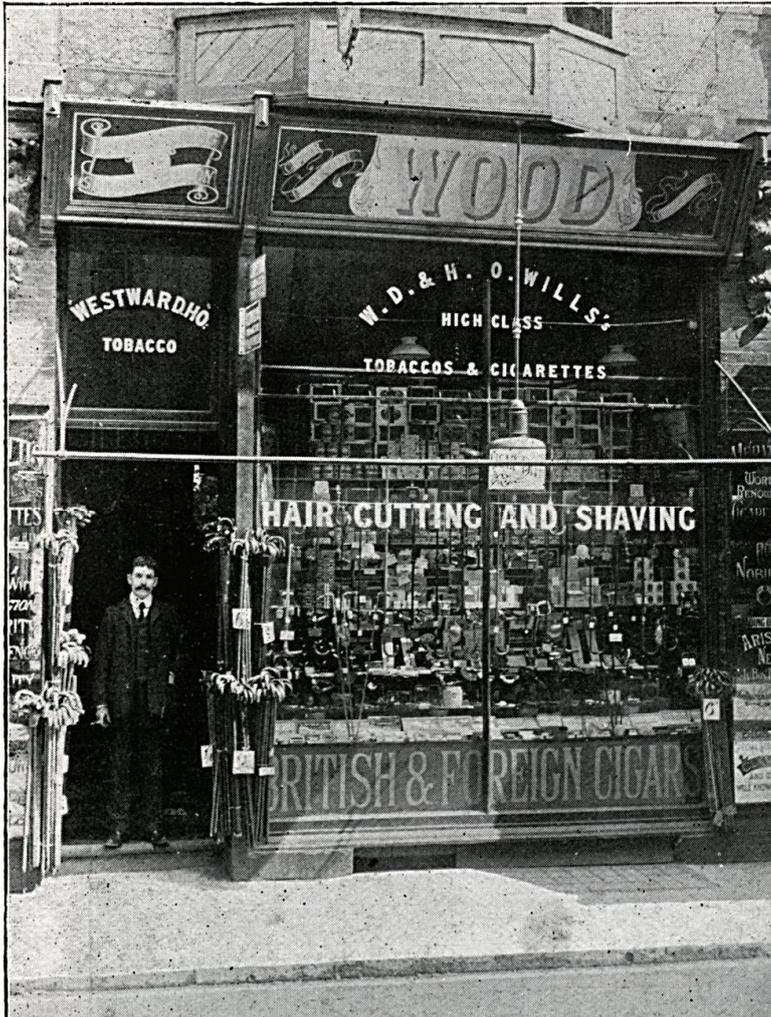




First-class Toilet Saloon



This fine image appeared in the *Ventnor Official Guide* of 1905. It shows the premises at 25 High Street, also as known as Minerva House. It was a tobacco and cigar store as well as a hairdressing saloon, described as a 'toilet saloon' in the language of the day. The Wood family had run the business for some years and, in April 1910, the local newspaper reported how the premises had been extensively enlarged and refurbished, especially the part used for hairdressing. An upstairs room had been handsomely fitted up for the purpose, including incandescent gas lighting and two fine American Columbia shaving chairs. New hygiene practices were also being employed, sponges having been dispensed with and replaced with fresh sterile cloths for each customer. Antiseptic sprays were also to hand and there were automatic powder receptacles. A new hairdressing assistant (from London) had been engaged who was

in possession of various medals and diplomas for his trade. Moreover, the gentleman was an accomplished linguist, fluent in French and German as well as English.

I am not sure that you would find many hairdressers as linguists today, but in Ventnor we are now lucky to have a Turkish barber on the High Street.

For those who do not readily recognise street numbers, No 25 is today the Fish and Chip shop, the upper bay in the picture still recognisable.

Michael Freeman: *Ventnor & District Local History Society*, from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre



Ventnor & District Local History Society is a registered charity, working to preserve and record the history of our area and make it available to the public in the Ventnor Heritage Centre.

The Society and Heritage Centre are run and managed by volunteers.

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