

❖ Ventnor and District Local History Society ❖

Issue 4

March 2004

"MUSEUM PIECES" - by Graham

The Museum closed at the end of October with visitor numbers similar to previous years. As our stewards can confirm, some days are fairly busy only to be followed by periods when very few people come through the door. As there is no set pattern to this, it makes it difficult to use stewards more effectively.

Many thanks to Brenda, who despite not being in the best of health, again dressed our Christmas window.

The Museum is looking rather shabby externally, so the building is going to be re-decorated. However, the ornate canopy, which is made of zinc, is, after 99 years, wearing badly. We do not want to lose this attractive feature but the one estimate we have received was in excess of £3000, which we obviously cannot accept. Professional advice is being sought.

We intend to re-open a side door which has been sealed for many years, as a disabled access. This will necessitate a ramp for wheelchairs. This access is required by law which is due to be brought in this October.

We were recently offered the old organ from the Royal National Hospital chapel. This is currently at St. Mark's Church in Wootton. With the pipes soaring to 15ft. we, unfortunately, could not give

this splendid relic a home.

We have acquired from the Coastal Visitors' Centre, a very large publicity information board depicting a wreck at Blackgang. This is now in our window.

We are appealing for old cine film or videos as we are keen to build up a video collection. So far we have received 5 reels which, hopefully, can be put onto video. If any of you have any old film with a local connection, please let us know.

The new season's Exhibition is now in the process of

**THE SPEAKER AT THE
APRIL 30th MEETING
WILL BE ROGER SILSBURY
WHOSE SUBJECT WILL BE
"AN INSIGHT INTO
THE LIFE OF A
TRINITY HOUSE PILOT."**

preparation. The main display is called 'Focus on Niton' which is self-explanatory. We are also compiling two screens on shops and trading down the years entitled 'Along the High Street.' Another new screen will have a 'Then and Now' theme.

So as you can see, we are always busy.

(continued from column 3)

The family connection with Bonchurch continued down the years, many of us can remember yet another Dan who ran the Bonchurch taxi service. A most enterprising family. - Graham

From the Archives -

Dis for Daniel Day and family

Daniel Day was born in Whitwell in 1814. His father, Stephen, was a stonemason who was later employed in building Steephill Castle and 'Cove Cottage' in Belgrave Road in 1828. In 1832 he was killed in an accident at the Castle, when he was struck by a block of stone falling from the building.

Daniel also became a stonemason and continued the family business in Ventnor at the time the town started to grow and built many of the early houses.

About 1840 he partnered Jonathan Jolliffe in building the many fine villas which sprang up in Bonchurch after the building ban was lifted by Act of Parliament in 1838. They also built the 'new' church in 1849. Properties from this era in Bonchurch today are a lasting testament to Mr. Day's workmanship. He built 'Elm Cottage' in the main village street. It was to become the family home for various members of the Day family for about 150 years.

It was re-named 'The Croft' and it still bears that name today. Daniel later lived at 'Wykeham Cottage,' Upper Bonchurch. Three of his children lived at 'The Retreat' at the top of Bonchurch Shute.

In 1894 the firm of Daniel Day and Son, now run by his sons, another Daniel, and Alfred, is recorded as 'having an extensive business including a spacious timber yard and workshop for the cutting of wood, stone and marble. They were builders of reputation, undertakers (with their own monumental masons), ran an estate agency, grew vegetables, flowers and fruit in their own market garden at Upper Bonchurch. Daniel was a Bonchurch parish overseer and councillor and a collector of taxes! If all that were not enough, they were insurance agents for the Royal Insurance.

OUTINGS

We thoroughly enjoyed lunches at the Beach Hut Diner and at the Woodman's Arms, following the trip to Havenstreet Railway, all arranged by Brenda.

Over the last six months, many research queries have been answered for people calling into the Museum, and by post. Fay has found information from our archives and from her own research files at home for some 30 enquirers, as far away as New Zealand and Canada. People have wanted to know about subjects including the Gasworks, St. Lawrence Hall, Ventnor Sailing Club, The Heights, Enfield House, the Royal Marine and families - Trueman, Compton, Banbury, Gilbert, Turner and Bucknall. It all takes time - and patience - but she enjoys it and around £300 has been received in donations of thanks.

This is the inside of the complimentary ticket issued to Miss Newnham of The Dairy, Dudley Road, when this picture-house was first opened in 1924. (Later re-named "The Gaiety"). The ticket was given to the Museum by Fred Farrow.

HOW ABOUT A NICE, EASY JOB?

With the summer approaching, it is urgent that we find some more stewards if the Museum is to operate without closing on some days. This is a real possibility. Please help if you can. **YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE AN EXPERT ON LOCAL HISTORY.** If you do not know the answer to a query, there is a form to fill in which can be left for Fay to do research and send off. Stewarding is a pleasant, undemanding job, so if you can give us a morning or an afternoon on a regular weekly basis, it could be the start of a new career!

The shifts are 10 a.m.-12.30 or 2p.m.-4.30p.m. You will not (unfortunately) be asked to deal with queues of people. Also you will not be expected to work alone, so do not worry! You will have an experienced steward with you. If you think this could be for you, please contact me and I will explain all.

- Graham

"A QUARTET OF MEMORIES"

At the opening of the Exhibition in May, a new booklet will be published. Fay has collated excerpts from the memories of former Ventnorians, together with pictures and advertisements from her own collection, which are relevant to the script. The reminiscences are provided by George Haynes, Tom Harding, Ron Pusey and Alan Thorpe.

Chatting leads to Publicity!

Fay's stalls at various local events where she sells our booklets, her greetings cards and paper-back books, lead to chatting about the work of the Society - which is all good publicity. This year, we have been at Whitwell Church Fete, the Art and Craft Show and Lions Fayre at the Winter Gardens, and at Ventnor Middle School. Fay has had Brenda and Graham's company at some events. Nearly £100 has been raised by these stalls.

THE CINEMA
GROVE ROAD, VENTNOR, I.W.

GROVE ROAD, VENTNOR. I.W.

Proprietor	T BRADING
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No.: 22.

WPFK COMMENCING

	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
1	9	12	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
2	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
3	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
4	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
5	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
7	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2
8	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
10	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
12	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Conditions

This Ticket is given with the Compliments of the Management for displaying Bills in a prominent position & must be handed in at the Pay Box to check admission each time it is used.

SCRAPBOOK PRESENT

The information about "The Heights" at the Museum and in Fay's files supplied enough cuttings and scanned photos for the daughter of a resident of "Foxhills" to compile a beautiful scrap-book, given as a Christmas present.

NEWS FROM THE TRUSTEES

Mr. Rex Lancefield, our regular conservator, does not specialise in the necessary work which was needed to restore our model of two 'cottages' which shows how the Royal National Hospital actually began. Wealthy benefactors donated the cost of each block of 'cottages' which eventually made up the quarter of a mile long hospital. Many sources were contacted before we attracted the attention of Corinne Hillman of Camberwell College of Art. Corinne came to meet us and was most impressed with the exceptionally detailed model. At present one of her students is restoring it (as her project) and we hope it will be finished by the middle of the year.

In Autumn 2003 the Trustees recommended that we sent some delicate and delapidated items for conservation, some of which were deteriorating with handling. The Executive Committee agreed that around £1200 could be spent. The work has been completed satisfactorily and returned to us.

Each meeting we are surprised with the number, and variety, of items which appear - photos, postcards, legal documents, Carnival programmes, hotel brochures - and ... a Ventnor Laundry box lid and a piece of stone from the now demolished Beauchamp House.

Items not applicable to our area have been given to the County Record Office, and Sandown, Shanklin and East Cowes History Societies.

WE PRESERVE LOCAL HISTORY!

Please do not throw away any old photos, books or papers concerning Ventnor and District. Bring them to the Museum and they can be kept for the next generation and the next and the next

Produced for the Ventnor and District Local History Society by Fay Brown. Next Newsletter will be published in September