

Brewing Stories

INTERVIEWEE	Christine Hooper
DATE OF BIRTH	1957
PARENTS OCCUPATIONS	Father was a market porter in Brentford market. Mother worked at Cherry Blossom.
Interview Location	Boardroom at Griffin Brewery
Interviewer: Chris Kaufman.	Summariser: John Maguire.

Christine started work at the brewery in 1975, and has been there until the present day.

Christine was born in Shepherd's Bush. Fullers was her second job. Her first job was with the DHSS and lasted 1 week. She started at the Brewery as an office junior. Her current role is as Hock Cellar and Tour Guide Administrator. She remembers that when she got to her 18th birthday her pay was re-rated as an adult, and when she got to 21 she was given a bottle of champagne by the company.

Her impressions of her first day were the "surprising" language of the Draymen in and around the office. She was given a pencil and a ruler to make entries into the stock ledgers, but not a rubber. Errors had to be erased with a razor blade. Most of the order processing work was done in the morning. The afternoons were a more relaxed, social time. As a local girl, she knew people who worked at Fullers, some were friends of her parents, and she quickly settled in. In the early days there were around 400 workers at the site, mostly men. There was an active sports and social scene, where the brewery competed with other brewers through the London Brewers association. Christine did not go on any of the day trips, but she told a story about a coach trip for the Draymen where one of the wheels came off the coach.

There were, and still are, instances where marriages were made at the site. It was once known as the marriage agency. Historically the Griffin has also been a place of employment for families – one family clocked up around 250 years service, although this is less prevalent now, with fewer local people working at the site. When asked what the key difference in the office was now, she said there were lots more accountants and lots more job titles.

When asked about memorable people she worked with she mentioned Bill Berler – the Security Guard. Bill was also the site first aider, and was heavily involved in making some of the competitive events with other Breweries happen. He had a skeleton in his office (as first aiders do), as a prank Christine dressed the skeleton up in Bill's dress uniform.

Christine is proud to have worked for a family firm like Fullers, and proud of the fact that the company now exports to 80 countries. When asked to describe the smells, sounds, sights and sense of the brewery when going to work each day she talked about the smell of malt and mash, the rattle of bottles, the yelling and swearing, the sight of the Wisteria in bloom, and the love that pervaded the site.

This is a fond recollection from someone who enjoyed her career.