

## **Robin Hood Beer & Cider Festival – Nottingham Castle**

### **ADMISSIONS, ADVANCE TICKETS & PAY ON THE GATE**

Since Nottingham's annual Beer Festival moved to the Castle in 2008 attendances have increased considerably every year, meaning that the grounds are at capacity at peak periods. This is despite us adding more and more covered areas to increase capacity further, in 2014 we added a further marquee for customer seating down in the bandstand area and this will continue to be available this year (2016).

The castle and its grounds are an ancient monument, which is owned and operated by the city council, and understandably they are concerned that attendances should not exceed comfortable and safe levels. It was insisted that we should sell advance tickets some years ago to ensure that we are able to manage and control numbers more satisfactorily but the sessions are **NOT ALL TICKET**, allowing us to admit some pay on the gate customers on each day. However the actual number we are able to allow in is dependent on the weather, as when it is wet the marquees tend to become more crowded.

As well as regulating numbers to allow for changes in the weather, paying on the gate is permitted because customers with advance tickets, allowing them all day access, may not arrive until later, early evening on Friday and Saturday afternoons being the busiest periods, and so this allows us to permit cash payers in at other times to fill the resultant spaces. Saturday evening after about 7.30 pm is a good example, when the afternoon peak of customers reduces and we are able to allow a good number of cash payers in at discounted rates.

**Important note:** No pass-outs are permitted and you receive no tickets when you pay at the gate, just your glass and tokens. So it is not possible to queue up early to get a ticket and then leave and return later.

*So when are the best and least favourable times to attempt entry without an advance ticket?*

**Wednesday Evening.** - There is usually plenty of space and you are virtually guaranteed to get in. All of the bars and stalls are open and there is a full programme of entertainment. Some people feel this is the best session to attend.

**Thursday** – Whilst Thursday's are becoming increasingly popular we have yet to see a situation where attendances have reached capacity, although Thursday evening gets pleasantly busy. Pay on the gate admissions are therefore unlikely to be limited.

**Friday** - The Friday session usually fills up gradually during the afternoon and by early evening we are often close to capacity. The earlier you arrive the better your chances of being able to pay on the gate, but once we reach capacity it is "one in" "one out" with queues possible. In 2015 we never reached the position where queues formed and all would-be cash payers gained admission, although all years are different. **There is a significant discount for Friday cash payers for 2016.**

**Saturday** - Customers tend to arrive and queue before opening time on a Saturday. By early afternoon it is sometimes necessary to operate a one in one out system but in 2015 all would-be cash payers gained admission. **There is a significant discount for Saturday cash payers for 2016.** Once we reach the early evening, customers from the very busy afternoon period start to drift home and there is usually plenty of space for cash payers to enter. **Cash admission is discounted to £10 after 7.30pm on Saturday evening.** There is always a vast selection of beers and ciders available throughout Saturday evening, as well as live entertainment, and despite the long-standing urban myth **we never run out!**