



JOHN VAUGHAN (1949–2016)

John was unique, a one-off, with a life-long love of antiques. He had an eye for them, a nose – and had a phenomenal memory for every trade he'd ever done: where he'd come across a piece, what its value was, what he'd bought it for, what he sold it for. Antiques were what he was, whether it was house clearance, his own shops, or Antique Fairs.

His father was a market gardener cum entrepreneur with a love of piers. John's private education took him, first, to working in a bookshop. But he also loved the antiques market in Portobello Road in North Kensington. He didn't have a stall there but bought and sold and, with a growing knowledge of who to sell to, he always knew when a deal could be made.

John loved Greece, the island, its people and its way of life. He took holidays there and never wanted to come back. He was a shy with many people, not big on charisma, and only his close mates really knew him. But those who did had some amazing stories to tell. He was a regular in the Unicorn in the days of Val and Fred Ellis. Fred upset him one day and John, being a pretty strong man, got hold of Fred's head and dunked it under the beer tap. Val banned him, and it took flowers and a lot of persuasion to get him back in.

The May Day challenge was a manic annual occasion, like the time he canoed from Banbury to the Great Western in Aynho, to be met by 20 mates ready to make a day of it! His birthday coincided with Deddington Fair in November, an occasion for parties when everyone in fancy dress had free rides on the dodgems.

John came to Deddington around 1973 and had first shop in the Old Farm House in New Street, where he then lived. He showroom was dark and dingy with furniture piled up – customers loved to rummage and think they were finding a bargain. After he married Judy, he moved to Weston House with a shop in Chapel Square, and then to Manor Farm in Clifton, where he built a lake and filled it with trout for his mates to come and fish. He moved back to Berwick House and finally to the Daedings, running a stall in Station Mill Antiques in Chipping Norton.

There was one lovely occasion when John got pretty legless in the Unicorn and Mike O'Brien and I had to half walk, half drag him back him to Clifton when he was living there. We left him on his doorstep, but by the time we got back to Deddington and in need of a pint, there was John on a bar stool in the Unicorn, big grin on his face, having hitch-hiked back! That was John, there are so many stories like this, he was such a great character.

John Parkinson