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Scottish Brewing



Archive



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Aiming for Alloa's ales ...



SCOTTISH BREWING ARCHIVE JOURNAL

Volume 7

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Opening Hours

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A special thanks to all contributors, and to Iain Russell for his invaluable help.

SBA Open Day

Friday 17 November 2006

4pm - 6.30pm

Guest speaker 5.15pm.

Seminar room at the Archives in Thurso St, Glasgow

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Editorial

History Is Alive

History is more than documents. It is about people and what they thought and did, and about the legacy they have left us.

History is also more than the people who lived it. It also needs people - researchers, writers, speakers - who find something of the lives of their predecessors and their enterprises in archives. It then takes other people who are interested enough in who and what have gone before to hear and read those stories. And it takes people to gather and protect those archives for other people who are yet to come.

However, there is more to it even than that, for history is not just about the past. It is alive right now, much of it in the memories of people who have experiences to tell, if only we ask them. History is also alive in another sense, in that it is about things that people are involved in today.

Those of us who love history may be heard justifying this fascination by saying that if we do not know where we have been, how can we know where we are and where we are going? Or maybe we just admit to liking a good story. Something to blether about with the people we meet in pubs, over a convivial ale pot or three.

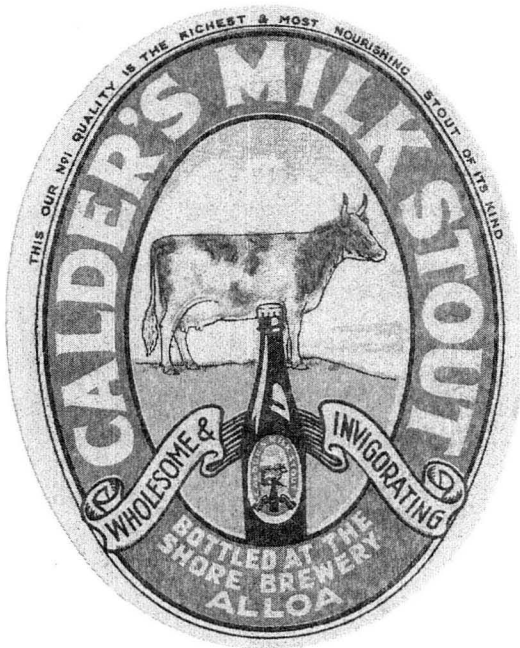
One indication of living history was on view recently in the Halfway House pub, a crucial pausing place to catch breath and taste refreshment before climbing the rest of the stairs up Edinburgh's Fleshmarket Close.

John Ward, the licensee, was showcasing the products of different Scottish breweries. When it came to offering Belhaven the chance to have their cask ales pouring from all four of his hand pumps, an unusual arrangement was made.



Yes, at different times, we enjoyed Sandy Hunter's and St Andrews ales, and the unusual fruit brew more often found in bottles. Then one fine night there was a truly spectacular sight.

Was this the first time that a simultaneous line-up of pump clips appeared of cask versions of Belhaven's 60/-, 70/-, 80/- and 90/-ales in a pub rather than at a beer festival? Could it be the last time all four were being drawn from adjacent taps? The 90/- weighed in at 8 per cent ABV, a tad stronger than some of us recall, and was deliciously drinkable for something so potent, while the 60/-, at below 3 per cent, was a nourishing quaff for those seeking something more gentle.

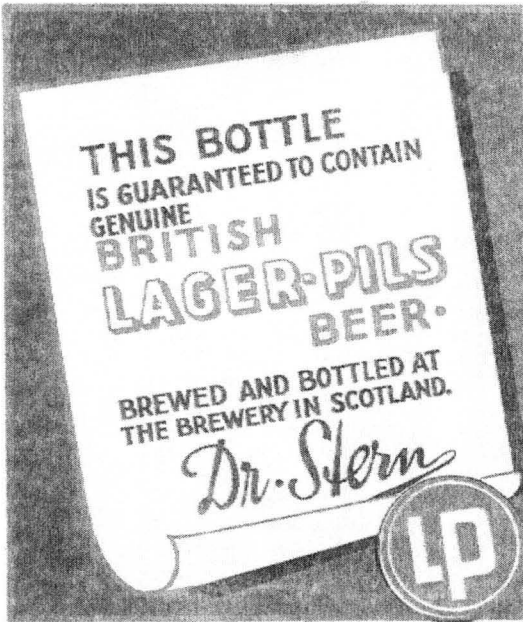


These days the old Scottish shilling designations are becoming increasingly rare, apart from 80/-ales from several brewers, not all cask. And even there, we see the simple number "80" without the historic "/-" mark on Caley's most recent pump clip for this fine ale (although their publicity material on the internet does explain the old "shilling" story for the interested drinker who has grown up this side of 1971).

Tennent's 60/- Light is still to be enjoyed in the Horseshoe in Glasgow, although it is brewery-conditioned, with mixed-gas dispense, these days. And there's a name. Light. The world moves

on; how often do you hear drinkers calling for Light or even Heavy these days? The tradition is still to be found, but is this living history, or dying history?

And nobody is heard calling for a Wee Heavy dump to turn the remains of their Heavy into a “Happy Day” - an element of Scottish pub history that remains alive in some memories but no longer in reality.



Light in Scotland and Mild in England are reminders of brewing links with industries that once made Britain the world’s workshop. These qualities of ale are still to be found in pubs in former steel and mining communities, but for how much longer?

The arrival of new breweries on the scene and continuing interest in beer, old and new, the breweries where it is crafted and the pubs

where it is enjoyed, prove that although some traditions are going or have gone, there is no end to the fascination in the beer trade and its people. Long may that continue. Let’s raise a glass to the positive future of a living archive that will be treasured by those who follow us.

Picture by Dave Wright shows the line-up of the shillings at the Halfway House

Celebrating Alloa's Ales

Alloa is essentially a brewing town, and from time immemorial has been famous for its beer - ALFRED BARNARD

It is difficult at this distance to fully appreciate the deep shock that was felt when one of the greatest names in Scotland's brewing industry succumbed after more than two centuries of a proud international history.

We have recently seen the demise of brewing at Edinburgh's Fountainbridge, with McEwan branded ales emerging from the Caledonian along in Slateford Road. That's a development none would have dared forecast not so many years ago, although something at least as remarkable was experienced 43 years previously in Alloa.

The closure announcement of the George Younger brewing business in Alloa back in 1963 must have been felt as a truly devastating blow. Although that was an era of brewery closures, it came at a time when most Scots would have assumed that George Younger, like William McEwan, William Younger, and J & R Tennent, would surely go on forever.

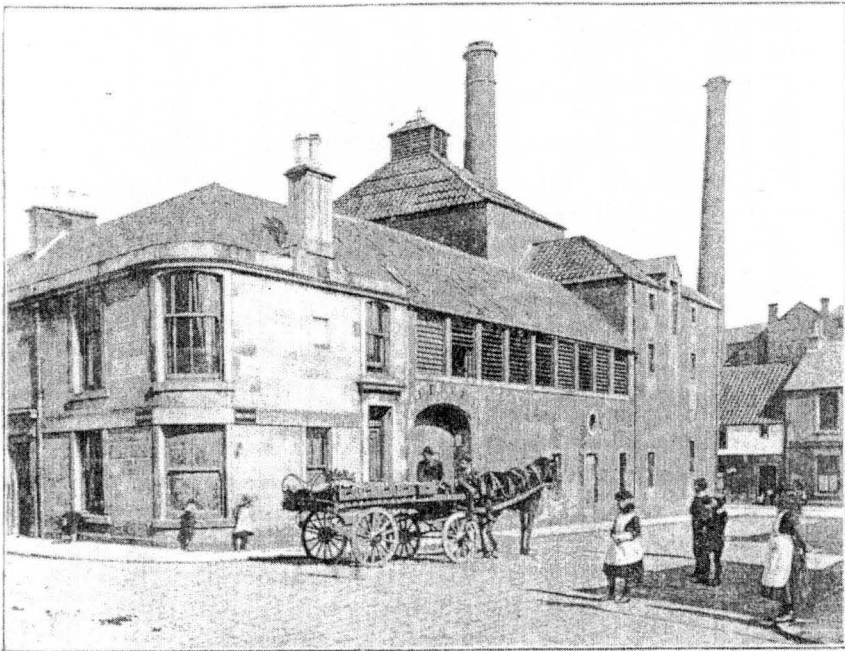
This article is not intended as a definitive history of George Younger, or Alloa brewing. These stories have already been set down. Alloa Ale, written by the then SBA archivist Charles McMaster, remains an invaluable and interesting read, published in 1985 to celebrate 175 years of the Alloa Brewery.

It is saddening to look back from today's perspective at part of his introduction to that history: "Here's looking to the next one hundred and seventy-five years!"

Last year's Alloa theme at the SBA open day brought fresh life to the tale. Our purpose here is to celebrate something of the flavour of the town's ales and lagers and their place in Scotland's beer

story that is to be found not only in the archives but in the memories of many people.

Some of the Alloa beer labels that are held in the archive are reproduced throughout this Journal and on the outside and inside of the cover to supply some visual reminders. On another page there is a copy of an advertisement for George Younger's - "as good a beer as you can get in the world" - reproduced from a brochure *In And Around Sunderland*. This illustrated book of pub histories from the North East of England, published in the 1930s by the George Younger subsidiary brewer R Fenwick & Co Ltd of Sunderland, is one of the many gems held by the SBA.

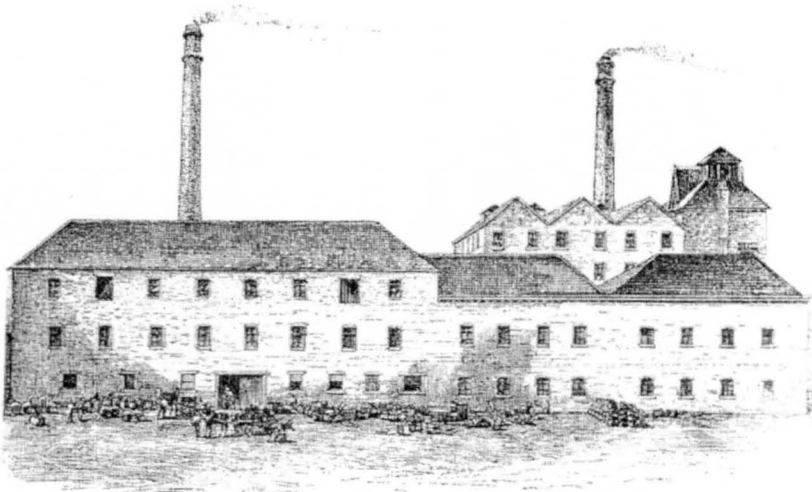


GENERAL OFFICES AND OLD, OR MEADOW, BREWERY.

Other Alloa items in the archives include some that seem odd to the modern eye. An example is a label from the distributors in Malta, offering a reward of £1,000 - a huge sum for its time but presumably impossible to claim - for "anyone who can confute our

statement that Messrs George Younger's Ales and Stout are brewed in Alloa, Scotland, and bottled as originally imported by J & Hector Pace & Co, 20 Sda Reale, Valletta”.

Brewers were fond of making remarkable claims for their products in the days before there was an Advertising Standards Authority or a Trade Descriptions Act. Medical opinions, real or otherwise, were published by many as justification for supping one brand rather than another. One such claimed that after careful examination, Calder's Milk Stout “reaches a very high standard of merit”. This was “whether considered as a nutritive, a stimulant or a tonic.”



FERMENTING DEPARTMENT, IN EAST VENNEL.

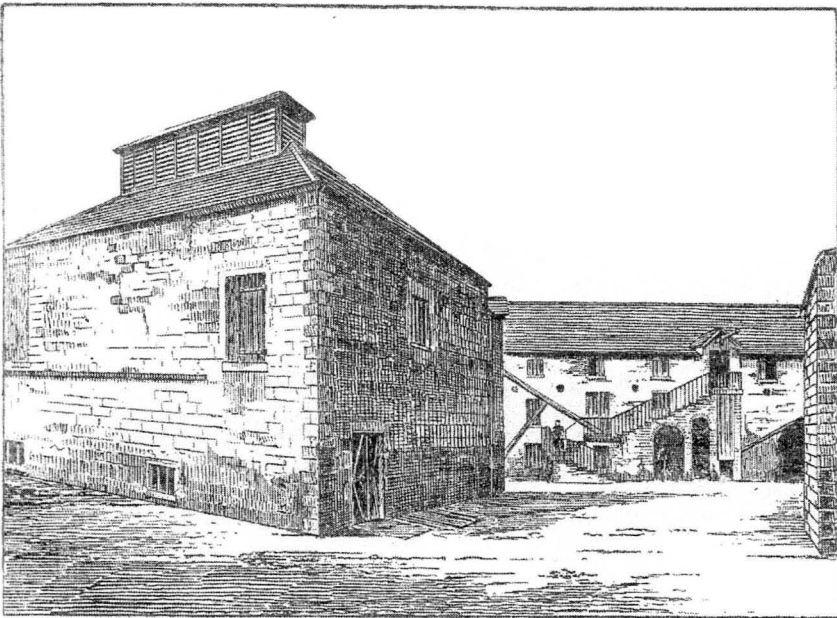
The claim added: “Its nourishing qualities are largely due to its richness in lactose, a form of sugar more nearly akin to Nature's source of energy than the sugars usually found in fermented liquors.

“Lactose is not likely to set up fermentation in delicate stomachs. It is not only a food in itself, but its valuable tonic properties have

the virtue of enabling invalids more readily to assimilate the other foods taken by them, especially when convalescing.”

The point then made, that one pint of milk stout contained as many carbohydrates as a half-pint of milk, was regarded as a healthy sign before today’s obsessions with low-carb diets!

Maclay’s won a prize medal at Vienna in 1894 for its Oatmalt Stout, which was promoted as “most nourishing and strengthening” and “strongly recommended for invalids” with the admonition: “See medical opinions.”

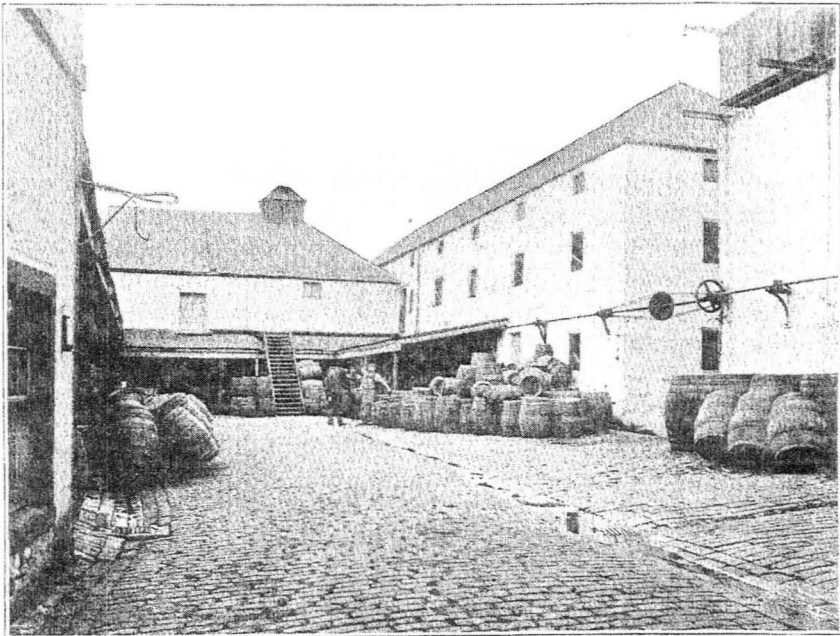


NEW MALTINGS.

When Duncan Kellock, then head brewer at the Thistle Brewery, came to re-create Oatmalt Stout in the 1990s for a CAMRA beer festival in Edinburgh, he found brewing with malted oats interesting (these gave the brew a pleasingly smooth texture for the drinker to enjoy) but some of the other ingredients disturbing. The packets of liquorice took a long time to unwrap, but that didn’t

make his mind boggle so much as the quantities of linseed oil in the original recipe.

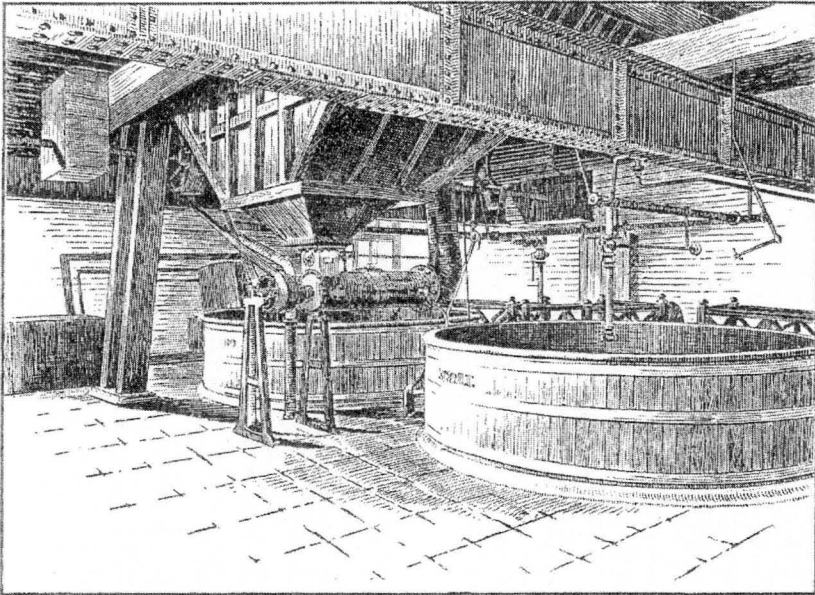
Clearly the Victorian and Edwardian invalids who had been prescribed this beer must have been constipated. As Duncan so neatly put it, he had to cut back on the linseed oil significantly - "I didn't want all the real ale drinkers in Scotland spending a night in the toilet."



BREWERY YARD.

Some historic beers from Alloa bore labels that would also be out of keeping with modern sensibilities. "The Arab Brand" for instance. Or George Younger's promotion of "The Revolver Brand". These were all very well when that company sent much of its production to British soldiers overseas, but those days of Empire are gone in spite of the presence of British troops today in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Much gentler is Sweetheart Stout, still a strong seller in many pubs where its refreshing character continues to be appreciated. It is now part of the Tennent's portfolio, but in spite of ceasing Alloa production all those years ago, still carrying the "George Younger's of Alloa" designation on its label, the longest-running in the world to be illustrated by a woman's photograph.



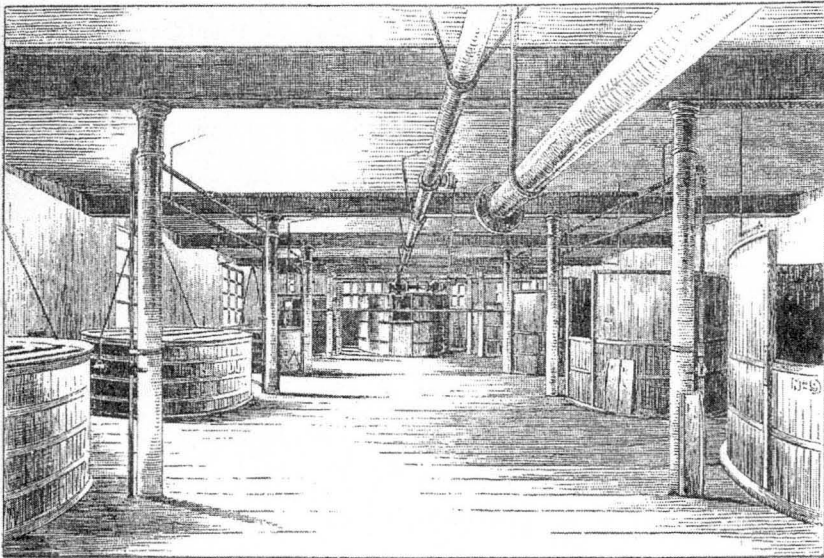
MASHING STAGE.

The most recent George Younger of that family was marketing director. It is said that he described this gentle stout as "the sort of beer your sweetheart would drink", hence its name. A former Cabinet Minister, including time as the Secretary of State for Scotland in Margaret Thatcher's Government, he died in 1997 as the 3rd Viscount Younger of Leckie. His obituaries from The Herald and The Times are among family papers cared for by the SBA.

Some Alloa labels in the SBA collections remind us of a long-running legal controversy when Bass of Burton were offended by Meiklejohn's of Alloa using the title Bass Crest Brewery on its labels.

Surely the representation of the Bass Rock could never have been mistaken even at a distance by the short-sighted for the famous Bass red triangle trademark. Charles Maitland, a partner in the business, had the Bass Rock as his family crest, hence the cheeky designation Bass Crest for the brewery and its ales. The row was only settled by Bass buying the Alloa concern in 1918.

The illustrations of George Younger premises and the Shore Brewery of James Calder with this article are taken from Alfred Barnard's classic *The Noted Breweries of Great Britain and Ireland*.

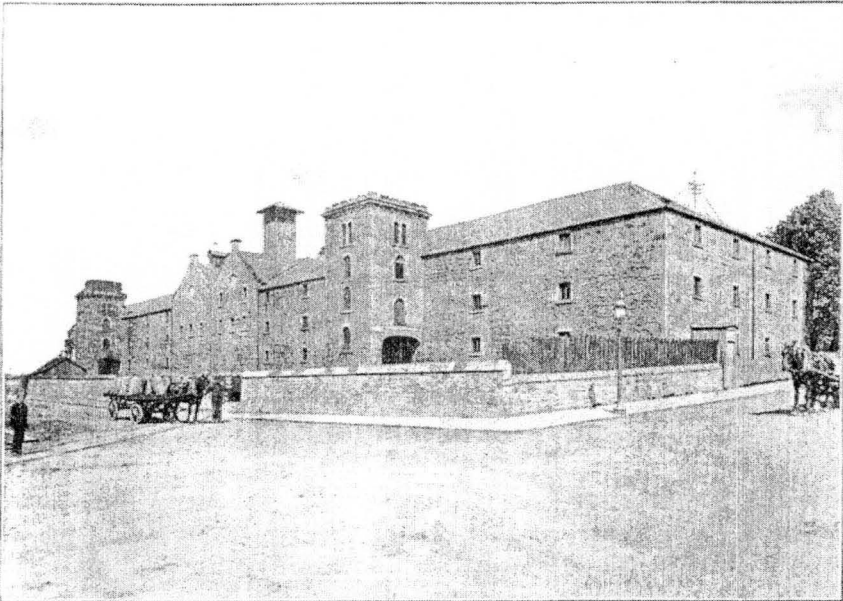


FERMENTING HOUSE.

Barnard adopted a leisurely style of description appropriate to 1891, the year after the opening of the Forth Bridge made Alloa

more directly accessible from Edinburgh for the trains of the North British Railway.

Here is a flavour of his approach in Volume 4, outlining his journey to Alloa: “This was the first time we had travelled over the



CRAIGWARD MALTINGS.

Forth Bridge, and we must confess that from the top we were not so much struck with this triumph of engineering skill, which cost three millions of money, as when we had sailed beneath its wonderful cantilever span in the early summer time.”

His description of his destination, quoted at the head of the article, certainly conveys Alloa’s importance to the ale business as “essentially a brewing town”. That also conveys how fundamental beer was to the very fabric of Alloa, with no less than nine breweries in the area at one time.

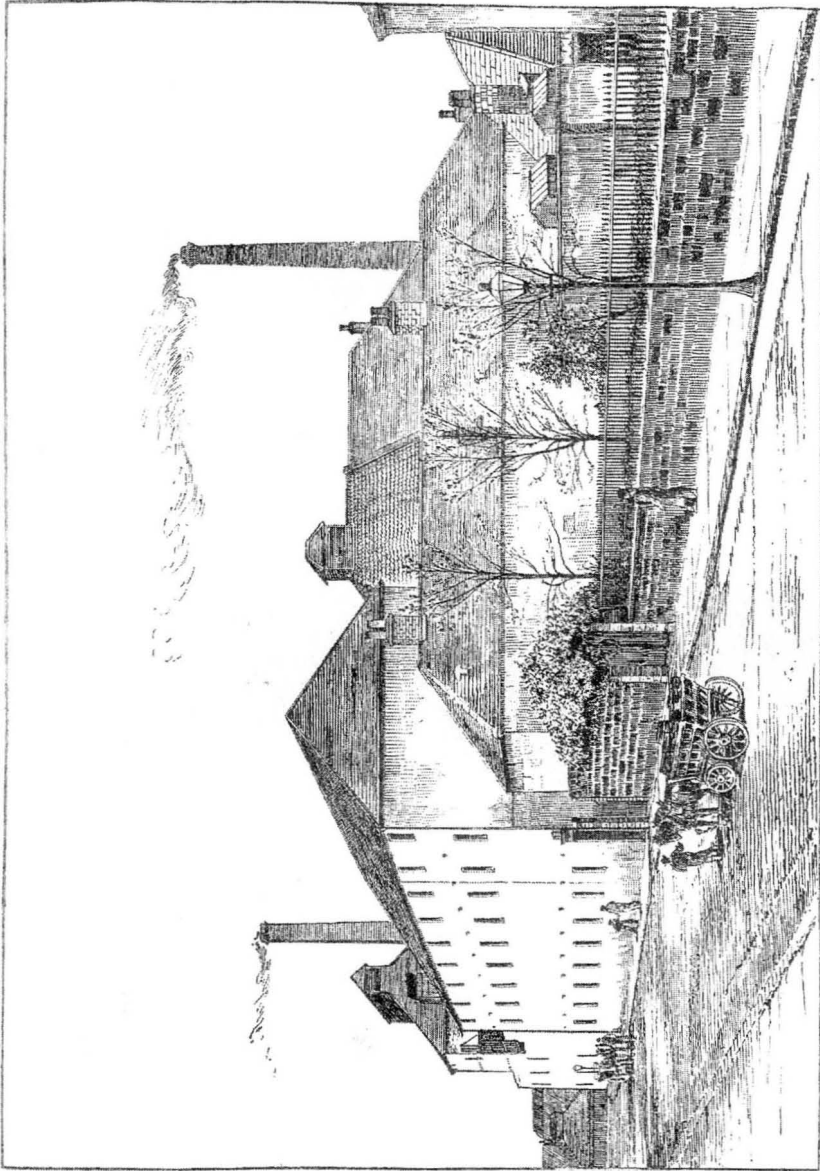
Consider the roll call of these great names of beloved memory:

- Archibald Arroll & Sons Ltd, the Alloa Brewery
- Blair & Co Ltd, the Townhead Brewery
- Jas. Calder & Co Ltd, the Shore Brewery
- Robert Henderson & Co Ltd, the Mills Brewery
- Robert Knox Ltd, the Forth Brewery (at Cambus)
- Maclay & Co Ltd, the Thistle Brewery
- Meiklejohn's Brewery Ltd, the Bass Crest Brewery
- Geo. Younger & Sons Ltd, the Meadow and Candleriggs Breweries

And consider not only the direct employment provided, but all the supporting cast of farming, malting, glass-making, bottle production, and distribution. Then there were the retailers, near and far.

Consider, too, the two-way process that brought barley in from the fields for malting and sent cattle feed back to farmers from the brewers' spent grains, not to mention the fertiliser from spent hops. (Even in its final years in the modern era, used hops from Maclay's Thistle Brewery were fertilising the roses in the grounds of the Scottish Police College at Tulliallan.)

The Thistle Brewery, which had been with Maclay's since 1871, ceased brewing in 1999, the last of the originals. But Alloa brewing is not dead. Where George Younger's once flourished, the Williams Brothers of Heather Ale fame have their own modern brewing plant, on a smaller scale than the industrial giants of the past but promoting the name of Alloa ales in the export market. On the soft drinks front, Alloa also features as home to Ella Drinks Ltd, producers of Bouvrage sparkling fruit drinks.



THE SHORE BREWERY.

The industrial brewing town that Alloa had become before 1900 owed its origins to geography, below the Ochil Hills and beside the Forth, with coal and salt-panning having been sources of revenue since older times. Barley was available for malting for brewing and distilling, transport by ship was possible, and good well water was just fine for brewing.

By the time the original George Younger began brewing in 1762, just three years after Arthur Guinness and son started in Dublin, to put it into context, there had been public brewers at Alloa for more than 100 years, but only on a small scale.

The opening of the Forth & Clyde Canal in 1792 allowed Alloa ales to be transported over the Forth and then along the canal to Bowling on the Clyde for onwards transshipment to Liverpool, Bristol, Dublin and the wide world beyond. Water transport was to remain significant even after the coming of the railways.

Alfred Barnard's purpose in 1891 was to visit Calder's where he found Five Guinea Ale very much to his liking.

It "...proved highly meritorious, it being a rich and full-flavoured beverage of considerable gravity."

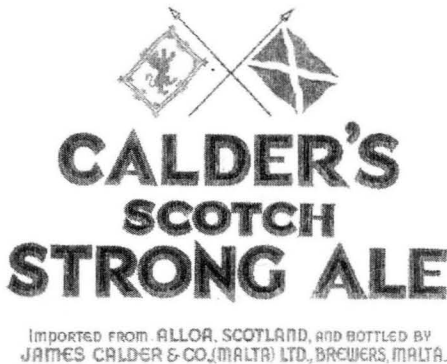
More than a century later that gets the taste-buds tingling at the very thought. For those who grew up this side of decimalisation in 1971, a guinea was 21 shillings (which doesn't sound so romantic in today's currency as £1.05). Savour the recent memory (if you have been lucky) of Belhaven 90/- at 8 per cent ABV, and consider, if you will, something even richer in texture and taste.

It is a reminder that although Alloa came to be synonymous with British lager, it was on ale that its fame was founded.

If Younger was a renowned Alloa name, so too was Calder, with long-term and highly significant links to other arms of the brewing industry and, in particular, with that great centre of English ale, Burton-on-Trent. It was through the Calder tie-in, traceable in the

archives, that the producers of Ind Coope Burton Ale were to come under the same ownership as the Alloa Brewery, home of Skol lager.

How are the mighty fallen. As The Scotsman beer columnist I described the brewing hall of the Alloa Brewery in the 1980s as



like “a cathedral of beer”. Head Brewer Brian Eaton insisted on keeping it spotless.

Those huge copper vessels and the tiled walls around gleamed more brightly than any I saw at supposedly more prestigious

lager brew houses on the Continent, where the copper vessels often have a dull patina that would never have been tolerated by Brian.

I well remember a celebratory beer dinner that was hosted beside that Alloa copperwork, the finest occasion I enjoyed in the nine-year career of The Scotsman’s beer column, and the finest venue I have ever dined in. When invited to attend the formal final mash in 1998, I declined, fearing it would have been too tearful an occasion.

The giant copper brewing vessels were the last cause of “The Silver Link” - the Kincardine Bridge over the Forth - being raised for the passage of a ship. That was in 1955 when the MV Stefan berthed at Alloa Docks with the precious Scandinavian cargo for Ind Coope, then operators of the Alloa Brewery.



BREWERY, FROM CANDLERIGG STREET.

It was a brew house for Skol, the lager that originated with the rather less Nordic title Graham's Golden Lager. But that brew house's flexibility to produce ales as well, with enough efficiency to craft various recipes to required brew lengths, satisfied a range of demands for more than 40 years.

The late John Mackenzie had worked long and hard when he managed the Alloa Brewery Company to protect its future as the third force in Scottish brewing after Tennent's and S&N, and did not live to see the closure of the brewery that was on a historic site dating from 1810.

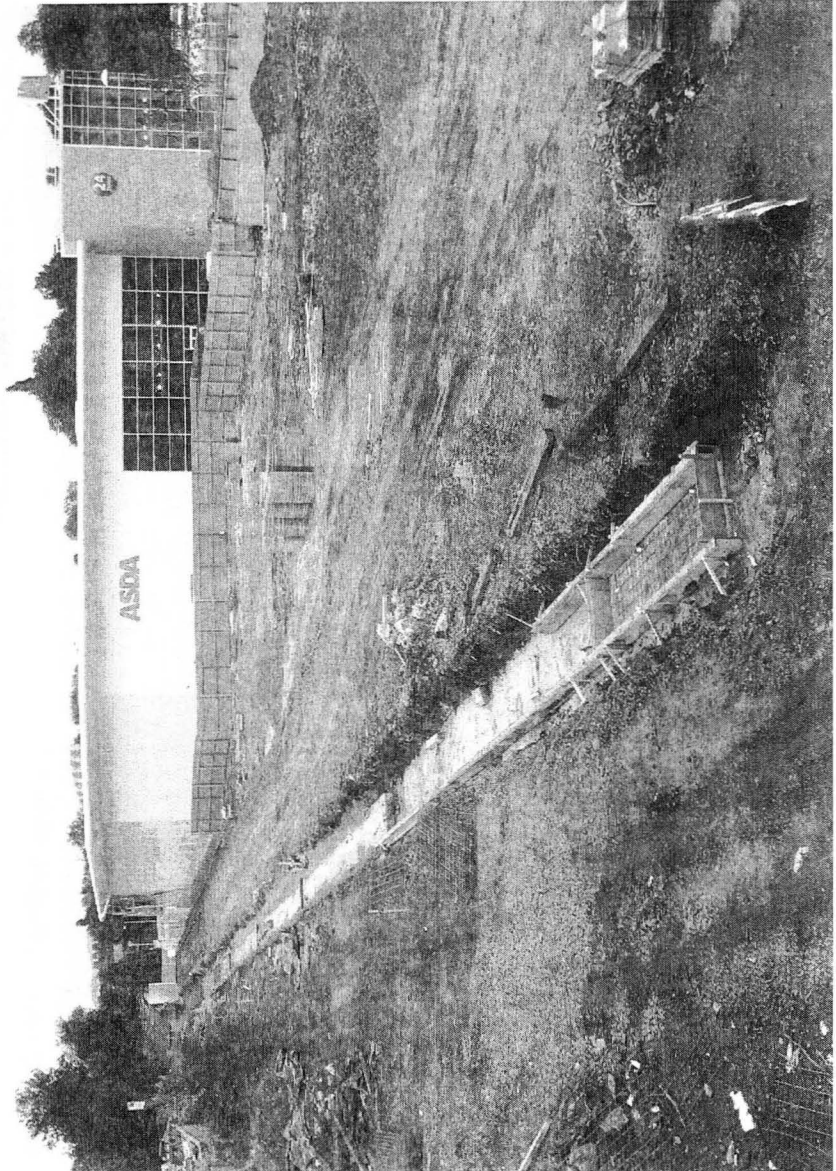
The Alloa Brewery was demolished and its basements were filled in. The remnants of the brewery buildings came crashing down five years ago at the hands of demolition specialists. They used explosives and powerful machinery, including equipment with such self-explanatory descriptions as "shear/muncher attachments", culminating in the levelling of the site using brick and concrete from the demolished property, processed through a machine with the stirring name Rockranger Crusher.

Go there now and it may take time to recall exactly where the brew house was on that site. A new ASDA supermarket has been erected, as illustrated in this Journal.

As is also seen in the ASDA photograph, work is advancing alongside on a new railway station for Alloa, due to open in 2007 with direct trains every hour from Glasgow via Stirling.

Alloa lost more than George Younger's back in 1963 - it also lost its passenger trains as a result of that year's Beeching Report, The Reshaping of British Railways. Alloa Docks closed in 1970. At least the trains are coming back.

Allan P. McLean



Younger gets old in England

More than half a century after George Younger's of Alloa disposed of its interest in the brewery of R Fenwick of Sunderland and its North-east England pubs, the Scottish company is still remembered.

That's because the distinctive Y logo with the slogan "George Younger's Alloa Ales" is to be found in Darlington, County Durham.

It appears on the outside of two windows at the side of the Red Lion in Priestgate in the town centre. The Darlington branch of CAMRA report that these may date from the 1930s although stained glass windows at the front of the pub were installed in 1903.



The SBA files include photographs of the Fenwick brewery, which was acquired by the Alloa business in the late Victorian period but disposed of in 1952 to J W Green of Luton - later Flowers, which then became part of Whitbread. The Red Lion was a Whitbread house until 2004 when Greene King acquired it, so now, with Belhaven, there is again a Scottish link, albeit indirect.

MESSRS. GEORGE YOUNGER AND SON.

ALLOA ALE.

- “ Awa’ wi black brandy, red rum, and blue whisky
 An’ bring me the liquor as brown as a nut ;
 O ! Alloa Ale ye can mak a chiel frisky,
 Brisk, faeming a’ fresh frae the bottle or butt.
 An awa wi’ your wines—they are dull as moss water,
 Wi’ blude colour’d blushes, or purple, or pale ;
 Guid folks gif ye wish to get fairer and fatter,
 Then aye weet your weasans wi’ Alloa Ale !
- “ Gif ye wish healthie habits an’ wad be lang livers,
 Then spirituoa drinks ye s’oud never fash wi’ ;
 But Alloa Ale ye may drink it in rivers,
 An’ the deeper ye drink, aye the better ye’ll be,
 Sae potent as physic its virtues are valued,
 They daily wha drink look hearty an’ hale ;
 O ye a’ hae heard tell o’ a Balm got in Gilead,
 Tak my word for’t ’twas naething but Alloa Ale !
- “ Then countrymen croud roun’ the bizzin ale bicker,
 An waur na on whisky your siller an’ sense ;
 Nae gate ye’ll fa’ in wi’ the like o’ this liquor,
 That thro’ body an’ saul can sic vigour dispense.
 Let nae Brandy-bibber scare you wi’ his scoffin,
 At prudence in drink—till he tire lat him rail ;
 Ilk a dram that he drinks is a nail in his coffin,
 But you’ll lenthen your life-lease wi’ Alloa Ale.
- “ Gie big-bellied John Bull his pot fu’ o’ Porter,
 Which is far frae a wa’cast, weel worth its fair fame,
 But Paddy prefers something sharper an’ *shorter*,
 An’ I’m sorry to say it, some Scots do the same.
 Far Hielan’ bred Donald, au’laigh countrie Sannock,
 Wad baith be the better an’ tend to my tale ;
 Aye dine on the Kebbuck-kale Brose an’ Bear Bannock,
 An’ drink when they’re drouthie the Alloa Ale !”

JOHN IMLAH, 1827.



From the Archivist...

Susannah left the Archives for pastures new at the start of the year, and I took her place (not to mention her pc, pencils and notepads) in March. It's a daunting task, taking on an archive so large and varied as the SBA, but I feel I've found my feet now. It has been busy...

Having cleared the backlog of inquiries that had built up in Susannah's absence, I started work on updating the SBA web pages. The website is a vital part of the archive, as it provides people from around the country - from around the globe, indeed - with an easy way to find us and make contact. About 80 per cent of all SBA inquiries come via the webform. It's vital that the information we present on the pages is accurate and up-to-date.

I have started a rolling programme to improve and add to the information about the collections that is made available on the website. I hope to be able to upload some images from the Archive soon, to enhance the appearance of the pages. We can also use the webpages to make available articles published in previous issues of the Journal and in other SBA publications. The important thing is that we let people see for themselves the rich variety of archive material we have to offer, so that they have a good idea of the range and depth of the collections we hold in the repository at Thurso Street.

Apart from some labels deposited by our new Journal editor and some property ledgers and artefacts from S&N's former HQ in Ellersley Road, there have been no new accessions to the Archive. That has left me with valuable time to attack the cataloguing backlog. I have been able to incorporate some records in existing collections, and to catalogue some of the smaller accessions. I'm now girding my loins and preparing for an assault on the Maclays collection - I'll let you know how I get on in my next report!

There has also been time to add to our finding aids. I compiled a shelf locations guide to the collection, to assist the poor souls who look after the Archive and our readers on my days off. And I've compiled a list of company histories, so it's easier to track down information on each of the companies and breweries whose records we hold (and many for whom we hold no records at all).

I have worked with the Trustees to produce a Mission Statement



for the Archives, and met with our Chairman Colin Valentine over the summer to develop a 3-year plan for the Archives. Both Mission Statement and long-term plan are essential if (or more accurately, when) we approach funding bodies for financial support,

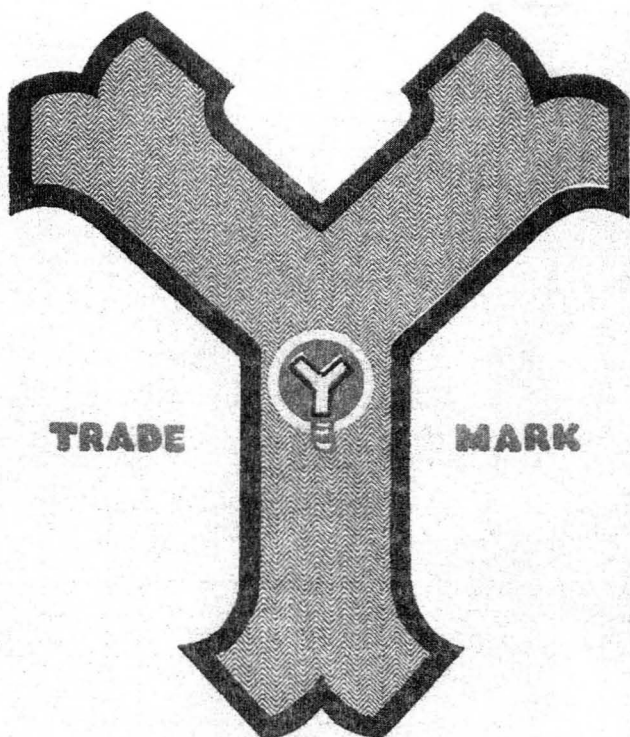
either for special projects or for core funding of the archive itself.

Another priority has been to appraise the collections received in the past few years, to ensure that material that does not meet the criteria set out in our collecting policy is removed from the Archive and disposed of. The rejection of archival material sometimes causes alarm, but it is vital that we don't clog up the shelves with items that are not directly relevant to the story of Scotland's breweries and Scottish brewing.

The material we received from Maclays, for example, included a straw donkey, non-functioning table lights and broken inkwells, a cruet set and a wooden boomerang, none of which are suitable for preservation in the Archive. Of course we will not throw away the boomerang, for fear that it comes back...

Iain Russell

Beer is as good a drink
as you can possibly have



GEORGE YOUNGER'S
beer is as good a beer as
you can get in the world

S.B.A. OPEN DAYS 2005 & 2006

The Breweries that built Alloa

Our last open day was on 18th November 2005 and was well attended by Friends and supporters. The theme was about the Alloa Breweries and the effects on the local community.

As has become the norm, we opened at 4.00 pm in the Seminar room in Thurso Street with a tour of the Archives available at 4.30 pm and guest speakers at around 5.15pm.

There was a display of related items artefacts, documents etc put together by the Archivist, Susannah Waters who also did the tour.

This year our first speaker was Susan Mills, museum and heritage officer at Clackmannan Council. Susan produced a fascinating collection of slides of various buildings and aerial photographs in and around Alloa illustrating the locations of the various Breweries Maltings and allied traders. As I was brought up in Alloa long enough ago to qualify for my bus pass, it brought back lots of memories and reminded me of just how much I had forgotten about Alloa and its brewing Heritage.

Susan was followed by Duncan Kellock, who is one of our Trustees and is a former Head Brewer from Maclays. Duncan showed us some slides from Maclays taken up to the time of its demise. Once again we were reminded of the loss of industry, the effects on the community and the importance of the work of the S.B.A. to preserve the records and safeguard the history of Scotland's brewing Heritage (I feel a Mission Statement coming on!).

Many thanks to both our speakers, and also to Susannah (this was her swan-song) who put together a great display of items related to our theme. Susannah was presented with a bouquet as a token of all her valuable work and we wish her well in her new post.

We must also thank our generous sponsors who provided liquid refreshments.

Date for your diaries.

This year's event will be held on Friday 17th November 2006 at 4.00 pm in the seminar room at the Archives in Thurso Street.

Being a World cup year the theme will be **Beer & Sport in Scotland** and will focus on sports events and sponsorship by Scottish Brewing companies. Hands up if you remember the Skol Cup! As usual a tour of the Archive can be arranged and we hope to have a guest speaker at around 5.15 pm. The event will close at 6.30 pm.

Please watch the newsletters and website for details.

Social Event

Last year in the Hogshead in Edinburgh a group of around a dozen of the friends and supporters of the Archive got together for a couple of beers and some nibbles.

The object of the evening was for the Trustees to meet the friends on an informal basis and chat about the Archive and its purposes future direction etc.

It has been suggested that we have a similar event in Glasgow on a date to be announced so please keep an eye on the web-site and the Newsletter for more details.

In the meantime, if you have any thoughts or ideas and would like an input into the affairs of the archive please get in touch with us.

Harvey L. Milne

Vice chairman

SBA

One Hundred and Fifteen Years after Barnard

In the year the brewery founded by William McEwan closed and some two decades after Holyrood Brewery closed, we were to visit a new brewery. Where Alfred Barnard wrote so enthusiastically about Holyrood, Abbey Brewery and the Queens Park Bottling Stores, there now stands The Scottish Parliament buildings.

It was in the aforementioned premises and in the close proximity of Salisbury Craigs, which so impressed Barnard that three men were trained in the science and art of brewing. It was those three who were to follow in Barnard's joy of travelling and visit the new source of ales with the potential to continue the Edinburgh brewing tradition.



We met in a well-known tavern in Victoria Street famed for the quality of its traditional ales. There were four of us but one had a prior engagement thus could not join the invitation to the Stewart Brewing Limited open day. Hence it was that like Barnard and his two

companions, suitably fortified by a steak pie and a glass of ale, we commenced our journey to the southern edges of Edinburgh.

On a typical overcast and sometimes showery day we mounted the vehicle of transportation clambering to the elevated platform at the forward end of the carriage, which afforded such splendid views of the countryside, and sometime known colloquially as a number 37 bus.

Alighting at the exotically named Bilston Glen Industrial Estate we attempted to follow the map which thoughtfully had come with the

invitation. Barnard took the trouble to explain something of the history of the area of the South Back Canongate but let it suffice to say that the Bilston Glen pit was one of the deepest in Europe and that the colliery closed in 1989.

As we wandered into the Estate partially failing to correctly interpret the stylised map and finding ourselves engird by similar buildings typical of those to be discovered in such a place, we applied all our navigational skills. The brewery was not in production due to the presence of so many visitors; however, in spite of the lack of the usual clues of steam and odours issuing from any building our instincts took us to the plant without much difficulty. There, in what would have been the shadow of the Pentland Hills, provided there had been any sun to cast a shadow, was Steve Stewart's new brewery.



Upon entering the building we were greeted by the delectable Mrs Stewart who had made herself available to socialise with Steve's guests for the open day. Also assisting was a student of brewing, who helps Steve on a part time basis and was

currently engaged in furthering his practical skills by dispensing the product for the guests to sample.

Many of the guests were proprietors of the taverns where Stewart ales can be purchased.

Perhaps the most striking visual impact was of a wall of new plastic casks in the distinctive blue and white colours of the Stewart Brewing logo. Also in evidence were stainless steel firkins, however, the new casks were particularly innovative. Their

suitability was confirmed by the quality of the ales we were sampling. Further investigation revealed a 2500 litre hot liquor tank and a 1400 litre copper, both of which were handsomely clad in wood.

A brew normally consists of a 2000 litre charge mashed with 250 kg of crushed malt. Being on the same floor level the wort is pumped to the copper where the boil is about 1 hour. There are 3 stainless steel FVs cubic in shape with sloping but not conical bottoms. Ten lagged 5 barrel tanks arranged in two neat rows completed the conditioning facilities. Cask racking apparatus and a cask washer were also in evidence for the discerning brewer to observe. A small, almost laboratory, scale pilot brewing apparatus is used to develop new product lines. The overall impression was of good quality equipment laid out in a most practical fashion.

Here are the brewer's own description of his products.

We were grateful to Steve for taking time away from his other guests to discuss with us some of the finer technical points of the brewing process. There only remained for us to continue the sampling process a little further in order to confirm our first impressions as to the excellent quality of the products.

On the return journey atop our double decker chariot, heading towards Scotia's capital with its own parliament and thence to our several lodgings, we were to reflect that what we had seen ensured our confidence that the brewing heritage of Edinburgh would continue.

Fifteen men on a dead man's chest

Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of Ale

Drink and the devil had done for the rest

Yo-ho-ho and a keg of ale!

Les Hutcheon

History Sells Today's Brews

The value of history to the profitable promotion of products in the 21st century is demonstrated handsomely by communications from two of Scotland's notable breweries.

One is a glossy booklet published by our friends at Dunbar before the link with Greene King, but still current. Welcome to Belhaven is a superbly produced introduction to the East Lothian brewery and its products.

The other example is the Caledonian Brewery's web site, which inevitably features colourful illustrations of pints of ale, gleaming in such an appetising manner that the internet surfer just wants to reach into the screen and taste some. Or at least go tearing off to the nearest pub dispensing such joys. As well as sales promotional material, information presented on this very accessible site includes some nuggets of history.



The Belhaven brochure and the Caledonian's images on the world wide web are just two among many fine examples of how history can be used to bring fresh life and interest to the promotion and appreciation of today's beers. (And not just by quoting a date of foundation - eg 1719 for Belhaven or famously 1664 for Kronenbourg.)

Distributed to encourage interest in Belhaven brews, with a general invitation on the back cover to phone to arrange a visit, the Dunbar publication can also provide a worthwhile souvenir for those who

do accept a tour of the premises. Two postcards, printed on perforated pages for easy removal, represent a nice touch. A future edition would no doubt bring the story up to date in relation to company ownership, but no significant change is needed in a publication others could do well to emulate, if they do not already have an equivalent of their own.



There are pages advertising Belhaven products of course, together with examples of advertising from 1994 to 2003. A

well-presented two-page diagram explains how beer

is brewed, naturally using Belhaven's cask, keg, bottled and canned beer as examples of what it is all about.

There are also pages of history, as is appropriate for such a well-established business. This includes a reminder of how Belhaven Bill - now "retired" from front-line promotions - was devised in the 1950s by Sandy Hunter and his friend Bill Woolward.

"Far from being modelled as has been claimed, on a particular personage, it was an idea born out of the cross-fertilisation of 'Saxa-Sam' (of Saxa Salt fame) and Father William (of William Younger's beer)," the booklet informs. And there was me thinking it might have owed something to the Great Northern Railway's "Barnacle Bill" who skipped along another part of the East Coast to confirm that "Skegness Is So Bracing!"

The oft-quoted remark of the Emperor of Austria - "Belhaven beer is the Burgundy of Scotland ... Bavaria cannot produce the like" - inevitably gets prominence inside the front cover, together with James Boswell's famed description of Dunbar ale as "the best

small beer I ever had”. Perhaps the only quotation that may need updated is the one from Tony Blair about “a taste that was distinctive and memorable”. Have Gordon Brown or John Reid made positive remarks about Belhaven beer yet?

The Caledonian Brewery web site uses descriptions by the beer and whisky writer Michael Jackson, including the appearance of Caledonian 80/- being the “russet-brown colour of autumn leaves”, not to mention the one we can all agree on: “... very easily drinkable”.

The “shilling” designation may have disappeared from the pump clip for Caley 80/- but the web site takes the opportunity to explain as well as use the “/-“ mark, recalling that these designations of alcoholic strength once related to the level of tax charged. But, oh dear, what’s this? Tax “per 504 pint barrel (called a hogshead)”? A hogshead of ale is 54 gallons, or 432 pints, so something here does not compute. Perhaps someone needs to spend some time in the archives, or maybe just the arithmetic class.

It would be unfair to carp, however, for this is an informative web site, well-designed. Never mind the difficulties English visitors have getting their tongues round the pronunciation of “Deuchars” when ordering that Caley brew, the web site reveals, in relation to 80/-: “Incidentally, we have had requests for ‘Caledonian slash dash’.”

The site entry recalls that the weakest brew was 40/-, “a very light beer often supplied to farm hands”. There’s no mention of 56/- ale, though, a quality associated with McEwan’s, if memory serves, and produced for the harvest season. Those farm hands and their weak beer again - they needed a huge thirst quenched although sobriety had to be maintained to get the work done.

To read more on Caley, go to www.caledonian-brewery.co.uk

Alloa Time Line

Researchers using SBA records to uncover the history of Alloa brewing and the rise and fall of George Younger, one of the most famous names in the story of Scottish ale, may find this outline a helpful guide for the 201 years of that company's activities in the town. For the rest of us, it is a reminder of what once was.

1762 George Younger purchased a property which included a malt kiln.

1764 adjoining property belonging to the brewer Robert Stein was purchased - combination of two sites became the Meadow Brewery, seemingly one of the first public breweries in Alloa.

1771 Robert Meiklejohn established his 1st public brewery in Alloa.

1787 Meiklejohn moved his brewing to Candleriggs brewery.

1816 Shore Brewery built.

by 1820s Meiklejohn's known as R Meiklejohn & Son (son James returned from London).

1850 Railway came to Alloa - little impact at first, with water transport remaining crucial for Alloa's links to the rest of the world. It was not until 1890 and the opening of the Forth Bridge that the North British Railway had a reasonably direct route to Edinburgh, but the Caledonian Railway delivered an alternative route to Alloa in 1885 and it provided transport for Meiklejohn's.

1852 George Younger leased Candleriggs Brewery of Robert Meiklejohn & Co (purchased in 1871). Meiklejohn's moved to Grange Brewery.

1853 Alexander Blair founded Townhead Brewery.

1856 Ownership of Grange Brewery passed to Maitland, Gorrie and Boyes - Charles Maitland adopted his family crest of the Bass Rock and the motto "Non Fluctuo Fluctu" both of which had been granted to his family by Charles II. The use of the Bass Crest name led to continuing legal battles with Bass, Ratcliff & Gretton of Burton fame.

1850s George Younger exported strong ale to the West Indies.

1856 A new brewery opened with an Alloa connection, but not in Alloa. This was the Fountain Brewery established in Edinburgh by William McEwan, who hailed from Alloa.

1862 Shore Brewery bought by James Calder (it prospered greatly). Its proximity to the harbour meant that Calders beer was easily exported. The company owned its own ships. Ale for England also went by sea.

1874 Meiklejohn Centenary.

1889 George Younger Candleriggs brewery damaged by fire and rebuilt 'bigger & better'.

1891 Alfred Barnard visits Shore Brewery on his famous tour

1897 George Younger registered as a limited liability company began to trade to India, far East and South Africa (particularly pale ales).

1898 George Younger purchased R Fenwick & Co of Sunderland.

1913 Calders took over the failing firm Samuel Allsopp & Sons of Burton and thus established a long-standing link between the great ale towns on the Forth and the Trent,

which was only effectively severed in 1998 with the closure of Alloa Brewery.

1921 Brewing moved to Arrol's Alloa Brewery (brewing both pale ale and lager for Calders)

1920 Under the threat of temperance campaigns, the George Younger company bought Grange Brewery to brew non-intoxicating beers and stouts!

1941 George Younger closed Grange Brewery.

1944 Calders bought Robert Henderson's Mills Brewery.

During Second World War, Fenwick of Sunderland was bombed while brewers continued to face restrictions on availability of ingredients.

1951 Ind Coope & Allsopp took control of Alloa Brewery, which then concentrated on lager. Later modernisation of the brewery to create a magnificent continental-style brewhouse with its famous huge coppers, led to the years of Skol Lager as a product that had its followers, but never toppled Tennents of Glasgow from the number one lager spot in Scotland.

1954 BA Ltd acquired Robert Knox (Cambus) Ltd.

1957 BA Ltd acquired Ideal Taverns (Scotland) Ltd.

1959 George Younger took over Blair's of Alloa. BA ceased to brew.

1962 BA Co Ltd went into voluntary liquidation.

1963 Brewing ceased at Candleriggs brewery.

BOOK REVIEWS

CAMRA's London Pub Walks

By Bob Steel

An initial flick through the pages of this volume caused a sharp tug at this reviewer's heart strings. There on page 14 is a colour photograph of a pub I was led away from in tears 27 years ago.

It was where my pewter pot was lodged in my three years of working in London, and it was difficult to leave that remarkably small ale house with the remarkably big welcome after the last of what had been almost daily visits.

Robert Bruce - what an unlikely name for a Cockney barman! - used to pour Wethered's Bitter into that pot as soon as my shadow was seen across the glass in the door. I have never been back, terrified in equal measure that if that pub had changed, I would be devastated at the loss, or that if it was still the same, I would be devastated that I had ever left.

"This is the little Beehive which boasts an attractive exterior. In an area of small pubs this is one of the smallest, but the welcome is warm ... an unpretentious pub which should not be missed," opines Mr Steel, so it seems it hasn't been spoiled after all. Young's and Fuller's ales are on tap nowadays, Wethered's of Marlow having long gone the way of too much of the one-time Whitbread empire.

We regulars knew the Beehive in Homer Street, Marylebone, as "the glue pot" because once inside you got stuck, so enjoyable was the company.

It features as pub 4 in walk 14 of 30 walks. A visiting Scot in the imperial capital could do worse than have this handy book at the ready, to guide them around some pleasant parts of London,

discovering that there are good pubs there, and that there is also history and architecture to be enjoyed in and between them. **AMcL**

Published by Campaign for Real Ale. £8.99 (CAMRA members, £6.99)

Good Pub Food

By Susan Nowak and Jill Adam

The fact that there is a Foreword by Jean-Christophe Novelli, the celebrity restaurateur, indicates that this is a book to be taken seriously by those interested in food.

Those who just like unpretentious pubs might worry that this is too much of an upmarket pointer, but they would be wrong. The Michelin-starred TV chef confirms an appreciation of good ale, and what he describes as the “simple, delicious dishes made from fresh local ingredients you will find in pubs in this guide”.

The beer and food writer Susan Nowak and her co-editor Jill Adam, Deputy Editor of the Good Beer Guide, are sure-fire guarantees that there is nowt here but good, honest fare, as they say in Yorkshire.

This sixth edition of this popular guide is again an indispensable source of proper pubs serving proper food alongside proper beer. There are 600 pubs in all, a wide range, including a good selection of Scottish entries, many of which will be familiar to Scots imbibers as well as diners.

And if you want to try some at home, there are also recipes from around the land, including one for chicken breast stuffed with skirlie from the Kintail Lodge Hotel at Glenshiel. **AMcL**

Published by Campaign for Real Ale £14.99(CAMRA member £12.99)

APPLICATION FORM

I wish to join the Friends of the Scottish Brewing Archive, and enclose a crossed cheque or postal order, payable to the Friends of the Scottish Brewing Archive, for the appropriate amount, (remember £10 is the minimum subscription)

Name _____

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To the Manager:

Please pay to the Scottish Brewing Archive Trust, Account No 21695230 Sort code 83-06-08 at the Royal Bank of Scotland, 36 St Andrews Square, Edinburgh, EH2 2YE, the sum of £ _____ immediately and on the last day of January each year until further notice.

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Andrew Woods
The Acting Treasurer
Friends of the Scottish Brewing Archive
48 London Street, Edinburgh, EH3 6LX

If your address has changed please contact:

The Membership Secretary
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The Scottish Brewing Archive was established in 1982 to collect and preserve the records of the brewing industry in Scotland and to make them available to researchers. It is funded by the industry and employs a part-time Archivist. There are records of more than 120 companies including breweries, maltings, a cooperage, some public houses and hotels, the Brewers' Association of Scotland and the Institute of Brewing (Scottish Section). It has a library of historical, scientific and technical books, some dating to the 18th century, and periodicals. There is also a collection of cans, bottles, advertising material, beer labels, and brewing equipment.

The Archive is open to the public. Please contact the Archivist for further information or to make an appointment.





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