



RYDE SOCIAL HERITAGE GROUP

Beyond the Graves

Volume 21: Number 1: January 2026

A CHRISTMAS LUCKY DIP



IW Observer 4 January 1862

Exhibition of Christmas Trees - This bazaar was very well attended, and a brisk business done in fancy goods and articles exhibited. The proceeds of the bazaar were for the St John's Sunday School fund.

Photograph of the tree in the North Chapel, 2010 - RSHG
Advert IW County Press
19 December 1914

And a Break from the Festivities



INTERNATIONAL STORES
For Your Xmas Shopping

Tea in fancy tins	Mince-meat
Raisins	Crystallised Fruits
Sultanas	Chocolates
Carrauts	Nuts
Peel	Green Fruit
Prunes	Jams
Figs	Jellies
Puddings	Bottled Fruits
Iced Cakes	Tinned Fruits
Biscuits	Almonds
Bon-Bons	Muscatsels

THE BIGGEST GROCERS IN THE WORLD
TEA :: COFFEE :: GROCERIES :: PROVISIONS



MRS BEATON'S CHRISTMAS PLUM PUDDING

INGREDIENTS - 1-1/2 lb. of raisins, 1/2 lb. of currants, 1/2 lb. of mixed peel, 3/4 lb. of bread crumbs, 3/4 lb. of suet, 8 eggs, 1 wineglassful of brandy.

Mode - Stone and cut the raisins in halves, but do not chop them; wash, pick, and dry the currants, and mince the suet finely; cut the candied peel into thin slices, and grate down the bread into fine crumbs. When all these dry ingredients are prepared, mix them well together; then moisten the mixture with the eggs, which should be well beaten, and the brandy; stir well, that everything may be very thoroughly blended, and press the pudding into a buttered mould; tie it down tightly with a floured cloth, and boil for 5 or 6 hours. The day it is to be eaten, plunge it into boiling water, and keep it boiling for at least 2 hours; then turn it out of the mould, and serve with brandy-sauce. On Christmas-day a sprig of holly is usually placed in the middle of the pudding, and about a wineglassful of brandy poured round it, which, at the moment of serving, is lighted, and the pudding thus brought to table encircled in flame. Average cost, 4s.

Sufficient for a quart mould for 7 or 8 persons.

Seasonable on the 25th of December, and on various festive occasions till March.

Note - Five or six of these puddings should be made at one time, as they will keep good for many weeks, and in cases where unexpected guests arrive it only requires warming through, a quickly-prepared dish.

IW Observer 28 December 1861

The tide of Christmas from time immemorial, one of lustful festivity and muscular enjoyment, but times and ceremonies have undergone a change. "Our fathers" - vigorous old and Christian ancients kept it with more celebration if with less refinement than ourselves.

MINCE PIES (Wikipedia)

Originally named Christmas Pie, its ingredients are traceable to the 13th century, when returning European crusaders brought with them Middle Eastern recipes containing meats, fruits, and spices; these contained the Christian symbolism of representing the gifts delivered to Jesus. The tradition of eating Christmas pie in December continued through to the Victorian era, although by then its recipe had become sweeter and its size markedly reduced from its once large oblong shape. Today the mince pie, usually made without meat remains a popular seasonal treat.

IW Observer 15 December 1906

To please the children, we make dozens of mince pies, and elaborate our cakes with pink and white icing; we call together the family, from baby to grandmother, that each may give a stir "for luck," to the historic pudding. It is now common knowledge that the richness and nutritiveness of Christmas cakes and puddings depend more on the currants, as a wonderful healthful food for growing children. They cleanse and enrich the blood, and avert the necessity of medicine.

RSHG Christmas Drop-in, 2017,

Not many mince pies left!



IW Times 17 December 1964

Christmas Party - The one-year-old IW Railway Retirement Association held its first Christmas party at the Oasis Ballroom, Ryde Esplanade on Tuesday. About 150 members attended.



MISTLETOE (Wikipedia)

The Romans associated mistletoe with peace, love, and understanding and hung it over doorways to protect the household. In the advent of the Christian era, mistletoe in the Western world became associated with Christmas as a decoration under which lovers are expected to kiss, as well as protection from witches and demons. Mistletoe continued to be associated with fertility and vitality through the Middle Ages. By the 18th century it had also become incorporated into Christmas celebrations around the world. The custom of kissing under the mistletoe is referred to as popular among servants in late eighteenth-century England.

The serving class of Victorian England is credited with perpetuating the tradition. The tradition dictated that a man was allowed to kiss any woman standing underneath mistletoe, and that bad luck would befall any woman who refused the kiss. One variation on the tradition stated that with each kiss a berry was to be plucked from the mistletoe, and the kissing must stop after all the berries had been removed.

CHRISTMAS CHARMS AND SPELLS.

Below are some old charms and spells for seeing into the future at this time of the year. This one is for Christmas Eve: Procure some berries from off a fresh piece of mistletoe (not exceeding nine in number) and put them to steep in a liquid composed of equal proportions of wine, beer, vinegar, and honey. Take them fasting before going to bed on an empty stomach, and you will dream of your future destiny. You must retire to rest before twelve.

Here is a charm for New Year's Eve: On New Year's Eve, previous to retiring to rest, pull twelve hairs from your head and plait them into the form of a ring. Put them into a Prayer-book at the place where the Marriage Service commences, taking care not to speak, and your future husband will appear to you in your dream.

IW Observer 26 December 1903

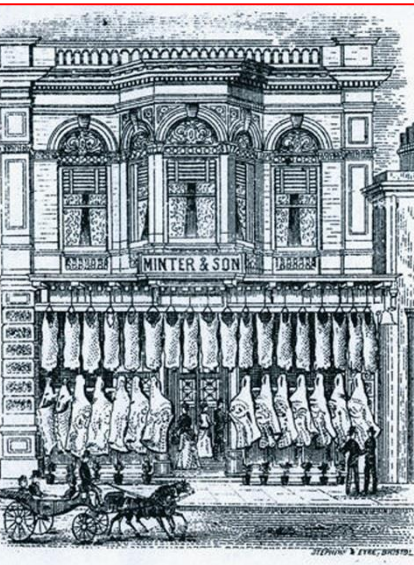
Shopping in Union Street - RSHG



Christmas Shopping

Christmas Card
RSHG

S Fowler Advert
IW County Press
3 December 1921



FOR PRIME ENGLISH
BEEF & MUTTON
AT XMAS—SHOP AT
MINTER & SON,
(C. J. Minter, Proprietor)
Family Butchers,
High St. & Swanmore, Ryde.
Telephone 81 Ryde.

Adverts

IW Times 14 December
1922

Minter's shopfront - RSHG

IW Observer 27 December 1913

Dull Christmas - There have been a good many complaints amongst Ryde traders that the Christmas season this year has been one of the duller known. There are probably two reasons for this. There is less money in the town and the increasing popularity of "shopping by post." The first remedy is to attract a wealthier class of visitor to the town.

Now Showing.

A Choice Selection of
Novelties suitable for

Xmas & New Year Gifts.

BLouses, JUMPERs,
COATS, SCARVES,
GLOVES,
HANDKERCHIEFS,
HOSE, &c., &c.

W. MATHIAS,
Fancy Draper, Milliner, &c.,
1, CROSS STREET, RYDE.

The IW Observer, 4 December 1920, described some Ryde shops at Christmas.

'Over 12,000 toys are a leading feature at the Xmas Bazaar arranged by the S.B. Firm (Mr H.R. Whyatt) in Cross Street ... the Santa Claus "stockings" are home-made and the larger proportion of the great mass of toys are British ... the prices throughout are most reasonable'.
'Mr A. Newman of St Thomas' Square has ... Meccano models which provide our lads with many a pleasant and instructive hour'.
'Teague and Co., Union Street ... their specialities [are] in gramophones, accordions and various instruments ... the firm have always the latest dance and operatic music in stock'.
'H.G. Jolliffe, of the Tea Shop, High Street [stocks] bacon, tea, coffee, as well as currants, sultanas and all the essentials for the Xmas pudding and mince pies'.

Colour Harmony
in the Home.

S. FOWLER & Co.,
Art Furnishers,
51, 52, Union Street, Ryde, I.W.
Tel. No. 155

BEG to announce that during ... commencing MONDAY, DECEMBER 6th, they are making a Special Colour Display in their Windows of the Latest ...
Furnishing Fabrics, Lamp Shades, etc., etc.

In order that the effects by artificial light may be seen, the Window Lights will be kept on during the evenings until 9 p.m.

A good selection of Japanese Novelties and Calendars, etc., suitable for Xmas Gifts may be seen in their Showrooms.

Dreaming of a white Christmas?

Postcard snow scenes around Ryde, 29 December 1909

Roy Brinton Collection



A Winter Forest created by primary school children on a visit to the RSHG in 2015



A TOUR AROUND RYDE: The Library

A Unique CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

Bring the Children and introduce them to our

JUVENILE LIBRARY,

The latest Books by the
: : Best Authors at : :
2d. per volume. weekly.
: : No DEPOSIT. : :

MUCKLOW'S LIBRARY, 16 Cross St.

Advert IW Times
14 December 1922

IW County Press March 26th 1960

Bequest to Library – The Education Committee were informed that under the will of the late Dr John Dockray a considerable sum of money would be made available to improve the County Council library services in Ryde. The money would be placed in trust and would be used during the next five years. It is understood that it is hoped to apply the bequest to move the library from its present inadequate premises in Lind Street to the School of Art in George Street, when the County Secondary School vacates the latter premises.



TOWN HALL LIBRARY.

A letter was read from Messrs Eldridge and Sons, executors of the late Miss Collins stating she had bequeathed to the Library free of duty a large volume of Osborne photos taken by the late Jabez Hughes, and several valuable works on natural history and other subjects

The Mayor said the gift would be much appreciated and form a valuable addition to the library and he was anxious that steps should be taken whereby that library should be used (hear hear). At present it was only utilised as Justices room and for their meetings but as far as the library itself was concerned it was a dead letter. It was time they should consider whether they could not have it made use of by people for reference books.

Alderman Blackall remarked that so far as the General Purposes committee was concerned he was sure they would be pleased to take it in hand, as from time to time they had very valuable books given over to their care, and it was quite right that the public should have an opportunity of inspecting them. The present gift would form a capital addition.

School of Art and 1965 library photographs - RSHG

Lind Street photograph – Dave Bushell

The IW County Press, 16 October 1965, reported on the opening of the new County Seely Library in George Street, by Earl Mountbatten of Burma.

IW Observer 17 June 1922

IW Times 27 January 1966

Library – fact may be stranger than fiction, but in both departments Ryde's £32,000 public library, opened in October by Earl Mountbatten, surprised the readers yesterday. Anxious faces peered out through the plate glass windows, and puzzled ones looked in, but never—at least, not for about 15 minutes—the twain did meet. The lock on the main door had broken. Mr. Abbott, librarian put a determined shoulder against the door and the lock finally gave way.

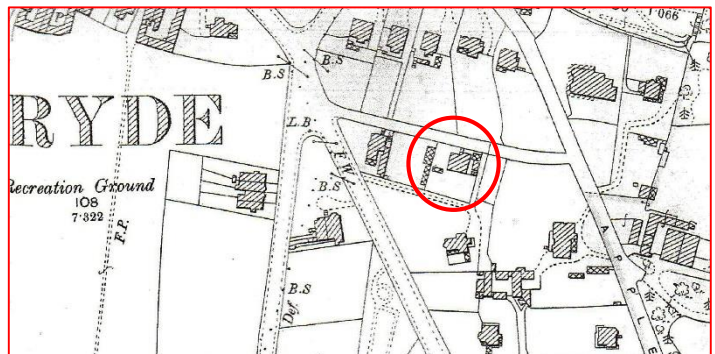
A VISIT TO APPELEY COURT

HENRY JONES THADDEUS (sometimes called Harry) and APLEY [or APPELEY] COURT



Born Henry Thaddeus Jones in 1859, he entered the Cork School of Art when he was ten years old. There he studied under the genre painter James Brenan. Thaddeus won the Taylor Prize in 1878 enabling him to go to London, and then again in 1879 enabling him to continue his studies in Paris at the Académie Julian. His first major painting, *Le Retour du Braconnier* was hung "on the line" (at eye-level) at the Paris Salon of 1881. He received commissions to paint portraits, among them two papal portrait commissions (for Pope Pius X), and became a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. He received several other portrait commissions. In the 1880s, Thaddeus travelled to Algeria where he explored Orientalist painting. His autobiography, titled *Recollections of a Court Painter*, was written during his retirement in California and published in 1912. In his later years he settled in the Isle of Wight, and died in Ryde, on 1 May 1929. He was buried in St. John's cemetery at Westridge.

Details from a book about Harry Jones Thaddeus – Artist/Portrait painter (information from Stephen Kennedy)



Photographs of Appley Court Brian Young

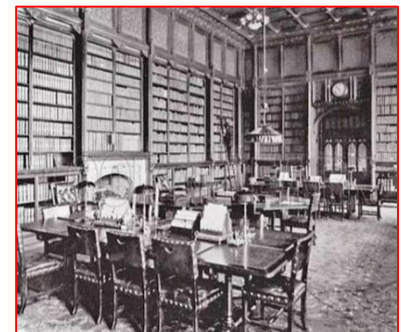
The Wounded Poacher by Henry Jones Thaddeus at the National Gallery of Ireland [Wikipedia]

1897 OS map locating Appley Court between East Hill Road and Appley Rise

Another resident of Appley Court was Jean Howard, the second wife of George Howard, the House of Commons Librarian.

She was often prosecuted in the local Ryde court. The IW Observer 11 May 1918, reported she had refused access to Appley Court on several occasions to Raymond Sibley of the Ryde Gas Light Company so he could read the meter. She was fined £2. They mentioned a previous case when she had been convicted in 1915 for assault on the police. She had set her dogs on a police officer and had torn up the summons when it was given to her.

The same newspaper in their 27 May 1922 issue, reported that she was summoned by the Water Committee for allowing a stop cock and a cistern to constantly overflow, causing a 'bad waste of water'.



House of Commons Library Wikipedia

IW Observer 24 June 1922

IW Observer 12 December 1874
A contemporary suggests that a railway pier should be run off Apley, with a long tunnel under the hill. This is, like most advice gratuitously given by those who know nothing of what they are talking about.

A REWARD will be given for the return of, or Information which will lead to the recovery of a Bible with Howard name, and an Amethyst Seal with Coat of Arms, which were in the possession of the widow of the late Mr George Howard, of Appley Court.—Captain Howard, R.N., Norton Rectory, Faversham, Kent.

IW Observer 25 November 1922

APPELEY COURT
Private Hotel
Standing in its own garden in best part of Ryde, away from noise of traffic. Two minutes from Sea and all Amusements.
WELL FURNISHED AIRY BEDROOMS, FITTED HOT AND COLD WATER. "SLUMBERLAND" BEDS.
VERY COMFORTABLE LOUNGE, SEPARATE TABLES AND EXCELLENT CUISINE.
Full Board or Bed, Breakfast and Evening Dinner as required.
PERSONAL SUPERVISION FREE CAR PARK
Apply for Tariff to Proprietress
APPELEY RISE - RYDE
Telephone 2567

DEATH AT APPELEY COURT.—We regret to record the death of Mrs. Jean Howard, widow of a former librarian at the House of Commons which occurred at her residence Appley Court aged 62. She had resided in the Island about 16 years and about 10 years of the time at Appley Court. About 12 months ago she met with a burning accident and had been an invalid practically ever since. The funeral took place at St. Johns Cemetery the arrangements being entrusted to Mr Percy V. Coombes.

Advert for Appley Court when a hotel Ryde and Seaview Guide 1954 - Ann Barrett
Holly in the Cemetery 2010 - Janette Gregson



CALLING ON THE MAYOR OF RYDE

BOROUGH OF RYDE.

To the Burgesses of the West Ward.

LADIES and GENTLEMEN,—At the request of many of the Burgesses, I beg to offer myself as a Candidate to fill the present Vacancy in the Town Council.

Whilst fully realizing the importance of not unnecessarily increasing the rates, I heartily support the contemplated improvement on the Eastern Fore-shore, believing that the prosperity of Ryde can only be maintained and advanced by a due regard to all such improvements as may be calculated to add to its attractiveness.

Should you do me the honour of returning me, I shall at all times act independently, and do all in my power to advance the prosperity of the Borough.

I beg to remain, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Your most obedient Servant,

ERNEST GROVES.

Cross-street, Ryde, June 20th, 1879.

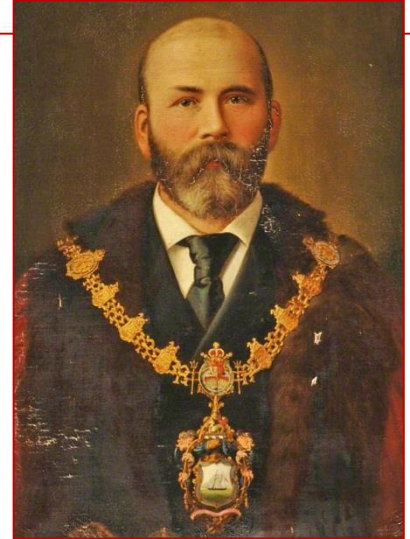
IW Observer 28 June 1879

IW Observer 12 February 1898

The Queen has sent, by Sir Arthur Bigge, a portrait of Her Majesty, as a souvenir of the visit of Her Majesty to Ryde last year, during his Mayoralty, to Ald. Ernest Groves. It is from a photograph taken of the Queen as she appeared on the 22nd June.



THE MAYOR'S NEW ROBE. — During the past week Messrs J. and A. Morgan have had on exhibition, at their establishment in Union Street, the new robe which is to be worn by the Mayor Elect, Mr Ernest Groves. It has attracted considerable attention, inasmuch as it is somewhat different in style to the robes worn by former Mayors. It is of the usual scarlet cloth, lined throughout with silk, but for the ermine with which the fronts of Ryde Mayors' robes have hitherto been trimmed, rich sable fur has been substituted, which with black velvet also adorns the edgings of the sleeves. The cut of the robe is more like that worn by the City of London Corporation, and we must say that the sober richness of the garment adds considerably to the dignified appearance of the wearer. There is another reason why the Mayor may be excused for wishing to make an alteration. Ermine is not merely a very expensive fur, but is no longer fashionable. There are several Mayors, we understand, who have their robes put away, getting moth-eaten, because ermine is not worn now, whereas sable can be brought into use for a variety of purposes. We believe Mr Ernest Groves is going to be Mayor so many times that his new robe will be quite worn out, but all the same he has initiated a fashion which we believe to have the merits of good taste and economy.

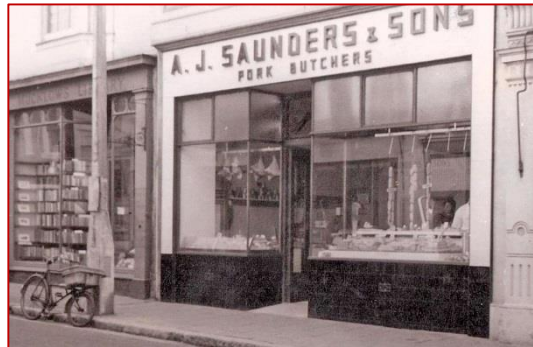


Article IW Observer 9 November 1895
Alderman E Groves wearing his robe
RSHG

NOTICE OF REMOVAL.

ERNEST GROVES begs to thank his customers for their kind patronage and support, and to inform them that, owing to the expiration of his lease, he has REMOVED to more convenient and commodious premises, adjoining; and trusts, by increased personal attention to their requirements, to merit a continuation of their favours.

CROSS STREET, RYDE, I.W.,
1st August, 1878.



A MODEL SHOP.—No doubt many visitors and residents have noticed the handsome new butcher's shop in Cross-street, just opened by Mr. Ernest Groves. A first glance shows that no small amount of taste has been brought to bear upon the design and general arrangement of the premises. In days gone by butchers' shops were not among the most attractive places, but of late years an immense improvement has taken place in this respect, and Mr. Groves' new abattoir and show room—for it deserves the name—are splendid specimens of what can be done with the aid of art in making business places pleasant to visit. Perfect cleanliness and ventilation, plenty of room, arboresque adornments, meat of first-rate quality, and every detail carefully attended to, places Mr. Groves' establishment high in the scale of purveyors of meat.

Mr Groves moved his butcher's business into Cross Street, as advertised and described by the IW Observer

Groves' premises later became A J Saunders in Cross Street
Photograph RSHG

SOUP FOR THE POOR OF RYDE.

Mr Duffett, of the Lion Brewery, has very kindly placed at the disposal of the committee a copper, &c., for making soup for the poor, and the following subscriptions have been received in cash and kind:

Ernest Groves (Mayor)	0	5	0
J. T. Woodman (Kent Hotel)	0	5	0
J. C. T. Brook	0	3	0
Supt Hinks	0	2	6
Miss Godwin	0	2	6
F. W. Randall	0	2	6
Major Hamilton	0	2	6
W. H. Woodridge	0	2	6

Owing to want of space the other subscriptions will be announced next week.

The poor of Ryde were not forgotten after Christmas, with Mr Groves one of the benefactors
IW Observer 21 January 1897

ST JOHN'S GIRLS CLUB & THE SUFFRAGETTES



In January 1912 the Senior Girls Club put on a performance in the St John's Parish Hall. The presence of the policeman suggests the suffragettes were up to no good!

Postcards - Paul Kingswell

Photograph of St John's Church - RSHG



IW Observer
6 January 1912

IW Observer 11 June 1910

The Suffragettes are about to commence an active campaign in the Island and hope to make many converts. The probability is that they will not find the ladies of the Island very warm supporters of the cause.

IW Observer 10 September 1910

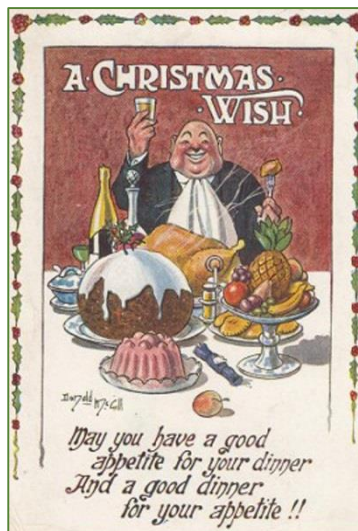
Suffragists - The charming ladies who have been speaking at Newport and Ryde have attracted fairly large audiences, but their auditors are pretty indifferent about the merits of the movement. One well-known lady doubts whether one woman in twenty in the Island has the smallest desire to vote.

IW Observer 6 April 1912

Women's Suffrage - There was evidently a sprinkling of sympathizers with women's suffrage at Mr. Horsburgh's lecture on Tuesday. His reference to the subject of "votes for women" were met with a tapping of the feet, smiles and nods, and other evidence of feminine approbation.

IW Observer 15 March 1913

Militancy - Previously suffragette meetings were tolerated with good humour. Now, however, the militants are having a rough time of it at the hands of an outraged public, and their meetings - north, south, east and west, are being broken up.



Postcard
Vectis Postcard Club

IW Observer
27 September 1913

ISLAND MEMBER AND WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE. —Mr. Douglas Hall, M.P., presided at a meeting, held at the Drill Hall, Newport, on Tuesday, in opposition to Women's Suffrage. He made it clear that though he acted as Chairman of the meeting it was not to be taken as an indication that he opposed Women's Suffrage. His view was that it was a very difficult problem as to whether it would be good or bad for the country, that women should participate in the government of the country. He did not propose to make a speech on one side or the other, but he asked them to give serious attention to what the speakers had to say. Many of the Island member's constituents will come to the conclusion that it would be more satisfactory if he would come off the fence in regard to this matter. A very large number of people both men and women are opposed to Women's Suffrage, because politics are outside women's sphere, and because ninety-five per cent of women understand little or nothing of politics and care less.

Non-Militant Suffragists.

A meeting convened by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, Ryde Branch, is to be held at the Small Town Hall, on Monday, October 6th, at 8 p.m. This Society is non-party and non-militant. The speakers will be Lady Chance, and Miss Aston, while the chairman will be Sir William Chance. There will be no charge for admission.