

# SGT NEWS



## RAW MATERIALS - MUCK OR BRASS?

Thanks to increased production, demand for glassmaking raw materials in Europe has held steady. This despite the increasing proportions of recycled stock being used. In a lecture to the North West Section, consultant Alan Reynolds detailed the sources and methods used to maintain a consistent product and provoked discussion on the growing influence of cullet on production.\*

Originally the glass industry used raw materials from the most convenient local sources. This led to distinctive glasses according to regions. The material was extracted, crushed to a uniform size distribution, washed in water to get rid of clays or soluble impurities and iron oxide was separated out by gravitational, magnetic or centrifugal means. If further amounts of iron needed to be reduced, the material was washed in a hot acid or alkali.

The demand for a better quality product - at reduced cost - and the desire to exploit natural resources has brought about a globalisation of raw material supplies. If silica sand with 0.02% Fe can be dug straight from the beach and loaded onto a waiting ship without any intermediate processes, then the cost of moving it to the customer becomes the

most expensive factor. Even African and Australian sources become viable in the UK market.

In 1980, foreign cullet (from bottle banks) provided 2.8% of total annual glass production. For 1992, this figure is expected to be 26% for all glass types. If in-house cullet stocks are included, the contribution from recycling is as much as 40%.

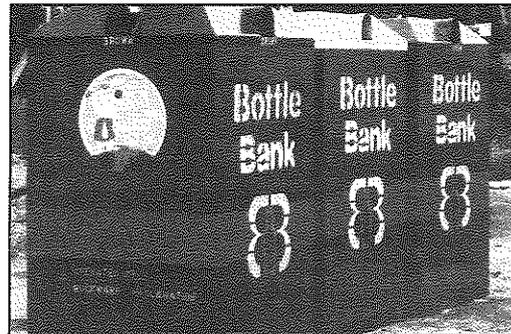
For green glass, some plants are using 100% cullet (Switzerland exports green cullet... any green glass produced there is 100% recycled).

Recycling is the greatest challenge to raw materials suppliers, as the proportion of raw material reduces and cullet becomes the majority component in the furnace. Bottle banks are on track to reach their target of 10,000 by 1995. The European Commission Directive on packaging has set a 10 year target of 90% recovery of materials, of which 60% has to be recycled, the interim target being for 60% recovery with 40% recycled.

As well as market share being threatened by materials already sold once, pressure is being maintained by the buyer on standards. All suppliers have attained BS5750 and are being examined by total quality converts. Profit margins are being eroded in order to compete and these levels do not justify further investment in new plant and equipment. Less demanding customers from other industries that do not mind a small amount of iron beckon!

\* A summary of the lecture and discussion 'Raw materials - muck or brass?' presented to the North West Section at Pilkington Technology Centre, Lathom on September 10, 1992.

*Bottle bank cullet now represents some 26% of UK glass production.*



## SUNDERLAND LAUNCHES GLASS TOURIST TRAIL

North East Section Executive Committee members Bill Brookes and John Henderson were recently invited to represent the SGT at the launch of the Sunderland Glass Tourist Trail. The launch was attended by representatives of local industry, academia, the arts and civic dignitaries, notably the Mayor of Sunderland, Cllr W Craddock.

The idea for the trail was nurtured by Northern Marketing Initiative through its chief executive Ann Mitchell. Help and support was enlisted from the City of Sunderland, Coming Consumer, Tyne & Wear Museums, The Wearside Opportunity, Redby Travel, Wearside TEC, Joplings, Tyne & Wear

Development Corporation and The University of Sunderland.

The Trail will provide a guided tour of glass-associated attractions within the City of Sunderland's boundaries. To this end, a special Tourist Trail Bus leaves from a central point in Sunderland with a daily programme of visits to the various attractions. This includes visits to glassmakers Corning, Phoenix Hot Glass Studio and SGT member Hartley Wood.

The welcoming speeches and official launch took place in St Peter's Church, Monkwearmouth (the reputed site of the first glass windows in the country, 674 AD). Brief visits were made to Hartley Wood, Joplings (where a Sunderland

Glass display and sales area has been created) and the University of Sunderland's Reg Vardy Gallery, where there was an exhibition of contemporary studio glass. This exhibition includes two items by North East Section chairman Charles Bray.

Finally there was a spectacular balloon release from the roof of Sunderland Civic Centre, after which the guests were entertained to a buffet lunch by the Mayor.

JOHN  
HENDERSON



### LOCAL SECTION CONTACTS

For details of forthcoming local section events in your area, contact the appropriate Honorary Secretary. All SGT members and non-members welcome.

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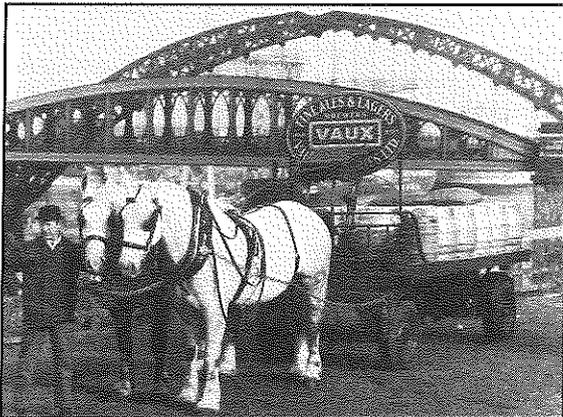
**North West**  
- Dr D Martlew,  
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# ACQUIRING A TASTE FOR VAUX HOSPITALITY

Last May, the North East Section held its AGM at Vaux Breweries, Sunderland. Surprisingly it was 10 years since the section last visited Vaux and this time the chairman insisted that the meeting should be held before the tour of the brewery and hospitality... not after. A prudent move as many readers will no doubt realise.



Since Vaux was founded in 1806, horses have played a central role in the life of the brewery. The tradition continues, with horses still working alongside motorised drays, carrying out deliveries in Sunderland and outlying areas.

Vaux is one of the foremost independent brewers in the UK. As well as having its own brands of beers, ales and lagers (hereafter called 'beers'), the company also brews under contract and licence for other UK and overseas brewers. Vaux has an 'association' with and some equipment from the Carlsberg brewery in Denmark, for example. There appears to be a consensus within the industry that the Danes are probably the best brewers in the world.

The brewing process at Vaux has become more and more automated and controlled. This does not mean that it relies any less on the skill of the brewer. Indeed, because the volumes brewed are so much greater, a 'bad' batch of 'beer' can be much more costly than previously.

Each brew goes through a series of rigorous checks, ranging from specific gravity to microbiological safety. However, there is one parameter that no test or instrument can quantify... taste. This still requires the use of the human nose and taste buds to give the beer meaning. Taste is a matter of judgement and Vaux still relies on a tasting panel as the final arbiter of its beers.

Every Monday the tasting panel will give its verdict on the beers due for release



Vaux Breweries' new keg plant.

that week. Any that do not make the grade are blended, or if too bad, destroyed. Several SGT members were interested in any vacancies on the panel!

Once beers have passed all the quality control criteria, they are released for bulk supply, kegging, bottling or canning. Vaux has its own modern bottling and canning lines which when not working on their beers, are working on contracts for other brewers.

The evening ended with a visit to the Vaux hospitality pub. Several members tried various types of beer, including low and non-alcoholic varieties. We could have gone on much longer but conscious of the time our hosts had devoted to our visit, the chairman called for a vote of thanks to Vaux and especially the senior brewer, Bob Watson, who had acted as our guide. Thanks duly given we bade our reluctant farewell.

JOHN HENDERSON

## FEBRUARY DIARY DATES

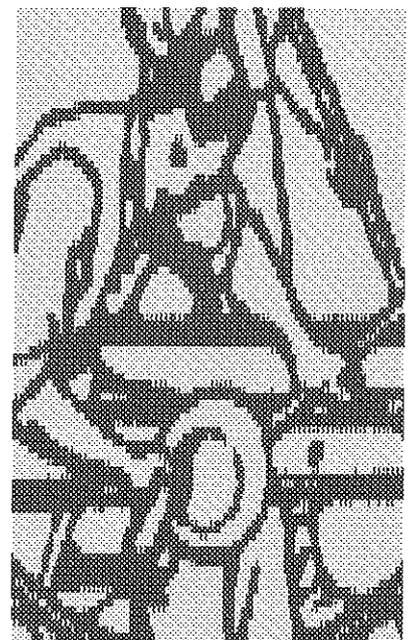
**LONDON:** A joint meeting with the Institute of Materials, Plastics and Rubber Institute, has been arranged for Tuesday February 9. Mr B Paterson of Premier Glass will discuss 'Coatings for bottles'. Venue for the meeting is United Glass, St Albans.

**MIDLANDS:** A young speakers evening has been scheduled for Monday February 1 at Pedmore House, Stourbridge. And on Friday February 19, the Section's annual dinner and dance will take place.

**NORTH EAST:** 'Automatic glassmaking' is the theme of a presentation by David Braithwaite of Maul Technology, to be given on Tuesday February 9.

**NORTH WEST:** Chris Elmsley of York Instruments will talk on 'Optical sensors' on Tuesday February 16. This is a joint meeting with the Institute of Measurement and Control.

**YORKSHIRE:** The speaker has still to be announced but on Thursday February 4, 'Rockware's experience from down-under' will be the topic of conversation. Appropriately, Rockware's Wheatley factory in Doncaster is the venue.



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