

LIFESTYLES TODAY

Today Editor Barbara Taylor 667-5468 btaylor@lfpres.com www.canoe.ca/LondonToday/home.html

Health Tip Of The Week
 Set behavior goals rather than weight goals. Often setting a goal of 1-2 pounds per week although healthy may not be realistic for you. Instead, set a few small behaviour goals such as: having breakfast, walking 30 min each or eating fewer sweets. You will attain your weight goals as you slowly move toward a healthier lifestyle.
 JANE COULSON — STAFF WRITER

The bare facts

Calendar Girls film tells of women who took it all off for charity. D3

Magic carpets

Storyteller Robert Munsch says books let us find the worlds we want. D6

section D

Gin brought first modern drug crisis

MARILYN LINTON



YOUR HEALTH

No matter how blotto, drunk, corked, hammered, loaded, pie-eyed, stewed, tanked or tipsy you were on New Year's Eve, your three sheets to the wind can't compare to the state of the pickled populace of Britain during the 1730s.

The story of Jane Andrews, a housemaid, is typical: After work, she visited a gin shop, hooked up with three other people and invited them back to her place of work, where they went on drinking rotgut gin for five hours before all piling into bed together.

The boozing history of 18th-century England has been painstakingly uncovered and entertainingly reported in a much-praised book by Toronto researcher Dr. Jessica Warner, who specializes in the history of alcohol. The book, *Craze*, is about individual and public health during some of Britain's worst industrial revolution years, but it's been deliciously described as "social history at its gimlet-eyed best."

Months before I read her book, I'd heard her talk about 18th-century gin at an event sponsored by the Toronto Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, where she works. She argues that gin gave rise to the first modern drug problem.

Given how booze today is such an accepted part of culture (it's seen as stylish and sophisticated and a couple of drinks a day are even said to be advisable to protect against heart disease), it's astounding to learn the dark side of gin's history and how destructive it was to mighty England.

As a society, we're quick to assume that if we just remove a particular harmful substance — gin, crack or cocaine — all the other problems associated with it will go away.

Of course people had always drunk alcohol, and some to excess, but when gin suddenly became both cheap and widely available, it quickly became the drug of choice for the urban poor. The effects were detailed by writers such as Henry Fielding and artists such as William Hogarth. Hogarth depicted the tragedy of the times in *Gin Lane*, his drawing of a London street where misery is everywhere and a baby falls to its death from the arms of its gin-addled mother.

Warner makes the point that unlike beer and ale, which for centuries had been the drink of the poor and was lower in alcohol content than spirits, gin was a sledgehammer.

"People knew how to handle their beer, but they would drink a pint of gin thinking it comparable to a pint of beer, so it caused very serious public health problems," Warner says. They drank in ignorance, some of them sinking into madness, others dying on the spot.

"It didn't occur to anyone then to abstain from liquor, whereas in our society many people drink just occasionally," she says. "Today, there is a range of acceptable behaviours around alcohol, whereas in the 18th century it was merely assumed that women, men and even children would drink."

In 1736, there were 120,000 gin shops in England — one for every 10 households — and countless street hawkers selling the stuff. There was no established police force; the governing class hired informers to enforce Gin Acts designed to limit gin's sales to a manageable number of licensed establishments.

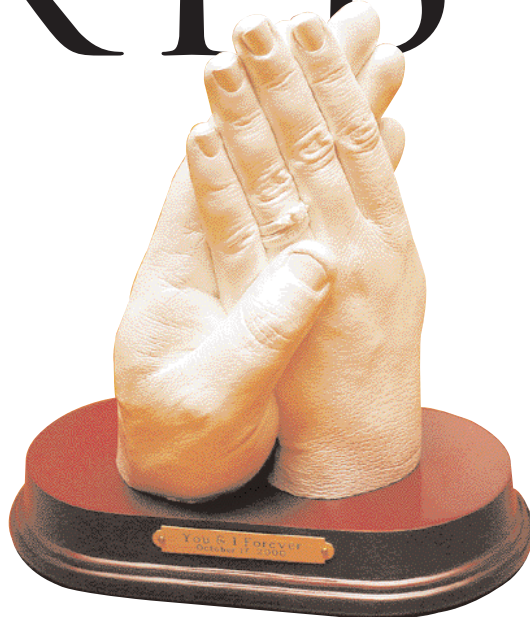
"The social conservatives who took on gin did not address the other issues such as overcrowding, poor sanitation, inadequate wages, malnutrition," Warner says. "It's not unlike today, where a great deal of emphasis is placed on mothers using crack cocaine. Of course it's a bad thing, but the larger public health issues, like their lack of prenatal care, are never addressed."

As a society, she says, we're quick to assume that if we just remove a particular harmful substance — gin, crack or cocaine — all the other problems associated with it will go away.

"It's a convenient argument if you are not prepared to spend money on social problems."

Marilyn Linton is a health editor with Sun Media Newspapers.

A FORM OF TRIBUTE



MORRIS LAMONT The London Free Press
MEMENTO: A casting of an engaged couple's clasped hands can show even such fine details as the ring's engraving.

Body castings — anything from babies' feet to pets' paws to whole bodies — can mark a special event, commemorate a relationship or just remind yourself 30 years from now how good you looked.



MORRIS LAMONT The London Free Press
CHILDHOOD RECORD: Kim Raymond opened a local franchise of Wee Piggies and Paws, a company that makes impressions and castings of hands and feet, after having had a set created for her son Tyler, now 21 months old.

BY SANDRA COULSON
 Free Press Lifestyles Reporter

The bronzed baby boot is getting the boot.

In the memento market, castings now come in all shapes and sizes. The newest trend is to make body castings.

Anything from pudgy baby hands to sensual adult torsos is possible.

"One of the things I really enjoy about doing this is the model's response: 'I really don't look that bad,'" says Stephen Ord, who runs a company called Lifeforms out of his London home.

"They're so personal and they just bring so much joy," says Kim Raymond, who runs a similar business, Wee Piggies and Paws, from her home in Union, south of St. Thomas.

A framed, bronzed plaque with the hand prints and footprints of a baby is her most popular product.

"It's such as joy to have a customer pick up something I make for them and they tear up," she says.

She also casts the hands of engaged couples, the hand of an athlete to commemorate a milestone and the paw prints of pets.

She once turned down a request to cast a body part she thought was in poor taste, telling the customer hers is a family-oriented business.

Ord says he does a lot of castings for people who are going through "life-challenging" times.

One was a liver transplant recipi-

ent. Another was a girl with spina bifida who had a cast made of her strong upper body and a mermaid tail formed for the statue's lower half because she loves to swim.

He's done castings of the torsos of pregnant women and body builders.

His most popular piece is the "O Pear Girl," a pear-shaped casting of a woman's lower back and buttocks finished in the colours of real pears. He does these for individuals, but also makes multiple copies from paid models for sale in galleries.

He has occasionally cast children's hands and feet, but most of his works are adult nudes. Ord says customers often say, "Thanks for taking me a little bit out of my comfort zone." But he, too, has turned down requests to do castings he thought were sexually explicit.

Ord does his castings in three layers, starting with a gel and adding gauze to protect customers' skin. He then covers the gauze with a pudding-like plaster used in the special-effects industry. It hardens in anywhere from 15 minutes for a hand to 50 minutes for a torso.

Wee Piggies' impressions are made by having the customer place a hand or foot in a moulding compound. Raymond then uses the mould to make a three-dimensional reproduction.

For her statuettes, the customer's hand is placed in a liquid that sets to rubber in 60 seconds. Raymond then uses the cavity as a mould.

Polishing, sealing and coating can take a few weeks after a cast is made.

With both Lifeforms and Wee Piggies, details picked up by the cast — including skin pores and ring engravings — emphasize the individuality of each piece.

Raymond bought the Wee Piggies franchise for the London area this year. She first heard of it two years ago when her husband saw an ad for the franchise in St. Catharines — where the family was visiting — and suggested they have impressions made of their then-newborn son Tyler.

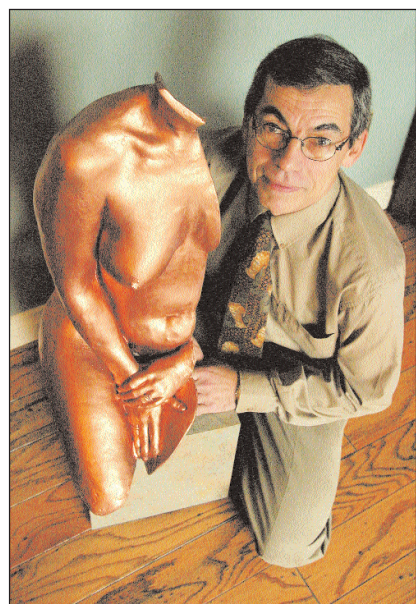
Raymond operates the business part-time, retaining her full-time job in payroll and benefits at a St. Thomas manufacturer.

Ord also runs his business part-time. Trained as a botanist, he works full-time as a systems analyst at a London financial institution.

"It came about because I wanted to take a (non-credit) course at Fanshawe. I wanted something totally different," he says.

He signed up for sculpture and took along his wife Pat as his model. The instructor had expected students to have an object, not a person, as their model, but she gamely went ahead teaching Ord.

Ord charges anywhere from \$145 to \$650 for his body castings; Raymond's charges range from \$45 to \$60 for impressions and from \$130 to \$180 for statuettes.



SUSAN BRADNAM The London Free Press
SECOND SKIN: Stephen Ord shows one of his recent castings, with a copper veneer, of a live model at his company, Lifeforms.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- ▶ Lifeforms: 471-1327 or <http://members.rogers.com/lifeforms>
- ▶ Wee Piggies & Paws: 631-4438 or www.weepiggies.com

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