



86 High Street, Ventnor: part one – Moses Hibberd



Some readers may be familiar with the BBC2 series 'A House through Time', presented by David Olusoga, in which the story of a home and the lives of its inhabitants is recovered through photographs and documents. Over the next three weeks, this local history page will be pursuing a similar exercise with a building that was both house and shop, covering a time-span of about a hundred years. In this first instalment, we look at Moses Hibberd who opened as a pork butcher, poulterer and fruiterer at 86 High Street sometime in the early 1850s. The image to the left is thought to date from the early 1860s and reveals the building's distinctive façade, with decorative stone parapet, gated side archway and projecting bay window to the first floor.

Moses Hibberd was a native of Dorset, son of James Hibberd, a yeoman farmer. He was one of fifteen children and the family displayed astonishing longevity. His father lived until he was 89, his mother until 92, while eight of his brothers lived to the average age of 80. Moses, moreover, did not break the trend, for he died in 1907, aged 88. He started in Ventnor in 1845 as steward at Steephill Castle and was once honoured to escort Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort around the Steephill estate. By the 1861 Census, though, his household is firmly established at 86 High Street, with wife Sarah aged 33, along with three daughters and two sons, ranging in age from 13 years to 1 year. The family had one resident servant and a pork butcher, Thomas Bailey, aged 20, who was also resident.



Around 1865, Moses Hibberd vacated these premises in favour of taking over what became the Terminus Hotel on Mitchell Avenue. It was probably a shrewd decision, as the railway line extension from Shanklin was soon to be opened. Moses later became a prominent public figure in Ventnor, serving twenty years on the Ventnor Local Board. He also acquired considerable property in the town. The picture shows Moses in the early 1900s on Belgrave Road.

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



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

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