



The Gambrinus Gazette

Summer 2010

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NEXT MEETING: August 8, 2010

FELTNER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION MUSEUM IN HISTORIC WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA

by W.R. Barney, President

Our next meeting will be a real treat as I have finally received permission for us to tour the collection of the Feltner Community Foundation in historic Winchester, Virginia! The foundation is a privately-owned museum that is only open to the public six days a year.

First off, we will meet for lunch at Donato's Italian Restaurant. All entrees are \$15.00, which includes home-made bread and house salad, your choice of soft drink, tea, or coffee, and a cannoli for dessert. The restaurant has many imported and domestic beers and wines, which members can pay for separately.

As per usual, social hour begins at noon, followed by lunch and the meeting at 1:00. Then on to the museum, which will be open for us from 2:00 to 4:00. There will be tables available for stein sales at Donatos, but since we will be meeting in two places, you may want to hold down the number of steins you bring due to time constraints. I think you'll find that there is something of interest for everyone at the museum, with steins only being a part of the museum's extensive collection. Inside you'll find the following:

- * About 350 antique beer steins wonderfully sorted and displayed.
- * Over 150 pieces of original art, including paintings by John Chumley and 12 by Mort Kunstler, including "Until We Meet Again"
- * "The War Caisson" - carved in 1886 from the timbers of Ft. Loudoun
- * Antique toy collection (trains, planes, and race cars) as well as 200 antique toy banks
- * 400 antique miniature oil lamps

Please return the reservation form included in the Gazette with your menu selections and check for the lunch to our treasurer Chris Schaefer. Please make sure the form is mailed to arrive **no later than Thursday, August 5**. I thank the owners of the museum, the Feltners, who have been kind enough to take time out of their busy schedule to open it for our club.

- Barney



Winchester, Virginia, is a small city filled with history! Founded in the 1700s, numerous Civil War battles took place in Winchester. A quick getaway from the hustle and bustle of Washington and Baltimore, Winchester features inexpensive but great restaurants and several memorable antique shops!

NEXT GAMBRINUS MEETING: AUGUST 8, 2010

Noon	Social Hour and Stein Sales Donatos Italian Restaurant 229 South Loudoun St. Winchester, Virginia (540) 667-9332
1:00 PM	Lunch and Club Meeting at Donatos
2:00 PM	Museum Tour Feltner Community Foundation Museum 9 Court Square Winchester, Virginia 22601

Two newsletter inserts are included: (1) a map with directions and details and (2) a reservation form.

MAY MEETING MEMORIES:**A DELIGHTFUL DISPLAY OF DIESINGER STEINS**

Ralph Joyce treated over 25 members of the Gambrianus Stein Club to an exceptional presentation and discussion of Diesinger steins at the May 2010 meeting. Ralph, who is also SCI's Vice President for Conventions, bought about 60 Diesinger steins from his home in New Hampshire and provided the lucky Gambrianians in attendance with many tidbits on identifying and collecting these wonderful steins (Figure 2). The discussion also included many handouts that featured pictures and the history of Diesinger steins.

Karl Diesinger established a ceramics factory in Hohr, Bavaria, circa 1860. Sometime around 1900, Adolf Diesinger began managing the company and subsequently applied for and obtained patents for the company's works. Although the Diesinger ceramics company is thought to have been dissolved before 1910, it made hundreds of unique and valuable steins that are today cherished by collectors of antique drinking vessels.

Many Diesinger steins were labeled on the bottom with "DRGM 154927" or, more rarely, "DRGM 250635." DRGM stood for Deutsches Reichs Gebrauchsmuster and denoted items or designs that were legally protected by patents issued by the German Empire. Ralph told the assembled Gambrianians that our very own Stephen Lee Smith was the first to discover the meaning of the DRGM mark by researching with the Berlin Patent Office. The August 1973 issue of *Prosit* included Stephen's article entitled "Mystery Mark Explained," which identified the mark as a patent number issued to Adolf Diesinger in April 1901. The DRGM 154927 patent was applied to items that were machined "to the exact and sharp demarcation of colors on porcelain, ceramic, and majolica... consisting of a hand-worked relief of all figures and decorative representation." This means that the Diesinger steins that have this mark were generally crafted, reliefs and all, by the same piece of clay.

The second patent mark, DRGM 260635, was provided to Diesinger to protect the method by which the lid of the stein was attached to the body (Figure 3). The lower hinge was crafted as part of the stoneware. These steins therefore do not have a pewter strap around the handle to attach the lid. Ralph said that these steins are relatively rare, probably because using stoneware as a joint makes these steins very fragile at the lid attachment.

Not all Diesinger steins include the factory patent marks. Some Diesingers have an oval stamp on the bottom that says "A. Diesinger, Majolika-Fabrik, Hohr" (Figure 5) while others have a pewter tang stamp indicating "A.D.-H" (Figure 1). Many Diesinger steins are not labeled at all but Ralph explained that there are a number of ways to determine whether a stein is probably a Diesinger.



Figure 1. Ralph Joyce showing members how to find the "A.D.-H." mark on the tang of a Diesinger stein.

Diesinger designs are distinctive foremost, and once one knows what to look for, it becomes easier to recognize a stein as a Diesinger. First, Diesinger steins are normally highly decorated and made out of cream-colored clay. Second, Diesinger stein handles are almost always stylized and many have a snake-like motif. There are approximately 22 documented handle styles that were used by the Diesinger factory. Third, several types of Diesinger steins have threaded reliefs and include stippling that looks like raised bumps. Quite often, Diesinger stippling can also be finished with gold highlights or gold squiggles (Figure 4). Lastly, many Diesinger steins feature rows of beading near the top and bottom of the body of the stein, and repetitive, rococo-styled reliefs.

As was evident from the presentation, Diesinger steins are very interesting and fun to collect. The Diesinger factory produced a number of products that are sought after by today's collectors, including: colorful character steins, souvenir steins, castle tower steins, children-sized steins, and steins that feature dwarfs and gnomes. In all, there are a wide variety of high-relief styles and colors, many of which were on hand for examination by club members. Prices for master Diesinger steins can be very expensive, but many 0.5L and 1L steins, especially certain commemorative steins, are available at affordable prices.

Do you have an article you would like published in future editions of *The Gambrianus Gazette*? If so, please e-mail the article to the editor at GambrianusDC@gmail.com!



Figure 2. The exceptional coloring and craftsmanship distinctive of Diesinger steins was made evident by the steins Ralph Joyce brought to the May 2010 meeting in Gaithersburg, Maryland.



Figure 3. Golly gee, is this a stein sale table? Ralph highlighted many of these Diesinger character steins during his presentation to the Gambrinus Stein Club.



Figure 3. An example of a Diesinger stoneware hindge stein that merited the DRGM 260635 mark.



Figure 4. A close view of "gold squiggles" that can be helpful to identify whether a stein is a Diesinger.



Figure 5. The oval stamp denoting "A. Diesinger, Majolika-Fabrik, Höhr," which appears on the bottom of some Diesingers. Photo Credit: www.steinmarks.uk.co.



Figure 6. Five examples of souvenir steins that were a speciality of the Diesinger factory.



Figure 7. These two Diesingers feature the same type of gnome relief but have different body shapes, coloring, and lids

SECRETARY'S MINUTES

The Gambrinus Stein Club convened on May 16, 2010 at O'Donnell's seafood restaurant in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Even though the meeting did not include a competitive drinking contest, members present can testify we collectively racked up quite a bar tab while enjoying the sale tables, discussing steins, and looking forward to the upcoming Myrtle Beach stein convention in September!

President W.R. Barney convened a brief business meeting following Mr. Joyce's presentation. Barney started the meeting by taking nominations for two SCI awards. The first award up for chapter nomination was the Jack Heimann Service Award, named after the first president and former Executive Secretary of SCI and editor of *Prosit*. The award is given to recognize exceptional service to SCI. Judy Stuart nominated our founding member Stephen Lee Smith for the award, which was seconded by the members present. Judy and John Manning agreed to work together to draft the award nomination for Barney's review.

The next award up for nomination was for Master Steinologist. Barney nominated Chris Wheeler, who compiled the informative and exceptional website www.steinmarks.co.uk to assist stein collectors across the globe. The site features pictures and descriptions of hundreds, if not thousands, of different stein marks. The site is free to anyone and fills a very necessary void for stein enthusiasts in the digital age. All members present seconded Mr. Wheeler's nomination and Barney was to work up and submit the nomination.

The next item on the agenda was Gambrinus's selection to host the 2012 SCI convention. We were lucky to have on hand SCI's vice president for conventions, Ralph Joyce, who provided Gambrinians with a briefing on the things to consider when selecting the hotel and hosting a convention.



Figure 8. Judy Stuart presents a clear-but-almost-certainly Theresienthal glass stein. The stein featured a newly added thaler coin thumblift.

Mr. Joyce, who is currently busy putting together the finishing touches for the 2011 SCI Convention in Providence, Rhode Island, offered some insights on these topics. Members discussed whether the Gambrinus-hosted convention should be held in Reston, Virginia, which had a very affordable hotel with ample parking, or in Baltimore's Inner Harbor, which featured more activities but the hotel prices were a little higher and parking was not as available.

Member "Show-and-Tell" was also in full blossom. Dick Strom presented a recent find – a glass stein with a relatively unique inlay lid (Figure 9). The lid featured people of various ethnic groups accompanied by armed French soldiers in a tropical or safari environment. Members descriptively commented that the inlay presented what could be called an excellent example of "colonial multiculturalism." Next, Judy Stuart presented a clear glass, but probably-almost-certainly Theresienthal piece that featured a silver lid with embedded Austrian thaler coins (Figure 8). Judy had found a larger denomination thaler coin and had a jeweler affix the coin to the stein as a thumblift. Everyone enviously agreed that the thumblift made it quite an exceptional piece!

In the spirit of the day, Dennis Hunsicker brought a master Diesinger stein that he recently purchased from another Gambrinian, and Barney also brought in two Diesinger character steins – a 0.25L clown stein and an even tinier kinderkrug (also in the form of a clown). These steins served to compliment Ralph Joyce's extensive and intriguing collection.

Barney then offered a preview of the Gambrinus's next gathering in Winchester, Virginia on August 8, 2010. Details for this meeting are included on the first page of this newsletter.



Prosit!



Figure 9. Dick Strom shows the membership the details of a glass stein that all agreed had quite an interesting and colorful inlay lid.

ACCESSING THE SCI WEBSITE

The SCI Website, www.steincollectors.org, has been revamped in the past year. Reports are that some SCI members in good standing have had problems connecting to the "Member's Only" area.

If you have had problems connecting to the "Member's Only" section, fear not! Simply contact John Piet, Director of Internet Activities, at sci@steincollectors.org. Editor's note: I have contacted Mr. Piet for SCI website assistance and he is very responsive and helpful!

SCI CONVENTION MYRTLE BEACH, SC SEPT. 9-11, 2010

Look for a detailed convention report in the March issue of *Prosit*. Those who wish to register early may do so and save money. The Hilton Hotel is offering a special room rate of \$119 per night plus tax. Register by July 31 to guarantee a hotel room! For more information on the convention, contact John Kelly at johnlacykelly@embarqmail.com or call him days at 919-831-3642.

FEATURE PHOTOS

MORE OF RALPH JOYCE'S DIESINGER STEINS



Figure 10. The largest Diesinger of the day was this one-of-a-kind master stein that featured birds with a threaded relief.



Figure 11. This liter stein provided another exceptional example of Diesinger's threaded relief technique.



DUES DUES DUES

Gambrinus Stein Club dues are \$10.00 per year or \$25.00 for three years. If you have not yet paid your dues, please send a check payable to Gambrinus Stein Club to our treasurer, **Chris Schaefer**,

THIS JUST IN...

SCI WEBMASTER CHALLENGE

John Piet, the SCI Webmaster, has issued a challenge to individual chapters and members to contribute entries for "Stein of the Month," which is featured on the SCI home page, www.steincollectors.org. It is hard to think of an easier or better way to feature items from your individual collection and politely "show off" your finds! Unfortunately true to form, Gambrinians have not been quick to submit "Stein-of-the-Month" entries to SCI, even though we all have beautiful, unique, and interesting steins that we love to show to each other.

"Stein-of-the-Month" Submissions do not have to be literary masterpieces. All that is required is a nice picture or two and a paragraph that describes the stein, its history and background. Please email "Stein-of-the-Month" entries to the SCI Webmaster at the following email address: sci@steincollectors.org.

GAMBRINUS STEIN CLUB MEETING CALENDAR

DON'T MISS A THING!

ALWAYS BE SURE TO ATTEND THE NEXT GATHERING OF THE GAMBRINUS STEIN CLUB!

August 8, 2010	Donatos Restaurant 229 South Loudoun St. Winchester, Virginia
November 14, 2010	Details Forthcoming!
February 13, 2011	Seven Seas Restaurant Rockville, MD
May 15, 2010	Details Forthcoming!

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