

Dedication, giant veg and Alan Titchmarsh...

Welcome to a world of long carrots and heavy leeks in tomorrow's Seven Days



Can you fill the gap in Richard's display?



MISSING LINK: Richard Percival has 1,200 beer trays, but no good pre-war Notts ones C24086DAM2-3 DUSTIN MICHALOVIS

By DAN HODGES

THE Holy Grail, a black pearl, the Loch Ness monster... some people spend their lives in abortive quests for the objects of their desire.

In Richard Percival's case, the 'must have' is a tin tray.

Despite being proud owner of the most magnificent collection of classic brewery trays in England, the Arnold-born collector has never found a good example of a Notts brewery tray from before the Second World War.

"Trays produced before the war generally had black backs," he said.

"I've got about 300. But despite living here for most of my life, I've never got hold of a black-backed tray from a Notts brewery.

"I know they exist, and I've spent 25 years waiting for one to turn up."

Now Richard wants *Post* readers to help him end his quest.

The 44-year-old management consultant lived in Nottingham until his early 20s, but moved away to Lancashire and then Amsterdam.

Now he has moved back to the area, and is hoping there's a tray in someone's attic that will allow him to say his collection is complete.

Featured on Channel 4's *Collectors Lot*, Richard's tray collection runs to 1,200 from as early as 1880.

He also has pre-war brewery mirrors, adverts, match strikers and ceramic bells.

Perfection's a tray away

Your stories

Have you got an unusual hobby?

Write Your stories, Nottingham Evening Post, Castle Wharf House, Nottingham, NG1 7EU

Telephone 0115 964 4065

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He got the collecting bug when, as a young man, he travelled to Brighton to watch his beloved Notts County play.

"There was a guy with me who col-

lected beer mats and in one pub he asked for a particular mat," he said.

"The landlord hadn't got a mat but he had a tray. He gave it to me and that was it."

"I started off asking local landlords if they had them, then I had to move on to antiques fairs and specialist fairs. eBay is really my last hope."

Richard's best 300 trays cover the walls of a converted cowshed at his new home, just over the Leicestershire border in Waltham-on-the-Wolds.

Another 400 are displayed in a barn next door, with the rest in storage.

He fears the memorabilia may one day be all that is left of old Notts breweries like Shipstone and Home Ales.

And he worries even Hardys & Han-

sons — brewers of his favourite Kimberley Bitter — could disappear after it was taken over by Greene King earlier this month.

"People think I'm mad, but when they actually come and see my collection they're mesmerised by it," he said.

"Older people can come from around the country and I can show them a tray from a brewery they've known years ago.

"It's quite unique, and it's a preservation of brewing history."

Richard is willing to pay up to £50 for a pre-1938 Notts brewery tray in good condition. Anyone who can help should call him on 01664 464883.

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Praised for bid to save

A SCHOOL teacher who tried to stop a man from jumping to his death has been praised by the man's family and the coroner.

Daniel Simpson, a geography teacher at Mansfield Woodhouse's Manor School, was driving over the bridge at Beeston station when he saw the 55-year-old poised to jump.

He stopped his car and asked the man, whose identity is to be withheld, if he was ok. He said 'no'.

Mr Simpson told the inquest yesterday: "I put my hand on his hands and asked why and he looked at me and jumped off."

The man was not hit by a train, but died of multiple injuries following the incident in March.

Notts Coroner Dr Nigel Chapman recorded a verdict that he took his own life.

Forest's best start to season since...? Find out in Post Sport

Art guide up for award

A NOTTINGHAM art gallery catalogue has been shortlisted for a national award.

Djanogly Art Gallery is one of 21 others picked from 124 entrants for this year's The Art Newspaper and AXA Art Exhibition Catalogue Award.

First prize is £5,000. Second is a full-page advert in the newspaper, worth £2,985, and three runners up will each receive quarter-page advertisements worth £825.

The winner will be announced on Monday, November 27 in London.

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