



## Christmas in Ventnor's *International Stores*, 1932

Cauliflowers threepence each, nuts sixpence for three and half pounds, a box of twenty-five individually wrapped mandarin oranges for one and ninepence, potatoes ten pounds for a shilling, apples fourpence a pound (some 'foreign'), grapes eightpence a pound . . . If you were born after about 1975, you'll need to ask your parents or grandparents to translate this, because the UK moved from using pounds, shillings and pence to decimal currency in 1971.

This wonderful Christmas display was in Ventnor's *International Stores* in the 1930s. As well as offering all the festive fruit and vegetables, crackers and nuts, they are taking *Xmas Poultry Orders* – *Turkeys Geese Ducks Farm Roasters etc.*

The shop used to stand at 69 Ventnor High Street, next door to the Globe Hotel, on the left-hand side of the road, opposite what is now Knights Court. The Globe and the *International Stores* are now gone of course, their space occupied by part of the Central Car Park. They were both hit by a bomb in September 1942 during the second world war; the shop was almost completely destroyed, the *County Press* reporting that *a portion of the weighing scales was found in a garden 300 yards away*. Fortunately, shop manager Leslie Heasman, his wife Edith and young daughter Celia, who all lived in the flat above the shop, were not there at the time.



The second photograph was taken in 1932 and shows the outside of the shop, with the staff, and the Christmas display probably dates from the same time. The *International Stores* didn't disappear from Ventnor, but moved further down the High Street, where many readers will remember it standing between Boots and the Blenheim after the war.

*We wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year. We hope you enjoy reading our weekly stories of life as it once was as much as we enjoy writing them. Do come and visit us in the Heritage Museum after the Christmas break!*

