

ROUNDAABOUT  
RINGWOOD & FORDINGBRIDGE

# NOW and THEN

## The Old Entrance into Ringwood

The Second Bridge pictured at the turn of the century



The same view in November 2008

**O**ne of the all-time favourite stories at Christmas must be Dickens' 'Christmas Carol' written in 1843. If you read the part of the story where the Ghost of Christmas Past takes Ebenezer Scrooge back to the scenes of his childhood, you may be struck by how Dickens could have been describing Ringwood, '*They walked along the road; Scrooge recognising every gate and post and tree; until a little market-town appeared in the distance, with its bridge, its church and winding river.*'

Until the building of the first bypass in the 1930s, anyone coming to Ringwood from the west would have approached the

town along a tree-lined main Wimborne Road, over the Third Bridge across the River Avon, then past the Fish Inn over the Second Bridge and up West Street to the Market Place. Any Victorian contemporary of Scrooge would be completely amazed at the transformation of the A31 nowadays with its many carriageways, gantries and a completely different approach into the town via two roundabouts and an underpass!

Although West Street is no longer accessible from the eastbound carriageway, the old photograph of the Second Bridge and West Street taken from the grounds of the Fish Inn is still easily identifiable.

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Continuing the Christmas theme, the Second Bridge viewed from the opposite side in Jubilee Gardens after a snowfall during 2003/4 winter.