *'Sporting Times'* about a chemist who overdid a prescription and had been tried for manslaughter. When cross-examined by the junior counsel he said "We all make mistakes sometimes – even you lawyers." Junior counsel replied "That may be, sir, but consider that a chemist's mistake is generally buried six feet underground." The Chemist answered "Just so, sir, while a lawyer's mistake sometimes swings six feet in the air!"