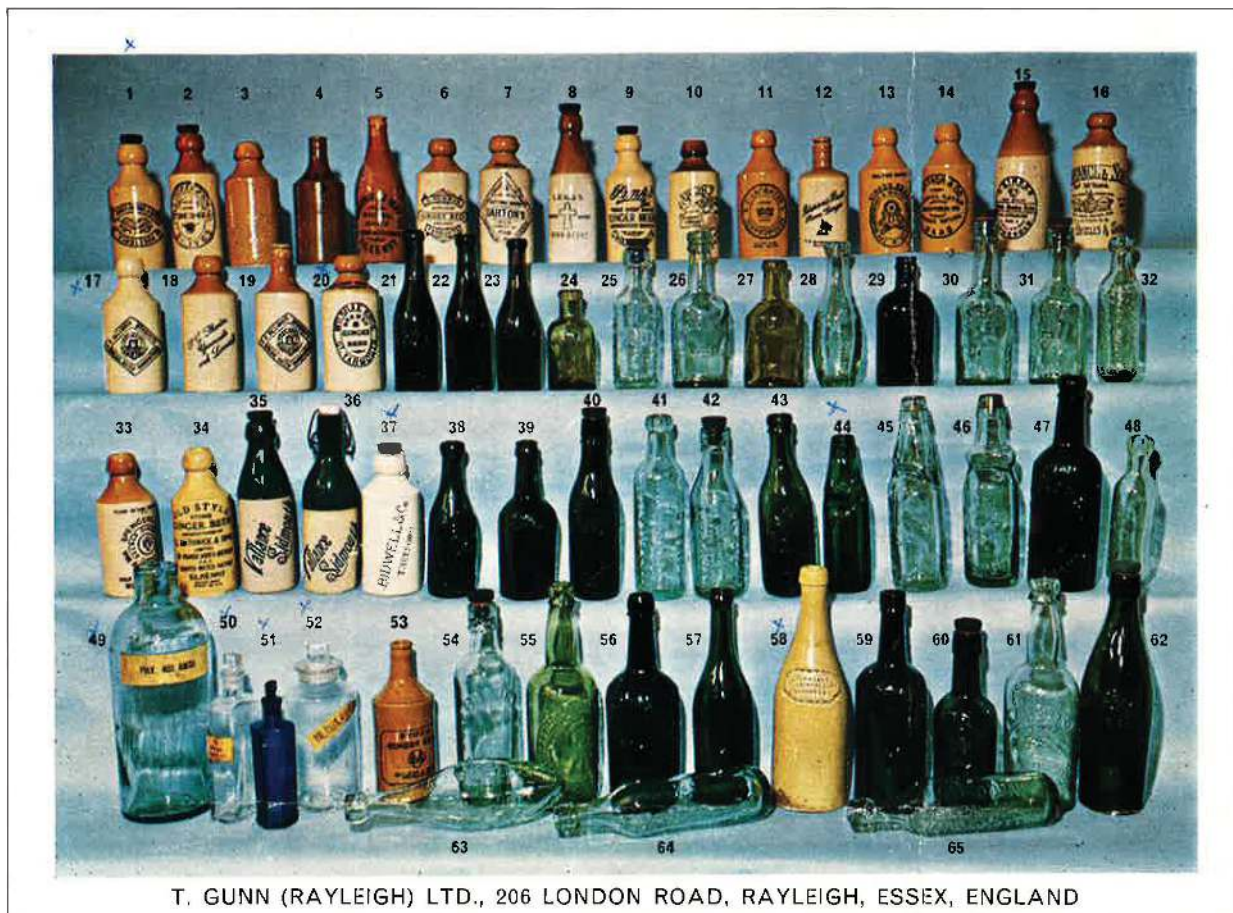


How many remember T. Gunn?

By
Bill Baab



T. Gunn's British Bottles for Sale. Numbers corresponded with those on his price list. (Courtesy of Bill Baab)

Stenciled ginger beers, embossed Codd bottles, black glass ales, "quack" medicines, all from the United Kingdom and all for sale – cheap compared to today's prices.

They were for sale by T. (For Thomas) Gunn (Rayleigh) Ltd., 206 London Road, Rayleigh, Essex, England. His advertisements appeared in *Old Bottle Magazine* during the early 1970s.

So I sent him a letter asking him to provide photos, better descriptions and prices wanted. I received a letter from him dated 28th January 1970 and that included a price list and a full-color card showing some of the containers.

"Dear Sir: Many thanks for your letter of the 23rd inst(ant) and I have pleasure in sending you herein a list and illustration," his letter began. "I am most grateful to you for the copy of *The Glass Eye*. (I had sent him a copy of our Georgia-Carolina Empty Bottle Club newsletter). I like reading these American bottle sheets, they are so full of humour and help get British readers' minds away from Mr. Wilson's paradise for a few moments. (Wilson was Prime Minister).

"I have never heard of a bottle collectors club in this country and only know of one collector. I fear that this is a hobby that has not taken on here yet. I believe people here and there are beginning to show just a little interest because they read of the popularity of it in the U.S.A."

Excerpts from his price list:

"Kindly note that all the glass pop and beer bottles have hand-applied lips and all of the bottles are in perfect condition. . . Many of the bottles have interior screw lips and these will be easily identified by the screws shown in the illustration (the stoppers are not as old as the bottles). . . Some have no embossing, but do have attractive paper labels affixed. . . the Codd bottles have glass marble closures. . . some have pointed bottoms (Hamiltons or torpedoes), others have round bottoms (aerated waters and ginger ales) and at least one has a semi-round bottom and stands up with difficulty. . . All the pottery ginger beers are priced at \$3 each. . . We also have some old wooden Codd openers (used for pushing the marble closure into the bottle) at \$1 each."

None of Gunn's prices exceeded \$12 with some \$2.50 and \$2 in U.S. dollars. Gunn also paid the cost of packing and postage. He also gave a 10% discount on orders of six or more bottles.

So, did I order a bunch? No. I decided I wasn't interested in collecting British bottles when it was all I could do to keep up with what I was collecting in Georgia. I do sometimes wish I could have ordered a couple of those Codd's, in particular the black glass example shown as No. 44 in the photo.

Whatever happened to T. Gunn? Does anyone remember?

