



Archive Fact Sheet: W. S. Gosset and Student's T-Test



W.S. Gosset GDB/CO13/0015.26

William Sealy Gosset, the statistician and scientist known as 'Student' was born in 1876. His father was Colonel Frederic Gosset, R.E. The Gossets were an old Huguenot family.

William Sealy Gosset was a Scholar of Winchester and later a Scholar at New College Oxford, where he obtained First Classes in Mathematical Moderations and in Natural Science.

He joined the Guinness Brewery on 1 October 1899 as a junior brewer. He was appointed Brewer in charge of the newly established experimental brewery in 1907 and later established the statistical department, which he ran until 1936. He then transferred to the newly opened Guinness Brewery in Park Royal, London - the first Guinness Brewery to be built outside Dublin. At Park Royal, he took up the position of Head Brewer in 1936 until his death the following year (16 October 1937).

It was while he was working at the Guinness Brewery, that he devised Student's T-test. In his work with barley research, Gosset had to draw conclusions from the analysis of relatively small sample sizes. He introduced a new mathematical approach to the subject which laid the foundations for all later statistical techniques.

**If you have any further questions about the history of Guinness please contact us at: Guinness Archive, GUINNESS STOREHOUSE®, St. James's Gate, Dublin 8
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As per Brewery regulations at the time, he was not encouraged to publish his findings under his own name, therefore he adopted the pseudonym, A Student. Gosset's initial work was published as a paper in 'Biometrika' in 1908. C.D. LaTouche, the Managing Director of Guinness at the time decided that publications should be made without the Brewer's name appearing and it was LaTouche who suggested 'Student' or 'Pupil' as a pseudonym.

The Guinness Brewery at the end of the 19th century had begun developing the area of scientific brewing. In 1893, T.B. Case was appointed - Case held a first-class degree in Chemistry from Oxford and subsequent brewers at Guinness all held degrees from Oxford or Cambridge. Alexander Forbes Watson, another chemist, was responsible for establishing the first brewers' laboratory. An Experimental Brewery and Experimental Maltings were established in the first years of the 20th century. It was within this scientific and research based working environment that Gosset worked.

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