

**HOBBY: BEER TRAY FAN BELIEVES COLLECTION IS BIGGEST IN UK**



PICTURE: LIONEL HEAP/654977:1

**IS IT A RECORD?** Richard Percival with his massive collection of beer trays. He is holding up his favourite tray, which dates back to about 1905

# RICHARD'S SET TO SERVE UP RECORD

You'd have no problem carrying your drinks if you ever went round to Richard Percival's house.

Richard has more than 1,200 beer trays at his home and believes he has the biggest collection in the country.

The enthusiast, who admits people think he's a "geek", has even turned a cow barn in his garden into a shrine to his hobby.

He has been collecting trays – all of them dating back earlier than the 1970s – for 25 years.

Richard, 44, from Waltham on the Wolds, near Melton, suspects there is no larger collection of beer trays in the world.

Officials from the Guinness Book of Records are encouraging him to get in touch to find out.

Dad-of-one Richard, said today:

by **TIM SMITH**

"People see I collect beer trays and think I'm a right geek. At first, my friends told me I was absolutely barking mad and, to a degree, I am.

"But I have always been interested in modern history and I find them fascinating.

"They tell you how the history of brewing has changed over the years. Many of them are colourful with interesting pictures which tell a tale.

"Lots of people collect beer mats, towels and jugs but until I started, no-one at all collected beer trays.

"I know it's Britain's biggest collection. Over the years, I've got to know everyone in Britain who collects anything to do with breweries and I don't know of anyone who has as many beer trays as me.

"There's a guy in the US who has a

collection, but I don't think it's as big as mine."

Richard, who works as a management consultant, is planning to marry fiancée Susan Mallalieu in October.

He said Susan thinks he is mad, but shares his interest in the historical side of his collection.

An avid Notts County football fan, Richard was bitten by the beer tray bug on a trip to a match in the early 1980s.

He explained: "We were in the pub and one of the guys, who collected beer mats, asked the landlord if he had any.

"The landlord said no, but gave me a beer tray instead. I took it home with me and haven't looked back.

"When I first started, I was picking them up at antiques fairs, 10 or 15 trays at a time.

"Nowadays, I always look on the walls of a pub to see if there are any interesting trays, but I have never, ever pinched one."

Three hundred of Richard's favourite trays are on display in his cow barn in the garden.

A spokeswoman for the Guinness Book of Records said: "We don't currently have a world record for the most number of beer trays, although the largest amount of beer cans is 75,000, by someone in America.

"We are always interested in hearing from people who have done new things, so Mr Percival should make an application via our website."

Richard would like to hear from anyone who has a tray with advertising on the front and a plain black back, dating from between 1900 to 1939. He would be willing to pay up to £50. Call 01664 464883 or 07715 369540.