



Tiger Tea – part one



This is Pier Street, Ventnor, on a sunny winter afternoon circa 1900. The Rose Inn stands to the immediate left, a covered wagon stationary outside, perhaps delivering supplies. To the right, sun awnings are out and shops appear to be attracting trade, judging from the number of people walking the pavement. At 15 & 17, Pier Street, the Tiger Tea Stores may attract the inquisitive eye, also known as the Tiger Tea Warehouse. The business had been established in the mid-1880s by Joseph Sanders. The shop boasted a double front and, once inside, it was reckoned to be admirably appointed in the best modern style. All manner of high-class groceries were stocked, sourced from the best markets. Above all, though, Mr. Sanders was an expert tea taster and blender. Tiger Tea was a choice blend of rich Indian and Ceylon teas, sold at one shilling and ten pence per pound weight (a little less than 10 pence in today's money). It was much called for in Ventnor and the Undercliff, as well as across the Island.

His Tiger Tea store formed part of fine new range of shops known as *Regent Parade*, erected on Pier Street (initially Mill St.) about 1870. Each of the six units had a 17 x 15 feet floor area, an even larger studio room off a half-landing, together with ample bedrooms and other offices. Sanders actually occupied nos. 4 and 5 Regent Parade, a designation that was prone to cause confusion, as the east side of Pier Street later came to have its buildings odd-numbered throughout its length.

Joseph Sanders was a rather extraordinary survivor, as we will see in part two next week.

Ventnor & District Local History Society: Michael Freeman. All material from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre, the image itself from the late Fay Brown's collection, but courtesy of the Isle of Wight Record Office.