

My Goodness! My Guinness!

Dick Henrywood of Dreweatt Neate looks at promotional material from one famous household name

Of all the household names associated with drink, Guinness must be one of the most recognisable. With well known slogans such as 'Guinness is Good for You' and 'Guinness for Strength', the company has made particularly effective use of its advertising budgets. Its near obsession with advertising and promotion dates back to the 1920s, but most readers will be familiar with the recent 'Pure Genius', 'Black and White', and similar campaigns.

While much of the company's work has taken the form of traditional posters and printed advertisements, and more recently film and television, Guinness is probably unique in its extensive use of associated promotional wares. They were marketing goods of every description long before the advent of what we now call merchandising. Over the years their output has been vast, but the following lists should give a flavour of what can be found.

Alongside the more traditional drinks related items such as beer mats, ashtrays, mugs, jugs, corkscrews, bottle openers, trays and glasses, we find household wares such as storage jars, teapots, mugs, eggcups, cruet sets, plates and teaspoons. There were personal items such as pens, penknives, keyrings, cufflinks, buttons, pendants, clothes brushes, umbrellas and even waistcoats and sun hats alongside the ubiquitous T-shirts. Trinkets such as horse brasses contrast with more expensive items such as watches and clocks, cameras, and barometers. Stuffed toys vie with mirrors, postcards contrast with a bodhran (an Irish drum), the lists are virtually endless. It is not surprising that all this proves such a rich vein for collectors.

While all Guinness products are sought after, the decorative china wares are particularly popular. These were obtained from various manufacturers, but by far the most prolific supplier was Carltonware. They made household wares such as storage jars, cruet sets, mugs and egg cups, alongside more decorative wares such as figures and lamps. These sell for around £35 to £150 each, depending on condition, subject, and demand on the day. One particularly desirable figure shows a drayman pulling his own cart, with the horse sitting rather smugly in the back!

Several different lamps were made, the simplest being of bulbous form printed with a band of running toucans, the more desirable being in the form of a penguin, a sealion balancing a spherical shade on his nose, or a toucan standing beside a pint of Guinness.



A selection of Guinness ware which fetched a total of £1,304 at a Dreweatt Neate collector's sale, with the rare toucan jug accounting for £715

Various matching shades were produced. These lamps are all popular and range in price up to more than £500, although some of the simpler types might be found for around £40 or so on a lucky day. The sealion lamp illustrated here sold for £633, helped particularly by being in mint condition, complete with its original box and all internal packing.

Rarest of all is the "Roglow" advertising lamp, again heat driven, with a three sided shade projecting various Guinness slogans on to a curved reflector. This was clearly made with a

very short life in mind, its very ephemeral construction probably accounting for its rarity. The example shown here was in amazingly good condition, apparently never used, again with its original box and appropriate packing, including Guinness

Park Royal Brewery address labels. It sold for £368.

Perhaps the most evocative of all the Carltonware products are the flying toucan wall decorations, in the style of the much derided 1950s set of three graduated ducks flying up the stairs, but in the form of toucans, each balancing two pints of Guinness on its beak. If perfect, the set of three will normally sell for around £200 or so, although the set shown here in the original cardboard packing flew to an impressive £483. There was little doubt about the authenticity of this set, but these flying toucans have been extensively reproduced along with other Carltonware Guinness



A set of Guinness wall toucans and a popular sealion lamp with heat driven rotating shade which sold for £483 and £683 respectively last February

products. The reproductions are fairly commonly found in antiques fairs and markets, so 'caveat emptor', let the buyer beware!

All Guinness products are collectible. With beer mats the cheapest, and lamps amongst the most expensive, there is plenty of interest to all collectors, even the most impecunious. While other brewers have produced similar wares, the Guinness name commands a considerable premium. Their output was vast, imaginative, and perhaps most importantly, fun.