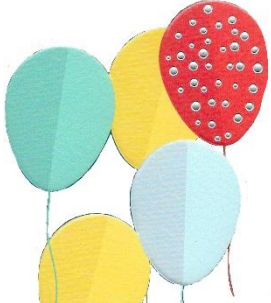




RYDE SOCIAL HERITAGE GROUP

Beyond the Graves

Volume 17: Number 2: April 2022



CELEBRATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RSHG

The Ryde Social Heritage Group was formed by a small group of friends in 2002 and became a formally constituted Group in 2005. The RSHG exists to research, document and share information about the history of Ryde, including the development of the town, the people, their lives and deaths, businesses and entertainments.

From Small Beginnings ...

Sometime in the summer of 2002 Janette Gregson went to a meeting of those concerned about the West Street Cemetery, and had the good fortune to sit next to Sally-Ann Garrett. They became friends, and also members of the committee of the Friends of Ryde Cemetery for a short time. As their objectives differed from the Friends, Janette and Sally-Ann became determined to carry on with the things they believed important with regard to the Cemetery – preserving the rich heritage that can be found before it completely disappears. Janette began to record the monumental inscriptions from the Old Parish Cemetery, while Sally-Ann, who had carried out a great deal of research into the history of the Cemetery, began to write up her notes. They set up a website and had a piece in the Ryde Beacon, which led to Kathie-Ann joining them.

[Extracted from a report by Janette Gregson]



The 'Transcribing Troupe'
in the Cemetery
28 April 2007

Project Launch Meeting with
President Roy Brinton and
Sally-Ann Garrett
21 March 2006



The volunteers adding records to the new website at the
Ryde Development Trust Offices in Union Lane.
28 January 2006

On 10 November 2007 the 4,000th individual record was added to the Group's website. The transcribing group included 'Bubbles' [Rosemary Smith], Maisie Kitching, Rosemary Robinson, Diana Riach, Kate McDonnell, Liz Graves and Rachael Mead.



David Earle leading the Transcribing Group 11 March 2007

In the Cemetery ...

The Open Day
9 September 2007
with a gazebo set up in
front of Janette's house.



In 2008 the Mapping Team of leader David Earle, Lydia Jackson and Stephen Day completed 30 maps for the Old Cemetery, which were put online, a major achievement.

The tree survey with Jim, Sally and David
20 October 2007

24 March 2008. Unveiling of the
Interpretation Panel, with Janette,
Maisie, and onlookers, including Al
Rowe [centre in purple] who did the
art work for the panel and also
drew the audio trail map.



David Earle
'The Happy Mapper'
In 2008



Colin Pope led 37 people on a
fungi walk, 10 November 2015.
He described Ryde Cemetery as
a pastoral haven. Many varieties
of waxcaps were found, as well
as more unusual species
including Smokey Spindles and
Funnel Caps.



Bird Walk with
President Richard Smout
April 2017



In 2016 Bill Shepard and Sue Blackwell led a nature walk. Bill was
delighted to find the variety of evergreens doing well, some from the
original planting, making them around 150 years old.

The RSPB Big Garden
Bird Watch is an annual
event.
Colin and Barbara Hunt
taking part in the
Cemetery, January 2018



Projects & Events...



Celebrating the Book Launch in 2008

The Changing Face of Ryde
Exhibition in Ryde Library 2013

The RSHG took part in Ryde History Week from 3 to 9 May 2009, along with other local groups. The Group welcomed nearly 1,000 visitors to St Thomas' who were amazed how much work the Group had produced. Monday was Victorian day, with members dressing up. Children were encouraged to do the same from a dressing up box. There were talks and events through the week. David demonstrated the website and visitors were able to find information on their families and locate graves in the Cemetery.



Ryde History Week May 2009
with Tony Gale [above right]

The official opening of the Heritage and Learning Centre took place in Ryde Cemetery, 9 September 2010, and over the next two days over 1,000 people visited the exhibitions in the three chapels – the North Chapel had the RSHG display and the Cemetery Heritage Trail specially written for the event.

2017 Archive day at Ryde Library,
with Jenny Stay, Ann Barrett,
Shelagh Gaylard, Barbara Hunt
and Richard Smout,

Together with Living Links the Group launched a Heritage Audio Trail in 2010. It took two years to complete. Starting in Lind Street it takes the walker via Union Street and the Esplanade to the Canoe Lake, and back up St Thomas Street to the Church. With 17 information stops it could take 2 hours to complete.



Following a successful bid to the Local Heritage Initiative the RSHG held an evening event at the George Street Centre on 21 March 2006 to launch the project about the social history of Ryde. Almost 150 attended. A lot had been achieved over the past two years, but this was the first big exhibition, so every effort was made to type up stories and enhance photographs.

On 7 June 2008 over 100 guests attended Ryde High School's Studio Theatre to launch the RSHG's major publication *'Ryde's Heritage, Our Town, Your Histories'*. There was an exhibition and various folders to browse through. Ann Barrett, leader of the Research Group, showed the website. Janette Gregson, chairperson, welcomed everyone and described the Group's activities, paying tribute to the late Les Barrett and also to Sally-Ann Garrett. She thanked people involved in the book, Roy Brinton, Liz Graves, Rachael Mead, Ann KcKechnie, Tony Gale, Carol Strong, David Earle and Ann Barrett. The evening ended with a talk by Roy Brinton.



The theme of the 2011 Heritage Open Day at the Cemetery was 'Oh, I do like to be beside the Seaside!' The usual suspects worked hard on researching, collating photographs, finding memorabilia and creating displays, even a tableau of a seaside scene, complete with sand.

Photos 'The Usual Suspects' and the seaside tableaux.

A Royal Tea in the Cemetery in 2012.
The Christmas Drop-In Day in 2016 at the Cemetery, with Dave Bushell on the key board.



Dr Nick Barratt and the Heritage Open Day in September 2012



The team worked hard to clean the dis-used church of St Thomas' and set up the displays for visitors to enjoy. Things to see at the event included the display boards, research folders and even an attractive display of doll's houses echoing Ryde of the past.

This special event at St Thomas' Church had a very special guest - Dr Nick Barratt, editor in chief of 'Your Family History' magazine, historian, author and broadcaster. After a guided tour of the exhibition with Janette, they went to the Heritage and Learning Centre in the Cemetery to see what had been achieved in the previous ten years. After lunch with Shelagh and Ann, he gave a talk 'Behind the Scenes, Family History and the Media'.



Community Archives & Heritage
Sustained Achievement Award

Awards ...

Over the years the RSHG has received many awards including the Community Archives & Heritage national award, above, in 2015, and also an award for Sustained Achievement in the same year. In 2011 the Group was runner-up in the Community Action Awards, but in 2012 won the National Award for Most Inspirational Community Archive.

Meet the Residents ...



Group members in character:

Derek Warman as Michael Maybrick 2012 [above]

The Home Front 2014 [right]

At Cornelia Heights Residential Home in 2015 [below right]

At a Havenstreet Country Women meeting 2018 [below]



Waiting for the show to begin in the Cemetery



The characters turned up at various other venues including Seaview Cricket Club; the IW Crematorium Open Day; IW Family History Society; Ryde Library; Monkton Arts; Elim Senior Circle and many more.



Education & School Visits...

Year 5 from Greenmount Primary School visited the Cemetery on 29 June 2016 as part of their Victorian Studies. Their activities included a guided tour of the Cemetery, map reading showing the Cemetery and the growth of Ryde, and seeing the history of Ryde exhibition. Looking at graves of eminent Victorians on Millionaire's Row, with Ann Barrett and Arthur Williams, proved popular. Dave Bushell led the cross hunt, identifying different styles and discussing the symbolism.



Greenmount Primary School using the RSHG computers in the North Chapel, 2016 [above]

Pupils from Dover Park at work in the Cemetery, 2011 [left]



Haylands Primary School visit for their Victorian Studies in 2015. Learning about Victorian life and working on a project.



Tony, Dave and Ann with Ryde Academy at the Aspire 12 July 2017

Out and About ...

Some of the Group's other outings included Quarr Abbey, Ryde Fire Station, the Bus Museum, Briddlesford Farm and St Michael's Church in Swanmore.



Exhibiting at Party on the Pier
31 March 2012



Summer Outings - to St Mildred's, Whippingham July 2013 [top]

At Carisbrooke Castle 13 November 2019 [above left]

Jill and Poppy at the Postal Museum 2014 [above right]



The Group took part in Party on the Green for the first time in 2019. It was hard work, but people came to chat and share reminiscences, even to share photographs.



In 2014 Janette received a letter from the Lord Lieutenant of the Island inviting her and a guest to one of Her Majesty's Garden Parties at Buckingham palace. This was in recognition of the work carried out by the Ryde Social Heritage Group as a voluntary local history group. Carol and Janette at the Palace.

The Future ...

After the Ryde Social Heritage Group provided six weeks of training for the Friends of Northwood Cemetery for their restoration project, the Group is now supporting the Methodist Church in Garfield Road with their Lottery Grant.

The Group is now involved with the 3-year Heritage Action Zone project for Ryde High Street.

Volunteers continue to research at the IW Record Office and the IW Crematorium.

Quarterly meetings are held at the George Street Centre.

The Resource Centre in the Cemetery is open for Coffee mornings, and, of course, for research, as well as other activities such as the RSPB Birdwatch.



Kate, Carol and Ann working at the Crematorium in 2016



The Quarterly Themed Magazines can be found on the Website from January 2010, when Carol Strong was editor, to the most recent, with photos, adverts, snippets, etc., sourced by Ann and put together by Hilary. The Website continues to grow, not only with grave research, but Photo of the Month, Looking Back, etc., all thanks to Ann and her dedicated volunteers.



The proposed restoration of the plaque commemorating the sinking of the Royal George is a new project. Displays boards, like this one for 2015 Regency Ryde, continue to be put together for members and visitors' enjoyment.

