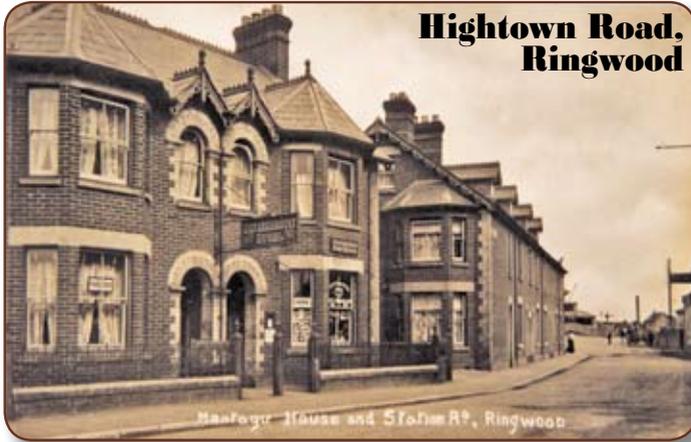


ROUNABOUT RINGWOOD & SURROUNDING VILLAGES

NOW and THEN



**Hightown Road,
Ringwood**

The old photograph in this issue features the bottom of Hightown Road opposite the Lamb Inn at the junction to Christchurch Road.

Judging by the long dress worn by the woman walking along the pavement, the photograph was taken about a hundred years ago. The caption states that the road was then known as Station Road, for the obvious reason that Ringwood railway station was then situated on the right hand side, as can be glimpsed in the distance (now Castleman Way). Hightown Road has over the centuries also been known by various other names including Clark's Lane, Southend and Cemetery Road.

The large pair of houses in the foreground was then known as Montagu House. The left-hand side was used as refreshment rooms serving lunches and teas. The right-hand side was a post office. Its window displayed postcards and advertisements for ices and Fry's chocolate and cocoa. In 1911 the census shows it was run by sub-postmaster James Hext who was also a clock and watch repairer connected to his

family's shop at Fridays Cross. He was living at Montagu House with his wife Emily and children Leslie aged 9 and Doris aged 8. Kelly's directory of 1911 states that the post box, which can be seen set into the wall beside the door, was cleared five times a day at 8.45 & 9.25am and 12.45, 4.45 & 8.30 pm, with a Sunday collection at 11.45am.

The sub-post office continued for most of the 20th century, until it closed sometime during the 1980s and became a private house. The walls and railings outside have long gone, replaced by metal chain-link fencing. The roof slates have been replaced by concrete tiles and the pitched roofs over the bay windows flattened, losing some of the character of the original building.

The other houses in the centre of the old photograph remain very much the same today as they appeared in 1911. Their name, Montagu Terrace, can still be seen painted high up on the first house in the terrace. The main difference is that in 1911 no one expected the occupiers of these houses to need to have somewhere to park a car!



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