

TIMES PAST

MEMORIES OF LEEDS PEOPLE AND PLACES

Collector who's crazy about trays

BY NEIL HUDSON

RICHARD Percival never meant to start collecting beer service trays, it happened quite by accident but over three decades he's managed to amass thousands of the things.

Now, the 50-year-old business consultant is appealing to the folk of Leeds in a bid to find one service tray which has eluded him all these years.

The father-of-one spoke to *Times Past* about his accidental obsession and his ongoing quest.

"It all started 30 years ago when I was part of an away trip to watch my favourite football team, Notts County.

"A few of the people I went with were big real ale drinkers and some were members of CAMRA.

"We stopped off at this one pub and one of the chaps was asking a barman for a beet mat because he collected them - the barman told him he didn't have the mat with the design he wanted but he did have a metal service tray.

"My mate said he didn't want a tray but I just thought, I'll have it. Why not?

"At the time, I looked at it from a practical point of view, as something I could use. I didn't realise it would turn into a lifelong obsession."

Richard, who worked as a director for sports firm Reebok for 10 years before starting up his own business, caught the collecting bug and before he knew it had amassed hundreds of beer trays.

"In the beginning, I just took anything but then I got to the point where I had to make a decision about what I wanted to collect, so I decided to specialise in pre-1970 trays.

"As a result of that decision, I sold about 400 trays which were post-1970.

"All the trays I have now are from about 1880 to 1970, I've

had them all professionally photographed and I hope to set up a website soon so other people can see them. I also intend to reduce my collection to about a thousand, which will mean getting rid of another 500 or so."

Despite his vast collection, however, there is one tray which has always eluded him.

He said: "The tray I would dearly love to find was made by a Leeds brewery which was taken over by Joshua Tetley in 1960. It was called the Melbourne Brewery Leeds Ltd and it was based on Plum Street and was registered 1889 as the Leeds and Wakefield Brewery Ltd. It changed its name to Melbourne in 1957 and was taken over in 1960. It was a significant brewery with 245 pubs, many of them in Leeds.

"I have a lot of trays from Melbourne already but there's one in particular I would love to find in good condition. I know it exists because I have actually got one, it's just that the one I have is in very poor condition and really only worth scrapping.

"I suppose I am appealing to the people of Leeds to see if they recognise this tray. If anyone does find it, I would be willing to pay for it."

Grandfather-of-one Richard said there were two other trays with Leeds connections he would also like to find.

"There was a brewery called Albuon Brewery Leeds Ltd on Woodhouse Lane, which was acquired by Kirkstall Brewery in 1827 and which closed in 1933 and I believe they had some trays printed. Additionally, I have heard that Kirkstall Brewery itself was

acquired by Duttons Blackburn Brewery in 1936 and that they had 83 pubs. If anyone has any trays which have connections to either of these two breweries, I would love to hear from them as well."

Richard added: "I suppose now I am concentrating on pre-war trays and there's an easy way to tell if you have one, because the underside of the



● **THE PLATTERS:** Richard Percival with his tray collection and, inset, the Melbourne Brewery tray that he is seeking a better example of

tray will be painted black, which was to do with the way they were manufactured.

"I think my collection is probably the largest in the world. In fact, my collection recently featured on BBC's *Antiques Roadtrip*, where the guest presenter was Philip Serrell and in 2011 I was featured on ITV's *May The Best House Win* and we won.

"I'm still looking for the tray from Leeds and in the past I used to trawl antique shops and car boot sales and so on but nowadays I do most of my hunting on eBay.

"The pre-war trays form the biggest part of my

collection and here I am missing one particular tray and probably other trays from ex-Leeds breweries.

"Can anyone help me find this tray or any other black-backed trays?"

"I would be delighted to pick up any black backed tray from any former Leeds breweries including the Albion Brewery Leeds Ltd's and lastly J W Hemingway Ltd, which was acquired by Tetley's in 1967."

Contact Richard via email on richard.percival@hotmail.co.uk or phone him on 01664 464883.

TWITTER: @NEILHUDSONYEP EMAIL: NEIL.HUDSON@YPN.CO.UK

PAST ORDERS AT THE BAR



● **MUSICAL BAR:** Drinkers at the Boat Inn in Allerton Bywater in 1960

THIS week *Times Past* begins a series of articles looking at bygone boozers.

If you have fond memories of an oft-frequented, well-loved watering hole, we'd like to hear from you.

We begin with a picture from our archives of the 17th Century Boat Inn, Boat Street, Allerton Bywater, taken on October 9, 1960.

The pub was a one-time calling place for Methley miners taking ferryboat trips to and from the colliery.

Pictured at the bar was 79-year-old Billy Guy and 80-year-old Walt Hepworth, both ex-miners with over 60 years' pit service, supping pints and listening to tunes on a Polyphone, a musical box that uses 20in steel discs and which was built in Saxony about the time they were born.

CONTACT US

● Send your letters to: *Times Past*, YEP, Wellington Street, Leeds, LS1 1RF or email times.past@ypn.co.uk

Scary movies from yesteryear and the changing face of town

MY daughter sent me the piece about the Cinerama. I remember going to see *How The West Was Won* and I felt as if I was living through it.

Another film I saw was the *Wax Museum* and everyone wore special glasses. I was scared stiff, even in the advert a man had a bat and ball and they seemed to come out into the audience.

We used to queue at the Theatre Royal at Christmas to see the pantomime because we got the Co-op divvy and went with the money.

L ACKROYD, Bedford Green, Leeds.

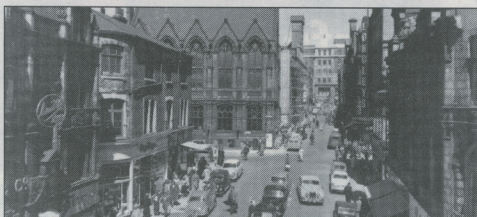
YOUR LETTERS

I WORKED in Hunslet during the 1950s and it was a great place to work. I would love to have a book about Hunslet as it used to be.

Sadly, it is not the Hunslet now that I knew. If anyone knows of any books, or photos, I would be most grateful.

MRS J WELLS, Ings View, Methley

I WAS a member of the youth club at the Tennant Hall (1942-



● **1957:** Lands Lane, with the Theatre Royal in the background

1945). I remember Eddie Rogers very well. I played rugby for Woodhouse from there. They also had two other teams,

Blenheim and Gibraltar. Clifford Cocker was the leader and an excellent man he was.

My regards to Eddie.

JACK STEAD, Bamcroft Towers, Leeds

FOLLOWING the demise of many popular public houses, the older generation tend to recall well the pubs of yesteryear.

I submit a photograph of the landlady and barmaid of the Middleton Arms in Middleton, which is now defunct. This would have been taken in the late 1940s.

The lady on the left is Mrs Beasley the landlady and the barmaid is my

mother Nellie Doyle.

Do any readers remember them?

MRS E CHESTER (NEE DOYLE), Rothwell, Leeds

THANK you for printing my query about any pensioners who were members (1938-1945) of All Souls Youth Club, situated at Tennant Hall at the church on Blackman Lane.

I would love to hear from anyone who recalls this club.

EDWARD ROGERS, Green Lane, Cookridge

MONDAY: RETRO - THE BACKDROP TO YOUR YOUTH