



Breaches of Malting Regulations 1803-1812

Malting is a process that has traditionally taken place across England for centuries, with most villages having a malthouse which supplied malt for beer for local inns and beer houses. A malt tax was introduced in 1697 and was repealed in 1880.

In 1802, the Malt Tax was increased significantly, due to the need to finance the Wars with France between 1793-1815. In 1789 the malt tax raised one million pounds, and by 1865, total revenue was reported to be six million pounds a year.

There were many regulations in place regarding the malting process. The cistern and the couch-frame had to be constructed in a particular manner, to permit the excise officer to gauge the grain. The maltster had to give notice before wetting any grain; 24 hours in the city or market-

©Wiltshire OPC Project/2022/Maureen Withey

town, 48 hours elsewhere. The grain had to be kept covered with water for 48 hours, excepting one hour for changing the water. Grain could only be put in the cistern between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. and taken out between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. It had to remain in the couch frame for at least 26 hours. Once thrown out of the cistern, it could not be sprinkled for 12 days. A survey book or ledger had to be kept to record the process and the gauging of the grain in the cistern, the couch, and on the floor. The volume of the grain was carefully measured, based upon the mean width, length and height, and calculated by mental arithmetic, pen and paper, or slide rule. The duty to be charged was based upon the largest gauge of either the cistern, couch or floor after a multiplying factor of 1.6 was applied to the larger of the cistern or couch gauges.

Breaches to these regulations were punished by fines and increases in the annual licences for maltsters.

In 1829, the House of Commons published a list of Maltsters across the country, who had breached the malting regulations between the years 1802-1813, together with a list of the regulations breached and the fines imposed, in “**Accounts and Papers, Vol. XVIII.**”

Before the Magistrates for Breaches of the Excise Law

Period				Person Convicted		Residence	Nature of Offence	Division or Ride	Charge for License		
From		To		Surname	Given Names				£	s.	d.
Year	Date	Year	Date								
1805	05-Jul	1806	05-Jul	Marlen	Daniel	Allington	Wetting grain on the floor before the expiration of twelve days.	Ride	0	15	0