

## Emsworth Ship Bowls

Reminders of Emsworth's past as a port and ship building centre are to be found in Bristol and Liverpool Museums. Both museums have in their ceramic collections examples of ship bowls relating to Emsworth ships built, owned and manned in the eighteenth century. Ship bowls are so called because they commemorate the launching of a ship or the appointment of a master. They are individually painted with a ship inside, and they measure approximately 27 cm (10.5ins) in diameter and 11 cm (4.5ins) in height.

Frank Britton in his book *English Delftware in the Bristol Collection* illustrates such a bowl, decorated with a floral border outside and on the inside 'a ship in full sail with a red ensign at the stern, the union flag at the bow and a pennant from the top mast.' Below is the legend : 'Success to the LIVELY OF EMSWORTH – ROBERT RANDELL, Master.' He has identified this ship as being in Lloyds Register of Shipping for 1764: 'LIVELY, Master W. Hicks'. Trading London-Dublin, 80 tons ... Built Emsworth. First registered 1747. Owner R. Randell'. He has also found a reference to LIVELY OF EMSWORTH in the Bristol Merchant Venturer Society's Anchorage and Wharfage Books in 1746, paying dues on a voyage from Ireland, and suggests that she was registered in the following year.

The Bristol Port Books in the Public Record Office also record the LIVELY, with Robert Randall as Master, sailing from Southampton to Portsmouth in 1755, and with John Wright as Master in 1756.

The same Port Books record another Emsworth ship, the PROVIDENCE OF Emsworth, with William Randall as Master, sailing from Exeter to Chester in 1755, and again in 1756 for a unknown destination. Mr Britton suggests that this ship was also built in Emsworth and that Robert and William Randall were related.

A study of the Warblington Parish registers for the period produces scores of Randells (with several variations in the spelling), the first Randall appearing in the Baptismal Register in 1655. Robert, Master of the LIVELY, was born in 1692 and appears to have had nine children, one of whom, William, was born in 1733. This would make him 22 in 1755 when William is recorded as Master of the PROVIDENCE, which is perhaps rather young to be the Master of a ship. However, Robert had a nephew, also named William, born in 1725, so he may have been the Master of the PROVIDENCE.

The Parish Registers also record Wrights, John Wright, a mariner, married Kitty Harris in 1760, and they produced four sons between 1763 and 1769, so this is probably the John Wright recorded as the Master of the LIVELY in 1756. There are no Hicks in the Register for the relevant period.

The ship bowl in the Liverpool Museum is also of Delftware, having a similar ship in full sail, red ensign at the stern, union flag at the bow and pennant from the top mast, painted in polychrome enamels on the inside. The legend below reads: 'Success to the EMSWORTH, JOHN SHEPHERD Master, 1757'. The Chichester Council Minute Books for 1767 record a John Shepherd of Emsworth landing coal at Dell Quay and paying dues of £1.1s.10d. Again the Parish Registers record Shepherds, with various spellings, from 1695, and several Johns for the relevant dates. As the fathers' occupations are rarely recorded in the Registers till 1813 it is not possible to differentiate between them. However, I think it highly likely that the Master of the EMSWORTH was an Emsworth man.

Although these three sturdy sailing ships have long since disappeared, it is satisfying to think that they are survived by fragile pottery bowls to provide us with a glimpse of the lives of some of the inhabitants of Emsworth two hundred years ago.

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