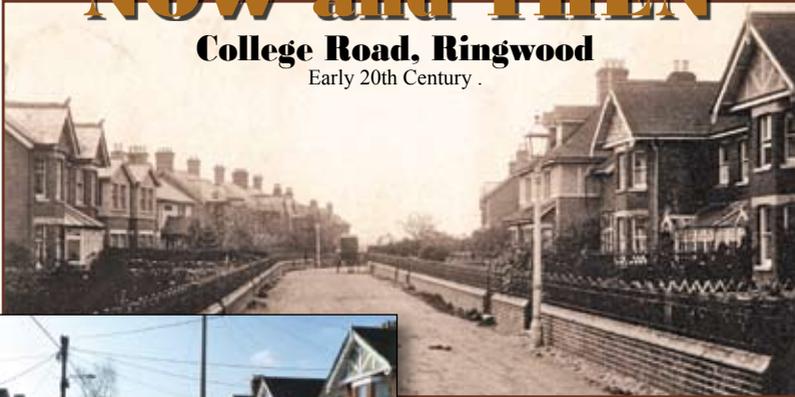


ROUNDAABOUT RINGWOOD & FORDINGBRIDGE

NOW and THEN

College Road, Ringwood

Early 20th Century .



March 2011

College Road has always been in estate agents' parlance 'a desirable and much-sought after area' of Ringwood. Houses began to be built on land owned by King's College Cambridge in the last few years of Victoria's reign. The area was then known as the Kingsfield Estate and consisted of two separate fields as shown on a map of Ringwood 1897. It is reputed that these fields were used to grow camomile for Henry Holloway, who lived in Southend House, Hightown Road.

The land was divided up into more or less equal sized plots on which either a detached or a pair of semi-detached houses could be built. These were rented from Kings College on a 99-year lease, until in 1925 the householders were able to purchase their freehold. The lower field nearest the Quomp was developed first, ending in houses now number 34 on one side and 29 on the other. The pair of semis, now 1 and 3 College Road, were probably the first to be built around 1897. The names '1 and 2 Kingsfield Villas' can still be seen engraved in the stonework above their doors. However the other houses were not originally numbered but known by names, such as Hazlehurst and Chalbury.

Houses were built sporadically and in varying styles by builders Alexanders of Fordingbridge or Barrows of Ringwood. All are of red brick except for

what is now 14 College Road, which has a cream-coloured brick. Most were built with a proper bathroom, in those days the last word in modernity, in the same way as ensuite bathrooms are today. In 1900 very few other houses in Ringwood had a bathroom or indoor WC. There was no mains water at that time; water came from a pump at the bottom of the garden. The houses were heated by coal fires and lit by gas.

The road was given its distinctive character by the front wall along all the properties, topped with iron railings and interspersed with matching gates, as can clearly be seen in the old photograph. Unfortunately the railings and many of the gates were lost during the Second World War when they were sent for scrap metal for the war effort. Since then many of the gateways have been widened to make room for cars, a modern day necessity not imagined by the original architects! The residents still continue to have to share the cost of maintaining the road, as stipulated in the original deeds.

The census of 1901 shows that there were 17 houses occupied by that time. Interestingly very few of the first householders were born in Ringwood. They tended to be people of some substance such as the stationmaster, police superintendent, schoolmaster and the manager of Armfields. A few decades later College Road had become the home of some of Ringwood's best-known local tradesmen, including Messrs Frampton, Chilvers, Barrow, Brown and Davis of Cox & Hicks. Nowadays College Road is popular with the medical profession, including four GPs!