

# A Student Society Tin Toffee Stein

by Martin Kiely

Decorative tins to hold various foods, tobacco and other items have been with us since the 19th century. Their purpose was twofold: to entice the customer to purchase the product, and to keep the contents as fresh as possible. Originally the tins were decorated with printed paper labels glued to the outside. Later, transfer decorations were used.

Offset lithography developed in 1870 by the British Firm Barclay and Fry greatly improved the quality of decoration on tin boxes. The new process allowed tins, no matter what their shape, to be decorated with clear, crisp-colored designs by transferring the desired image from a printing plate to a rubber roller and then to the tin.

Figure 1 is an offset litho tin beer stein which started life as a container for Bristow's toffee. The stein body is banded top and bottom with a grape branch pattern. A similar motif is found on both sides of the handle. The body of the stein is decorated with two scenes. To the right of the handle we find two students linked arm in arm standing on a hilltop overlooking a town. The town is situated on the bank of a river. The students are wearing pillbox hats and sashes. One fellow is leaning on a sword so we can assume they are members of a German student society. The German scroll underneath roughly translated means good old student days.

In figure 2 there is a young man, possibly our sword-carrying student, attired in his Sunday best sitting on the grass with his arm resting on the knee of a very prim and beautiful young lady, to whom he has just presented a bouquet of flowers. There is an open satchel near her feet which probably contains the makings of a picnic lunch. Beneath the scene is a German scroll, which translates to the time: the loveliest time, the most beautiful time. The scroll is anchored to the ground by the lady's walking stick, which has a decorative pink bow at the center.

Figure 3 is the stein lid which has a coat of arms complete with a blank shield and a stylized helmet topped with feathers and grape leaves. Again there is a scroll, in Latin this time, with the words *Gaudeamus igitur*. so let us be joyful, the opening words of a German student song. The verse continues: when we are young. The

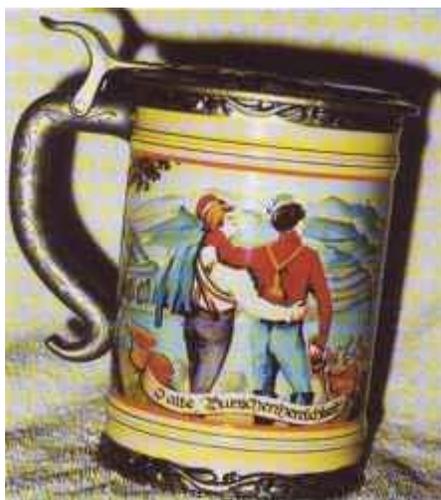


Figure 1.

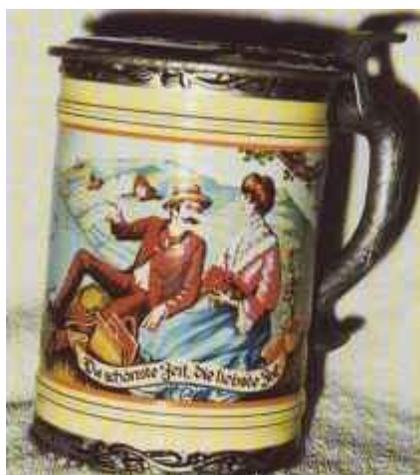


Figure 2.



Figure 3.

expression can also be used to refer to college students partying.

The handle is attached to the body by two rivets offset to the right of the seam. The seam of the joint is partially hidden by a large brown tree.

The bottom of the stein has a bilingual (French and English) paper marked Bristow's Assorted Toffee "Beer Stein" 15 oz net 425G followed by an ingredient list, made in England by Bristows of Devon-Crediton-Devon.

Charles Bristow worked all his life in the confectionery trade. In February 1932, at the age of 66, he opened his business. Bristow's of Devon made butterscotch candy, toffee and fudge. We must admire a man for starting a new career at the age when most people retire.

Bristow's continues today specializing in souvenir gift confectionery which they sell to customers worldwide. Mr. F.R. Bristow, Managing Director of Bristow's of Devon, no longer has records of this toffee stein. However, he thinks it was made by Frick and Nark of Germany. The German consulate could not furnish me with an address for Frick and Nark.

The author would like to thank Mr. F.R. Bristow for his help in making this article possible.

## Bibliography:

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