

Henry Knight. 1820-1895

Inventor of the can opener.



Henry Knight's can opener

Henry Knight was born in Worthing moving to the Isle of Wight with his wife, Harriett, and their family around 1850.

The preservation of food in wrought iron cans was developed early in the 19th century. Before the invention of the can opener it was a messy business getting at the contents of the can, the usual way of opening a can would involve the use of a hammer and chisel.

By the 1880s lighter metal was being used in the canning process this created an opportunity for Henry to invent the tin opener.



He patented his invention in 1881. The patent was eventually sold to Crosse and Blackwell.

Henry described himself as an importer of Italian sculpture and owned the Royal Victoria Arcade in Union Street Ryde.

The Arcade is now home to the Historic Ryde Society. <http://historicydesociety.com/> Henry had several patents to his name, including a horse clipping machine and an automatic weighing machine.

His son was Charles Knight a well-known photographer on the Isle of Wight.

A controversial member of Ryde Town Council, he earned little from his inventions and was declared bankrupt in 1890 following the failure of his import business

Henry Knight died in 1895.