



Edition 15

9th March 2018

FRIENDS *of* WARMINSTER MALTINGS

TIMELINE of the POUND STREET MALTINGS

We have just completed and put on display for visitors a Timeline for our Pound Street Maltings. For this exercise, we refer to the maltings by this title, because across its 163 years it has traded under a range of different company names, Warminster Maltings Ltd being its most recent, less than 20 years ago.



Our Graphic Designer, John Somers, Mounting our Timeline.

Two features within the Timeline particularly stand out, because they are examples of history repeating itself:

Firstly, the maltings has twice been impacted by the Exchequer.

1855, when the maltings was constructed, The Malt Tax laid down the rigid procedure by which malt had to be made in order that officers acting for the Commissioners for Excise could engage with maltsters, and measure volumes of barley and green malt throughout the process. It was on the mean of these volumes that the tax was levied. The Malt Tax was repealed in 1880.

2002, the then Labour government introduced Progressive Beer Duty (PBD), which fuelled the following boom in Craft Breweries. PBD enables even the smallest breweries to compete on price with the global brands, because the former are levied a lot less tax in direct proportion to their level of production.

Both the Malt Tax, arguably, and Progressive Beer Duty, certainly, have been good for the maltings.

Secondly, for a lot of its life, the maltings has been directly associated with leading varieties of malting barley.

1905, former maltings proprietor, Dr. Beaven's very own plant breeding break through, '*Plumage Archer*', was the first genetically true variety of barley in the world, and a spectacular achievement for both the malting and the brewing industry, as well as for farming. '*Plumage Archer*' prevailed as Britain's most popular barley variety for well over 40 years, and many modern varieties today are directly descended from it.

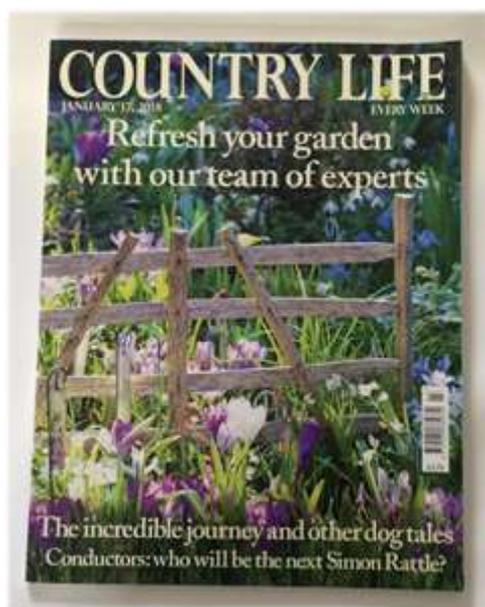
1976, when Guinness were running the maltings, they successfully launched a barley variety named '*Imber*', which had been bred on their Barley Research Farm at Codford, just outside Warminster. However, '*Imber*' was only short lived.

2001, I brought along '*Maris Otter*' barley, for which I continue to maintain the production and marketing rights. This variety, a second generation descendent from '*Plumage Archer*', is still revered as "the most famous barley in the world" and sought after by breweries right across the globe.

The Timeline highlights a number of other stories, all of which are illustrated across 19 pages so far, and hopefully they help to understand what is often described as an extraordinary survival. If, as we hope, the maltings continues to survive and thrive, we do, however, have a problem – we have run out of wall space!

'COUNTRY LIFE'

At the same time as John Somers was putting the finishing touches to our Timeline, next door, on the bottom floor of No.1 Malthouse, was Richard Cannon, photographer commissioned by Country Life magazine to illustrate their current series "Living National Treasures".



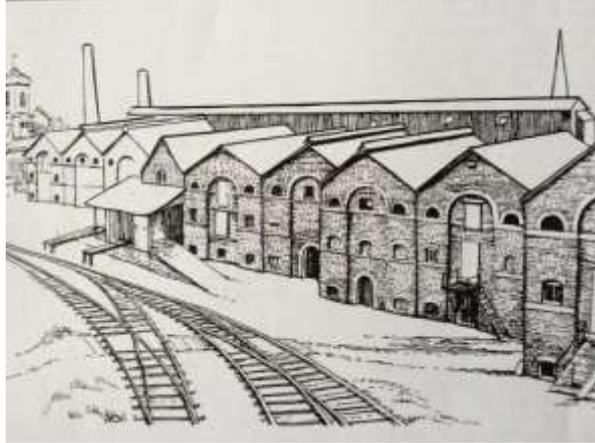
We are very flattered to have been selected to feature in this series, but we should warn regular subscribers that it will be a few weeks before we do appear, if we appear. Richard kindly advised us that there are quite a number of other 'Treasures' already in the pipeline!

However, Richard did manage to shoot a lot of pictures, mostly of two of our maltsters, Peter Chinnock and Nigel Molesworth, quietly 'ploughing' the floor. By the time he left, he had lots of material for 'Country Life' editors to pore over. Watch this space, if we achieve publication we will re-produce it in this letter another day.

SALISBURY MALTINGS

Recent headlines remind me that this near neighbour was once upon a time a long-time competitor of our maltings in Warminster. Today's story of course has, hopefully, nothing to do with malt.

For those of you familiar with the complex, now a shopping centre, I attach a drawing of what it used to look like when it was still a thriving 'floor maltings', a larger scale version of our own Victorian malt houses.



Salisbury Maltings in the 1950's

Trading under the name of William Brothers Maltings Ltd, malting eventually ceased in 1965, when the site was purchased by the City Council, and following a fire, the malt houses were all demolished.

At the beginning of this week the headlines concerning this Maltings referred to an "unknown substance" which was projected to be a poison. In happier times, by way of a contrast, this maltings was long associated with a "very well known substance" - the story goes that it made all the malt for Ovaltine!

Robin Appel