



Edition 18

10th September 2018

FRIENDS *of* **WARMINSTER MALTINGS**

HARVEST 2018

So far, it has been an amazing summer, and, some say, set to continue all the way to November! It has also been an amazing harvest, 2/3 weeks ahead of schedule, and executed across the south of England in almost unbroken sunshine. More than that, instead of farmers worrying about whether their barley is dry enough to cut (max. 14.5% moisture) they have been almost alarmed at how dry it has been (circa 9.0% moisture)! How that will impact on the steeping process at the maltings we have yet to find out.



The press, of course, have had a field day, if you will pardon the pun. On the back of the CO2 shortage, they have tried to invent a barley shortage, to presumably slot in alongside potatoes, green and root vegetables, stilton cheese and Christmas trees! But from where I sit, that is a gross exaggeration. Better than that, the barley crop off the chalk soils of Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset has performed quite well. No record yields, but the quality and size of the grain is good, it is low in protein (perfect for ale

and whisky), and, of course, it is dry enough to be stored safely forever, if needs be. And across the UK there is more than enough of it to meet domestic market demand.

But, across the Continent, the picture is less good, and our Belgian and German maltster friends would appear to require rather more UK malting barley this year than is the norm. Couple this to a global shortfall in wheat supply this year, and the price of barley as well as wheat has risen significantly over the last few months. So whilst there is no shortage of raw material at home, the price of beer is almost certainly bound to increase, but only by pence. If that makes a huge difference to your weekly budget, perhaps you should be drinking a little less anyway?

CONTINUING HISTORY

Pulling together the history of our maltings is a continual quest. So it is always a delight when we are surprised with an unexpected contribution (Friends Newsletter No. 17, Sue Robinson's photograph of the maltings staff 1949), or any snippet of information or photographic evidence which forms part of our 163 year story.

An unlikely source of 'photographic evidence' appeared in the August edition of the journal 'Motor Sport', a glimpse of the inside of Warminster Corn Market, which both the Morgans and Dr Beaven would have attended weekly for the purpose of purchasing their barley supplies. Two photographs, which, unfortunately, were taken after the building had ceased hosting corn merchants and maltsters (1855 – 1919), when, instead, it had become Wall's Central Garage, depicted the Rolls Royce of the famous Hon Mrs Victor Bruce, racing driver, aviator and successful business woman. Mrs Bruce, at the time, owned Warminster's glove factory, so hence her patronage of Wall's Garage.

My particular interest arises because within our museum I have tried to highlight the former importance of the Corn Exchange to the operation of our maltings. These Exchanges featured right across the country for more than a century, from the mid 19th, with a few surviving almost until the end of the 20th. Not Warminster's Corn Market, which closed ahead of most others, but certainly Salisbury and Bristol Corn Exchanges, which were both regularly attended by our maltings former managers, and which continued to function (just) in the 1990's.



**Warminster Corn Market following closure in 1919.
It was finally demolished in 1967, and is now the Edinburgh Woollen Mill shop.**

But my efforts to source photographic evidence of the frenzied activity that was a busy Corn Exchange in the day, have been totally frustrated at Bristol, Salisbury and Warminster. Salisbury Museum have told me they know of no photographs, which is extraordinary, because that Exchange was unusual in having a railway siding which came right into the building - for the conveyance of sacks of corn for inspection by merchants, millers and maltsters.

But now, including courtesy of 'Motor Sport', perhaps I can piece together a bit more of a pictorial insight into our local Corn Market instead.

WARMINSTER TOWN F.C.

Our sponsorship of our local football club (Friends Newsletter No.16) has got off to a flying start. The first team, at least, keeps winning, and they are currently second in the league! It seems part of our message adorning the back of each home programme "Maltings Gold – Sponsoring and Refreshing Warminster Town F.C." is possibly working!

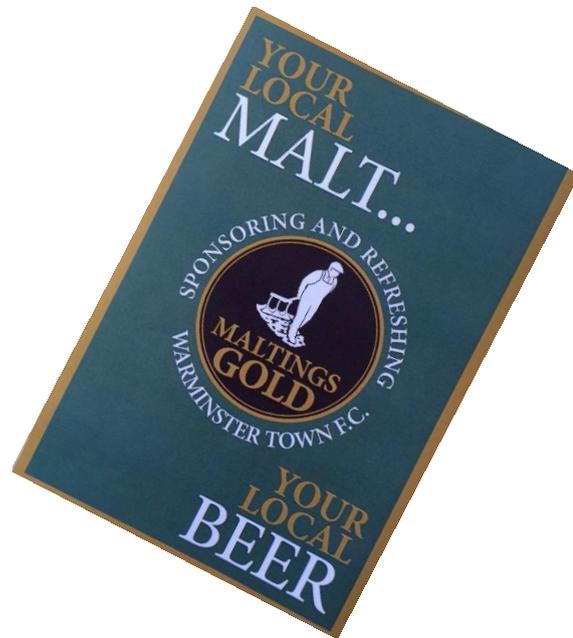


Chris Garratt photographed with 'Maltings Gold' Warminster Town F.C.

Advertising hoardings on the touchline and above the bar in the club house, are now supported by "Maltings Gold" beer mats, shortly to be joined by "Maltings Gold" glassware.

Better than that, "Maltings Gold" can also be enjoyed at The Organ Inn, and the Prestbury Sports Club, both in Warminster, and The Wine Vaults in Devizes. Of course, we would welcome more local hostelries, if the opportunity presents itself. So if you have enjoyed a glass of 'Maltings Gold' on a visit to 39, Pound Street, and you would like to see it on the bar of your local, then have a quiet word with your landlord, and put him or her in touch with **Chas. Hobden at The Wessex Brewery, Longbridge Deverill, tel: 07931 565001.**

Alternatively, find your way to Weymouth Street and the next home match, and come and support our winning football team. At Warminster Maltings we have been supporting championship winning beers for nearly two decades, who knows, we could be on our way to supporting a championship winning football team as well!



TEAS IN THE GARDEN

Our last event of this season is on the afternoon of Wednesday 12th September (2.00 – 4.00pm). We have not been rained off once this summer, so far, so if our luck holds, and you feel so inclined, do come along. We will be delighted to see you.

Robin Appel