

# Sealed With A Kiss

## the Best Antique Fair Bottle Find EVER?

**You simply couldn't write this incredible story, in fact it never ceases to amaze me how some folks think we do actually make some tales up, as if. But this has to be one of the best EVER... and could certainly be one that goes into the record books and is reiterated worldwide come July?**

Barnsley born Steve Williams works very hard in standing at all four Elsecar Bottle Shows, several local area Antique Fairs, Car Boots and the like, plus he has a well stocked unit at Barnsley Antiques Centre (*always worth a visit*).

I never ever fault folks who put in the hard work to make a few bob to help buy items for their own collection - and Steve is an absolute classic case who does just that.

This particular heartwarming story began on April the 2nd, not quite an April Fools joke, when Steve stood at the regular, very well established, Doncaster Antiques Fair in the wonderful Racecourse stand.

Quite late on in the day another stallholder asked Steve if he would like to buy off him a reproduction sealed shaft and globe dark glass wine bottle, "I purchased it 10 years ago for thirty quid and would be happy to just get my money back for it."

Steve said he'd had a good day so would buy it and take the item out of circulation so nobody could be fooled or conned into buying something that clearly wasn't what it seemed - a very noble gesture, but, that's Steve down to the ground. He told us "I don't really know about early stuff like this, so took it off his hands." He's a grand example of a humble straight talking, down to earth, Northerner, and that's not just blagging him or building him up unduly. He is, as folks say, "a good egg!"

He posted some images on Facebook and it virtually took off, not quite going viral, but everyone was giving their opinion about what he believed was not a right one, many asked for better images etc. The one thing that threw most onlookers was the unusual really chunky/very thick lip and string rim.

Steve came through to BBR the next day and I have to admit the top section really threw me - but the base wear, crude pontil, the crisply struck seal were far too convincing for it to be a copy. I took some close ups, sent them to David Walker Barker and he was quick to pop round to see Steve and give it a proper close up investigation, and came to the conclusion it really was a truly outstanding well crafted example of 17th c. origin.

Not surprisingly Steve was inundated with enquiries to sell it, several tempting offers were made, some by real "blasts from the past" but the day before the April Elsecar Spring show he carried the empty in (*inside a carrier bag*) and consigned it to the July SummerNational on Sunday for all to enjoy. Do we make it lot number 1, or the last lot?

I suspect it might even make an appearance on this years BBR t shirt as well - watch this space, and a few videos and cameras will be at the ready as it comes up on the rostrum on the Sunday afternoon.

Guesstimates on value must be made comparing it to the only similar 'chunky lipped' sealed shaft and globe which sold for £21,250 at Sotheby's in 2014, but, as John Ault point out that bottle was dated 1686 - Steves receptacle is slightly earlier?

If you can't make the show listen in live on: [easyliveauction.com](http://easyliveauction.com)

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**Above:** An astonished Steve said "Things like this don't happen to folks like us!"

**Right:** the bottle in all its glory!



**Above & right:** Close up of the detailed and crisply struck seal, the thick lip & string rim with attractive neck striations, and the sharp base pontil, with lovely stippled surrounding glass finish.

**Right:** As near an example as we could find to Steve's bottle is this wonderful piece sold by Sotheby's (?), London New Bond Street, on 12 November 2014 in their Fine British Glass Auction for £21,250 inc. premium:

**Lot 1.** A rare sealed shaft and globe onion wine bottle, the seal carrying the initials 'TL' and below the date '1686.' This bottle used to belong to Geoffrey Wills (*his pen name*) the famous author of Antiques books. On Facebook John Ault was quick to note "and Steve's is earlier?"

