

ROUNABOUT RINGWOOD & SURROUNDING VILLAGES

NOW and THEN

Finns, Market Place, Ringwood

Early 1920's



For most of its long history Finns public house in Ringwood Market Place was known as the Red Lion. Only the eastern side of the present building is the original inn; the western side was a separate house used in the early part of the 20th century as a tearooms, as can be seen in the photograph above.

The Red Lion dates back at least to the 18th century, when it was probably the third most important of Ringwood's inns, after the Crown and the White Hart. It is listed in Sadler's directory of 1784 with Francis Friss as the landlord. By 1822 the innkeeper had become Edward Bricknell, who was reported as providing home-made stingo (a slang name for strong beer) for the anniversary of the Ringwood Friendly Society that gave 'gen-

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eral satisfaction, being reduced in price and increased in strength'.

At that time it was quite usual for landlords to brew beer on the premises, possibly in one of the buildings in the rear yard. Coaches and wagons entered the Red Lion yard by going under the archway with a room above that still exists today. The yard was

an important part of the inn as it provided

1985



stabling and somewhere for farmers to store some of their goods on market days.

By the 1890s the landlord was Charles Thomas, who advertised the Red Lion as a hotel with beer, wines and spirits, good beds and stabling. During the 20th century the Red Lion was owned by Strong's of Romsey who acquired the tearooms next door and made it into the saloon bar.

The Red Lion remained an old English inn until the 1990s when it was turned into an Irish pub. Its name was changed to Finn M'Cauls after a legendary Irish giant of no relevance to Ringwood history. More recently this name has been shortened to Finns and some of the fake Irish trappings removed. The pub now belongs to Peter Haywood, father and son, with Ben James as manager.