

History

A potted history of happenings in and around Ringwood from 955AD to the 20th Century by Tony White.

The origin of Ringwood is speculation until further excavations provide more evidence. Documents state that in 955AD RIMUCWUDE is mentioned which translates into the Rim of the Forest.

Ringwood's development in those early days was dependent on the River Avon for its Mills and the Forest for the fuel for industry. The Domesday Book of 1086 indicates that there was a church and mill in the settlement.

Slowly the town grew until in 1226 King Henry III granted the Lord of the Manor the right to hold a market in Ringwood on Wednesdays, which of course still happens today.

However, it was not until Edward VI's reign that it was confirmed in 1553. The market became renowned as the main center for produce sales in the Avon and Stour areas and for Forest ponies. Added to this, two "fair days" dates were also confirmed on St Peter's Day 29th June and St Andrew's Day 30th November.

In 1752, when the calendar changed, these dates changed to 10th July and 11th December and were highlights in Ringwood's year right up until the 2nd World War.

Ringwood became nationally famous in 1685 when the Duke of Monmouth was imprisoned in the house of that name in West Street after he had been captured in the Horton area following his disastrous defeat at the Battle of Sedgemoor.

He was eventually transferred to and executed in London. Shortly afterwards Dame Alice Lisle was supposed to have harbored fugitives from the Monmouth Rebellion in her house at Moyles Court and the subsequent trial at Winchester by the infamous Judge Jeffreys of the Bloody Assize, sentenced her to be burned at the stake but then King James II committed this to be beheaded. Her gravestone is on the right of the Ellingham Church door in the churchyard.

In 1741, the Ringwood Brewing industry took off. Carters Brewery in West Street was started by Benjamin Bound. It then passed down the female line; Benjamin's daughter married Samuel Scutt, then Samuel Scutt's daughter married Alexander Carter. Samuel Scutt passed his brewery on to Alexander Carter in 1802. The brewery made use of the ideal water from the Avon for making good beer. The town became renowned for the quality of its ales from several breweries in the area.

Also in that year the Workhouse on the Verwood Road at Ashley was built to accommodate the poor people of the Parish. The Meeting House in Meeting House Lane was built in 1727 and has been successfully restored.

In 1792, the Manor of Ringwood was sold to John Morant of Brockenhurst by Lord Arundell of Wardour of £23,000. Most of the Manor was sold by the Morants in 1916. However, the family still hold an interest in the Market Square.

The Crown Inn in 1800 was in the Market Place and was a staging post for the Mail Coaches on their way to London from the south coast to change horses.

In 1830, the area was troubled by the agricultural riots when farm workers were afraid that their jobs were in danger by the use of thrashing machines.



Monmouth House, West Street



Market Place

There was also a lot of building going on in the mid 1800's. Many churches being built or rebuilt. Bransgore 1822, Ibsley 1832, Harbridge 1838, Burley 1839, Bisterne 1842 and our Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul was rebuilt in 1853/55.

The opening of the railway in 1847 put Ringwood on the Map being on the main line from London to Dorchester and places further west. Charles Castleman being the driving force behind the project. The line was christened Castlemens Corkscrew due to its lack of straight sections.

Employment in the area had been mainly agricultural with cottage industries of knitting gloves. Joseph Armfield came to Ringwood in 1875 to improve agricultural engineering. Gravel extraction came in 1930's, Wellworthy Engineering 1943, Rollalong Caravans and Wright Rain Limited have provided livelihoods for Ringwood people in recent times.



Old clock from inside the church

The Almshouses in the Quomp were erected by Mr Clark in 1843, the National School coming into use in 1848. The Police Station in Christchurch Road was built in 1850 and in the next year the Gasworks cost £2,000 subscribed for by £10 debentures. The Town Hall was paid for by Mr Morant, Lord of the Manor in 1868. This became the Cinema and later a shopping arcade.

Ringwood Hornets Football Club was started in 18790 but there was talk of Cricket in the area around 1750, both clubs playing on the Bickerley until 1900 when Carvers was made available by private generosity and money.

The eight pubs at that time in the Market Place alone taking advantage of the closeness of the sports field.

After the first world war, more utilities were provided when the Electricity Generating Station by the Town Mill came into production in 1925.

In 1929 many people came to Ringwood from out of work Wales to help put in the Towns drainage system. The towns tap water supply was turned on with due ceremony in December 1930.

The car having made its mark on society, caused the demolition of the Corn Mill by the Church and the Vicarage so that traffic going north, east and west could by pass the town, the development of Housing Estates gathered speed after the 2nd World War especially to the west of the town with the selling of land in Avon Castle and St. Ives.



Jubilee Lamp

The joining of Poulner to Ringwood by the building of housing estates continued through the 1950s and 1960s. Then came the big split when Ringwood was virtually cut in half by the completion of the Poulner Lane diversion planned in 1928 and finished in 1978.

One of the big changes that has taken place in Ringwood was the introduction of supermarkets and the ownership of most shop premises by outside landlords and demanding high rents has caused many shops to close and remain empty. The interest in the Wednesday Market has declined since the closure of the Cattle Market in 1988.