



RYDE SOCIAL HERITAGE GROUP

Beyond the Graves

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THE HOME FRONT

During WW1 many grand private homes were offered for War Service and The Castle, on the Esplanade was adapted as a fully equipped Red Cross Hospital.

In 1915 Miss Kleo Friend, Commandant Voluntary Aid Detachment, Hants, wrote to John Oglander, Island Lord Lieutenant, to say that Colonel Hosie considered The Castle most suitable. It had four Officers Rooms and the War Office Food contribution would be 2/- per head, 3/- for enterics. 30 convalescent typhoid cases had already been taken.

Mabel Gough-Calthorpe also wrote to John Oglander to explain that she had been trying very hard to get work started at The Castle. *"Lord Kitchener stated he would require 40,000 more beds by the end of March, here is a house which in a week's time could be ready to receive about 40 wounded men, the house is fully equipped as a convalescent hospital with all necessary material and a division of well trained nurses. Our wounded men will be nursed back to health and so in many cases able to return to the front and God knows we want every available man if England is to win in this awful war."*



Photographs of the Castle Hospital and portrait annotated 'Commandant'.
RSHG



Miss Kleo Friend was the Commandant of VAD 104, Hants., and was in charge of Ryde hospitals throughout the First World War, including Hazelwood, Ashley Road, and later The Castle. She not only supervised nurse training but organised and led First Aid and Home Nursing classes. She was a very experienced nurse and had served in South Africa.

Col. Worthington Wilmer described her as 'very capable'. Col. Hosie in reply to her proposal for The Castle Hospital wrote, 'your methodical working out of its capacity is admirable and just the information I need.' Princess Beatrice said, 'We all know what an efficient person Miss Friend is'. Lady Gough Calthorpe once confided to Sir John Oglander, 'There is a dead set against Miss Friend, I am told it is her temper, but she is a clever woman, very keen over her hospital work, who takes the greatest care of her nurses. I have never heard a word of complaint from them, on the contrary; the Tommies also like her and call her a good sort and to me it seems a few people in Ryde (heads of departments) are jealous of her'.

IW County Press 20 June 1914

Airship – There was considerable interest in the appearance of an airship flying over The Solent, which was spotted several times during the week. The silver tinted, cigar-shaped envelope, which glistened brightly in the brilliant sunshine, was carrying out experiments for a new army air station at Gosport.

IW County Press 21 November 1914

Jam for the Soldiers - Mrs Forsyth acknowledges the receipt of 275 pots of jam for the soldiers. This was forthcoming after an appeal made a fortnight since.

IW Times 22 March 1917

The Castle Hospital - the hospital is still full up. Mrs Latter, assistant Matron inspected the hospital and expressed herself pleased with it. The whist drive at Trinity Hall, to which the patients were invited by the Trinity Canteen helpers, proved a great success.



DRUMMER JOSEPH GRAYSON

Joseph Grayson died at The Castle Hospital, a drummer in the Royal Field Artillery, he was only 15½ years of age. A bright and cheery lad, he had made himself popular amongst the wounded Tommies and staff when admitted suffering from nephritis. The Commandant, Miss Friend, said he was a very good lad. He appeared cut out for the Army, born in Leeds, he had been at a military school in Ireland before joining the Regulars. His funeral at Ryde cemetery had full military honours. It was attended by the Commandant and 19 of the nursing staff, as well as many patients.

From a report in the IW Times 20 March 1919.

Photograph of Joseph Grayson RSHG

IW County Press 24 October 1914

The Public Lights - The Borough Police, under the direction of the Chief Constable (Supt. Greenstreet), have had an exceptionally busy time during the week in dealing with the public lights. The Provost Marshall of the Southern Defences has issued a request that all bright lights in shops, hotels, and other public places shall be reduced almost to extinction. The readiness of the response to the request made by the police is seen by the fact that even on the busiest nights the town is almost in total darkness. The Pier is as gloomy as it is possible to make it, and the Esplanade is practically deserted after dark owing to all the lights being extinguished. We are asked by the Chief Constable to request inhabitants of private houses to draw their blinds immediately on "lighting up" in the evening. The majority of the inhabitants have already responded to this request. Cheerful acquiescence will prevent the unpleasantness which is bound to follow. It should be remembered that the police have full power to extinguish any lights.

Davenport Convalescent Hospital, The Strand, Ryde
Medical Directory 1912

Women's Thrift Crusade

A Course of Six Demonstrations in
**ECONOMICAL
- COOKERY -**

for Mistresses and Cooks will be held
in the

WORKING MEN'S CLUB,
CHURCH ST., SWANMORE,
ON TUESDAYS AND FRIDAYS

Commencing on the 5th October at 10.30
a.m.; also in the

GARFIELD HALL,
VICTORIA STREET,

ON MONDAYS AND THURSDAYS,
commencing on 7th October at 10.30 a.m.

There will be two lessons each week
for three weeks at each centre.

Miss Stockdale, from the National Food
Fund Association, will give the demon-
strations.

Course of Six Lessons 3s. 6d., Single
Lesson 1s.

Those wishing to attend the Course are
requested to send their names as soon as
possible to Mrs. E. C. Murray, Perivale,
Ryde.

For those who cannot attend the morn-
ing demonstration, a course of lectures are
being arranged for four afternoons a week.

In order that all may benefit, DEMON-
STRATIONS for WORKING WOMEN
have been arranged at Garfield Hall, Mon-
days and Thursdays, at 2.30, commencing
October 4th; and at the Working Men's
Club, Swanmore, Tuesdays and Fridays, at
2.30, commencing Oct. 6th. Admission
Two pence for each class.

For full particulars apply:
Mrs. E. C. Murray,
Perivale,
Ryde.

IW Observer
7 October 1915

IW Observer 10 July 1915

An enjoyable concert took
place in the grounds of
Davenport Nursing Home,
on the Strand, for the benefit
of the wounded soldiers
there. Musical items were
contributed and a comic
sketch was performed. Two
of the soldiers also took part
in the programme.



IW County Press 21 and 28 November 1914

Through the kindness of a few ladies in Ryde and Bembridge the matron of the Davenport Nursing Home has been able to offer six beds for wounded to the military authorities, and the offer has been accepted. Several ladies are subscribing for six months to maintain beds for the wounded at the Davenport Nursing Home. Several others are donating bedsteads, mattresses, pillows, blankets and eiderdowns; cups, saucers, soup-basins, and plates; tables and various useful articles. An anonymous donor has undertaken to supply 6 volumes of literature per week for the six months. The Nursing Staff consists of matron, 2 trained nurses, a probationer, and an army orderly.

IW Times 24 September 1914 Winter Clothing

In view of the approaching cold weather the Lord Lieutenant has appealed for cardigan jackets, woollen sweaters, khaki coloured woollen gloves or any other article of a similar kind, for issue to the Territorial soldiers who are so patriotically upholding the honour of their country.

Sir Godfrey Baring, presided at a meeting of the County War Relief Committee. They discussed the granting of relief to lodging house keepers, who had suffered heavy losses on account of the war, which had kept visitors away, and caused those who were in the Island on the out-break of war to leave. The Mayor of Ryde said some of the women who had been granted 7s.6d. a week wished to make garments in return for the soldiers and sailors and their families, and it was decided to supply them with material for the purpose. From the IW Times 5 November 1915

IW Times 20 August 1914

Garments - Thousands of women who cannot leave their homes to attend the sick and wounded will be pleased to know they can give practical service in this time of national crisis. The British Red Cross Society require many thousands of suitable garments which can easily be made at home at very little cost. Required most are helpless-case shirts, men's nightshirts, nurses' aprons and surgeons' overalls.

IW Observer 19 December 1914

Concert at Hazelwood - On Thursday a concert arranged by Mrs G W Colenutt, was given to the wounded soldiers at Hazelwood. Among those kindly assisting with the programme were Mrs H S Saunders, Miss Dawson, Mrs Holt, Miss Cicely Quayle, Mr Wallace Wheeler and Mr T S Mellanby.



IW Observer 13 January 1917

Hazelwood Hospital – This hospital, after being closed for cleaning, &c., was re-opened on Wednesday, when 70 patients were admitted.

IW Observer 24 March 1917

Wanted - Hazelwood Red Cross Hospital wants the loan of a large cupboard or wardrobe. Will some kind friend oblige?

William Jacobs – Roy Brinton Collection

The office at Hazelwood – Paul Kingswell postcard

Hazelwood after WW2 bombing – RSHG [unknown donor]
VAD Badge



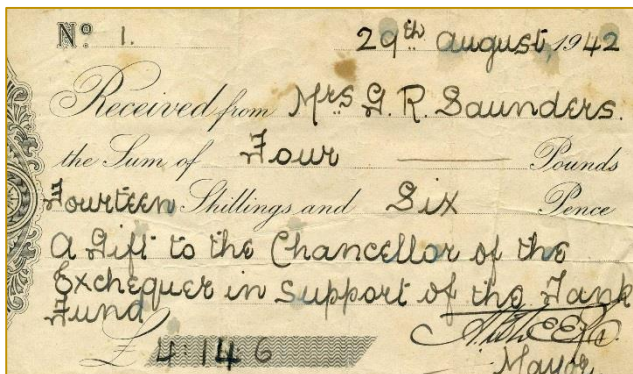
IW Times 31 December 1914

What to do in an Air Raid - According to an official warning issued on Monday, two duties devolve upon English civilians in the event of an air raid: (1) to seek immediate shelter in basements or any underground place. (2) To forward any fragments of bomb which might come into one's possession, to the police, for measurement by the military.



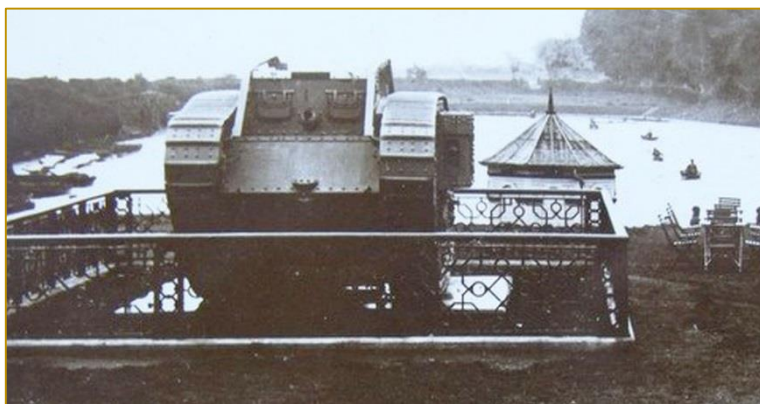
IW County Press 23 January 1915

Disused Papers and Relief - Mr Frank Puttick, of the Royal Pier Hotel, has issued an appeal to the inhabitants of the district to help the Prince of Wales's Relief Fund by saving their old newspapers. Over £2000 has already been added to the fund by this means. Only morning, evening, and weekly newspaper are needed. The members of the local troops of Boy Scouts have volunteered to collect the parcels and, as far as possible, will make a house-to-house collection. The first call will be made on Saturday next. If readers of the County Press will advise Mr Puttick when parcels are ready, he will arrange for them to be called for.



IW Observer 20 September 1919

The Tank – Following the reception ceremony on Tuesday the Post Office arranged a sale of War Savings Certificates, the purchasers of which were entitled to view the interior of the tank, and £60 was subscribed in this manner. Considerable interest has been taken in inspecting the large machine, and a number of snapshots have been taken of it and the crew. The christening of the Tank "Louise" as a compliment to the Mayoress was a graceful and timely act. Miss Barton has done a lot of good work during the War, in connection with the Supply Depot, and the compliment was thoroughly deserved.



Postcard of The Tank at Ryde Canoe Lake – RSHG

1942 Receipt for donation to the WW2 Tank Fund
Bubbles Saunders

WHEN YOU FIND A BOMB

If you find something that you may think is a bomb, don't poke at it with your walking stick or umbrella to make sure. It is YOU whom the authorities wish to make a report- not the bomb!

You should report your discovery immediately to a warden or policeman. In fact, the law demands that you shall do this. It is an offence not to report your observation.

Do not suppose that anyone will laugh should you have made a mistake. You will be complimented, whether the object proves to be a bomb or not. You may well have saved the life of some curious child by taking proper action quickly.

Small incendiary bombs may be found lying unignited on the surface or partly buried in gardens, recreation grounds or in the open country. Discovery of bombs or even suspicious holes should immediately be notified to the police. It is a good idea too, if this can be managed to arrange for someone to stay near so as to warn other people until an officer arrives.

Should the warden or Police officer decide that the object- there may be more than one - can be safely handled, assistance can be given by obeying instructions carefully.

IW Times 11 May 1944

RYDE.
A.R.P. EXERCISE TO-MORROW
The largest A.R.P. exercise yet held in the Island will be staged here to-morrow (Sunday), to test the efficiency of assistance from other areas. The full services will be engaged with the A.F.S. and police. About 80 "casualties" will be dealt with, 50 of whom will be men from H.M.S. Medina. The brigades from Newport, Sandown, and Shanklin are taking part, the first-aid parties from Newport, Ventnor, and Cowes, and decontamination squads from Shanklin and Cowes will be called to assist.

IW County Press 30 March 1940

IW County Press 29 June 1939

Silhouettes of German troop carriers, published at the request of the war office, were included in the County Press. Readers were advised to cut the pictures out, paste them on to cardboard and hang them in their homes and local defence volunteer posts so people could identify the aircraft.

IW County Press 2 December 1939

The first of the monthly tests of air raid warning sirens was set to take place on Monday morning at 11am. Anti-gas helmets for babies were to be given out for children under two and half years old. Trained nurses were to fit them and explain their use.

IW County Press 18 November 1939

In a report of the Island and the war, it was said everyone should have received their ration books and had to register for bacon, ham, butter and sugar. As British summertime ended, the blackout was brought forward by an hour and a mask for vehicle headlights was to be made obligatory.



IW County Press 16 March 1940

IW County Press 18 February 1939

The Women's Voluntary Service were hoping for more recruits. They already had 98 clerical, 121 transport, 248 casualty, 249 domestic, 129 communications, 28 evacuation, 86 miscellaneous duties, 194 assistant wardens and 42 executive staff.

G R
WOMEN
URGENTLY WANTED
FOR THE
W.A.A.C
WOMEN'S ARMY AUXILIARY CORPS
WORK AT HOME & ABROAD
WITH THE FORCES
COOKS, WAITRESSES, CLERKS, DRIVER-MECHANICS, ALL KINDS OF DOMESTIC WORKERS AND WOMEN IN MANY OTHER CAPACITIES TO TAKE THE PLACE OF MEN.
GOOD WAGES - UNIFORM
QUARTERS - RATIONS
FOR ALL INFORMATION AND ADVICE APPLY AT:
NEAREST EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE
THE ADDRESS CAN BE OBTAINED AT ANY POST OFFICE

BOROUGH OF RYDE & PARISH OF BEMBRIDGE
AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS
A scheme is being prepared by a Joint Committee, consisting of representatives of the Ryde Borough and Bembridge Parish Councils, providing for the taking of precautionary measures which would be necessary for safeguarding the civil population of the above two districts in the event of an air attack being made on them.
Volunteers are required for the following branches of the organisation, viz:—
(a) First aid or medical services.
(b) Rescue or demolition services.
(c) Decontamination of materials.
(d) Air raid wardens.
(e) Gas detection officers.
(f) Administration and clerical.
(g) Communications (Dispatch riders, runners &c.)
(h) Fire fighting.
(i) Repair of roads, sewers, &c.
Will all persons who are prepared to assist please call at or send their names to the Air Raid Precautions Office, at the Town Hall, Ryde, when enrolment forms will be issued to them. Volunteers will be trained in their various duties and in anti-gas measures.
Town Hall, Ryde, I.W.
16th June, 1937.

Air Raid Precautions issued
June 1937

WW2 WAAC Poster
and Gas leaflet
The National Archives

OFFICIAL INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF HOME SECURITY
What to do about GAS
HINTS TO MOTHERS
★ Learn to put on baby's gas helmet quickly, while wearing your own mask. Your Health Visitor will show you how. If you don't know her address ask at Town Hall or at the Child Welfare Centre.
★ With more than one baby you need help. Arrange with a neighbour, or find out if your local W.V.S. has a Housewives' Service.
★ Toddlers soon learn to put on their own masks. Let them make a game of it and they will wear their gas masks happily.
MAKE SURE YOUR FAMILY HAVE THEIR GAS MASKS WITH THEM NIGHT & DAY

Local councils were responsible for organising all the necessary ARP services in their areas. Although the standard procedures prescribed that the ideal warden should be at least 30 years old, men and women of all ages were wardens. In certain instances, given special needs of communities, even teenagers were wardens. The role of ARP was open to both men and women but only men could serve in the gas contamination (teams that dealt with chemical and gas bombs), heavy and light rescue and demolition services. ARP wardens had the task of patrolling the streets during the blackout, to ensure that no light was visible. If a light was spotted, the warden would alert the person/people responsible by shouting something like "Put that light out!". They could report persistent offenders to the local police.



Land Army photographs and posters Imperial War Museum

As men aged 18 to 41 joined the forces, women were recruited to take on their jobs at home. Many worked in factories but others joined the Land Army. The government tried to encourage people to grow their own food as well, but rationing was introduced in 1940.

IW County Press 16 December 1939

People who had soldiers on leave staying at their houses were experiencing difficulty in getting the necessary additional butter, sugar, bacon and ham, as they were not registered with local retailers. This was to be corrected when rationing was introduced on January 8.

IW County Press 20 July 1940

Demonstrations of wartime cooking and vegetable preservation were put on around the Island. Townswomen's Guilds and individuals were invited to take part to learn how to get the most from their rations and what could be grown.

Identity cards were introduced by the government in World War II to identify people and their addresses. Everyone, including children, had to carry an identity card at all times. The identity cards were abolished in 1952, but the identity numbers were used by the National Health Service to give everyone an individual number. People who had an identity card during or after the war still have the same number as their NHS identity today.



IW County Press 9 March 1940

IW County Press 1 May 1943



The Labour Exchange/Recruitment centre in Mount Street
Roy Brinton Collection



IW County Press
1 August 1942



22 June 1941

People who experienced the war years in Ryde will always remember an incident where eleven people, including five children, lost their lives and at least another 50 were injured. It was Sunday night, 22 June 1941 when Bettsworth Road School was destroyed by enemy action.

Below is a story of that night passed down to Pat Southcott by her father.

"During the war, buildings in the close proximity to our house were badly damaged by German bombs. Our house suffered extensive damage after one such incident when Len and Elsie had to sleep "under the stars" as the roof was blown off, ceilings demolished and doors and windows blown in. Dad told me that luckily, (if that seems the right word under the circumstances), it was a warm June night. In fact, it was 22 June 1941. Mum would have been six months pregnant with me.

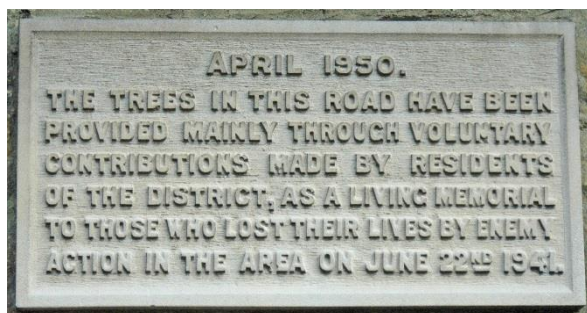
My Aunt Nellie Crabb, Dad's eldest sister and Uncle Fred, her husband, were bombed out of their house in William Street on that occasion but were not harmed. They were lucky as eleven people, including children, lost their lives that night. My aunt and uncle came to see my parents just after the bombing "looking as black as soot" according to Dad.

After the war aunt and uncle were allocated one of the new council houses built at the top end of Church Street to replace the ones which were flattened.

Many people were made homeless that night and some were given temporary shelter in the Commodore Cinema. The children from Bettsworth Road School were moved to Green Street or Trinity schools. The Infants school was eventually relocated to St. Michael's Church Hall.

A wall plaque erected in April 1950 in St Michael's Avenue [previously Church Street], records *"The trees in this road have been provided mainly through voluntary contributions made by residents of the district, as a living memorial to those who lost their lives by enemy action in the area on June 22nd 1941"*.

Photograph RSHG



Quarry Road Street Party – Heather Driver

IW County Press 18 March 1939

The horrors of an air raid were vividly brought home to the residents of Ryde and the East Wight. Around 500 people took part in the mock exercise. The arrangements were kept secret so each incident came as a surprise. A high explosive bomb was supposed to have hit Ryde Town Hall. The roof was wreathed in smoke from the red flares, which had been lit to add a realistic touch. In the streets, yellow flares told onlookers more bombs had fallen, and the piercing shrieks of three women trapped on the Town Hall roof were heard.



Partlands ARP 1941 – RSHG
[unknown donor]

At the beginning of the war, ARP wardens had no uniform, but wore their own clothes (wardens wore helmets, arm bands and badges on their civilian clothes) and in October 1939 were issued with 'bluette' overalls with a red on black 'ARP' badge.

From May 1941 full-time and regular part-time wardens were issued with a dark blue battledress and beret. Women were issued with a four pocket tunic, again in dark blue serge with skirt.

Young People's Swing Club COMMODORE BALLROOM Every Tuesday

Come along and enjoy yourselves 7 o'clock till 10.30. Admission 9d. Proceeds for Charities. Lively Music by Charlie Martin and J. Dyer (Drums). Organisers: Mr. and Mrs. Bloomfield.

IW Times 12 November 1942

IW County Press 19 May 1945

European Victory Party.—A large number of children at Weeks were given a victory tea and sports on Saturday, the event being organised by Mr. and Mrs. Down, of Weeks Hotel, and parents and friends. The kiddies from Weeks-road were joined by those from Millward-road and all had tea at tables in the street outside the hotel. Alfred-street children sat down to a meal in the garden of the Congregational Church. The guests were the Mayor and Mayoress (Mr. and Mrs. H. W. O. Weeks), Ald. and Mrs. W. Russell, and Ald. and Mrs. E. C. Loader. There was an enjoyable programme of sports, for which prizes were given. Adults joined in the dancing which was carried on till a late hour under the glow of a large illuminated "V." The revelry terminated with a huge bonfire, to which was committed an effigy of Hitler which had been hanging from a lamp post. Parents in Priese and South-streets organised a similar function for their children on Tuesday. About 40 sat down to an excellent tea. Families pooled their rations to provide the fare and there were generous gifts from residents to add to the meal. After tea, served by parents and friends wearing carnival hats, the children took part in races and were later joined by adults for dancing. The Salvation Army band played lively selections. Ice-creams were provided and each child received oranges and a florin. The expenses were met by a collection among the parents.

