



RYDE SOCIAL HERITAGE GROUP

Beyond the Graves

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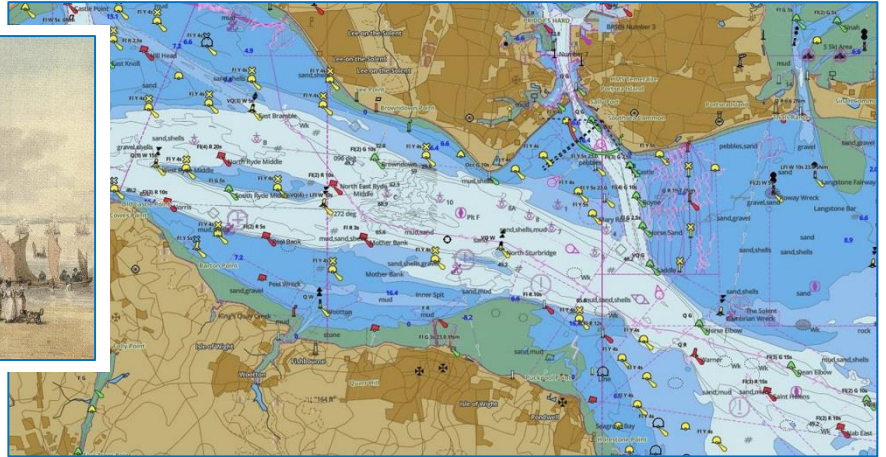
TO THE RESCUE . . .



The waters of the Solent have always been a danger to swimmers and shipping leading to many rescues.

Map of the Solent showing the various hazards – Wikimedia Commons

This Rowlandson painting of the Solent shows a deceptively peaceful scene.

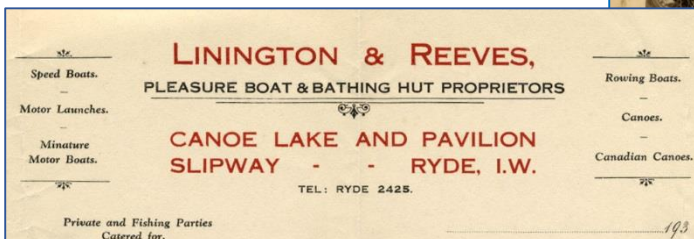


Some of the regular Ryde watermen rescuers

William Bartlett, W. Butchers, Thomas Buxey, Ernest Cotton, William Cotton, Robert Heward, George Jeffrey, Alfred Linington, Hurst Linington, Albert Reeves, Dan Reeves, Daniel Reeves and Robert Reeves

Hurst Linington was born in 1892, his father being a survivor of the 'Selina' lifeboat disaster. The Linington and Reeves families were pleasure boat and bathing hut proprietors at Ryde. Hurst [known as Harry] died in 1957.

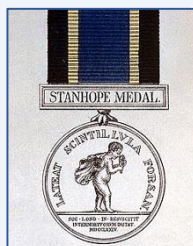
Photograph of Hurst in front of Ryde Pavilion circa 1930, Letter heading 1930 and longshoremen photograph all courtesy of Brian Bosley



IW Observer 29 December 1906

A very courageous rescue was effected by Mr. Searle, of Monkton Street, Ryde, on September 1st. A lady was bathing from a machine on the sands near the Canoe Lake when she got beyond her depth. She was in immediate danger of drowning when Mr. Searle brought her to the shore, where he and she were brought to safety by Mr Dan Reeves. Mr Searle was afterwards presented with the Royal Humane Society's Medal and certificate.

A letter to the IW Observer concerning the rescue said Searle had become exhausted during the rescue and both he and the lady were brought ashore by Dan Reeves, a popular young waterman. The writer thought Reeves, who had saved two lives, should also have received a certificate.



The Royal Humane Society distributed medals, clasps, money-rewards, as well as testimonials, to those who saved or attempted to save drowning people.

This Stanhope Medal was introduced in 1873.

IW Observer 12 November 1904

The Royal Humane Society have presented to Miss M. Gill, of Pier Street, Ryde, a testimonial in parchment setting forth her courageous conduct in rescuing a child from drowning on the Western Esplanade on 1st August last.

IW Observer 28 December 1918

Mr T. J. W. Wheatly, who rescued a young woman from drowning off the Pier in February was awarded the bronze medal of the Royal Humane Society.

THE LIFEBOAT DISASTER



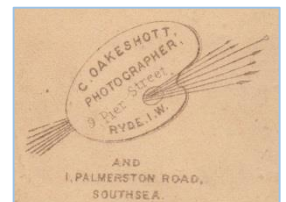
The funeral of the two men, together with Frank Haynes' 3-month old daughter, who had died on 30 December, took place at St James'. Flags flew at half-mast and blinds were drawn on windows, while huge crowds lined the streets of Ryde. As a coastguard, Frank Haynes was given full naval honours. The funeral procession then made its way to the Cemetery.



IW Observer 2 October 1909

Jubilee Celebration – "Lifeboat Saturday" was observed on Saturday last, when special collections were made throughout the Island. The occasion was the Jubilee of the establishment of the I.W. Lifeboat Board. In the evening the crews of the six Island lifeboats were entertained at dinner at the Medina Hall, Newport. The crews of the lifeboats had saved over 850 lives in the last half century.

BRAVEY REWARDED.—This (Friday) morning as the signalman of the R.V.Y.C. (Mr. Henry Worley) was attending to his duties on the Club battery, he heard screams for help proceeding from one of the bathing machines, belonging to Mr. Minter. On turning, he saw a lady apparently drowning, having drifted out of her depth. He immediately jumped off the battery wall, and, with Mr. Minter's machine attendant, rushed to her rescue, and succeeded in bringing her safely ashore. The lady, on recovering, offered Mr. Minter a shilling to divide between the two men, which Mr. Minter politely begged the lady would give the men herself, and reconsider the amount offered for saving her life.



Mr Oakshott was a local studio photographer. The reverse of one of his photographs showing his logo – Ann Barrett.

The full story of the tragic events leading to the deaths of two of the lifeboat crew can be read in the IW County Press of 5 and 13 January 1907. Seeing a small boat in difficulty on the evening of 1 January, the lifeboat, Selina, was launched. The crew were William Bartlett, George Jeffery, Ernest Cotton, Alfred Linington snr., Alfred Linington jnr., Daniel Reeves, Albert Reeves, Henry Heward and Frank Haynes.

After a fruitless search the lifeboat was returning to Ryde at 8 pm when it overturned. The crew had to cling to the upturned boat in the dark, cold conditions, with no means of raising the alarm. First Haynes, then Heward, succumbed to the cold and, despite the efforts of Linington, snr. and Bartlett to hold them up they were washed away.

Nearing Southsea their cries for help were heard at around 1.15 am and the survivors were rescued. At the inquest it was stated that a great deal of praise was due to the men who went out gallantly to save life.



The wrecked lifeboat on Southsea beach.
Three of the survivors – Daniel Reeves, Ernest Cotton and Albert Reeves.
The lifeboat back at the station, circa 1908.

All Roy Brinton Collection

Postcard of the funeral nearing the Cemetery – Hilary Lloyd

The lifeboat station had been refurbished in 1869.

It was taken over by the RNLI in 1894 and closed in 1923.

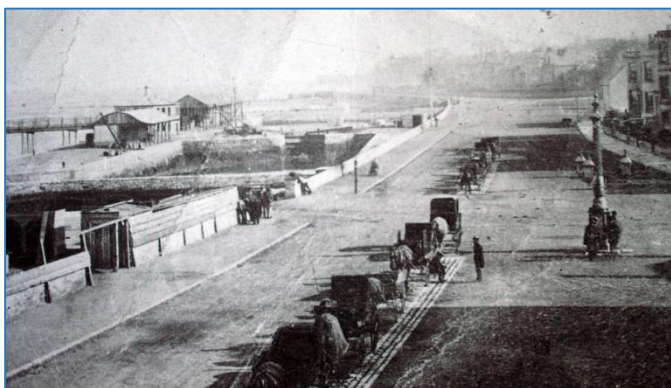
IW Observer 23 July 1864

Caution to Amateur Boatmen – Mr. Oakshott, of Pier-street, was about to take two ladies out for a row in his cockle-shell on Monday evening, but they, in stepping in, instead of treading in the centre of the boat, trod on the gunwale, so the boat capsized and plunged the whole party in the water. Fortunately, a waterman named Barton, was close at hand, and rescued them from their perilous position, and he was rewarded with five shillings, which is rather a low estimate of the value of a life.

IW Observer 30 July 1864

In 1859 the IW Ferry Company constructed the inner and outer basins, together with lock gates, sheds on the Quay and the Victoria Pier. They had money and other problems, eventually selling out to the Ryde Pier Company, who turned the Victoria Pier into a bathing pier, but continued to run the docks and basin.

Photograph below - Roy Brinton Collection



Above – Kemp's Baths, later the site of the Esplanade Hotel
Roy Brinton Collection

Below – IW Observer 29 February 1868

FORTUNATE RESCUE.—Great praise is due to P.C. McLaughlin, who on Friday night last was the means of rescuing a fellow-creature from a watery grave. It appears that about 12 o'clock McLaughlin and Sergeant Cole were on duty on the Esplanade, near Kemp's hotel, when they heard screeching, the night being very dark. McLaughlin ran to the Ferry Company's basin, and turning on his light saw a man named Hailes, one of the Coastguardmen, struggling in the water, when lying himself down over the gate he seized the struggling man by the hair of the head. Fortunately, Mr. Curtiss, the carrier, with Sergeant Cole, soon came and rendered every assistance, so that the man was got safely home, and has now fully got over the fright which the accident occasioned.

PLUCKY RESCUE FROM DROWNING.—On Friday afternoon last a somewhat exciting scene occurred at the public bathing stage. It seems a young man named Emm plunged into the sea, which was somewhat rough, and swam about 50 yards from the stage, when he was suddenly seized with cramp, and called for help. Amongst the bathers was Mr E. H. Earle, of the Ryde Post-office (a capital swimmer, and winner of the first prize in the swimming match at Bembridge last week), who at once went to the rescue. Emm had sunk once, when Earle managed to grasp him and got him to the boat which is moored off the stage. With great difficulty he managed to get Emm into the boat, and then found there were no oars on board, and no means of reaching the shore. Earle had consequently to swim to the stage for the oars, swim back to the boat, and then row the boat with Emm on board to the stage. There brandy was administered, and eventually Emm was revived sufficiently to be conveyed to his home in a cab. Since the accident the boat has been attached to the stage, by a long rope, a precaution which ought to have been taken before, for Earle's plucky efforts to save life might have been neutralised by the time occupied in swimming to the shore for the oars.



BOATING ACCIDENT.—A boating accident which might have been attended by very serious consequences, occurred near Fishbourne on Saturday. A daughter and two sons of Mr White, of Swanmore, Ryde, embarked in a centreboard sailing boat from Woodside, Wootton, for the purpose of having a sail. The day was squally, and in a very short time the boys found the boat beyond their control. After one or two narrow escapes the boat capsized throwing the occupants into the water. Fortunately the coastguard at Fishbourne had been observing the manoeuvres of the boat, and being not unprepared for an accident, got their gig ready, and as soon as the boat capsized went to the rescue. The boys were in an exhausted condition but the girl did not feel the effects of the immersion so keenly. Had they been further away from the Coastguard Station, or had the Coastguard not been keeping such a good look-out, it is more than possible that the young people would have been drowned before aid reached them. The boat was an utterly unsuitable one for any but very experienced persons, being long and narrow and almost entirely open.

IW Observer 5 September 1885

Right:
Report on the boating accident
IW Observer 5 May 1906

Swanmore Road
Roy Brinton Collection

Fishbourne Coastguard Cottage 2004
Ann Barrett



THE LATE BOAT ACCIDENT.

To the Editor of the Isle of Wight Observer.

Dear Sir,—The recent boat accident at the Ryde Pier Head should open the eyes of the Pier Company to the fact that there is no adequate provision for saving life in cases of emergency—the one life-buoy was not obtained for some time, nor was it made use of by the drowning people. Great credit is due to the Coastguardmen for their restorative treatment of the young man according to the established method.

Yours obediently,
AN EYE WITNESS.

IW Observer
4 July 1891

From the IW Observer 31 July 1920

Ernest Bridle, 11, of Pitt Street, climbed over a rail on the narrow edge of the pier to unhook a fish that had been caught. He missed his footing and fell 15 feet into the choppy sea. A young visiting actor, Mr Leslie, immediately plunged in, fully dressed, and swam to the boy. He got hold of him and swam back to the pier. They were both hoisted to safety. Hot Bovril was provided by Miss Shales of the Refreshment Rooms. Bridle was soon restored and Mr Leslie, after stripping off his sodden clothes, escaped the attention of the crowds clad only in a mackintosh. His wrist watch had been smashed and his hands cut by the "pier mussels". Bridles father called in to the Crown Hotel, where Mr Leslie was staying, to thank him.

Boys fishing on the Pier
Roy Brinton Collection



IW Times 16 August 1906

Fishing Accidents – Mr G. Pigou, who was sitting on a pile fishing at the Pier-head, lost his balance and fell into the water, but was quickly rescued by Frederick Ryall, a coastguard. He sustained a cut in the head, in his fall, but was not seriously hurt. The same day, John Dyer, aged 8, of 17 Mount-street, also fell into the water while fishing from the Victoria Pier. A man named Bartlett, of Nelson-street, held him up, and Alfred Linington, boatman, of Bellevue-road, took him off on a boat. The boy was able to walk home, apparently uninjured by his ducking.



ACCIDENT.—An accident happened to a little boy on Thursday morning that was well nigh fatal to him and several others who went to his rescue. The young gentleman was on the Pier fishing from the crane steps, when his feet slipped and he fell into the sea. A young man, who saw him fall, immediately jumped in after him, and was followed by a gentleman for the same purpose. These two would have brought the little fellow safely to shore had not a third—his father—thought his assistance necessary. This gentleman, not being able to swim, clung to Charlo, the first to the rescue, and so tightly did he keep his hold that Charlo, to save himself, was obliged to leave the child to disengage himself from his grasp. At this juncture, when all were nearly exhausted, a boat arrived, and they safely landed by its aid on the Pier. Had either Charlo or the second gentleman who jumped in been left to themselves no danger would have accrued, but the naturally-anxious parent jeopardised all, and brought down a shower of abuse upon Charlo, (from a fellow on the Pier, who had neither the courage to leap in himself, nor the sense to refrain from worrying and confusing those who had) all because he left the child to disentangle himself from the parent.



Postcards of crane on the Pier and the Vectis Boating & Fishing Club on the Pier
Roy Brinton Collection

IW Observer 15 September 1860



Premises of the Boating & Fishing Club 2025
Trevor & Ron West of the Club

Trinity House Pilot Boat photo
Trinity House History



IW County Press 10 June 1972

Ryde's sea rescue scheme was quickly in action on Monday evening when a report from Ryde telephone exchange said that a red flare had been seen 400 yards north-west of the pier. Ryde Lifeguard's inflatable rescue boat *Zodiac Astral*, crewed by P. Dibbens and D. Brading, a Trinity House Pilot launch and a boat from the Vectis Boating and Fishing Club went to the scene. They found a speedboat had broken down, and a man and two children were rescued.

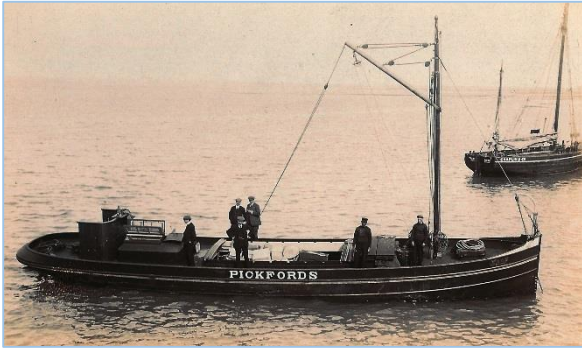
IW Times 15 August 1968

A Trinity House pilot boat left its mooring at Ryde Pier head on Tuesday afternoon to rescue a man and woman whose yacht was in difficulties. The alarm was raised by a member of the Vectis Boating and Fishing Club, which has its headquarters on the pier and normally undertakes rescue duties. However, conditions were too rough to launch the club boat, so a message was passed to the pilots.



IW Observer 14 May 1864

Brave Act – On Saturday last a lad named Wills was hauling in a boat to the Pier, and overbalancing himself he fell into the water. The accident was noticed by Charles Osmond, who immediately plunged in and rescued him.



Pickford's Motor Barge – Roy Brinton Collection

From the IW Observer 21 September 1907

The crew of Pickford's motor launch, the Wasp, with their wives and children, had spent the day on the Island. As the tide was low they could not embark to return from the Quay, so the party was to be conveyed to the pier. The last lady to board, holding a child, slipped and caused the boat to overturn. Three women and the child ended up in the water. One of the men jumped in to aid one lady. Mr Woodman, the bathing attendant, an old Navy man, heard the screams and also jumped into the water to help the woman and her child. However, the other lady let go of the upturned boat and grabbed Mr Woodman, so endangering them all. Another Pickford's employee ran to the landing steps and was able to haul out the exhausted women, [presumably the child as well, although not noted in the article] and Mr Woodman, who was, himself, in a distressed condition. One of the party was insensible, but was revived by the skilled hands of Miss Kitty Gray. Mrs Mills had received cuts to her face while in the water. The party were then able to board the boat safely. No praise was considered too high for the coolness and courage displayed by Mr Woodman. He was the recipient of overwhelming gratitude and thanks when the rescued and their relatives visited him later. Miss Gray was also entitled to praise.

IW Observer 1 January 1901

The only excitement that those people on the Pier had on Whit Monday, was the spectacle of a lad falling into the sea, and his remarkably prompt rescue by a coastguard named Way.

A LAD RESCUED FROM DROWNING.—On Wednesday afternoon a son of Mr. Samuel Munford, of the Albert inn, Warwick-street, was bathing off Apley and got out of his depth, and must have been drowned had not Mr. Henry Sivell, with a promptitude that does him the greatest credit, especially considering the fact that he is not a young man, immediately rushed into the water and rescued the lad, whom he brought ashore senseless. The boy has now recovered his fright, and will doubtless ever feel a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Sivell for saving his life.

IW Observer 21 July 1866

From the IW Observer 26 August 1922

While bathing at the eastern end of the Esplanade a lady got into difficulties in rough sea. Five others went to rescue her and all six were in danger of being drowned. An eye witness said it was about 10.30 am when Mr Cotton [bathing] machine attendant had his attention drawn to a boy out of his depth in the water. The mother and three friends went in to his assistance, but also got into difficulties. Cotton bravely got the boy ashore and rescued another four. Then he noticed a woman had been swept out past the groyne, despite being exhausted he went out and held her up in 20 feet of water. A boat was launched and brought them to shore. Cotton was assisted by Robert Reeves, Hirst Linington and W. Butchers. It was hoped the Royal Humane Society would recognise his brave conduct.



Western Esplanade

Postcard with the tide out - Roy Brinton Collection

Postcard with the tide in – Paul Kingswell

IW Observer
24 June 1922

RESCUE FROM DROWNING.—A London visitor (Mr F. N. Young) writes describing what he terms was a gallant rescue from drowning recently off the Western Parade. It appears that a young woman named Lily Thompson, a waitress, went out to bathe and got out of her depth. She cried appealing for help and a gentleman took off his coat and immediately swam out to her assistance followed by another visitor and she was brought ashore. She had also complained of cramp whilst in the sea. Our correspondent suggests that it was a very prompt rescue and should if possible be brought to the notice of the Royal Humane Society.

Eastern
Esplanade
Roy Brinton
Collection



Not All Rescues Involved the Sea . . .

A letter to the IW Observer, 23 September 1882, signed Kit, described *'the gallant rescue of a feline quadruped'*. It had got onto the roof of Mr Purnell's in the High street and could not get down. Its *'bewailing of her unhappy fate froze the hearts of those who heard her with horror'*. A long ladder was placed at the side but the cat would not climb down and no-one had the courage to attempt a rescue. Then a seafaring man named Gawn *'gallantly mounted the lofty ladder'* when he was nearly on the top rung *'she gave a delighted spring into his arms and clung affectionately round his neck. Amidst the breathless suspense of the crowd they descended together, and as they reached the ground, pussy, doubtless with a purr of gratitude - bolted'*. Gawn also left the scene and the writer thought he should not go unrewarded and had started a fund.

Cat photographed in the Cemetery by Janette Gregson
Postcard showing Purnell's in the High Street – Hilary Lloyd



On Wednesday morning the snow still continued, and increased the height of some of the drifts, especially at Upton, where we are told one bank which obstructed the road had reached nearly 9ft in height. The rural postmen had a bad time of it, and one postman, named Fox, who left for Haven Street on Wednesday, never turned up till about 11 o'clock next morning, with his ears frost-bitten. It seems that he lost his way and got into a snow drift, from which he was rescued by some good Samaritans and taken into a house at Gatehouse, where he was refreshed and remained till next day. Indeed the postmen obliged to be out in such weather are deserving of great commiseration.

The White Hart at Havenstreet, with a postman outside?
Paul Kingswell

IW Observer
22 January 1881

IW Observer 16 September 1911

Mr W. T. Hazard, one of the masters at the Ryde School of Science and Art has received a letter from the I.W. Education Committee congratulating him on the recognition by the Home Secretary of his plucky action in rescuing a child in danger of being run over by a motor car at Ryde, some time ago.

IW County Press 25 May 1974

A hovercraft belonging to Hovertravel Limited, sped to the rescue when a small truck driven into shallow water near Ryde Pier to tow in an inflatable dinghy became bogged down. An SRN6 arriving from Southsea on passenger service, saw the driver in difficulty and after discharge of passengers returned to tow the truck ashore.

IW County Press 1 June 1974

To the Rescue – Ryde fire brigade was called to Binstead housing estate on Friday week when a family reported a strong smell of burning rubber. Firemen found the cause – an elastic band had fallen on a grill.

Bathing and boating at Seaview
Postcard – Paul Kingswell

CHILDREN RESCUED.—Several young performers belonging to Madame Walker's Juveniles from Southsea, were placed in difficulties whilst visiting Seaview on Wednesday in last week. It appeared that the younger children of the troupe had received instructions not to enter the water until the elder ones were ready. In their eagerness, however they had commenced to bathe among some rocks, when a sudden inrush of water placed them out of their depths. Some visitors noticed their peril, and several gentlemen plunged in fully clothed, and eventually succeeded in bringing them to shore. One little girl was carried in an unconscious condition to the Coastguard-station where she recovered and the children subsequently returned to Portsmouth



From the IW Times 5 August 1909

A sudden squall on Bank Holiday Monday at Seaview capsized a small sailing yacht and its owner, Percy Caws, 26, a pilot, was drowned. The other two in the vessel, Harold and Lionel Davis, were saved.

LIFEBOAT AND HELICOPTER SEARCH WAS FALSE ALARM

Roger and Ronald Alderman, aged 17 and 14, staying on holiday at 22 St. Thomas's Street, Ryde, were on Sunday the unwitting cause of a full-scale search by rescue services, in which the Bembridge lifeboat and a helicopter took part. Their father gave the alarm when they had not returned two hours after going for a swim at 6.15 p.m.

In fact, the boys, both strong swimmers, had entered the water at Ryde, but, after swimming towards Seaview, decided to come ashore there, and make their way back along the beach. They returned at 9.40 p.m., and the search was called off.

— Previously, Bembridge lifeboat had been launched, under Coxswain F. Smith, to go to the assistance of the occupants of a dinghy, which had capsized off No Man's Land Fort. On arrival the lifeboatmen found that the dinghy had been towed in to Seaview by the Seaview Y.C. nanny boat. It was just after their return that Mr. A. P. Weaver (hon. secretary) ordered the Jesse Lumb out again to search for the missing boy swimmers.

20 August 1921

IW County Press 15 July 1961