



# RYDE SOCIAL HERITAGE GROUP

## Beyond the Graves

Volume 19: Number 4: October 2023

### PUCKPOOL – IN WAR & IN PEACE

Puckpool House was probably re-built in 1714 for Richard Roberts of Gosport. It was sold, in 1720, to David Boyes of Appley, who ended up in prison, so his estate was sold. After several owners it was bought, in 1822, by Lewis Wyatt, an architect, who made many alterations. When he died, in 1853, the property was auctioned and became the holiday home of Josiah Spode [of Spode China fame].

In 1861 the house and estate was purchased by the War Department. Puckpool Battery was constructed at the northern end.

In 1878 the War Department sold the house to Major-General the Hon. S.J. Gough-Calthorpe, of the nearby Woodlands Vale. Puckpool House and grounds was leased out to various tenants, before being sold again in 1923.

In 1937 the estate was sold to Seaton Holiday Camp [Devon] Ltd., a subsidiary of Warner's Holiday Camp. They spent £60,000 on erecting the holiday camp, which opened in June 1939.

Extracted from the RSHG website, where more information can be found



Examples of 19<sup>th</sup> century  
Spode China

Photograph of Puckpool  
House  
Roy Brinton Collection



#### IW Observer 24 May 1862

Rather Dangerous –At Puckpool, for several yards, the wall has sunk away completely rendering the passage most hazardous, especially to ladies. Now Puckpool is the property of Government, it is, of course, useless to talk about putting the wall in a state to walk upon.

#### ISLE OF WIGHT.

**PUCKPOOL**, with Grounds, &c., about 17½ Acres.  
**MESSRS. E. and J. WALLIS** are favoured with instructions to LET, unfurnished, the above very desirable Property, situate on the coast about one and a half miles from the fashionable town of Ryde, commanding extensive views. The House contains, on the ground floor—entrance hall, breakfast and dining rooms, library and conservatory, housekeeper's rooms, butler's pantry, and kitchen, with requisite offices. On the first floor—drawing room, smoking room, seven bed and two dressing rooms; also one bed room in attic. Detached are one five-stall stable, harness room, and two coach houses, with men's bed room over. The Premises are in good repair and fit for immediate occupation. Further particulars and cards to view may be obtained on application to Messrs. Walls, Estate and House Agents, 22, Union-street, Ryde.

IW Observer  
6 December 1862  
To Let Advert

### PUCKPOOL HOUSE

Extracted from an advert in the IW Observer, 13 August 1853.

To be sold by Daniel Smith & Son, in London, the estate of Puckpool. It comprises of a picturesque cottage residence, with ornamental tower and rustic verandas, surrounded by a rich little domain of nearly 30 acres, which might be appropriated for other villas. The estate is studded with majestic and varied timber, which opens to a grand expanse of the ocean, from Calshot Castle to St Helen's Roads. It offers a choice and enjoyable property to a man of taste or a member of the Yacht Club.

It can be viewed only with cards. Particulars and lithographic plans from Mr G. Riddett of Ryde.

The IW Observer, 26 November 1853, advertised a four-day sale of furniture at Puckpool, belonging to the late William Wyatt [sic]. Included were Brussels and Turkey rugs; Damask curtains; a handsome Rosewood bookcase and other quality furniture; an ormolu chandelier; stuffed birds; a set of armour; a percussion gun with powder; numerous beds as well as linen; 500 volumes of books; plate; choice hothouse plants, etc.

#### IMPORTANT SALE OF NEW FURNITURE. PUCKPOOL PARK, RYDE.

**GEORGE RIDDETT** begs to announce that, in consequence of this Estate having been purchased by the Government, he has received instructions to Sell by Auction, early next month, the whole of the FURNITURE, which is quite new, and of excellent quality, from one of the first London Houses.  
Ryde, February 7, 1862.

IW Observer 8 February 1862

#### IW Observer 4 April 1863

Fashionable Intelligence – Lieut. Ardagh, Royal Engineers, has taken Puckpool House.

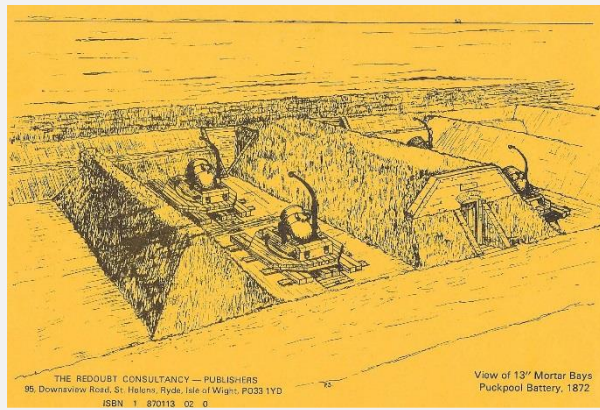


# PUCKPOOL BATTERY

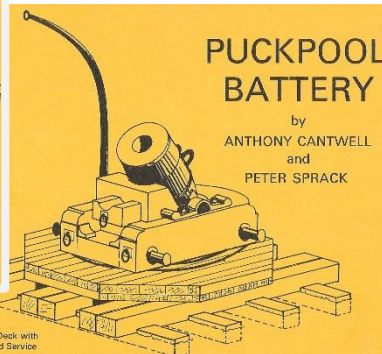
Puckpool Battery by Anthony Cantwell & Peter Sprack  
ISBN 1 870113 02 0

Publishers The Redoubt Consultancy

This booklet describes the history and the layout of the Battery, including many line drawings of the fortifications.



IW Observer 27 May 1865



## IW Observer 26 October 1867

Military Movements – On Wednesday last a battery of the 12<sup>th</sup> Brigade of Royal Artillery, commanded by Major P. Bellingfield, arrived at Ryde *en route* from Fort Elson, Gosport, for Puckpool and Yaverland. They appear to be a very fine body of men.

**WAR DEPARTMENT PROPERTY.  
PUCKPOOL HOUSE, ST. HELEN'S,**  
about 1 mile from Ryde, Isle of Wight.  
**TO be LET,** for a term of six years, all that desirable  
**RESIDENCE,** with Ground attached, known as  
**PUCKPOOL HOUSE,** containing: on the ground  
floor—Entrance hall, breakfast and dining rooms,  
library, conservatory, housekeeper's room, butler's  
pantry, kitchen, and all requisite offices; on the first  
floor—Drawing room, smoking room, seven bed and  
two dressing room, and one bed room in attic. De-  
tached—one five-stalled stable, with harness room and  
two coach-houses, with man servant's room over.  
The house and grounds comprise about 17½ acres.  
The premises may be viewed on application to the  
Resident Caretaker; the Conditions and Form of Ten-  
der for renting the same may be obtained on application  
at the Royal Engineer Office, Portsmouth, up to the  
7th June next.  
Royal Engineer Office, Portsmouth May 17, 1865.

## IW Observer 12 October 1872

The fortification of Puckpool is nearly or quite completed. The last detachment of the Royal Artillery from Puckpool Battery proceeded to Portsmouth on Monday last, as they have successfully accomplished the landing and placing in the Battery some 25-ton guns, which are capable of piercing some 14½ inches of iron plates, backed with one-foot teak, with their battery charges at 1000 yards range.



Battery Photograph - Roy Brinton Collection

The IW Observer, 4 June 1892, reported on the Haddington Artillery Militia from Scotland on a training visit. Captain Walker gave the reporter a guided tour. The piece of ground to rear was more extensive than realized, with ample room for the long rows of tents accommodating the 600 men. Each tent was thrown open with beds and luggage neatly folded. There was a stand around the tent pole to hold the arms and accoutrements.

Remarking on the small numbers of men present the reporter was told that 250 of them proceeded daily to 'Nomans Fort' for instruction. Some of those left behind cleaned the 25-ton guns at the Battery. The guns peeped through the grass covered embrasures. Some guns were painted emerald green, but this, apparently, made them easier to spot, they would have been better in a light grey colour.

Men not on duty were in the reading tent, writing letters home, or reading newspapers provided by the officers. The men had a comfortable canteen and the sergeants had their own mess tent. The field kitchen was in the open air, where the cooks were preparing dinner of potatoes by the bushel and stew by the hogshead. Ryde town water was supplied by cart and was well-spoken of.

The officers' tents were to the west of the ground, with camp bedsteads, drawers and boarded floors. Their mess consisted of two large tents, one furnished as a dining room and the other as a drawing room. The band of the regiment performed at intervals, and had been engaged to give a performance on Ryde Pier. The medical profession under Surgeon Dunn, had little to do, the men being in the best of health.

The report ended by stating the officers and men are expecting a sudden attack on the Isle of Wight, which they will have to meet, but when the enemy will come of course no-one knows.

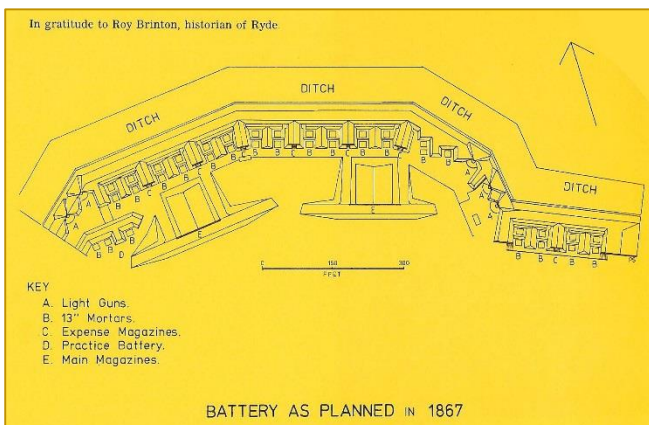


### Isle of Wight Observer 16 April 1910

Artillery Practice – Target practice with rapid firing guns took place from Puckpool Fort on Wednesday morning and was watched with a great deal of interest by people along the front.

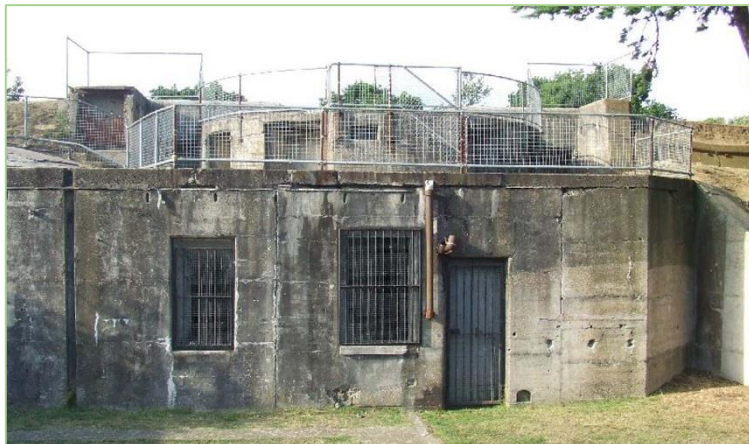


Puckpool Battery Photographs - Roy Brinton Collection



### Isle of Wight Observer 14 December 1918

The inhabitants of Ryde and district had a most enjoyable time at the Theatre Royal on Wednesday afternoon and evening, when two concerts, organised by the Nodes and Puckpool Batteries, R.G.A., were given by kind permission of Lieut. Col. D. F. Nickoll, D.S.O., R.G.A., to packed houses both afternoon and evening, in aid of the Royal Artillery Commemoration Fund.



The Puckpool Battery Booklet gives a 'Guided Tour' of the Battery, starting near the Barracks [now the café] passing the Artillery Store and the Cartridge Store with a hoist to the Loading Room above, to the surviving Mortar Bays. There had been many changes over the years

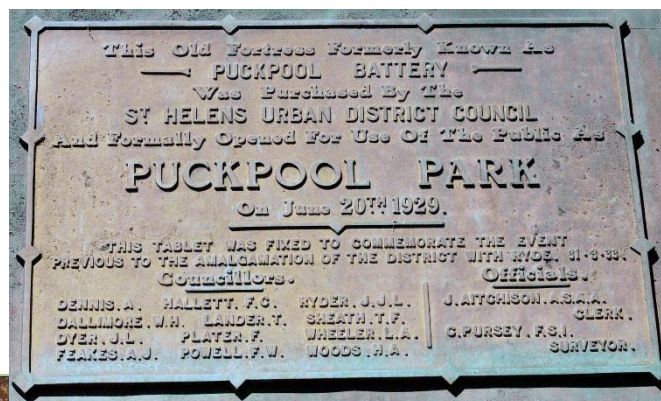
At the time of writing the booklet the Aquarium and Aviary were in the shelters under the 9.2 inch guns. There was a brick Gas Decontamination Centre from WW2, but some buildings had been demolished, including the shell-filling Laboratory of 1871.

One of the plans from the Booklet, showing the Battery as planned in 1867.

### Isle of Wight Observer 5 June 1920

Riflemen's Re-union – It is the intention of Major Veasey to entertain the members of the I.W. Rifles who sailed on the "Aquitania," in July 1915, to a re-union, which will take place at Puckpool House, Ryde, in August.

A plaque at Puckpool commemorates the opening of the Park to the public, 20 June 1929



Postcard above Ann Barrett  
Postcard right RSHG





# PUCKPOOL HOUSE & THE CARTER FAMILY

Although Puckpool House was a desirable property, just how peaceful would it have been so close to the Battery? In the 1880's it became the home of Edward Carter. The family were in residence by the summer of 1888, as, sadly, their only son, also Edward, died there on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

At Puckpool House in the census of 1891 Edward Carter was 42, a Barrister at Law, Farmer and JP, born in London. His wife, Mary Louisa, was 33. They had just two daughters, Mary, aged 5, and Dorothy, 1. They had a cook, Fanny Cole, 3 domestic servants and a nurse, Alice Rolf. Edward never practised the law, preferring to live the life of a country gentleman.

By the 1901 census, at Puckpool House, the family had grown, with four more daughters, Cecily then 8, Gertrude, 6, Eve, 5 and Kathleen, 1. Another daughter, Aveline, had died age 2, the previous year. This time there were eight living-in servants, a cook, Mary Grant, 4 maids, and 3 in the nursery, including Alice Rolf.

By 1910 Edward had moved to his parents' house, East Upton, after they had died. He died there aged 82, on 6 May 1931. He was one of the oldest members of the Royal Yacht Club and took an active role in local affairs and charities. He left his widow and five daughters. The ruins of the house after a disastrous fire show it would have been as desirable a property as Puckpool House.



Envelope addressed to Puckpool House, 1896. RSHG



Photographs of East Upton after the fire and the Stables, which still exist today. RSHG.



## SCHNEIDER TROPHY

Parking at Puckpool for the 1929 Schneider Trophy:

The charges for parking to be: Bicycles 3d, Motor bicycles 1/-, Motor cycle combinations and small cars 1/6, Large cars 2/6, Char-a-bancs 3d per seat (not including driver's seat), it is further resolved that in the case of cars driven by chauffeurs, the chauffeurs should pay for admission or seating in the ordinary way.



The IW County Press, 31 August 1929 published a photograph of the 1929 Schneider Cup Team: From left to right: H R D Wagthorn; T H Moon; D'arcy Greig; N H Orlebah; C N Staniforth and H L R Atherley.

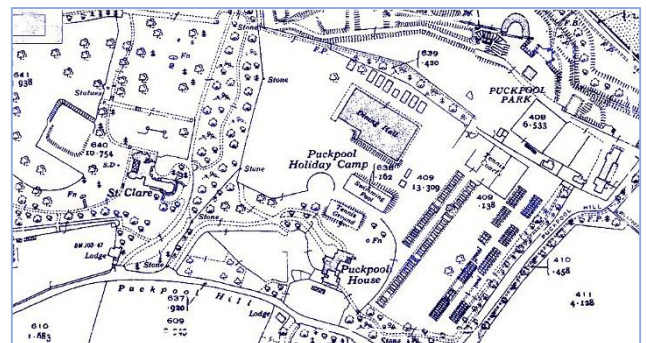
## PUCKPOOL IN WW2

The IW County Press, 12 March 1938, reported that the Plans Sub-Committee of the IW Planning and Development Committee had approved a draft agreement for the holiday camp at Puckpool, despite some opposition.

**Six new patterned private huts fitted with glazed doors are to be placed on the high ground at the east end of Puckpool Park, and tenders were invited for their provision.**

IW County Press 12 March 1938

Early OS maps showed only a blank area where the Battery was, but a later OS Map shows the site of the Holiday Camp.



The use of the Park and the Holiday Camp was curtailed by World War Two. In 1939 the Battery and the Holiday Camp behind became HMS Medina, used, until 1942 to train men for the Fleet Air Arm. The Observer Corps had a post on top of one of the Mortar Magazines, and there was an ARP post as well. In 1943 the 35<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Unit RN lived at the Barracks while they were converting barges into landing craft at Fishbourne. After the War the Battery resumed life as a Park.

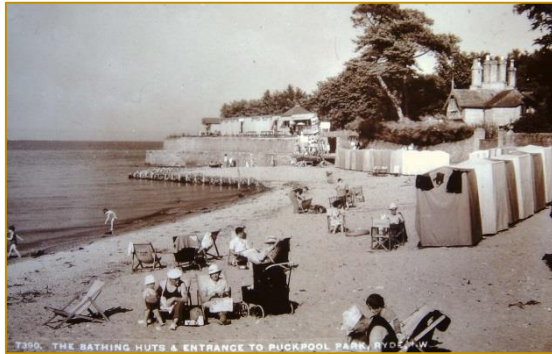
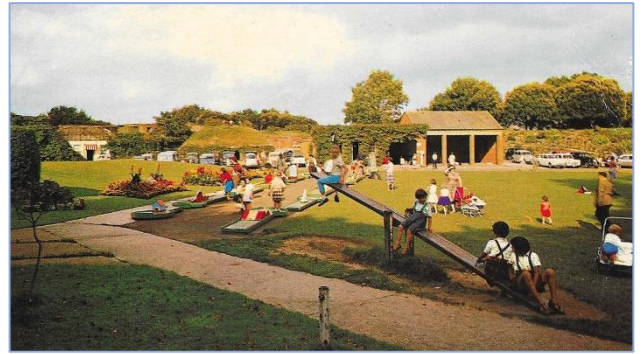
[Puckpool Battery – Cantwell & Sprack]

It would appear that throughout its time as a Military establishment Puckpool Battery never fired a shot in anger.

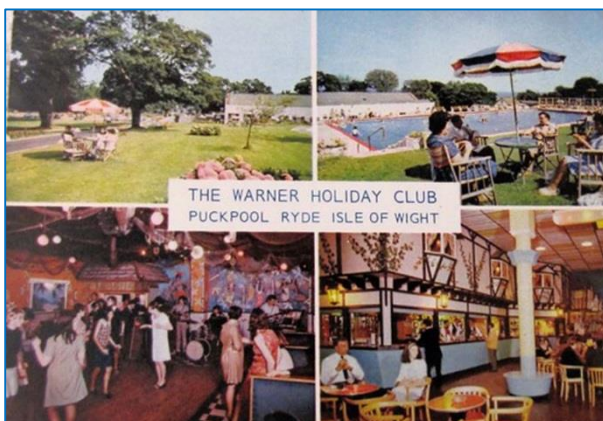
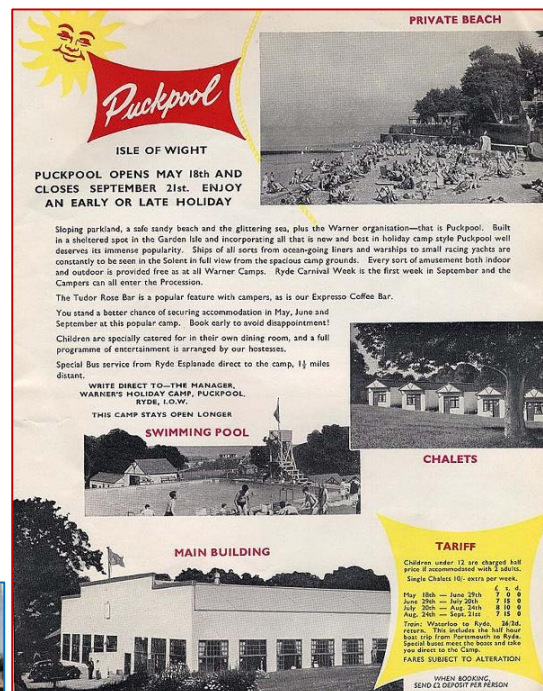
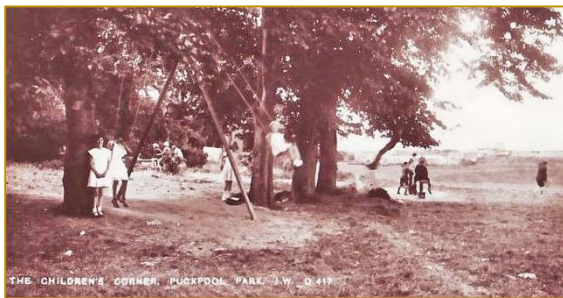


# PUCKPOOL PARK & THE HOLIDAY CAMP

***From the Ryde & Seaview Guide 1964*** - Puckpool Park was laid out as a pleasure park some thirty-five years ago and is remembered nostalgically by many as the venue of some of childhood's happiest days. A notable feature is the ingenious way in which formal gardens have been discreetly introduced to enhance the scene without any way distracting from the natural beauty of the surroundings and some of the plants and flowers are of subtropical species which can only be grown under glass in other parts of the country. The explanation of this is to be found in the Meteorological statistics of the Air Ministry which show over a period of 30 years the sunshine enjoyed at Ryde in the summer is 25 per cent above the average of all British resorts.



Postcard top and  
Advert Ryde & Seaview Guide 1935  
Ann Barrett  
Postcard top left  
Roy Brinton Collection



## The neglected chalets at Harcourt Sands [previously Puckpool Holiday Camp]

Other Postcards RSHG





# ISLAND INDUSTRIES FAIR

11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily 25th to 30th APRIL, 1960 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily

AT WARNER'S HOLIDAY CAMPS - RYDE - ISLE OF WIGHT

## COME TO THE FAIR

### PROGRAMME

**GRAND OPENING BY THE PATRON**  
**HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON, K.G.**  
**COMMENCEMENT OF THE WEEK OF SPORT**  
**Monday 25th April, 1960**

**The Duke of Wellington**  
 will give away the **Golden**  
**Prize** to the winner of the **100 Yards**  
**dash** on the **25th April** at **11 a.m.**

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**ADMISSION 1/- Children under 6d.** REFRESHMENTS & BARS Open All Day  
 Frequent Bus and Coach Services to the Ground. Large Car Park  
 FAIR OFFICES FOR ENQUIRIES-12 CASTLE STREET, RYDE. (Tel. 335)

**IW Times 26 October 1961**  
 All 170 stands for next year's Island Industries Fair at Ryde have been fully booked. The Fair will again be held at Puckpool and St. Clare Holiday Camps from April 9 to 14, there will be 10 more stands than last year's initial display.

Advert IW County Press  
 16 April 1960

**IW Times 2 November 1961**  
 Impracticable – A helicopter service to operate during the 1962 Island Industries Fair at Warner's Puckpool and St. Clare Camps could not be carried out at competitive prices. A member of the I.W. County Council said that he did not think such a service would come into being between the mainland and Island for many years.

**IW Times 2 April 1964**  
 Clacton and Ostend were not the only places affected by Easter hooligans. During the holiday, windows were smashed at The Dell Café, Puckpool, a nearby beach hut and the shed on Appley Golf Course.

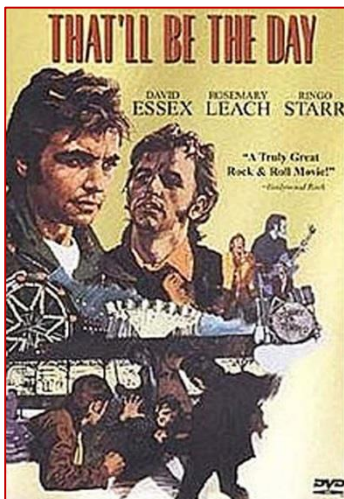


From the IW Times, 16 March 1967. It was at 1.37 am that some youths saw trees burning at one end of Puckpool Park. Ryde Fire Brigade attended and found the café, known as the Dell, leased to Lyons, was at the centre of the blaze. Flames were sweeping the length of the 50 by 40 ft. single storey building, constructed mostly of timber. Station officer Leonard Williams directed operations for three hours before the flames were extinguished. There had been no hope of saving the building or clues as to the cause.

Damage to the café amounted to £3,000 and it was hoped to rebuild it in time for the summer season. Photograph RSHG



**IW County Press 4 November 1972**  
 Film Making at Puckpool – Island extras, taking part in the film "That'll be the Day" at Warner's Holiday Camp, Puckpool were: Douglas Gibbons, Jim McDonagh, Christine Gallerand, Kreuz and Greg Bailey, all from Ryde.



Filming for "That'll be the Day" began on the 23 October 1972, with the Island chosen as it still had the look of the late-1950's. Ringo Starr, as Mike the barman, called upon his memories of Butlins Holiday Camp, while David Essex had a break from his West End appearance in 'Godspell', to film. DVD cover by Arnaldo Putzu

## Open day at Puckpool

Island amateur radio hams will again be celebrating the birthday of radio inventor Marconi by staging a special open day at the Puckpool Park Wireless Museum.

The event, on Saturday April 25, will feature unique Marconi memorabilia and other exhibits including giant valves used at the Daventry transmitter which broadcasted wartime messages throughout Europe.

Other working items on show will include early crystal sets while visitors will be invited to transmit to radio hams throughout the world on a special short-wave station.

A similar open day is held each year at the museum to celebrate Marconi's birthday.

"It should be remembered that Marconi built his first transmitter at Alum Bay next to the Needles in 1897," said Mr Douglas Byrne, museum curator.



Left IW County Press 21 February 1992

Photo IW County Press June 1994 – To commemorate D Day live transmissions were made using contemporary equipment by Curator David Byrne (left), an RAF radio instructor during the War and Vernon Scambell, who had served in the Army's 38th Reconnaissance Unit contacting countries world-wide using Morse code.