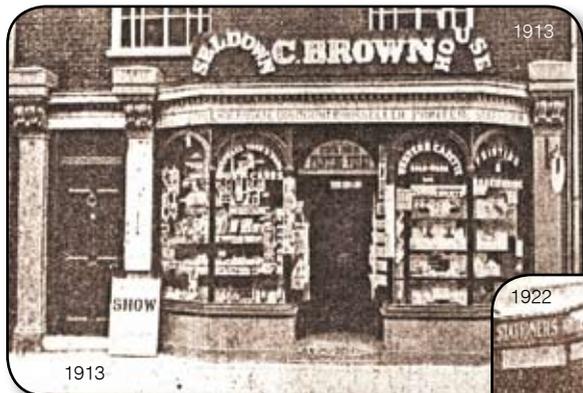


ROUNDAABOUT RINGWOOD & SURROUNDING VILLAGES

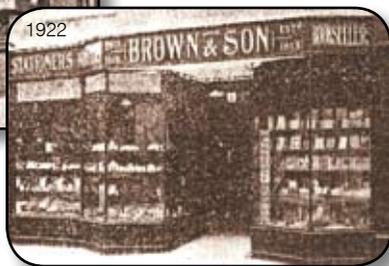
NOW and THEN

Article and photo kindly supplied by Mary Baldwin
W. H. Smith, 33 High Street, Ringwood



man and his wife did not live over the shop but in a new house built in College Road. He stocked his shop with a wide assortment of books, stationery, toys and china, including novelty china items embossed with the first Ringwood town crest, which he personally designed.

By 1922 he had taken away the large front door



One of the smallest branches in the country of the well-known company WHSmith, 33 High Street has enjoyed well over a hundred years as a stationer and bookseller. The 1901 census shows the building, then called Seldown House, was owned and occupied by Mr Charles Brown, who had moved to the High Street from a previous shop in Christchurch Road. Mr Brown was a Ringwood printer and seller of newspapers, books and fancy goods, who had bought out the printing business established in 1813 of his former employer Mr William Wheaton.

In 1899 Charles's son Mr C. Norman Brown took over the business due to his father's illness. Two years later he started the highly successful Brown's Ringwood Almanacs which he continued to print and publish until about 1956. These annual little books not only contained the addresses of Ringwood residents and businesses but also many articles and advertisements about Ringwood which were useful to residents at the time and still provide a wonderful source of information to local historians today.

By the time Charles Brown died in 1913, the year of the old photograph, Nor-

man shown on the left of the 1913 photograph and given the premises a new enlarged shop-front, which remains much the same today. The shop included a lending library, available to subscribers.

From 1936 Norman continued his printing side of the business from another property in Southampton Road, now Edinburgh Woolen Mill. Mr Brown was an energetic man who was very much involved in all aspects of the Ringwood community, including being a member of the Ringwood & Fordingbridge Rural District Council.

On his death in 1958 his business was sold to WHSmith, which has now been supplying Ringwood with books, newspapers and stationery for over sixty years. The combined time of occupation by the Brown family and WHSmith makes the shop one of the contenders for the record of the longest continuity of the same trade from the same site in Ringwood.



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