

# Clear evidence that we love a good glass

**M**OST of the GBBF glassware starts life in Turkey at one of the biggest manufacturers in the world – although some of the glasses you have used over the years may have originated across the Channel in France.

It's sad fact of life that all of the UK based glass manufacturers have fallen victim to globalisation – although Festival Glass, which has printed the colourful designs on GBBF glasses (and many other CAMRA festival glasses) for the last four years is based firmly in Halifax.

Planning for the festival starts early in the year with GBBF organisers choosing which style they'd like.

Graham Cheesbrough from Festival Glass explains: "There are about nine or 10 glass styles for the oversize pint glass – festivals tend to go for the conical 'straight sided' style now as they are much more durable and give more space for logos and designs."

With the glassware chosen, CAMRA then supplies the logo for the GBBF, along with the sponsor's – this year Shepherd Neame is supporting the festival glassware and using it to advertise a new ale... which we're not allowed to mention

*Chances are you're more concerned with filling your GBBF glass with beer, than how it's got to you – but it's surprising how much work goes into that process as Tom Stainer discovers*

yet! (keep your eyes open for more information on this launch)

Festival Glass now faces it's first challenge: getting the logos and colours right.

Graham says: "The way the process works means we can only use five colours. It can be quite

tricky making sure the sponsor's logo and whatever the GBBF version is, both look right with the limited colours.

"Also, people tend to design logos on flat sheets of paper, while a glass is obviously a three-dimensional, curved object – which adds to the fun. Luckily we've got people who have been printing on glasses for more than 20 years and can get their heads round the technical difficulties."

Once the technical stuff has been done and sample glasses printed and sent out to CAMRA and the sponsor for approval, Graham can press the button to start printing the thousands of glasses for the festival.

He adds: "Last year we printed 37,000 pint glasses, 6,500 half pints and 5,000 thirds. Once we set the machines going they run 12 hours a day for around two weeks to get the job done. We can print between 500 and 1,000 glasses an hour.

"The glasses are printed using a fully automated screen printing technique and then go into a glass furnace which slowly heats them to

**“We often get calls from people trying to track down glasses from previous festivals.”**  
**Graham Cheesbrough**

600C to fuse the enamel with the glass."

The best part of the process for Graham however, is arriving at GBBF on the first day.

"I love walking into Earls Court and seeing all the glasses out on the stand for the first time" he says. "It's great to see how drinkers react to seeing them for the first time and how people examine the glass first before going to get a drink.

"It's very satisfying to be involved in GBBF and to see how the glasses become collector's items. The fact GBBF often runs out shows us that people are taking them away with them because they value the glasses – and we often get calls from people trying to track down ones from previous festivals to complete their collection.

"We supply a lot of other CAMRA festivals and the vast majority of them report they're never left with many of the branded glasses either – so people really try to get their hands on them to take home.

"I think a good glass really adds to the enjoyment of beer. Belgian brewers have realised this for a long time and British breweries are beginning to realise it as well. It might be psychological but I certainly think a nice glass really makes beer taste better!"

● Oversize pint and half pint glasses will be available at GBBF this year, along with the popular third pint versions, both in conical and stemmed styles.



## Signs of success

SOME may use AC Nielsen data to judge the state of the real ale market, some might look at the number of small breweries which have sprung up – but for Graham, glasses are showing him how vibrant the sector is.

"The market has absolutely exploded for us recently. It's a really positive sign about the state of things and how many breweries are really marketing their brands well.

"We do a lot of work for SIBA breweries and more and more of them are coming to use asking for branded glasses – not just for the brewery as a whole, but for different glasses for different beers.

"I think it's a clear demonstration of how exciting the market is at the moment .

"I don't believe a struggling brewery will be looking to invest in branded glassware if the market is in the slump that people claim.

"While the big traditional real ale brewers might not be investing in making their brands attractive to drinkers, the smaller and regional operators certainly are making the effort."

**Festival PREVIEW**