

Chippenham Buildings Then and Now – No1 by Mike Stone

The Ruskin Hotel and Cafe

This is the first in a planned series which will look at Chippenham buildings showing how they have changed over time.

For our first look into the past, I have selected the former Ruskin Hotel and Cafe in Station Hill. Today the ground floor of the building is split into two shops, the Prince of Wales, micro pub, and a Vape Shop. Members hopefully have noticed that the front of the building is covered in scaffolding and an extra floor has been added at the top of the building.

In the recently deposited collections of the late Don Little, now in Chippenham Museum, there is a copy of a postcard (see below) showing The Ruskin Hotel and Cafe. Research in Chippenham directories suggest that The Ruskin Hotel was built in 1914 and was advertised as 'Chippenham's ideal unlicensed hotel'.

The hotel opened as the second establishment in Chippenham catering for the public need to cut back on drinking and was classed as a temperance hotel. The hotel was ideally situated in Station Hill and catered for both tradesmen and guests, who could sample breakfasts,

luncheons and afternoon teas. The hotel was run by Herbert H Hyatt until 1931 when it was taken over by A & E Oddy. Just before the outbreak of World War II it was renamed WTL Refreshments Limited.

