

ROUNDAABOUT RINGWOOD & FORDINGBRIDGE

NOW and THEN

Bottom of Hightown Road



Photograph taken in the 1920's



January 2012

The old photograph taken at the bottom of Hightown Road in the 1920s is still easily recognisable. At that time the series of garages and sheds belonged to a Mr Freddie Brockway, who operated a car hire and taxi service there as well as a cycle works.

Mr Brockway also ran a coal merchant's business from the building on the far end. In the window of the coal office he displayed a model steam railway engine and trucks that he had made, which used to fascinate many a young Ringwood schoolboy!

It makes sense that both sides of his business were located at the bottom of Hightown Road, as of course this area was next to the railway station and its sidings (now Castleman Way) at that time. In those days most people did not own their own car but travelled by train, so when they arrived at Ringwood Station they would often want to hire a taxi to take them on to their destination. Coal was transported into Ringwood by rail, so a coal-merchant's offices had to be near the railway yard.

After Mr Brockway's retirement in about 1930, the buildings were bought by Charles Bailey to house his family firm's coaches and taxis. Bailey's main office in Christchurch

Road was demolished about fifteen years ago when the entrance to Towngate Mews was made. Three generations of the Bailey family became very well known in Ringwood as the people to call if someone wanted to hire a taxi, book a coach trip or have a bicycle mended. The firm finally ended about 1980.

Ninety years after the early photograph, most of these buildings are still connected to the motor trade, though not as taxi hire. The two buildings on the left have been replaced with flat roofed garages housing Canford Wholesale and Classic Connections cars. At the other end are Ringwood Garage and QV500.com. Only the building in the middle has changed its trade; it is now 'Cooltradewinds', specialising in handbags, exotic scarves and accessories. The single-storey office added on the far end is Swift Ironing service. The side of the Lamb Inn can be seen on the extreme right of both photographs.