



Christmas 1913 in Ventnor

Electric Picture Palace, High Street.

Saturday, Dec. 20th :
 Special for three shows only,
BABES IN THE WOOD.
 Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 22nd and 23rd.
DICKENS'S CHRISTMAS CAROL
 (Special Film).
THE DEER SLAYER (2,100ft).
TRIP ALONG BANKS OF THE CLYDE
 (1,000ft. Travel).

Wednesday, Dec. 24th :
DICKENS'S CHRISTMAS CAROL,
 and a marvellous Eclair Drama, viz.,
THE AVENGER (2,500ft.).

Friday, Dec. 26th :
 Four Performances—11-30 a.m., 3 p.m., 6-45
 and 8-35 p.m. Children 1d. at the 11-30
 a.m. performance.
MODERN ENOCH ARDEN (2,100ft).
 and a splendid Pantomime Film,
TOPSEY'S DREAM OF TOYLAND.

With the exception of the feature films of Friday,
The Programme will be changed on Saturday.

The adjacent notice comes from the *Isle of Wight Mercury*, Ventnor's newspaper, dated 19th December 1913, 110 years ago. The town's first cinema, the Electric Picture Palace, was offering a fine range of entertainment from 20th to 26th of the month, excluding Christmas Day. Readers will instantly recognise two of the film subjects: *Babes in the Wood*, and *Dickens's Christmas Carol*, the former a favourite Xmas pantomime over much of the twentieth century and the latter a favourite tale (1843) that now exists in various film versions, the central character, Ebenezer Scrooge, almost a household name. The other film offerings will be unfamiliar, but one would love to view *Topsey's Dream of Toyland*, should it survive in the British Film Archive or elsewhere. Of course, all of these films would have been silent, other than the live piano accompaniment from a curtained area away from the seating.

When the *Mercury* was next published, on Boxing Day, 26th December, the editorial column, 'Echoes of the Week', remarked on the many greetings that the paper had received from distant parts of the world. These were from individuals (often entire families) that had emigrated in previous years. All remained regular readers of the newspaper, many from Australia, others from the United States,

Canada and South Africa. One reader from Perth, Western Australia, had been enormously impressed with that year's carnival pictures. The same reader was able to give a glowing account of the prosperity of all the Ventnorians who had settled in the city.

The *Mercury* was also very happy to report that the annual display of seasonable goods in the town had been excellent. The evening of Monday 22nd December saw a special celebration, with the shops on the High Street wonderfully illuminated and live bands offering commendable entertainment for the crowds. The weather, too, was fine and observers must have wondered how so a large stock of commodities on view would ever be disposed of.

However, if none of these activities appealed, you could always go skating at Ventnor Hippodrome (earlier the Summer Pavilion and much later the Gaiety). They showed pictures here as well, with arm chairs that could be reserved at 9d a time.

VENTNOR HIPPODROME,
 Esplanade, Ventnor
 (Adjoining the Hotel Metropole).
 Proprietor Mr. David Hart.
 Manager Mr. Wm. B. Quick.

**Best and Latest
 PICTURES.**

**Prices 9d. (arm chairs,
 reserved), 6d. & 3d.**

LOOK OUT FOR THE
Great Xmas Attractions.

Special Children's Matinee To-morrow.

SKATING
 DAILY
 10-30 to 12-30 ; 2-30 to 4-30.
 PRICES—Without Skates 6d., With Skates 3d.

Ventnor & District Local History Society: Michael Freeman, the *Mercury* excerpts courtesy of the Isle of Wight Record Office.



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 / telephone 855407

