



## Henry George Field, Gentlemen's Outfitters

The Ventnor Heritage Centre opens this week for the summer season (Monday to Friday, 10 am to 4 pm, as well as our usual Saturday morning), so this week's page is devoted to the background story behind our new window display. We hope to see many of our readers in the Museum during the summer - come in and say hello and browse through our books and postcards even if you don't have time to do a proper tour.



Some readers may already have observed that the Heritage Museum has a new window display this season. It has as its central feature a clerk's desk that came from London House on Ventnor High Street, once the premises of Henry George Field and, later, Stiby & Elderfield. This was a High-Class Gents' Outfitters that was founded in 1843. It subsequently evolved to offer High-Class ladies wear, as the photograph here and the advert (both from the early 1900s) indicate. The building remains today and is listed. Many will now recognise it as a tea and coffee house where you can buy mouth-watering cakes that are tantalisingly displayed in the window.

The clerk's desk is intriguing because it is so high. You either worked at it standing, or else sat perched on a high stool or high chair. It gave a

commanding view inside a shop like Field's and the disposition has resonance today where long hours spent sitting at desks are thought to enhance the propensity for back problems. A manikin, attired in the manner of a late Victorian clerk, stands behind the desk in the museum window, while a tailor's dummy with jacket in the making is in front, together with a glass display case that houses items of the tailor's craft.

Michael Freeman, with much help from Linda Chester and Linda Goodwin





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.

[www.ventnorheritage.org.uk](http://www.ventnorheritage.org.uk)

email: [ventnorheritage@btconnect.com](mailto:ventnorheritage@btconnect.com); telephone 855407

