

WHAT HAS BEER DONE FOR US?

You'd be surprised – beer is responsible for scientific discoveries, breakthroughs in modern medicine... and perhaps the very start of civilization itself...

AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION

Beer is thought to be a key motivator for the Agricultural Revolution, also known as the Neolithic Revolution.

Before the Agricultural Revolution humans were hunter gatherers and acquired food by hunting wild animals and gathering wild plants. Then, the way humans had lived their lives since their evolution began to change. Traditional hunter-gatherer lifestyles were swept aside in favor of cultivating crops, domesticating animals and establishing permanent settlements.

Some scientists believe that wild barley was domesticated in 9,000 BC because it was being used to make beer.

Why beer?

At a time when getting enough food was, literally, a matter of life or death, beer provided valuable nutrition and decreased harmful compounds.

PRIMITIVE CURRENCY

Beer was a crucial part of ancient economies. One of the earliest forms of writing, cuneiform script, had scores of symbols relating to beer such as types of beer, beer vessels, beer production, beer as wages, beer as reward and entitlement to beer.

The Egyptians

Egyptian workers who toiled to build the pyramids were paid with large quantities of beer, although it seems likely that the beer had the consistency of soup, rather than being the clear liquid that we enjoy today.

THE MIDDLE AGES

The standard drink in all but the poorest households was 'small' beer, a low-alcohol homebrew that was drunk even by children as an alternative to water, which was often far from clean. Even low levels of alcohol kill off most water-borne pathogens and so beer helped keep our mediaeval ancestors alive.

THE DISCOVERY OF BACTERIA

In the mid-nineteenth century, mm's studies into what caused beer and wine to spoil led him to identify bacteria, a previously unknown microscopic life form. His ground-breaking book, *Études sur la Bière* (Studies in beer), published in 1876 and rapidly translated into English, transformed the beer industry.

MASS PRODUCTION

A decade before Henry Ford's famous assembly lines, Michael Owens, the inventor in 1903 of the Automatic Bottle Machine, revolutionized America's glass industry with its prodigious production rate of 240 bottles a minute.

Bottles

And what sort of bottles did it turn out? Beer bottles, of course.

