

## ROUNDBOUT VERWOOD

# PAST and PRESENT



The Crossroads in 1925

**T**he distinctive three-sided building on the north-west corner of the Crossroads was built by Job Brewer in the early twentieth century. The first newsagent was Francis Austin, a retired policeman from London. Arthur Hopkins, manager of the Brick Works bought it around 1926 as a business for his unmarried daughter Nellie, whose principles would not allow her to sell cigarettes or open on Sundays. Even up to the 1960s the shop would never open on a Sunday so a newsagent from Ringwood would bring a stall to sell papers outside. Hopkins newsagents stayed in the same family hands for eighty-one years up to 2005 when Julian King, a Hopkins descendant and the then current proprietor retired.

Mabel Rose Whitmore's China, Glass and Hardware store occupies the centre shop in the photo. She also operated a motor-bike and sidecar round to Woodlands, Cranborne, Alderholt and other villages selling soaps, polishes and other items. In 1925 Mabel and her husband Leonard set up a printing business in their front room next to the shop and continued, with a treadle press, in a wooden hut, built for this purpose on the other side. Around 1939 the hardware store moved to a wooden building further up Edmondsham Road, now the Fayrewood Gallery with the expanding printing works in stables at the rear. The shop then came into the hands of Ernie Nicklen who sold wet and cooked fish. David Day bought the business in 1950 and it was managed by Mr and Mrs Coombes who married on Saturday, honeymooned on Sunday and started work on the Monday!

In the adjacent wooden hut to the left an electrical business was started by Len Halfacre, followed by Mr Wilkinson and then Fred and Olive Bailey in 1954/5 who displayed a TV in the window, a washing machine in the shop and their workshop behind. Fred then moved to the disused Crossroads Pottery building after the decorating firm of Cox and Guy vacated the premises. Here he took charge of radio and television being joined by his brother Maurice and by Mike Hudson who looked after washing machines. On 25th March 1960 the Restyng House on Ringwood Road was sold by the church and bought by the Bailey family who expanded their business with a showroom entitled "Television House", selling these as well as many other electrical items. The Restyng House was demolished in 1989 to make way for an enlarged version to include a new showroom as well as other shops and offices. Today, under new ownership, it still retains the name of its founders "Baileys of Verwood".



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