

Milk Emsworth

Up to the mid 1800s milk was sold locally in the markets and the summer was the cheese making season when there was a surplus of milk. A cow delivered about 1.5 gallons per day then.

Dairying was a cottage industry throughout historical times until the middle of the nineteenth century; country people kept a cow per family and in built-up areas cows were kept at the back of shops or in yards or stables in order to supply the urban population; the start of dairies in towns. The cows were changed at intervals and returned to the country to “recuperate” and a fresh cow was brought in exchange.

One can only imagine the amount of hay and straw needed to feed these cows, and the amount of dung that had to be taken out, adding to the burden from hundreds of horses already working in the cities.

However, in 1865-6 a plague of Foot and Mouth in London swept through the London herds causing a shortage of milk and later in the 1890s and 1911 there were very hot summers and one in five infants died because the milk had become bacterially contaminated – no refrigeration during transport and then delivered 'loose' to customers.

Louis Pasteur, a French microbiologist, conducted the first pasteurisation tests in 1862. Pasteur is credited with revolutionising the safety of milk and in turn the ability to store and distribute milk well beyond the farm. Commercial pasteurisation machines were then introduced in 1895.

The milk was pasteurised by HTST (*high temperature short time*) when milk is forced through pipes, which are heated to 72 °C, for 15 seconds. Then sold as pasteurised milk.

The rapid development of the railways enabled milk to be transported from the countryside to the towns. Specialised companies formed which bought the farmers' milk, transported it to the cities and distributed it to their customers.

At the farm the milk was put into churns which the farmers took to the station, or they put their full churns by the roadside. These were then collected from farms each day by the factory's own transport, which would leave clean empty churns ready for next days' milk, and from about 1920 it would have been a factory lorry. Every dairy farm had its own milk stand at the roadside, all at the same height as the lorry so that the churn could easily be rolled on board. Churn stands were structures of individuality, every farm had a different model, its size, shape and materials largely the choice of the farmer. They were often of a combination of materials, wood, brick, concrete, steel, local stone or even railway sleepers.

In 1950 the MMB (Milk Marketing Board) arranged for insulated tankers to collect from farms, thus removing the labour intensive moving milk in churns, but churns continued to be used until the early 1960s. By 1978 its entire collection was by tanker from the farm, with the cooled milk stored in bulk at the farm.

When in 1958 new TT milk regulations came in, many farmers would not upgrade their milking parlour, so became arable farmers.

When the Milk Marketing Board was abolished in 1994 the price paid to the dairy farmer for his milk was reduced to the point whereby production became uneconomic, and forced dairy farmers out of business or turned them away from dairy to arable farming. But that is another story.

The result was hundreds of thousands of redundant milk churns. Where did they all go? Many were sold abroad where they continued to be used for their original purpose, but a few remain visible when occasionally we may see a churn for sale at an antique shop.

Emsworth

Emsworth had its own dairy farms supplying milk to the village and you either went to the dairy for your milk or it was delivered by horse and cart.

In North Street there was originally Silvers Farm but no dairy, and further up the road was The Milkman's Arms public house apparently called such as it was built on the site of the farm's dairy.

In Horndean Road was Cold Harbour Farm where Arthur Tier was listed as a dairyman in 1931.

In West Street where the Antique shop is now, was Huttridge's dairy: milk was sold from there and later in 1939 they took over the Jersey Dairy

Tiers had a dairy behind the Old Pharmacy, now a charity shop, and well before the second World War and the cows used to be brought from Warblington Road through the town to the dairy and returned. This took place twice a day. What an upset that would be nowadays with the modern traffic.

The Milkman,s Arms PH was built on the site of the Brook Farm dairy. To the right of the farm house was the farm yard used by the Rubicks as a builder's yard. Since the 1970s it has been used by engineers and a boat chandlers. The farm barn was in daily use until it was eventually demolished. In 1999 the Milkman's Arms PH closed and in 2003 it was demolished and houses built on site.

I am sure there are many Emsworth inhabitants that can add much more to the information we have about the Emsworth milk supplies.

Tony Yoward



Fig.1: Churns awaiting collection

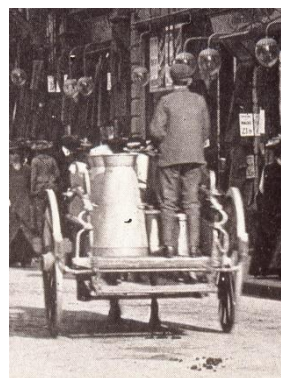


Fig. 2: Home delivery...



Fig. 3: Home delivery!



Fig.4: The Milkman's Arms pub