

ROUNABOUT RINGWOOD & SURROUNDING VILLAGES

NOW and THEN

This photo shows the single-storey flat roofed shop, unlike any other in Ringwood, which was built in the late 19th century on the corner of the High Street and Lynes Lane. Steven's Directory of 1891 states it was then owned by Epps & Co, who ran one half as a 'booksellers, stationers and fancy warehouse' and the other half as 'nurserymen, seedsman and florists'. The company also had a peat depot at their nurseries near Ringwood Station, on a site called South End Grove, now Nursery Road.

In 1921 Mr James Long moved from West Street (see December 2016 issue of Now & Then) to these High Street premises. In West Street Mr Long had described himself as a basketmaker but in his new business he was a seedsman. The words

above the three arched windows read 'Depot For Farm & Garden Seeds Tools Implements'. It is likely that the bearded man standing in front of the shop in the c1927 photo is Mr Long himself, anxiously eyeing the lady outside the greenhouse/conservatory part of the building, hoping she would come inside as a customer.

Like Epps & Co before him, Mr Long sold a lot more than just farm and garden supplies. The left side

of the building was the stationers and fancy goods department, as indicated by the doll and other items displayed in the left window. By the 1950s the stock was not quite so varied. Older residents of Ringwood still recall the evocative smell of fertilisers, plants and hessian seed sacks that pervaded the inside of the shop, by that time run by James's

**Longs,
51-53 High Street,
Ringwood.**



daughter, Miss Emily Long.

Sadly the building was demolished in the late 1950s to be replaced by the current block of shops and offices. For many years the two shops facing the High Street were Mostyns curtains and Allum & Sidaway jewellers but recently they have become The Dressing Room ladieswear and Michael Matthews jewellers.

The grand building just shown on the left of the c1927 photo, now occupied by Allum & Sidaway, was a rebuild of the facade of the old Market House which stood in the middle of the Market Place until 1867. The railings on the extreme right of the photo fronted Davis's garage, once the house of the Dyer family. A remnant of these railings can still be seen outside the present occupiers, the Breast Cancer charity shop.

