

Chalcrafts, Number 10 South Street

by Anne Johnstone

Now there's a name that is familiar in and around Emsworth. Chalcrafts have lived and worked here since 1760 and have owned a variety of businesses. In the 'famous' etching of Emsworth Square in 1830, Chalcraft Pork Butchers' shop can be seen on the left with the bow front.



Plate from Robert Mudie's book on Hampshire published in Winchester in 1838

The popular public house, The Coal Exchange, was run by John Chalcraft from 1865 until 1872. Previous to this he was the publican at The Locomotive situated in North Street. John Chalcraft was both a victualler and a pork butcher according to the 1851 census. John lived in North Street with his wife Susan and two children. Another public house run by the Chalcraft family was The Cricketers in Westbourne.

The family, apart from being in the licensed trade, were also brewers, pork butchers, cabinet makers and, if required, could even sell you an insurance policy.

For the past 20 years the family have successfully run a small but interesting antique shop in South Street. Here you can browse among the many antiques and items of interest. The shop is run by Martin and is opposite The Coal Exchange where his great great grandfather ran his business.

If you are familiar with Emsworth, you may have seen the family's delivery vehicle out and about. The 1939 Morris 10cwt truck, which has been lovingly restored, is used by Martin and his family to deliver the larger purchases from their shop.

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It is worth noting that the shop is in a Grade 2 listed building. It was built c1820 on the site of an earlier timber-framed building. The occupants of these premises can be traced right back to 1820. The first occupant was a Mr Morey Rates. From 1891 until 1916 it was occupied by the Ripley family who were fishermen. But in 1920 it was in the hands of the Dridge family, who lived there for a number of years with their 13 children. Living conditions must have been very crowded as the rooms are extremely small by today's standards.

Whilst chatting with Martin, I asked him about his childhood and his teenage years in and around Emsworth.

Martin was born in 1956 and spent his early years living an idyllic childhood in Emsworth. He attended St James Church School and then Warblington Secondary School. Martin started work at 15 in Collins Garage, Westbourne, as a trainee mechanic. He always had an interest in anything mechanical, and often popped over the road to a clock shop opposite as he was fascinated by the workings of all the various clocks within. After a time, he started making bits and pieces for clocks and this led to an interest in antiques as well as clocks.

Memories

Martin has lots of vivid memories of his days spent in Emsworth, especially those spent with pals Ian Fox, his brothers Malcolm and Kevin, Roy Hayward and Geoff Treagust to name but a few. The antics these young boys got up to would seem very alien to today's youngsters. For example, the times they spent in the harbour tying foot lengths of wood to their feet so they could walk out onto the mud flats. Or the days they were taken out fishing with local fisherman Nick Parham. Nick had a 30ft wooden boat and moored it at Dolphin Quay.

One bright sunny day, Nick had taken his boat out of the water to give it a new coat of paint; it was left to dry in the sun before being put back in the water. Unfortunately, when he did, it sank. The heat of the sun had caused the planks to shrink, thus the boat leaked and ended up on the bottom of Dolphin Quay. Sadly, this put an end to Martin's trips out fishing with Nick.

Another amusing incident occurred when Martin was out with a trawler. On pulling in the nets, which seemed heavy with fish, they found a huge Michelin Man made of rubber tyres amongst the fish. I asked Martin what became of the Michelin Man, but sadly he cannot remember.

Martin has vivid memories of skating on the frozen Mill Pond during the winter months and swimming in the harbour during the summer, which very often got him and his pals into trouble with the harbour master. Martin and his group of pals used to earn a few bob at the weekends helping sailors retrieve their boats from the mud. It was a mucky job, but someone had to do it!

Present Day

He met his wife to be, Elizabeth, in 1974. Elizabeth was on holiday with her parents on Hayling Island. Martin was at the fun fair and he asked Elizabeth out, and from that time they became a couple, marrying in 1975. Two sons, David and Steven, followed and Martin and Elizabeth spent the following years raising their family and working in the antiques business. For a few years they had a successful antique shop in Arundel, but by 1996 they had bought the shop they now have in South Street, thus bringing the Chalcraft name back to Emsworth. Chalcrafts specialise in antique clocks and antique furniture, stocking Georgian to mid-twentieth century pieces.