



Available now, '**King Ward and his huge Isle of Wight estate**' – a new book just published by Cowes Heritage on the Ward family, the history of Northwood House and much more.

Did you know that apart from Northwood House in Cowes, the Wards once owned 20,000 acres on the Island stretching from Cowes to Totland Bay? They owned four-fifths of the old Northwood Parish (which once covered Northwood, Gurnard, Cowes and Thorness).

Hugely rich and influential in the City of London as well as the Island, we have the Ward family to thank for a number of additions to life in Cowes apart from Northwood House and Park. These include the golf course, Northwood cricket ground and 'Rec', Northwood cemetery, Northwood School,

improvements to St Mary's Church and a new vicarage which is now an Abbeyfield home for the elderly. In 1820 George Ward introduced the first cross-Solent scheduled steam packet service. He owned the Fountain Inn and the area where the Red Jet now comes in and we have the public landing stage at Town Quay as a public benefit to this day.

Cricket lovers might be interested to read how in 1825 William Ward, a director of the Bank of England and top class cricketer, saved Lords cricket ground by leasing it for £5,000 when Thomas Lord tried to sell it for housing – history should have commemorated Ward the saviour rather than Lord the would-be seller, perhaps!

This new book tells the story of Northwood House. From being a private home it has been boarding school, nunnery, First World War hospital and council offices. Always at the heart of Cowes, the park has been used as a training ground for the fire brigade, as a key part of civil defence activity during World War 2 and for glamorous balls and weddings in the days when George IV helped make Cowes synonymous with sailing and Queen Victoria put the Island at the heart of the empire.

The book is available from the County Press Bookshop, Waterstones and from Cowes Heritage (the link is on this website).