



Continuing the story of 'A House through Time', this week's picture shows some of the staff posing outside Robert Tolman's bakery and dining rooms at 86, High Street around 1890. Tolman was a native of Seaton in South Devon, but came to Ventnor in 1866 from Clifton, Bristol, and established a confectionery, bakery and dining business at 86 High Street, and later a shop at 105 High Street run by his son Edward.

Tolmans served the high class of clientèle that by the later Victorian decades was frequenting Ventnor as a health resort. He also acquired a fine reputation as a refreshment contractor for all manner of functions, festive or otherwise. The 1871 Census records Robert, aged 30, as household head at 86 High St., along with Emily his wife, aged 28, and daughters Emily, aged 3, and Flora, aged 3 months. A nineteen-year-old cousin, Caroline Eames lived with them, working as an assistant in the business, while George Whittington, aged 22, was a resident baker and James Wheeler, aged 12, an errand boy who also lived in. Robert Tolman died in Ventnor in October 1919, aged 80.

The adjacent image, dated 1867, illustrates the range of fare that Robert Tolman was able to offer. You could even have entire dinner menus prepared and sent out to you at home, or else a cook could be sent to provide the same. The success of the business lead to luncheon rooms also being opened on Alexandra Parade in Pier Street about 1882. These continued as Tolman's Restaurant for more than 60 years, whereas the premises at 86 High Street were vacated about 1900.

Ventnor & District Local History Society: Michael Freeman, from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre, the photo courtesy of Sophie at Blake's Longshoremen.

ESTAB. Luncheon & Dining Rooms. 1867.

WEDDING CAKES Always Ready. Wedding Breakfasts ROUNTS, AND BALL SUPPERS, Furnished on Reasonable Terms.

COUNTRY ORDERS punctually attended to. Manufacturer of the celebrated Neapolitan Ices. DINNERS OR SINGLE DISHES Sent out in the Latest Parisian Style.

TEA & COFFEE Chops, Steaks, Coutelets & Patties. Men Cooks Sent to any part of the Country.

R. H. TOLMAN, (From T. A. Warren, Clifton) COOK & CONFECTIONER, HIGH STREET VENTNOR. AND AT THE PIER LUNCHEON ROOMS.



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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