

ROUNDBOUT RINGWOOD & SURROUNDING VILLAGES

NOW and THEN



**Lambert Gunsmiths
& Indian Tree,
Market Place**

over the business in the 1950s until it was later purchased by Greenfields of Salisbury. In the early 1990s the shop was sold to Malcolm Lambert and Tony Wiltshire, whose partnership continued until Tony's death two years ago. Today Lamberts continues to sell guns, but has also expanded the stock to include country clothing.

The adjoining property was once a public house, originally named the Dolphin but known since the 19th century as the Royal Oak. The 1890 photograph

Lambert Gunsmiths occupies a very old property that stretches back from the Market Place alongside an unnamed lane next to Old Bank House. According to a thumbnail sketch on a map of 1769, the building was once joined by an archway to the old Crown Inn (now Old Bank House) and was probably used by ostlers and coachmen, in the same way as the Crown Tap was part of the new Crown Inn at Fridays Cross.

By the 19th century the arch had been demolished and the property used as a lodging house. At what date the ground floor became a shop is uncertain, but since the early 20th century this has been a gunsmiths. The first owner was Richard 'Dicky' Blanton, who was reputed to be one of the finest makers of guns in Hampshire. He also sold fishing tackle. Mr Blanton owned an impressive 1927 Austin saloon car, which was often seen parked outside the shop. He lived in St Ives, so let the first floor flat above his shop to his employee Percy White, who had lost his leg during World War II. Mr Blanton's son-in-law Tom Andrews took



shows it was then a small Georgian building similar to the gunsmiths. However around 1900 the Royal Oak was enlarged and completely refaced to appear much as it does today. The inn was originally owned by Carters brewery, then Strongs of Romsey and lastly by Whitbread.

For many years the Knight family were the licensees. The Royal Oak closed as a public house in 1974, since when it has been a number of different restaurants serving various cuisines. It is currently an Indian eating house called Indian Tree.

