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**“Recollections of Emsworth Past”
 Memories of living as a boy in Emsworth
 during the Second World War**

Mr W J Scadgell
(concluded from the April issue)

I went to Manor House School at the bottom of South Street in Havant, travelling by No. 31 or 31A Southdown bus. This was before pedestrianisation in Havant and Chichester and before Emsworth was bisected by the “short bypass”. Double-decker buses and lorries all ground their way through Emsworth - up West Street and along the High Street, negotiating the right-angled corner into Queen Street.

By the end of five years of war, Emsworth looked shabby and run-down - very different from the vibrant, attractive town it is today. The fishermen’s cottages in South Street were dilapidated, the Quay Mill was an eyesore and, off-shore, the Ark and other once-proud relics from J D Foster’s oyster trade and shipbuilding glory days were rotting hulks. For the shops, business was depressed because rationing was at its most stringent. I remember the Scadgells were registered at Pink’s, the local grocery firm (where the Library now is). On the Square, on the other side of Nile Street, was the International Stores but this was before the advent of supermarkets. I also remember Corbins the shoe shop facing the Square (now Hutchins), Fogdens the drapers and Jacobs newsagents (where there is still a newsagents today). I was often sent out with fourpence halfpenny (4 ? d - less than 2p in today’s money) to buy a large loaf. Three pennyworth of chips was a feast! A packet of Smith’s crisps, with its little blue paper twist of salt, was a treat. There was no choice of flavours and no alternative brand!

Everyone listened to the radio for news and entertainment; and there was no television. But Emsworth and Havant each had a cinema and Chichester had no less than three! I was inspired by the battle of Agincourt in “Henry V” at the “Pavilion” in Emsworth (once the Town Hall and still identifiable in the Square by its clock tower). And I am happy to note that my father’s favourite leisure venues, the Town Brewery and the King’s Arms, are still prominent amongst Emsworth’s many pubs. After spending the best part of his life at sea, my father did not encourage me to take up sailing, which I regret. However, I well remember many trips to Sandy Point in my uncle Dick Mant’s motorboat. He was Commodore of the Emsworth Slipper Sailing Club when, after the end of the war, summer weekends were devoted to sailing regattas hosted in turn by the two sailing clubs in Emsworth and those at Hayling Island, Thorney, Langstone, Bosham, Itchenor and Dell Quay. Those were the days of races between Fireflies, Merlins, Sharpies and other classes I have no doubt forgotten. Also between family-owned boats like the “Eva”, recently lovingly restored by its owner John Mant - we were boys together in the 1940s! It is the story of Emsworth as I have known it: at a low ebb in the 1940s but now - 60 years later - transformed and flourishing, a highly desirable place for residents to live and having great appeal to visitors like myself. Well done, Emsworth!

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