

STATION AVENUE IN BUSIER TIMES.

By Dave Bambrough December 2006.



Comparative views of Sandown Station in 1957 and 2005. (Photographs D. Bambrough collection)

Station Avenue has been the gateway to Sandown for generations of visitors ever since the Isle of Wight Railway Co. arrived in 1864. Up until relatively recent times most daily requirements could be purchased within the Avenue but sadly now they are all but gone. Let us consider the 1950's and examine the various businesses plying their trade throughout the length of the road.

Beginning at the Station, W. H. Smith and Son Ltd had a newsagents shop on the Railway premises. Within the station yard there were two coal merchants, C. Butcher and Son and J. Janes Ltd. Next to these two were Alex Sharp and Co. Ltd, Timber Merchants. At No. 4 stood the Railway Hotel (public house) run by Mrs L. E. Capel and next-door at No. 6 was H. W. Frost (Joan & Cyril) officially registered as a tobacconist, but cups of tea, sweets and fruit were readily available.

Moving up the road a little on the left hand side at No. 17 stood Sadler's Stores, a small general store where most daily food necessities could be purchased. Any dental problems would be quickly sorted out at No. 28 by F. R. Fletcher L.D.S., a national health dental surgeon who practised his vocation here. No. 40 was the place for car spares, run by Norman Baker who also managed Sandown Football Club at this time.

Moving across the Broadway continuing on the left side, at No. 61a stood Eames Garage, car repairs and petrol pump service on the forecourt. The Wesleyan Church, long since redundant was used as a storeroom and repair shop for Clarks Radio's High Street shop. Moving to the right hand side, crossing over Fitzroy Street, Jack Owen ran a Stationers and Post Office, this was No. 68, at No. 70. Jack had his Barbers shop for those that cared little for styling as he specialised at short back and sides only. Just below Jack the next business was that of L. Denness & Son who sold house furniture and prams at No. 82 and more house furniture at No. 86. Next door was Mr. V. Muston's confectionary shop and immediately opposite stood the Rivoli Cinema. Formerly the "Oddfellows Hall" it was converted to a cinema in March 1921 and to a Bingo Hall in the early 1960's. On the opposite side at No. 92 the only original business still open apart from the much-reduced 8 miles of Island Railway is The Sandown Conservative & Unionist Club. There were many hotels, guest and boarding houses throughout the Avenue and of course the Saturday barrow boys carried visitors luggage to and from the station for a bob or two.

Rounding up the services rendered in Station Avenue in the 1950's. From the Station one could travel to Ventnor and Newport by train with a paper or magazine. Coal and wood were available within the Station Yard as was a beer at the Railway Hotel. Just outside the yard the more healthy individual would partake of cup of tea or a ¼ of cherries at Frosty's, purchase the week's groceries at Sadler's Store, have a tooth filled at No. 28, buy the car spares at No. 40 or have it repaired at 61a. Stamps and stationary plus a haircut were available at No's 68 and 70, a pram for the baby and furniture for the front room at No. 86. Gobstoppers and cigarettes from No. 88 on a Saturday night before crossing the road to see John Wayne, and afterwards, if you were a member, finish the night with a beer in the Conservative Club!

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