

NAMESAKE TOWNS



IN AUSTRALIA AND BRITAIN

This is the first of a series of short illustrated articles, to be published from time to time, on cities, towns and villages bearing the same name in Britain and Australia. They are designed to show by contrast the development in a century or less of the Australian places, and to call up in the minds of those who have travelled overseas the old-world settings of ancient patronymics.

The Two Ringwoods.

There is an appropriateness not always found in Australian nomenclature in the fact that the Ringwood of Hampshire and the Ringwood of Victoria are both market towns. The English Ringwood is on the River Avon, 9½ miles north-north-east of Bournemouth, with which beautiful place Australian soldiers, invalided or on leave from Salisbury Plain, are familiar, and where Stevenson wrote "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and "Kidnapped." Agricultural implements, linen goods, gloves and ale are manufactured there, and the population numbers about 8000. A busy, well-ordered place it looks in the illustration, and its restful side is suggested in the old thatched house near the stream, with the church tower immediately in the background. All the warm joviality of Christmas at the White Hart in that English town may be conjured up in contrast with the open-air picnic lunches during the same season in sunny Ringwood here.

The earlier Ringwood, in the Lillydale area, from which shire it was severed to become a borough in 1924, is remembered chiefly for its brick fields and antimony mines. From 521 in 1894 the population of Ringwood has grown to 3500. Travellers know it as the White Horse-road junction to Healesville and Warburton, Mount Dandenong and Fern Tree Gully, and to Warandyte. But it is a weekly mart for the sale of stock, and it boasts its "Paddy's market." During the last ten years, of course, this centre has developed remarkably as a residential area, and its nine churches, public halls, town hall, schools, stores and hotels, water from the O'Shanassy dam and electricity from Yal-lourn proclaim this borough a thriving centre of community life. An electric train service has made of it a suburb in a picturesque countryside of orchards, spacious recreation reserves and an artificial lake. There is a cool store, whose capacity of 50,000 cases of fruit compares

favorably in size with the Doncaster Central and Harcourt cool stores. Fruit growing is the staple industry of the district, and the Fruit Growers' Association holds an annual show there, but a fibrocement works gives hint of progress in internal civic economy. Attractive villas have been built about the township, and an air of self-dependence is apparent in the municipal improvements effected within the borough. Oaks and snow-covered thatch dwellings are absent in this delightful Australian setting. But in winter the distant snow-capped hills of the Dividing Range stand out, and the affinity between this town and the old Hampshire market town is very real in the Anglo-Saxon spirit which inspires citizenship in Ringwood, Victoria.