

PROMOTION

# Risen from the ashes



Gazing at the ashes, Paul realised nothing was salvageable. All the machines, hand tools, everything ruined. Raw materials - oak, walnut, maple, cherry - embers. All ironmongery distorted and melted. His spray shop and equipment, rubble.

*"26 years of work and achievement wiped out."* says Paul wistfully.

"It was December 2nd when the call came telling me the workshop was on fire. I remember looking towards the inferno." Paul turns silent for a moment, staring into the distance as if reliving the memory. Touching his heart with his hand he continues softly, "I felt an emptiness inside here like I've never felt before. The centre of the inferno was so hot, but I felt cold inside."

But this is not a story of endings. It's the story of turning tragedy into triumph and of a community turning bad fortune into good.

***When and why was Redbrook Kitchens established?***

Redbrook Kitchens began in 1991 with me making and fitting replacement kitchen doors. I've always been adventurous and like to stretch my boundaries, so rented a small workshop at Park Farm to build the business.

***Paul, you're a third-generation craftsman. We'd love to hear more about your interesting heritage.***

My grandfather was a pattern maker in the Czech Republic and made the screws for the Queen Mary liner. My father made parts for Meteor jets, pit props for Dowtys and was production manager for Chad Valley. I guess my apprenticeship started aged eight in the family business. While not born on the workshop floor, I certainly grew up there!



***Talk us through the design process, from inception to fitting...***

A customer's home is their most precious purchase and our goal is to make their home more beautiful and functional. Paddy takes measurements, draw up a quotation and complete design with his amazing visuals. Once a design is accepted, we agree a start date.

***What sets you apart from your competitors?***

I believe in full transparency, from fully itemised quotations to delivering what we agree to do when we agree to do it. We're reliable and refreshingly honest and we love a creative challenge. We'll take on that awkward shaped room and love nothing more than a request for a quirky design!

***How did your sister company, The Tile Barn come about?***

The Tile Barn dovetails perfectly into Redbrook, allowing us to offer a one stop shop. It gives customers peace of mind to have wall and floor tiles taken care of and to be able to create a scheme with us for their kitchen, bedroom or bathroom.

***Tell us more about the December 2017 fire...***

We lost 1,500 sq ft of Warehouse space, 3,000 sq ft of Showroom space and 2,700 sq ft of Workshop space in a few hours. I watched the fire rage from 7pm Saturday night until 2am the following morning.

***You decided, bravely, to continue the business and started all over again. How difficult was this decision?***

For a fleeting moment I fantasised about settling for an insurance payout and retiring. But it was only fleeting! As soon as I thought about my loyal customers, community and staff - the longest serving is Jason with 25 years - the decision was made to continue.

***How did you go about sourcing new premises?***

Within four weeks we had a fully functioning workshop in Toddington, thanks to the tremendous efforts of current and past staff. Next door let us use their spray shop. Another business owner, Chris Holmes Joinery, let us use his workshop to fulfil existing orders. And of course, we wouldn't have got anywhere without fantastic help from NFU Insurance.

On December 4th - two days after the anniversary of the fire - we opened our new showroom at 'Working Mens Cottage'. Next on the list is to re-open Park Farm.

***What does the future hold for Redbrook Kitchens and The Tile Barn?***

I try to only work four days a week and I'm enjoying seeing Paddy and Jason take more responsibility. It sounds soft, but we really are like a family. This year we're looking forward to starting again where it originally began. We're planning a spacious new workshop and showroom where we can spread our wings. Dare I say it, like a phoenix rising from the ashes? Wish us luck!



**REDBROOK KITCHENS**

◆ [www.redbrookkitchens.com](http://www.redbrookkitchens.com)