



Spring Hill in the 1920s



This is Spring Hill in about 1927, taken from its junction with High Street. It is a scene only partially recognisable today, for all the buildings on the right of the picture were demolished close on 50 years ago. It is high summer judging from the foliage on the tall tree that stands in the garden of the Crab & Lobster Hotel (you can just discern the hotel's large name board a little down from the centre of the picture).



It is also demonstrably a peaceful scene, for there is no vehicle traffic, just a hand delivery cart visible on the left and a cycle propped against the kerb on the right. There are a few shoppers under the sun awnings.

Using the copious index files of the late Fay Brown, we can open a window on some of the traders who occupied the various buildings in the picture. On the left, one can make out a petrol pump sign that belonged to Russell Bros at 3, Spring Hill. They dealt in cycles, motor cycles, and their repair. They also sold wirelesses and gramophones. The petrol pump was installed in 1926.

Next door, at 5, Spring Hill, was Channon's, fruiterers and florists. George and Edith Channon came originally from Torquay and their shop continued to the early 1960s. In 1931, there is a record of them supplying Ventnor Cricket Club with a bouquet of roses and carnations for the sum of 15 shillings (75p today).

Crossing to the other side of the road, you can just make out a shop sign for the Carisbrooke Dining Rooms at 8, Spring Hill. They were run by Harriet Adcock, widow of William Adcock. The family had come to the Island from Leicester around 1890. William died in 1917, but his wife survived him until 1935. They had two sons:

Herbert William who was described in

the 1901 Census as a pupil teacher and Felix who was then apprentice to a whitesmith. Immediately across the road again was a building that was once one of the oldest licensed public houses on the Island: the Wheatsheaf. It was run by George Hitchman for some 45 years, closing in 1910 to become a private residence, the home of George's widow, Ann. She died the year this picture was supposedly taken.

Finally, we should record the bakery and café that Ralph White once ran from 1, Spring Hill, part of whose shop can be seen at the very left edge of the picture. Here bread was baked the 'old-fashioned way' in the 'latest steam ovens', as was a mouth-watering selection of biscuits. Mr. White emigrated to Canada in 1923, but his Victory Café continued, later becoming the Café Suisse, but that forms a story of its own.