



# RYDE SOCIAL HERITAGE GROUP

## Beyond the Graves

Volume 18: Number 3: July 2023

### SMALL BUSINESSES IN RYDE ~ THE UP'S & THE DOWN'S

#### IW Observer 23 March 1861

Awful State of Things - It is well known that things are at present very dull in Ryde. On enquiring of several respectable tradespeople in two of the busiest streets in Ryde, as to what their daily receipts amounted to, at neither of the two shops alluded to, were they taking more than a trumpery half-a-crown a day, and at one shop they sometimes took perhaps ninepence one day and fourpence three farthings the next, and so on.

#### HARRY WOLFE ~ Fishmonger

##### IW County Press 1903

Bloaters sailed through the air in Ryde one evening as Mr Wolfe, a local fishmonger, let his hair down as Christmas 1902 approached. Refreshed and invigorated by repeated visits to a nearby public house, he provided an entertaining sideshow for late night shoppers as he sold his fish from the pavement in Ryde High Street. At the same time, he managed to add a new word to the English language.

H G Wolfe's Shop  
Roy Brinton Collection

1901 census entry for Harry Wolfe  
and his, no doubt, long suffering  
family in Ryde High Street



##### Extracted from the IW Observer 22 February 1903:

Jesse Baldwin licensee of the 'Rosemary Branch', Ashey Road, testified in court that Harry Wolfe, fishmonger, entered the pub on Saturday afternoon asking for a whiskey and lemon. The defendant [who hadn't appeared in court] then went into the tap room and 'capsized the whole show'. Baldwin thought Wolfe would kill everyone there. Threats to split each other's skulls with a poker were made. When a passing police constable was called in Wolfe was 'as quiet as a lamb'. Wolfe had been subpoenaed the previous Monday, but had been too drunk to give evidence then, and had also been seen drunk that morning. As he had five previous convictions he was fined £1, or 21 days.

Harry George Wolfe died at Westminster Hospital, London, 25 August 1906, aged 40.

Harry G Wolfe	Head	4	35	X	Fishmonger Shop	non-assessable	also	Leatherington
Rose	Wife	4	33	/				Infirmary
Wimpsey M. G.	Daughter		11	/				Newport
Reginald H. G.	Son	8	10	/				do do
Lynsey G. G.	Son		8	/				do do
Beatrice L. G.	Daughter		3	/				do do

#### IW Observer 30 August 1862

John Cooper, formerly a miller in Ryde, in good circumstances, but is now not only reduced but totally blind. Through a box being placed on the pavement in front of Mr Newman's shop in Angelsea Street, ostensibly to prevent fresh paint from being injured, Mr Cooper fell and broke his arm in two places.

In 1859 James Woodrow, innkeeper, of the Crown Inn, was bankrupt. Crown Hotel and Tap RSHG



#### IW Observer 26 March 1904

Mr E. Bennett, wheelwright, of St. John's Road, Ryde, has recently had on view a splendidly-built one-horse cart, painted in Royal blue and pickled out in red, made to order for the Osborne Estate, bearing the Royal arms with the words 'Osborne Gardens'; and that the same local tradesman had the honour a few months ago of making a similar cart for Her Highness the Governor.

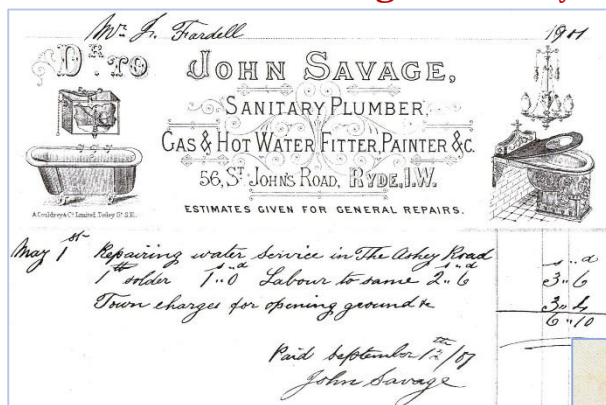
The IW Observer 4 April 1868 reported on the discharge of George Horsey, Ryde Tobacconist. He claimed creditors had unlawfully entered his premises in his absence and taken goods.

The IW Observer 30 June 1894 reported on William Newman's bankruptcy. He took over his father's business in 1865 and was also bankrupt in 1875/6. In 1894 his assets amounted to just over £1,000, leaving a deficit of about £930, caused by borrowing money at heavy rates of interest.



# THE SAVAGE FAMILY BUSINESS

Information & Images Courtesy of Derek Warman



An invoice for work carried out for Fardell.  
Photo of John Crutch Savage, founder of the business, by Sidney Switzer of Newport.  
Photo of His wife, Mary Ann [nee Channon], by A. Debenham

The 1881 census found them living at 11, Albert Street, with their children. The photograph of the shop and business premises was at 56 [later no 47] St. John's Road, taken about 1892 with Mary Ann and her youngest son, Ernest, outside.

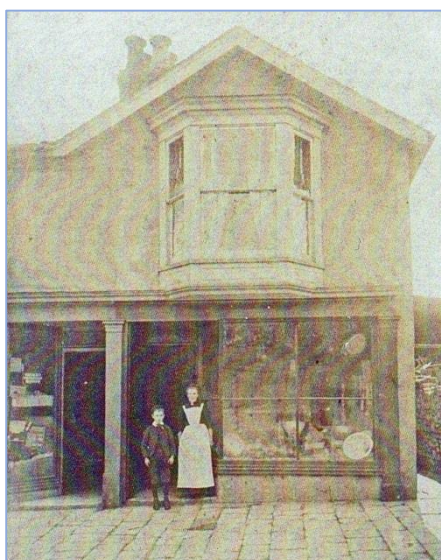
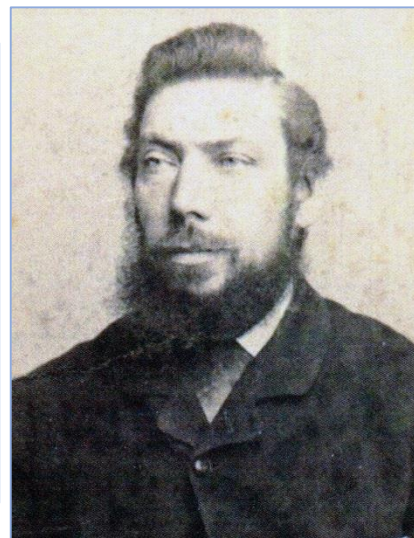


Photo of shop taken in 1995 as No. 47.

John Savage was born in Exeter in 1843. He was apprenticed to plumber and gas fitter, Charles Matthew Southard, in 1857 for seven years. His first year wages were 1 shilling per week, with an extra shilling for stabling the horse and cart and putting up the shutters. John married Mary Ann Channon at Exeter Register Office on June 9 1862. The census of 1871 found them living at St. Margaret's, Westminster. Two or three of their children died in infancy whilst in London, and they were advised, due to the pollution, to come to a healthier climate. They settled in Ryde about 1874.



John Savage conducted a very successful Plumbing, Gas Fitting and Sanitary Engineering business. His four sons all became Master Plumbers, and, after a day's work, were sent to Continuation Classes held in the School of Art, George Street [now the library stands on the site]. He held the belief that 'Education was never wasted'.

Photo of Ernest Savage who took over the business in 1905, by Cyril Linden of Ryde.



Ernest, the youngest son, took over the business in St. John's Road in about 1905. Wilfred, the eldest, founded his own business in Shanklin and Arthur worked with him. Albert became a plumber in the Royal Navy and moved to Portsmouth.

All three daughters went into service with local Ryde families and later married. Kate to William Potts; Maud to Harry Watson and Nellie to Eli Parker. John and Mary both died at 15, Player Street – she in 1910 and he, two years later, in November 1912.

Ernest moved premises later to 11, St. John's Road, [opposite Ryde County Junior School]. He retired after the Second World War and sold the business to George H. Allen, builder and decorator of St. John's Wood Road. Ernest died on November 20 1951, aged 69.



## GEORGE WILLS ~ Tobacconist

Pier street, Esplanade to St. Thomas street.

- 1 Chaplin & Co. railway & general carriers, G. F. Baker, agent
  - 2 Gregory Brothers, grocers
  - 3 **ROYAL EAGLE HOTEL**, Miss E. S. Turtle
  - 4 & 5 Albany hotel, John Emery Vardy
  - 6 Ryde Hotel & Restaurant
  - 7 Wellington inn, Albert Edward Trim
  - 8 Harvey & Co. confectioners
  - 9 & 10 Hooper & Son, fish-mongers
  - 12 Taylor Mrs. Sarah, refreshment rooms
  - 13 Flower Thomas C. chemist
  - 14 Herring T. G. hair dresser
  - 15 King Lud hotel, Frederick Henry Parnall
  - 16 Wills George & Co. tobacconists
- ..... here is Union st .....

Kelly's Directory 1910  
Pier Street with Wills  
Tobacconists next to the  
King Lud.

Postcard shows the shop  
was later divided into  
two. [RSHG]

### From the IW Times Thursday 18 February 1937

A remarkable character has been lost by the death of Mr. George [Barber] Wills, proprietor of a tobacco shop on the Esplanade. Aged 94, he was behind the counter of his quaint shop until quite recently. He was deaf and somewhat infirm, but he took a great delight in his business and liked to serve customers himself.

The window of his shop was something one would expect to find in a seaport town rather than on the Esplanade of a modern seaside resort. It was dressed as it was in Victorian days. Peering through the dusty window one can see pipes of all ages, shape and size. A cherrywood was of amazing length, 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 in the last century are displayed next to 6 boxes of wax matches advertised 'as used 100 years ago'. There 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 the 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.

Gregory Bros.  
Grocers at the  
other end of Pier  
Street [RSHG]

**GEORGE WILLS, TOBACCONIST, Pier-street, Ryde.**  
Dealer in Foreign Cigars, Fancy Snuffs, &c.—A  
large quantity of Foreign Cigars just imported. Yachts  
Supplied.—Agent for the "Isle of Wight Observer."

Advert IW Observer 3 February 1866



## MARY BROWN ~ Newsagent

### From the IW Times Thursday 2 June 1921

We regret to record the death which occurred under sad circumstances on Tuesday, of Mrs Mary Brown, 82 years of age, one of the oldest newsagents in Ryde, and who had carried on business for about forty years at 56 High-street adjoining St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church. She was the widow of the late Mr. H. Brown who pre-deceased her about five years ago.

It appears that on Thursday last she had a fall through tripping over her dress or mat and was knocked against the sink cutting her head rather badly. Her spectacles were found in the sink. She was alone in the house at the time, but managed to crawl to the front door and was heard moaning by Mrs. Gavin who rendered assistance and Dr Preston was called. She apparently recovered and ate a good dinner on Sunday, but died on Tuesday.

### IW Times 7 December 1961

60 Years Behind Counter - From the modest post of errand boy earning 1s. weekly at Fordingbridge, now 60 years later Mr Edgar John Downer, MSM, of 4 Arnold Road, Binstead, is managing director of Messrs. Colenutts, of Ryde. Members of the IW Grocer's Association met to celebrate Mr Downer's 70th birthday last Wednesday.

### IW Times 27 December 1928

A much respected tradesman, Mr F Crabb, baker, High Street, has been very seriously ill and fears were entertained as to his recovery, but on enquiry on Thursday morning, we were glad to learn he was much better. Mr Crabb is the heaviest man in Ryde. He is of the cheeriest disposition and will always be popular with his friends of the Ryde Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society.



Postcard showing Mrs Brown's  
High Street shop, next to the  
Roman Catholic Church where  
she worshipped. [Ann Barrett]

1910 KELLY's DIRECTORY  
**BROWN M. (Mrs)**, 56 High-  
street, Ryde, IW.

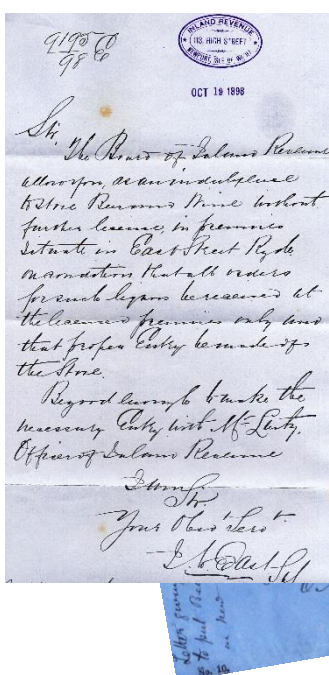
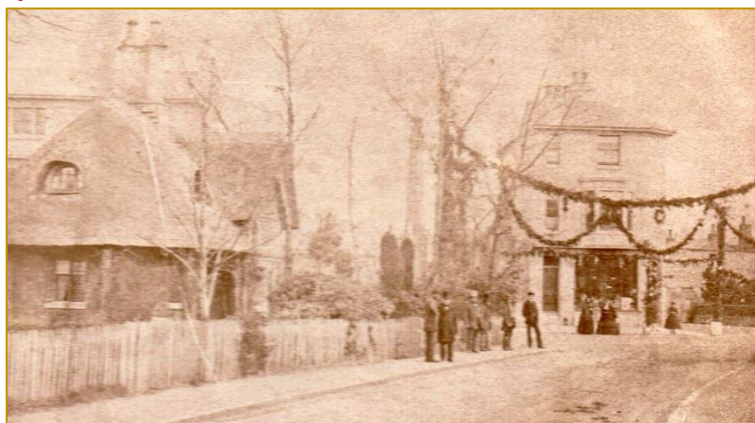
**In the matter of JAMES WILKINS and WILLIAM  
FREDERICK WILKINS, of High-street, Ryde, in  
the Isle of Wight, in the county of Hants, lately carrying  
on Business as co-partners in trade as Boot and  
Shoe Dealers and Photographers, adjudged Bankrupts  
on the 25th day of July, 1865; at 12 o'clock at noon.**

IW Observer 20 January 1866



# ADAMS GROCERY BUSINESS

## Information & Images Courtesy of Henry Adams



Adams family group.  
Photo of Adams Shop in 1863,  
with a thatched cottage  
occupying the site of Bellevue  
Garage  
[Modern postcard Brian Young]

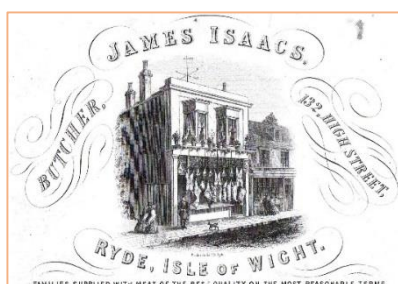
1898 Excise License  
Application,  
with envelope.  
A more recent bill  
heading.



### IW County Press 14 March 1942 Death of Mr. J. H. Adams.

A greatly respected tradesman, Mr. John Henry Adams, of 6 Monkton-street, died at a local nursing home on Saturday, aged 71. He was a son of the late Mr. H.N. Adams, who in 1887 founded a provision merchant's stores in Monkton-street. Mr. Adams entered the business in the following year and when he retired on health grounds had been engaged in it for practically 50 years. He was succeeded by his younger son, Mr. R. P. Adams. He was one of the oldest members of the Conservative Club and Association. For a great many years he was a sidesman at Holy Trinity Church. He was one of the oldest and best known non-racing members of Ryde Rowing Club. His wife died in 1925, but he is survived by two sons.

Advert for James  
Isaacs, High Street  
butcher.  
Lucy Fanny Isaacs  
married Henry N  
Adams, founder of  
the Monkton Street  
shop.



**HENRY ADAMS**

FAMILY GROCER AND GREENGROCER  
LICENSED TO SELL WINES, BEERS AND SPIRITS

6 MONKTON STREET, RYDE, I.O.W.  
Telephone (01983) 611101 VAT No. 339 2755 32

OPEN SEVENS DAYS A WEEK  
8.00 a.m. until 10 p.m.

**ORDER FORM**

Name.....

date of arrival.....time of arrival.....

Holiday address .....

**GOODS REQUIRED.**

### IW Observer 3 June 1865

Printing – In the middle of publication last week, our machinery broke down, but Mr Mason and Mr Wayland kindly placed theirs at our disposal, for which we return thanks. We were first apprenticed to printing at Ryde, and when we went to it in 1834 there was only one wooden press; it is therefore, a convincing proof of the progress of Ryde that there are at present resources equal to the production of three newspapers.

### IW County Press 1 October 1960

More than 150 people attended the opening of an impressive new showroom for Bellevue Garage, in Ryde. The showroom, located on the corner of East Street and Monkton Street, was officially opened by Mrs L Brownsdon, mother of the managing director and sister of the late John Barton, former mayor of Ryde, who started the business in 1919. After being shown round the new building, guests were entertained and were given cocktails.



## SANDAY ~ Perfume Factory

**Otto of Roses** Due to the labour-intensive production process and the low content of oil in the rose blooms, rose oil commands a very high price. Harvesting of flowers is done by hand in the morning before sunrise, and the material is distilled the same day. Roses grow wild in Ryde Cemetery - RSHG

### From the IW OBSERVER 23 December 1922

Considerable interest has been aroused by the announcement that 1 St. Thomas's Street, Ryde had been acquired by Mr M. Sanday as a perfumery factory. This gentleman is well-known in connection with his shops in the Royal Arcade. [This] busy hive of industry will provide steady employment to both male and female workers. Mr Sanday has travelled in Italy and the East where he spent several years in research work in the art.

He showed us his laboratory, and how a lasting fragrance is obtained and conveyed to the consumer. Mr Sanday had been approached by a leading manufacturer but 'I said no, it is an Island invention. I am proud of the Island and it is going to remain here'. Mr Sanday is supplying 25 chemists in the Island. The business will be known as the Isle of Wight Perfumery and Manufactory Co



Photo of St. Thomas's Street, Ryde, no 1 was at one time used as the Council Chamber and subsequently by the last Alderman John I. Barton, J.P. in his profession of architect. Roy Brinton Collection.

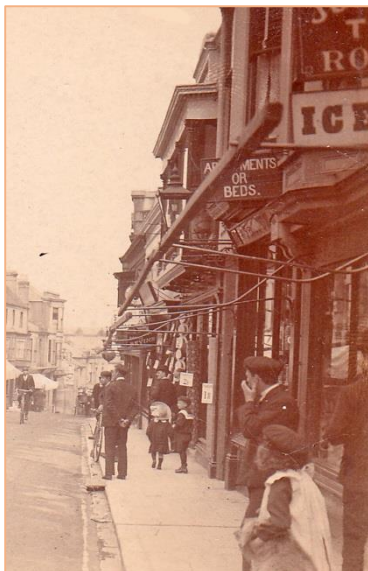
### Not all was as it seemed ... From the IW COUNTY PRESS 22 November 1924 - HAMPSHIRE ASSIZES.

Richard Cardwell Barron, 52, chemist, appeared in answer to a series of indictments. Last year he made his appearance in the Isle of Wight trading in the name of Marcus Beresford Sanday, advertising an invention for automatic scent sprinkling, the machines being placed in several public places. He obtained various sums of money from credulous people who paid him deposits when he engaged them as salesmen on commission. The prisoner had obtained money from people who could ill afford it, being their life savings. Mitigating circumstances were put forward. At the start the business was very promising, [but] a number of these machines had been destroyed by the public and a number of others were destroyed owing to the lorry conveying them catching fire. Barron [or Sanday] was sentenced to 12 months, plus 1 month for bankruptcy offences as well. The prisoner collapsed on hearing the sentence, and had to be carried below.

### IW County Press 3 March 1979

After 40 years in business as a Ryde butcher, Norman Key, of the Bays, Upton Road, retired at the weekend. Born in Sussex he began work in the butchery trade 52 years ago when his father was a manager for Dewhurst Ltd. He was manager of the local branch of the British Argentine Company, then, in 1939, joined his father, George, as Key & Son, with premises in the High Street. Mr Key was a volunteer fireman and in 1939 was called up full time, serving in Portsmouth. During the War his wife ran the business, with part-time assistance, while bringing up their 9 children. He returned to the business after the War and was treasurer of the IW Meat Traders Association. Photo of Mr & Mrs Keys from the newspaper report.

## NORMAN KEY - Butcher



## PERCY GUMBRELL - Confectioner

### IW County Press 18 July 1964

Mr Percy James Gumbrell aged 75, who had been in business as a confectioner in High Street for 40 years, died on Wednesday at his home, Pan Gardens, Queens Road. Born at Gosport, he was apprenticed at HM Dockyard, Portsmouth, before beginning an adventurous life serving in ships to many parts of the world. His principal interest lay in ships and the sea. He became a member of the Royal Yacht Club and often took out his small cabin cruiser and enjoyed fishing. As a young man he took an active interest in boxing. He was a member of the Ryde Club and the Town Club, and had played for both in snooker league matches. He was a member of the Vectensian Lodge of Freemasons.



Gumbrell's Confectioners was at 30 High Street, next to Barnett's the well-known cooked meat shop.

Detail from a Broderick Postcard of that part of the High Street. Paul Kingswell Collection

## ARTHUR HACKSHAW - Hairdresser

**IW COUNTY PRESS 1 May 1948**

One of the best known business men in Union-street for half a century, Mr Arthur Hackshaw died at his home, 10 Yelfs-road, on Tuesday at the age of 76. Some 56 years ago Mr. Hackshaw arrived from Marlow and set up in business as a hairdresser at 6 Union-street, and 14 years ago he transferred to more up-to-date and larger premises at No. 64, where he continued as the active head of the business until three years ago, when his health began to fail. In the earlier years he was an enthusiastic walker and cyclist. He was a member of the American Geographical Society and for a long period served as sidesman at the Parish Church



Hackshaws at 64, Union Street – Roy Brinton Collection

## ARTHUR PAGE - Outfitter

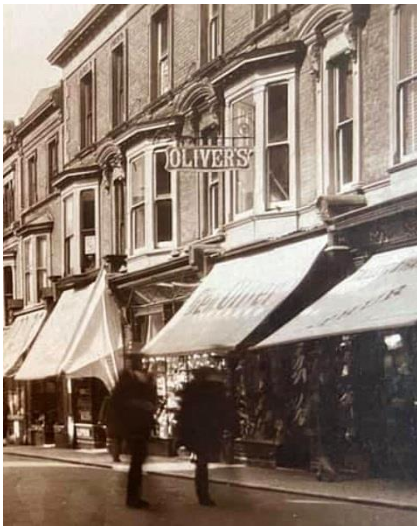
**IW TIMES 29 December 1932**

The death occurred under sad circumstances at the County Hospital on Tuesday of last week of Arthur Page, for many years a prominent tradesman in the High Street. He had recently suffered from depression and on Sunday was removed to the County Hospital suffering from self-inflicted wounds. He was 76, a native of Essex, and had had a somewhat romantic career. In early life, he made himself thoroughly acquainted with the clothing trade and started pioneering in South Africa. He travelled about the country with his laden bullock waggon, doing business with many Zulu chiefs. Many of them he fitted with West End fashions in clothes and had the privilege of dressing Kruger when he was President of the Boer Parliament.

Mr Page settled in Ryde and founded an outfitter's business in the High Street, but in 1890 he again toured South Africa with what was then one of the outstanding inventions of the century, the Edison phonograph. He returned to Ryde to continue his business, which he had left in the hands of a manager. Mr Page retired from the business about a year ago, but did not definitely sever his connection with it. Those who knew him valued his friendship and respected him greatly for his many good qualities

The IW Observer 7 May 1870 reported that Henry Loe, late of 52 High Street, Ryde, pork butcher, had been declared bankrupt in 1865, and had been a prisoner for debt at the County Gaol, Winchester. Creditors were still waiting settlement.

The IW Observer, 14 October 1905, reported that the IW Express Motor Syndicate, having to replace their existing buses, [which could not cope with Island roads] placed an order for the bodies of their eleven new vehicles with Mr Mullis.



37 & 147 Oliver Geo. boot mkr  
38 Page Arth. outfitter 12527  
39 Maypole Dairy Co. Ltd  
39a, Tomasin Arth. Hy. dentist  
40 Star hotel, Rt. C. Ward  
..... here is Star st .....

Kelly's 1935 Directory listing Mr Page's shop next to Olivers. Photo Roy Brinton Collection

Advert IW Observer 29 July 1905

MESSRS.  
**G. H. MULLIS & CO.**  
Beg to intimate that the  
**Carriage and  
Motor Works,**  
Late carried on at No. 22, Union Street,  
has now been transferred to Commodious  
Premises in  
**NELSON STREET,  
RYDE.**  
Repairs of every description at economical  
prices.  
Good workmanship. Estimating free.

## GEORGE MULLIS - Carriage Builder

**ISLE OF WIGHT OBSERVER 13 February 1909**

With much regret we record the death of Mr George Mullis, of Nelson Street, Ryde, which occurred on Wednesday afternoon, at the age of 61. He had suffered from weakness of the chest for some years. Mr Mullis was well known as a carriage builder, and had workshops in Nelson Street. Years ago he was in the employ of the late Mr Carter, and on his death he entered into partnership with the son of Mr Carter. Eventually Mr Mullis opened in business for himself in Union Street, afterwards transferring the workshop to Nelson Street. He was a very clever workman, and as a draughtsman his work could not be excelled. In addition, he was a man of great integrity and uprightness, with the result that he earned and retained the respect and liking of all who were brought into contact with him.

**IW County Press 20 June 1986**

Summer sunshine brought a measure of optimism to the Island's business community over the prospects for the tourism season. Hotel associations said after a slow start to the season, bookings were picking up.

## ISLAND BAKERIES

**IW County Press 14 October 1983**

Bakery giants Rank-Hovis-McDougall announced it was cutting staff by two thirds at Island Bakeries, Binstead. The company said 104 jobs would be cut and six Island Bakeries outlets closed to concentrate its trade on bread production for local supermarkets. Photo RSHG – The building was demolished around 1996 for housing.

