

Valley Feature on a man with an interest in breweriana

Richard has tray-mendous collection!

FOR most people, it is a sad feeling when last orders are called and you are forced to leave the comfortable surroundings of your local.

But for Ribble Valley businessman Richard Percival those melancholy feelings do not linger for long.

For as soon as Richard arrives home he has the luxury of being able to enjoy a glass of beer surrounded by his enormous collection of breweriana – including a vast array of beer trays, originally known as “weighter trays”, old pub mirrors and advertising signs.

In fact, the 41-year-old's collection is so large that he has had to dedicate an entire room to it at his Gisburn home, complete with custom-made display shelves.

Richard, who started collecting trays more than 20 years ago, has just over 1,000 of them in his collection and all date back to pre-1970. Some remain in boxes, while his most prized trays, all dating back to pre-Second World War, have pride of place.

Unlike other collectors of breweriana, Richard seems to have hit a niche in the market that others overlooked and he now has one of the best collec-

by Julie Wintle



tions of beer trays in the country.

Originally from Nottingham, he picked up his first tray from a pub on his way to a Notts County game in Brighton.

“My friend collected beer mats and we went into this pub and he asked for one, but they said they didn't have any and ended up bringing a beer tray out instead. My friend didn't want it, so I took it,” he says.

The interest in this corner of the breweriana market has increased in recent years and Richard now finds it far more difficult to lay his hands on trays missing from his collection.

Collectors

“When I first started collecting, I'd just go into a pub and ask the landlord if they had a spare tray and they'd usually just ask me to put 50p in the charity box on the bar for it,” he said.

“In those days there were no other collectors. Loads of people used to collect towels and adverts – so I had about a 10-

Richard Percival with some of his array of beer trays
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year head start on the market.”

He added that nowadays the situation was a lot different and his main source for new trays had changed from specialist fairs to the internet auction site, Ebay.

“These days I probably only really pick up about 10 trays a year and eight of those 10 are via Ebay.”

Over the years what started off as just a hobby has become increasingly more important to Richard and he soon began to match his trays to breweries listed in a book entitled “A Century of British Brewers”, which lists all breweries from 1890 to 1990.

“I started to realise I was picking some really rare items up and that what I was actually doing was preserving brewery history,” he said.

Now his ultimate dream is to set up his own breweriana museum.

Over the years the interest in Richard's collection has been astounding. He has featured in the Brewery History Society's magazine, talked on at least five radio stations about his collection, been interviewed by Granada TV celebrity weatherman Fred Talbot and featured on the Channel Four programme “Collector's Lot”.

He has even featured in the women's magazine “Best”, which was running a series of articles on unusual collections.

Now, he hopes to extend his amazing collection even further and is appealing to anyone who might have or know where he can find brewery memorabilia, particularly trays from breweries in Lancashire.

Have you got any of these trays?

THE main trays Richard Percival is interested in acquiring are:

Clitheroe/Blackburn: Tempest Seedall, Swan and Royal Brewery (1910); John Tillotson and Son, Waterloo Brewery, acquired by E. and J. Crabtree Ltd; E. and J. Crabtree, Victoria Brewery, Shawbridge Street, Clitheroe, which was acquired by the Blackburn Brewery Co. Ltd in 1920; Blackburn Brewery Co. Ltd, acquired by Dutton's Blackburn Brewery Ltd in 1928.

Barrowford: John Kenyon Ltd, Rossendale Brewery, acquired by Massey's Burnley Brewery in 1928; Lancashire Clubs Federation Brewery Ltd, which closed in the early 1960s.

Burnley: J Grimshaw Ltd, Keirby Brewery, acquired by Massey's Burnley Brewery Ltd in 1928; Burnley Clubs Brewery Ltd, demolished 1950.

Skipton: Scott and Co (Skipton) Ltd, acquired by Bentley's Yorkshire Breweries Ltd in 1912.

Anyone wanting to contact Mr Percival can call him on either 01200 445052 or on his mobile 07715 369540. Alternatively you can email him on rpercival@email.msn.com