

ROUNDAABOUT RINGWOOD & FORDINGBRIDGE

NOW and THEN

The Granary, High Street, Ringwood



The old photograph shows Eric Bickham's baker's shop on the left in the High Street in the 1950s.

Throughout the Victorian period it had been run as a bakery by a family named Ward, as is shown in the censuses from 1841 onwards. It is difficult to be sure before that date, but some evidence suggests that Mrs Sarah Ward and her husband William took over from her father baker Joseph Brown, who was also the parish clerk during the first two decades of the 19th century. After the Ward family came the Misses Crittenden, spinster sisters who were confectioners and pastrycooks, rather than ordinary bread-makers. They were followed by Miss Mary Pennell and Miss Maggie Long until the shop was acquired by Mr Bickham in the mid-1930s. When he took over he discovered the original faggot oven! It took a great deal of work to get the place up to modern standards. In 1940 Eric bought a bakehouse in Christchurch Road, which enabled him to

use the original High Street premises purely as a retail bakery with a small restaurant.

Since 2000 the shop, now called the Granary, has been run by David Gwatkin. He still sells bread and cakes, with hot take-away pies and sandwiches also forming a large part of the business. Externally the shop has changed very little since the 1950s. The unusual hanging sign advertising teas in the old photograph has been moved round the side to Pedlars Walk (see inset pic) and now promotes the Poppies Coffee Shop on the first floor.

In an article written in 'Food Industries Weekly' in 1963, Mr Bickham stated that the bakery had been in existence for some 150 years when he acquired it in the 1930s.

If this claim is true, (which looks likely), then this shop has been a bakery since the 1780s, meaning that it must easily now hold the record for being the oldest shop carrying out the same trade from the same premises in Ringwood.



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