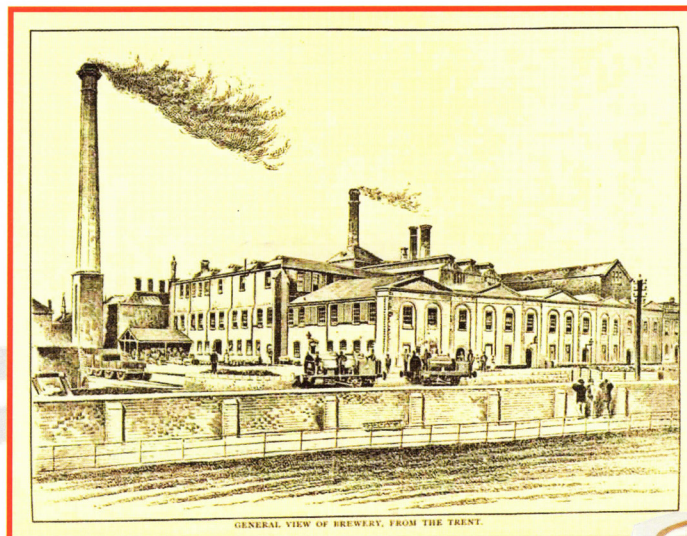


Thomas Salt & Co Ltd

A fascination for their brewery history, trademark & memorabilia

For over forty years I have been collecting brewery memorabilia. I have two areas of focus - pre WWII British brewery trays and any item from Salt's Burton Brewery. My passion for Salt's Brewery has led me to produce this article, I hope it resonates too? **Richard Percival**



Left: Salt & Co Brewery view from the River Trent, Burton on Trent.
Below: Salt & Cos impressive and extensive St Pancras stores.



STORES FRONTING PANCRAS ROAD.

The Early Years 1774-1870's

Thomas Salt established a maltings business in 1774 adjacent to Joseph Clay & Sons brewery. Clay's brewery was at that time one of the famous 'nine common brewers of Burton-on-Trent'. By 1789 Salt had started his own brewery. He continued to brew independently and by 1800 was also working Clay's Brewery as well as his own at 119 High Street, Burton. In 1804 Thomas Salt passed his own business to his son Thomas Salt the younger who himself acquired the Clay Brewery around 1812. On his death in 1813 the next generation, led by Thomas Fosbrooke Salt, continued to expand the company. With the existence of key trading routes from the River Trent to the East Coast ports and newly completed railway link between Derby and Birmingham, access to local and overseas markets were ideal. Most importantly however was the decision to brew Pale Ale in the 1820's. Salt's Pale Ale had a superb reputation and indeed the overall quality of Burton water attracted a number of London brewers in the 1870's like Charringtons, Trumans and Mann, Crossmann & Paulin. By the 1880's Burton-on-Trent had become the undisputed capital of brewing with Salt & Co being the 4th biggest brewer after Bass, Worthington and Samuel Allsopp & Sons Ltd.

The Maltese Cross Trade Mark 1876

Whilst there is no contention Bass's famous red triangle and the red diamond were the first and second ever trademarks to be registered under the Trade Mark Registration Act of 1875, for me the more striking example is that of Salt & Co with their eye catching beauty of the Red Cross, registered in 1876, which is the main reason I started to collect Salt's memorabilia.

The Later Years 1880's-1927

In the second half of the 19th Century Salt & Co were flourishing. One statistic says it all - their workforce had more than doubled from 194 in 1861 to over 400 in 1888. Salt's Pale



Above:
1884
Health Exhibition
showcard.



Above L to right: A trio of quality c.1900's Salts pieces - coaster, jug and a small stand up ornamental mirror.

direct result of the exhibition Salts added the word 'Health' to the centre of their trademark, a useful dating aid.

In 1893 the company was registered as Thomas Salt & Co Ltd. Trade however was beginning to prove more difficult. The Temperance Movement had swayed the public against brewers and supported by the Liberal Party had led to legislation which steadily reduced the number of licensed premises, particularly damaging to those breweries dependent on free trade, Salts being one. Other breweries acquired their own tied houses much earlier than Salts and although by 1900 they had acquired a wide geographical spread of around 300 of their own tied houses, strategically they had 'missed the boat'. Despite acquisitions of other breweries and their tied houses, such as John Bell & Co Ltd in 1902, a steady decline in beer drinking meant that by 1907 Thomas Salt & Co Ltd went into voluntary liquidation. The company was financially restructured and continued to trade but after WWII rising competition and costs could not delay the inevitable. In 1927, despite struggling on, Salt's was purchased by Bass, Ratcliff & Grettton Ltd. Both the High Street Brewery and their other brewery acquired from Brunt. Bucknall & Co Ltd in 1919, were closed shortly afterwards.

Modern Times

The High Street Brewery was cleared in 1965 to create a new shopping centre. Better news however is that the old Salt's well is still running under the streets of Burton and is being used by Coors today. The only building remaining from the original Salt's business is the Walstitch Maltings, or Wharf Road Tower, which was built in 1870 and abandoned in the 1960's. After significant refurbishment brewing commenced at the Tower Brewery in 2001 and the Salt's brand name has been resurrected too.

Collecting Salt's Brewery Memorabilia

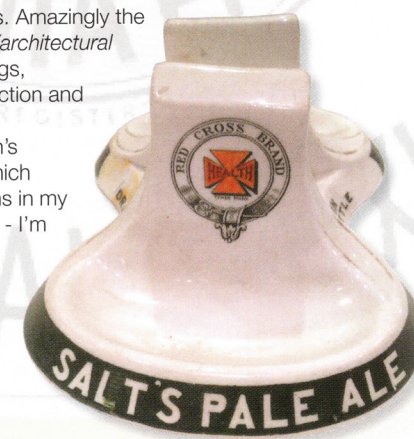
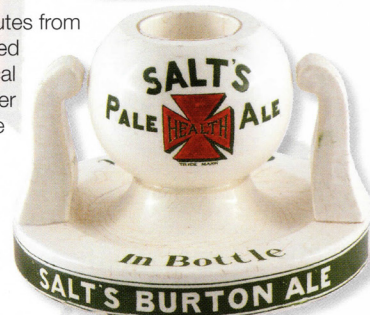
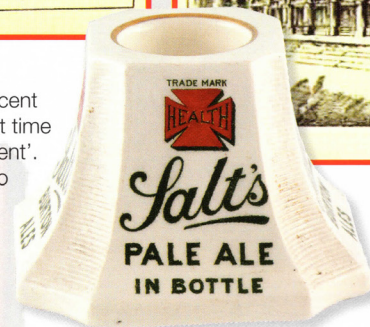
I have recently compiled a list of all known existing Salt's Brewery items. Amazingly the list totals just over 50 examples ranging from their magnificent mirrors (*architectural gems in themselves*) to cracking showcards. Ceramic items such as jugs, matchstrikers, coasters and ashtrays compliment any breweriana collection and other items such as playing cards, pencils and tankards also exist. I started by stating that I also collect brewery trays, in fact I have Britain's biggest collection with well over 1,000 pre-dating 1960, with 400 of which pre-date WWII. Well you've guessed it, despite a plethora of Salt's items in my collection I've never seen or heard of a Thomas Salt & Co brewery tray - I'm still searching for the Holy Grail!

If anyone would like to discuss the article, or help in my quest for the tray or other items please contact:

richard.percival@hotmail.co.uk or use the contact form on my website www.brewerytrays.co.uk



Left:
A rather unusual c.
1910 ashtray design which
Richard has still not managed
to track down.



Above: A 1920's jug with distinctive green top & bottom rim, plus **left:** a c. 1910 matchstriker both missing from Richards collection - help!



Above L to R: Two Salt's mirrors & a framed poster - all three c.1900 items missing from collection.