

ROUNDAABOUT
RINGWOOD & FORDINGBRIDGE

NOW and THEN



**Rayson
& Co
Chemists
at
Fridays
Cross**

This old photograph of Fridays Cross dating from about 1900 was in a very poor condition until it was skilfully restored by historian Ted Baker. It gives an interesting glimpse of Fridays Cross as it was over a hundred years ago, showing much fascinating detail.

On the extreme left is J. Etheridge's bakery, also selling cheese, bacon and pork. Next door is an imposing house which in 1901 was the home of draper and outfitter Caleb Gould, his wife Lydia and their large family. This house still exists today but its ground floor is now totally obliterated by the addition of three single-storey shops across its frontage, currently Swinton Insurance, New Forest Wines and Airtime.

In the middle of the photograph is a shop emblazoned with the sign Rayson & Co, Chemists. The chemist was further advertised by a mortar and pestle painted on the wall above and the words 'Horse and Cattle Medicines' written over the arch into Kingsbury Lane. Traditional chemist's large bulbous glass bottles full of brightly coloured liquids were displayed in the shop-window.

Henry Rayson, who bought the business in 1884, was remembered in an article by Dr Little as 'a real Victorian figure in a morning coat with his most mannerly

and courteous approach to all customers.' He was a great botanist and an ardent walker, studying the wild flowers growing alongside local country roads. In the days before there was a veterinary surgeon in Ringwood, Mr Rayson was very much appreciated by local farmers for his vast knowledge of animal illnesses. In addition to hand-making pills and tablets for his human customers, he also prepared many veterinary remedies. A great believer in advertising, he took out several pages in Brown's Ringwood Almanac, proclaiming every cure from Dandelion, Camomile, Quinine and Rhubarb pills to Worm powders and Ear Canker ointment! Mr Rayson died in 1939, aged 95. By this time the chemist shop was run by Randall & Wilson. Today the ground floor has been modernised and the brickwork painted, but the shop is still recognisable as Connells estate agency.

Gone completely however is the weigh-bridge, lamp and signpost seen in the foreground of the photograph. It would now be

impossible to loiter in the middle of the street as this little boy did for the early photographer. Nearby we now have the circular metal seat and widened pavement placed there by Hampshire County Council as part of the High Street enhancement scheme of 1993/94.



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