

ROUNABOUT RINGWOOD & SURROUNDING VILLAGES

NOW and THEN

Corbin/Indigo, High Street, Market Place.

The building now Indigo Indian Restaurant standing next to the old cinema once had an occupant with an unusual combination of careers. In the late Victorian period and the early 20th century it was the home and workplace of George Bentley Corbin, cabinet maker, taxidermist and poet. His shop can be seen in this old photograph c1910 next to the then Town Hall and Corn Exchange. (See photo on right)

George was born in 1841, the son of cabinet maker William Corbin and his wife Harriet of Lynes Lane. In 1881 the census shows that George and his young wife Emily lived in the Market Place shop where George was a cabinet maker and upholsterer. Sadly in 1884 Emily was killed in a railway accident aged 29 and it is said that



'The Forget-Me-Not', 'The Nightjar' and 'The Nightingale'. George Corbin died in 1914.

An advertisement in the 1906 edition of

'The Ringwood Almanac' shows that at that time George was in partnership with his brother Henry, promoting their cabinet making and upholstering business and also picture framing. Henry's son William Corbin later carried on the same business from a shop in Southampton Road and became well-known for his pen and ink engravings of local scenes. Interestingly today's local wildlife photographer Mike Read is a descendant of this Corbin family, so their love of nature lives on in his photographs and books.



George never recovered from the shock of her early death. From then onwards he lived alone in his shop except for a single servant and became a talented taxidermist and an authority on natural history. According to the late Dr. Little he frequently corresponded with Charles Kingsley and Charles Darwin, both of whom he knew well.

The other photograph c1910 shows Mr Corbin beside his shop window displaying an impressive array of the owls, herons and other birds and animals he had stuffed. He also wrote poetry which was published under the title of 'Stray Leaves from the Avon Valley'. Many of his poems reflected his love of nature with titles such as

