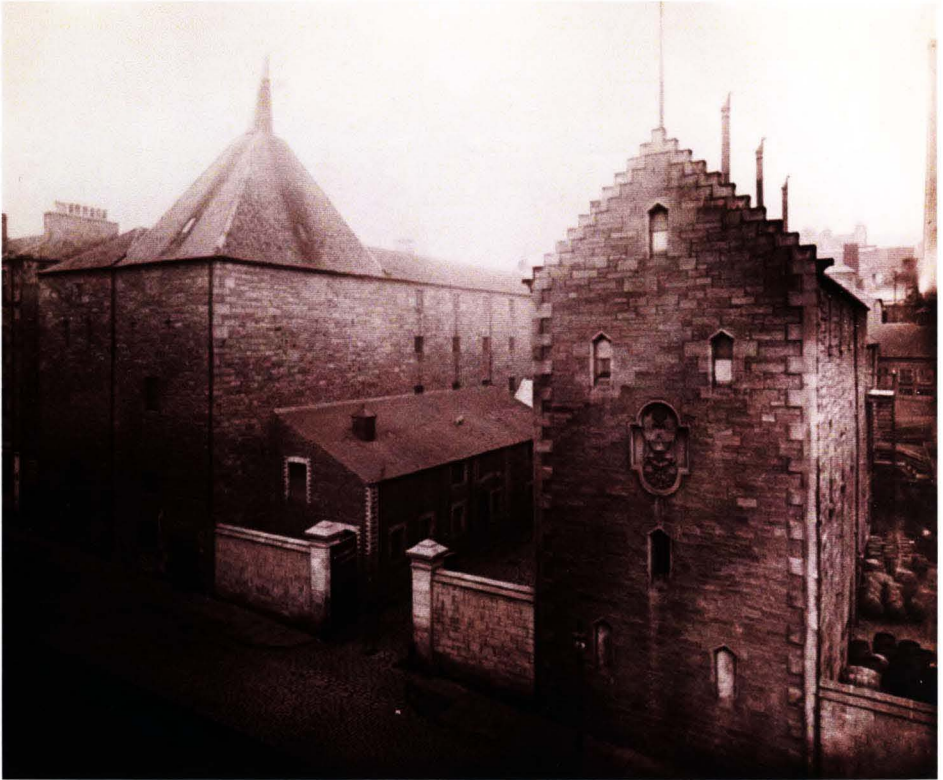


THE ANNUAL JOURNAL OF THE

---

# Scottish Brewing Archive Association





**William Younger's Holyrood Brewery in its heyday.**

Some of this site can still be identified today if you look carefully, amid all the modern trappings of buildings that have developed in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be near the Scottish Parliament, the visitor attraction Our Dynamic Earth and the new offices of The Scotsman. The brewing heritage of this historic area deserves to be better recognised.

---

# SCOTTISH BREWING ARCHIVE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

Volume 8

ISSN 1463-029X

Winter 2009/10

## CONTENTS

How to Contact Us	3
Editorial	4
The Scottish Beer Heritage Centre	5
Ten Years of <i>Cask Marque</i> in Scotland	9
Strength Behind Bars! Aitken's of Falkirk	11
References	18
Tribute to Sandy Hunter	20



Copyright rests with contributors and the Scottish Brewing Archive Association

Views expressed in the Journal are not necessarily those of the Scottish Brewing Archive or the Association

(c) Scottish Brewing Archive Association

## How to Contact Us:

### President

Harvey L. Milne  
12 Rosebank Gardens  
Parkneuk  
Dunfermline  
Fife  
KY12 9BW

01383 736230  
harveymilne@tiscali.co.uk

### Vice President

Leslie Hutcheon  
17 Caroline Terrace  
Edinburgh  
EH12 8QY

0131 334 3832  
les.hutcheon@lineone.net

### Treasurer

Duncan Kellock  
92 Beauclerc Street  
Alva  
FK12 5LE

01259 761353  
07803 854983  
duncankellock@hotmail.co.uk

### Secretary

John D. Martin  
41 Auchingane  
Swanston  
Edinburgh  
EH10 7HU

0131 441 7718  
07519 279564  
Martin.j7@sky.com



## Editorial

Welcome to the new Journal, first since the change that saw the Scottish Brewing Archive Association established.

This issue sees John Martin's case for a Scottish Beer Heritage Centre to draw attention to the proud history of Scotland's brewing tradition.

Also in this issue, Harvey Milne has information on an aspect of today's beer scene and Forbes Gibb outlines the history of one of the Scottish brewing companies that succumbed to changes in the industry in the 1960s after a long and proud existence. Aitken's of Falkirk deserves to be better remembered.

John Martin's article is illustrated with Edinburgh beer labels from my own collection, examples of which I donated to the Archive. As a child I loved the Aitken's "Strength Behind Bars!" posters, but the first beer poster to catch my eye was for William Younger with the slogan "Get Younger Every Day". For decades that company promoted its products on a huge billboard near Haymarket station in Edinburgh. That site today features advertising for Deuchar's IPA – who would have thought in the old days that an ale from the Caledonian Brewery would feature where William Younger once reigned?

These days Scotland tends to be better recognised internationally for whisky than for ale, stout or lager and yet, as the contents of the archive testify, our brewers were once renowned around the world.

Recent news of the first single malt whisky to be distilled and bottled for sale in England for 100 years is a reminder that Scotland's distillers thrived rather better over the past century as international traders than their brewing counterparts once the designation "scotch" gained geographical protection for Scotland's whisky but not beer.

The great brewing city of Edinburgh is home to a heritage centre for whisky, but not beer. So let's hear it for Scotland's brewing story. To assist the task of getting the word out, a leaflet about the Association is included with this Journal so that you can renew your membership and recruit new members. More copies can be provided.

### **Allan McLean**

15 Mountcastle Bank, Edinburgh EH8 7TA  
[allanpmclean@googlemail.com](mailto:allanpmclean@googlemail.com)

Mobile: **07531 129 892**

## The Scottish Beer Heritage Centre

After a lifetime's work with the largest brewer in Edinburgh – a city that was once one of the world's greatest brewing centres – **John Martin** outlines the case for Scotland's magnificent beer history to be showcased.

Although I have only been a member of the Scottish Brewing Archive (now SBA Association) for just over a year, I have been a beer enthusiast for many years and have tasted, whenever possible, the wide range of excellent beers brewed in Scotland.

I am proud to have worked for Scottish & Newcastle all my working life and left prior to the Heineken / Carlsberg takeover. During my career I worked in Holyrood and Fountain breweries in Edinburgh and all the other S&N breweries throughout the UK and have witnessed a great deal of change in the industry during that period, some good and some not so good.

A few months before I left S&N, I decided to work towards creating a Scottish Beer Heritage Centre in Edinburgh and to make it accessible as a visitor attraction, covering the following:

1. The brewing process
2. The history of beer in Scotland and Edinburgh
3. Beer research and education
4. Promoting Scottish beers

Before I explain my ideas further it will be useful to put it into context.

### **Brewing in Scotland**

Scotland is well known throughout the world for its whisky, due to the abundance of good quality water and suitable grain, however not as well known is its richness in brewing heritage, with a tradition that stretches

back beyond that of whisky distilling with the Picts reputed to be noted brewers of spruce and heather beers.

Over the years, brewing in Scotland grew to such an extent that in 1700 there were 522 brewers operating in the County of Fife alone. However it should be noted that beer became part of the staple diet at a time when water supplies were still very poor in many towns.

The reputation of Scottish beers was recognised in other countries with beers being exported to England, Holland, Belgium, the Baltic States and to Scottish expatriates in America and the West Indies. New export markets in India, Australia and the Far East were also developing, mainly as a result of colonial and military activities. One of the beers at that time, India Pale Ale (IPA) was quickly adapted in Edinburgh where the hard water was suitable for light sparkling beers of this type. In fact many beers produced today still use the term IPA.

By the 20<sup>th</sup> century the brewing industry in Scotland had become concentrated in three main areas, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Alloa, although there were other major breweries situated in Perth, Dundee and Falkirk. Edinburgh however was by far the main centre and became world famous for its Pale Ales in particular.

### **Edinburgh – Britain’s Capital of Brewing**

The secret of Edinburgh’s success as a centre of brewing came from the excellent quality of water available from underground wells that ringed the city and came to be known as “The Charmed Circle”. Edinburgh’s long and illustrious brewing pedigree goes back as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century when the monks at Holyrood Abbey started it all. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century commercial brewing was sufficiently well established for a powerful Society of Brewers to be formed to regulate the trade.

By the 18<sup>th</sup> century some of the most famous names in Scottish brewing folklore had become established in Edinburgh, names such as Drybrough’s, Campbell’s, and Younger’s would be familiar for two hundred years or more. In fact, Edinburgh employed approximately 45% of the total workforce involved in the brewing industry in Scotland at that time.

At its peak in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Edinburgh could boast some 40 breweries, with a concentration situated in or either side of the



Canongate (part of the Royal Mile). In 1870 the Scottish Standard reported that “The South Back of the Canongate of Edinburgh is more famous for breweries than any other street in the United Kingdom.”

By 1960 there were still nearly 30 breweries in Edinburgh, although many of the brewing companies were taken over and by 1970 the number was reduced to seven. Scottish & Newcastle began with the merging of two famous brewing names, William Younger’s and McEwan’s to form Scottish Brewers in 1931 and then in 1960 merged with Newcastle Breweries.

Today Edinburgh’s sole surviving brewery is Caledonian Brewery, which began in 1869 and continues to brew excellent beers such as Caledonian 80/- and Deuchar’s IPA.

### **The Beer Heritage Centre**

To ensure we never forget that Edinburgh was Britain’s Capital of Brewing at one time, I thought it appropriate that a Beer Heritage Centre was developed. However at this stage it is only an idea.

When I first started my plans last year I undertook a great deal of research and met a wide range of people to explain my thoughts. By building up contacts and through them exploring and adding other ideas, I produced an outline of my intentions.

My research involved frequent visits to the Glasgow University - Scottish Brewing Archive and I must say a big thanks to all the archive staff, who were all very helpful. I also visited the Coors (Bass) Brewing Museum in Burton upon Trent, the Guinness Storehouse in Dublin and the recently refurbished Heineken Experience in Amsterdam. During these visits I was able to see first hand what makes a successful attraction and learnt some of the pitfalls to avoid. I have also visited a selection of museums in London, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The Centre will not only act as a reminder of Scotland and Edinburgh’s past brewing heritage, but also as a living memory and part of the capital’s community history. Above all it needs to be interactive in such a way that people will find it more than just interesting or informative. As an attraction, visitors need to be involved and entertained. I plan to tap into people’s senses of sight, smell, taste, hearing and touch with also a little brain power required at some of the stages.

I think it is equally important to bridge the gap between the history of brewing and modern day, an example of this would be the use of touch screen computers allowing interaction of the brewing process.

The Centre would also have a bar for sampling and tasting a variety of beers and a private room that could be hired for meetings, presentations or for corporate hospitality.

I am in the process of writing a feasibility study report expanding on my ideas so that I can take it to the next stage for further development. People I have met have mentioned that the concept is a good idea and have not dismissed it out of hand, which has given me great impetus.

I am aware that during the current financial downturn it may be difficult to get this off the ground, however I am not one to give up easily and I will persevere with this until it becomes reality, even though it may take several years.

I am working with Sharon Fraser on this venture and together we will form a working party with other people once we have something more tangible. I would be grateful if anyone could contact me with ideas for the Heritage Centre which I can consider or if you have any interesting or humorous stories or unusual facts relating to beer when working in a brewery.

**John Martin**

Please contact me either by phone on **0131 441 7718** or by E mail [\*\*martin.j7@sky.com\*\*](mailto:martin.j7@sky.com)

## Ten Years of *Cask Marque* in Scotland

Cask Marque was established just over 10 years ago by a group of far-sighted people in the brewing industry who recognised that beer sales and those of cask in particular were falling. They wanted to reverse the trend, but what could be done?

The answer was to set up a Trust - *Cask Marque* - to promote and administer a Beer Quality Award for Cask Conditioned Beer. *Cask Marque* was set up as a completely independent trust and is supported by almost all the major breweries and pub companies and other bodies associated with the brewing industry. As we are independent we have no axes to grind and we therefore enjoy our reputation of being fair and unbiased. All the Assessors (we prefer the title Assessor rather than Inspector!) are former brewers or technical or quality assurance managers who have retired or been made redundant and *Cask Marque* now has around 40 Assessors with a total of well over 1,000 years experience in the trade.

Initially we concentrated on the *Cask Marque* award and we now have around 5000 outlets accredited to the award in the UK. However, our skills as Assessors and Trainers have taken us into other areas, including full cellar and bar audits which cover everything which affects beer quality, including cask, keg and small pack. We have also looked at beer and cider dispense times, temperatures and techniques, and at the installations themselves. In conjunction with the industry, we have also developed charters for glass care and distribution depots, and we carry out audits in these areas. We also deliver training courses in cellar management leading to the ABCQ award which is accredited by the BII.

In Scotland in 2001 we had about 70 accounts which had achieved the *Cask Marque* award, mainly sponsored by Caledonian Brewery and J.D. Wetherspoon. There was at that time no Assessor in Scotland and the Assessor from the Warrington Area would come up 2 or 3 times a year, scoot round all the accounts then retreat back south of Hadrian's Wall!

However, having been made redundant for the second time, I took on the area in 2001, and am the only Assessor in Scotland, covering about 20,000 miles a year and visiting each of the now 186 accounts at least twice. I have also inherited the nine accounts and the training remit for Northern Ireland! In Scotland I cover everywhere from Berwick to Wick

and from the Isle of Whithorn up to Plockton and Skye. If you want to know where the pubs are, please visit the *Cask Marque* website. I also cover the cellar audits and deliver the training courses in Scotland.

A recent survey indicated that over 30% of consumers recognise the *Cask Marque* as an assurance that good quality cask beer is on sale, and as cask beer is just about holding on in a declining beer market, we are doing all we can to contribute to its success.

We celebrated our first ten years last year – here's to the next ten!

Cheers!

**Harvey L Milne**

# STRENGTH BEHIND BARS!

## James Aitken & Co (Falkirk) Ltd

The story of a brewery that advertised itself with an illustration of a caged tiger and the slogan “Strength behind bars!” is explored here by **Forbes Gibb**.

### History

John Aitken founded the brewery in 1740 [Barber, 2005] and by the end of the century it had a valuation for insurance purposes of £300 (£180 fixed capital and £120 stock) [Donnachie, 1979]. It was registered as a limited liability company in June 1900 (registration no. SC004558) and had an authorised share capital of £150,000, which was split equally between ordinary and preferential shares.

The company made a modest number of acquisitions and investments, several of which reflected the strength of their trade in the north of England. The acquisitions comprised: Thomas Ireland’s North Port Brewery, Brechin; George Storey & Co’s Rothbury Brewery, Rothbury, and T.Y. Paterson & Co Ltd, Edinburgh. They also took a minority interest in Duncan & Dalglish Ltd of Newcastle and made a small investment in the Border Brewery Ltd of Berwick-upon-Tweed.

The North Port Brewery was offered to Aitken’s for lease in 1910 at £55 per annum and James Aitken was of the opinion that it could be used to brew light (i.e. temperance) beers. It was therefore agreed to lease the brewery and payments of around £150 were approved in 1910, with a little over £570 being invested the following year.

The brewery was initially run by a former assistant brewer at Aitken’s, Andrew Dickson, but he resigned in 1912 and was replaced by Hunter Campbell. Campbell indicated that he would take the brewery on, if Aitken’s would finance him, and it was agreed to sell him the assets for just over £950 in 1913.

Unfortunately Campbell could not make a success of the business and by 1914 a sequence of poor results and unpaid bills meant that Aitken’s decided to call in the loan and the brewery was closed [AIT1/6/1].

Around the same time that Aitken's decided to lease the North Port Brewery in Brechin the company was approached by representatives of George Storey & Co who owned the Rothbury Brewery. Storey's was nearly bankrupt and offered Aitken's a lease at £40 per annum. It was agreed to take a five-year lease and in 1911 Aitken's paid a little over £640 for the stock, plant, etc.

Despite some concerns about results it was agreed to acquire the brewery property for £1,000 in 1912. However, by 1922 the results had deteriorated significantly and the decision was taken to wind up the business. In 1926 part of the reason for the poor performance of the company came to light: the former manager, Mr Farndale, was found to have appropriated around £625. The premises were finally sold to Messrs John Lee for £1,325 and the final accounts showed a loss of over £2,200 which debt was taken on by Aitken's [AIT1/6/2].

Aitken's also considered acquiring the Border Brewery Ltd in Berwick-upon-Tweed. The Border Brewery was actively seeking a buyer in 1910 following the failure of the Law Guarantee and Trust Society Ltd which had backed over £24,000 of debentures [BB1/6/1]. The Border Brewery was discussed by Aitken's directors several times in 1910 and it was eventually agreed to appoint accountants to assess the business.

A favourable report was received and the directors were minded to make the acquisition. However the company's solicitor Mr Gair, who was also the representative of the Royal Bank of Scotland, was opposed and negotiations with the Border Brewery were terminated.

Despite the bank's opposition to the acquisition, Aitken's made a small investment in the Border Brewery of 337 preference and 70 ordinary shares. The Border Brewery subsequently merged with Johnson & Darling Ltd of Berwick in 1924 and Aitken's accepted an offer of around £350 for its shares.

In 1907 James Heugh Aitken took on a personal minority interest in the Newcastle firm of Duncan & Dalglish Ltd through a substantial investment of £8,000. Bass, Ratcliff & Gretton Ltd of Burton-on-Trent took on a controlling interest for £30,000. James was appointed Chairman and the whole of Duncan & Dalglish's Scotch Ale trade was given over to Aitken's. As this investment had been made for Aitken's benefit James was guaranteed against loss by the company.

Aitken's interest in Duncan & Dalglish continued into the 1930s (representing about 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the shares) but the death of James in 1933 meant that it lost its position on the Board and hence its influence. The final status of Aitken's shares is not clear from the minute books but it is assumed that they were acquired when Bass took over Duncan & Dalglish in 1940.

The other major acquisition made by Aitken's was that of T.Y. Paterson Ltd. T.Y. Paterson had originally been located in Glasgow but moved production to Edinburgh in 1902. In 1936 William Finlay re-opened negotiations with the directors of T.Y. Paterson (an initial approach had been rejected in 1929 [McMaster, 1987]) and was authorised to make a bid of 10/- per share and to raise it to 15/- if necessary. In the event an official offer was made at the lower price of 7/- per share with a lump sum of over £7,600 to be distributed amongst the Paterson directors [AIT1/6/2]. The offer was accepted in November of that year and by 1937 the copper and other movable materials had been sold at auction and the buildings offered for sale with an upset price of £4,000.

The acquisition had been made purely to acquire the Paterson trade and T.Y. Paterson Ltd was formally wound up on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 1940. Two other acquisitions were also explored: the Vaux bottling plant in Glasgow (1915) for a price of around £6,500, and the Wellshot Brewery Co Ltd in Cambuslang (1916). Although Aitken's bankers approved of the latter investment neither came to fruition [AIT1/6/1].

James Aitken was a vocal member of the Scottish Licensed Trade Defence League against temperance [Rutherford, 1985] but Aitken's, like many brewers, hedged its bets by producing some low or non-alcohol beers.

Among its more unusual investments, therefore, was a £50 fee to Cecil Clay in 1916 for his secret process for the production of non-alcoholic beer. Such secret recipes were clearly the order of the day as it was also approached by Valentine Ord and Messrs Smith Garrett along similar lines [AIT1/6/1]. One American brewer, S. Liebmann Sons, Inc of New York, licensed Aitken's formula in order to produce Good Old Scotch Brew, which contained less than one half of one per cent of alcohol.

Throughout the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Aitken's advanced numerous loans to licensees in order to secure their trade. It also assisted local sports clubs, such as East Stirlingshire FC and Falkirk FC, and took a charitable stance to the heirs of long-serving customers who

found themselves in financial straits even though this was “quite against business principles”.

Its paternalism was underlined by the small but frequent donations made to numerous charities and associations in the area. In 1947 it also introduced a contributory pension and life insurance scheme for its employees (ranked foreman and upwards) through Scottish Widows [AIT8/4/1].

The 1920s and 1930s were difficult times for many breweries in the UK and Aitken's suffered a number of small setbacks. In addition to the losses on the Rothbury and Brechin breweries it discovered in 1927 that Mr Cammell, the cashier at its Newcastle branch, had appropriated several hundreds of pounds.

This was not the only fraud that was perpetrated: Mr J. Macpherson, the Dundee agent, pocked £500 and Mr J.W. Jude, another Newcastle employee, made off with around £200. However, although Aitken's did briefly consider a proposal to sell the company in 1928 and was approached about converting the company from a private to a public one in 1936, it was able to remain independent and built on its reputation as a producer of high-quality ales.

In 1943 government concerns about fuel and the costs of transporting goods meant that Aitken's had to look at the exchange of trade with other brewers [AIT1/6/3] and eventually agreements were reached with McLennan & Urquhart Ltd (Dalkeith), Campbell, Hope & King Ltd (Edinburgh), and Robert Younger Ltd (Edinburgh) for the supply of beer to Edinburgh and the Borders in return for trade in Falkirk.

Despite successfully surviving the Second World War the company was eventually taken over in September 1960 by Northern Breweries of Great Britain Ltd. The brewery in Falkirk was closed in 1966 and the company was finally dissolved in 1968.

The site was sold to Falkirk Town Council in 1970 for £141,000 and is now occupied by an Asda supermarket. The Aitken name was revived briefly in the 1990s by Bass plc who had acquired the brand through the merger with Charrington United Breweries Ltd in 1987.

## **Brewery**



The original brewery in Falkirk was located on the south side of Market Street (now Newmarket Street) to the West of Lint Riggs. In 1797 additional land was purchased on the north side of Market Street and this eventually became the main location for its brewing operations.

The brewery, also referred to as the Falkirk Brewery, was further expanded in 1866 and 1878 and then reconstructed in 1900 to a design by Peter Lyle Henderson [Pearson, 1999]. Water was originally drawn from a disused mine on the Bantaskine Estate via a four-inch pipe which passed under the Union Canal and through a pump room in Bleachfield. However, in 1910 the first of two new artesian wells was sunk inside the brewery grounds to a depth of 518 feet thereby guaranteeing a cheap and reliable source of water. A second well was sunk in 1927 to a depth of 700 feet from which water was pumped at a rate of 100 gallons per minute [Anon, 1940].

In 1830 a patent was taken out for a carbonic acid gas plant for the preservation of beer in a bottle, an indication of the forward thinking of the company at a time when bottled beer was relatively uncommon [Anon, 1940].

A carbonating and bottling plant was acquired in 1910 and completely modernised in 1938 [Anon 1938]; a canning line was added in the late 1950s [Anon, 2002]. Bottling was also undertaken for T.Y. Paterson & Co Ltd, William Murray & Co Ltd, John Fowler & Co Ltd, and George Younger & Son Ltd [AIT15/1].

By the 1960s the brewery employed over 200 workers and was producing thousands of barrels a week while the bottling plant was capable of filling 1,200 dozen bottles an hour [Leslie, 1961]. The brewery had two mash tuns, the smaller of which was used for brewing stout, and five fermenting vessels [Anon, 2002].

Aitken's also had its own private railway sidings which connected to the LNER and LMS railways via Grahamston station [Peaty, 1985]. After its sale the main site was cleared in 1970 with the landmark 180-foot terracotta brick chimney being demolished by army engineers.

The last visible link with the past is the company's former office above the Goose on Newmarket (formerly the New Market Bar) in Lint Riggs which was used for some time by Tennent Caledonian Brewers Ltd. Aitken's had a number of facilities outside of Falkirk including, at various

times, offices in Aberdeen, Glasgow, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Richmond, and the Mains Maltings in Linlithgow.

The maltings was built in 1875 on the site of the Mains Distillery, which had closed in 1855 [Udo, 2006]. It had a frontage of 190 feet and was supplied with water from a well 600 ft deep in the nearby meadow [Barnard, 1889].

Linlithgow was ideally placed to take advantage of the excellent barley from farms in West Lothian and trains conveyed malt to the brewery at Falkirk from a railway sidings attached to the maltings [Barnard, 1889]. The maltings was converted into housing in the 1980s.

## **Products**

Aitken's built up a significant business outside of Falkirk for its strong ale and it was able to expand its market across the central belt of Scotland by taking advantage of its proximity to the Forth and Clyde, and Edinburgh and Union canals, which opened in 1790 and 1822 respectively.

A significant proportion of its sales was eventually to overseas markets and its reputation was underlined by acclaim for its high class ale at the Sydney (1879), Melbourne (1880), Calcutta (1884), Adelaide (1887), Melbourne (1888) and Brisbane (1897) exhibitions [Anon, 1940].

Nimmo [1880] records that: "The business, which has been conducted for four generations by the same family, has, from first to last, been very successful on account of the superior quality of the brew; and year by year Aitken's Ale continues to gain wider ground as a favourite beverage".

The third statistical account of Scotland [Leslie, 1961] states that "its products are known throughout the world, having won many awards in places as distant as India and Australia".

In fact, Aitken's reputation was sufficiently great that it was highlighted and recommended as an exemplar brewer for managers running clubs, etc., for service men [Anon, 1908]. At the London International Brewers' Exhibition in 1921 the company won the cup and gold medal, the highest awards at the exhibition.

The company trademark was a large red letter 'A' and it successfully contested an allegation by Bass that this represented a "colourable imitation" of Bass's red triangle [Burns, 2002].

A Peacock trademark was registered in 1877 for use in Burma [Dean, 2002] and the Nun Nicer brand in 1895 [Dean, 2000]. The Peacock Brand was eventually sold to McEwan-Younger Ltd in 1932 [Dean, 1994]. Aitken's employed a number of slogans over the years including:

Strength behind bars!

Just what I want!

The Ace of Ales

"A" match for the best

Take a note of the trademark A.

Aitken's produced a wide range of beers over the years which included: 1953 Coronation Ale, 90/- Ale, 120/- Ale, Brown Stout, Brussels Stout, Export Ale, Milk Stout, Pale Ale, Sparkling Ale, Stout, Strong Ale, Three Guinea Ale, and Victory Ale.



Aitken's Brewery



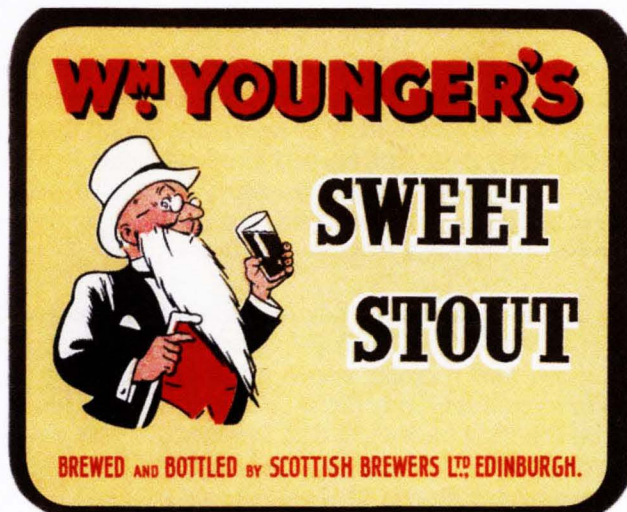
An original map showing the site of Aitken's Falkirk Brewery

## References

- AIT1/6/1 (1900-22) Minute book of directors meetings and AGMs. Glasgow: SBA.
- AIT1/6/2 (1923-34) Minute book of directors meetings and AGMs. Glasgow: SBA.
- AIT1/6/3 (1934-46) Minute book of directors meetings and AGMs. Glasgow: SBA.
- AIT8/4/1 (1947) Contributory pension and life insurance schemes. Glasgow: SBA.
- AIT15/1 (nd) Reminiscences of former employee, Alex Young. Glasgow: SBA.
- Anon (1908) Pure beer for club and service men. War Office Times and Naval Review.
- Anon (1938) New bottling plant. Falkirk Herald, 21<sup>st</sup> May.
- Anon (1940) 200 years of progress. Falkirk: James Aitken & Co., Ltd.
- Anon (2002) Memories, by the people of Falkirk. Annual Journal of the Scottish Brewing Society, 4, pp4-18.
- Barber, N. (2005) Century of British brewers plus: 1890-2004. New Ash Green: Brewery History Society.
- Barnard, A. (1889) Noted breweries of Great Britain and Ireland. Vols.1-4. London: J. Causton.
- BB1/6/1 (1902-1924) Minute book of directors meetings and AGMs. Glasgow: SBA.
- Burns, E. (2002) The mighty Bass. Annual Journal of the Scottish Brewing Archive, 4, pp23-26.
- Dean, P. (1994) The Silver Peacock trade-mark. Scottish Brewing Archive Newsletter, 24, pp16.
- Dean, P. (2000) The Monk brand. Annual Journal of the Scottish Brewing Archive, 2, pp31-32.
- Dean, P. (2002) The labels of Jas. Aitken & Co., Falkirk. Annual Journal of the Scottish Brewing Archive, 4, pp41-43.
- Donnachie, I. (1979) A history of the brewing industry in Scotland. Edinburgh: John Donald.
- Leslie, W.S. (1961) The third statistical account: Stirlingshire – Burgh and Parish of Falkirk. London: HMSO.
- McMaster, C. (1987) Scotland's forgotten breweries: T.Y. Paterson & Co. Ltd., the Pentland Brewery, Duddingston, Edinburgh. Scottish Brewing Archive Newsletter, 9, pp19-20.
- Nimmo, W. (1880) The history of Stirlingshire. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Glasgow: Thomas D. Morrison.

- Pearson, L. (1999) British breweries: an architectural guide. London: Hambledon Press.
- Peaty, I.P. (1985) Brewery railways: an historical survey. Newton Abbott: David and Charles.
- Rutherford, T. (1985) Prohibition - the brewers' response. Scottish Brewing Archive Newsletter, 6, pp8-10.
- Udo, M. (2006) The Scottish whisky distilleries. Edinburgh: Black and White Publishing.

**Forbes Gibb is of the Department of Computer and Information  
Sciences,  
University of Strathclyde, 26 Richmond Street, Glasgow G1 1XH**



## TRIBUTE TO SANDY HUNTER

It is more than two years since the death of one of the best-regarded figures in Scottish brewing in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sandy Hunter of Belhaven Brewery, Dunbar. Here is the tribute paid to his memory by former Belhaven Managing Director, **Stuart Ross**, at the funeral service in May 2007.

I first met Sandy in 1973, when I was a raw laddie who had studied law and then accountancy in my home city of Glasgow before joining a company called CCH Investments. CCH had just bought a small brewery in Dunbar and the chairman Gordon Currie wanted me to get involved in putting in some basic financial structures. He thought it would be a good idea if I met up with Sandy who was chairman and managing director of Belhaven, just to see that we would be compatible.

Sandy's interviewing technique was not text book driven. Over a few glasses of Belhaven's finest in a pub in Whitburn, he expounded on his views of life covering a wide variety of subjects. During this monologue he made it abundantly clear that he had three pet hates in his life which were lawyers, accountants and Glaswegians. It was therefore with a great degree of apprehension and trepidation that I responded to his first question - So Stuart, tell me a little about yourself...

Things were to get worse for Sandy because the Reverend McMartin retired very shortly after that from Belhaven parish church and, would you believe it, the new minister was a guitar-strumming, fully bearded young guy who looked to Sandy like a child-of-the-sixties hippy who had lost his way on the road back from San Francisco. This was of course Laurence Twaddle from Dennistoun in the east end of Glasgow. Sorry Sandy, we Glaswegians hunt in packs - nae luck.

Despite our disparate backgrounds Laurence, Sandy and I became good friends and Laurence even earned the title of Brewery Padre, although it didn't pay much - the odd beer in the pundy shop I think. Laurence is bitterly disappointed not to be able to be here today and I know Sandy would share that sentiment.

Representing the sixth generation of the Johnstone family who founded malting and brewing at Belhaven in 1719, Alexander Dudgeon Hunter was born in 1920 in Monkscroft House, which to this day remains the family home. Monkscroft was built in 1814 at the same time as the

brewery was being reinstated after a significant fire and Sandy was brought up there along with his two sisters Mary and Betty, the latter was later to make him the uncle of Rosemary and Richard.

Sandy was educated at Clifton Hall (primary school), Merchiston and Heriot Watt where he studied brewing. During the war he was a Captain in the Royal Engineers but, due to asthma problems, he didn't serve abroad and spent a lot of his time stationed in Yorkshire.

He became a master brewer, learning the intricacies and finer points of his profession at Dryborough's in Craigmillar before coming under the watchful tutelage of his father Ellis Hunter who had taken command of the business at a very young age, following the death of Sandy's grandfather, also called Alexander Hunter. His granddad died in tragic circumstances when he was struck by shrapnel from a flywheel at the West Barns maltings. Ellis, like Sandy, lived for 87 years until 1964 when Sandy took the helm.

But not for long - in 1972 Sandy's mum Eilidh died and, to help pay death duties, the brewing and maltings business was sold along with seven local pubs for a price of just over £80,000 - seems quite cheap by today's standards!! Sandy stayed on for a further ten years, working for the new owners CCH, before retiring in 1982.

The love of Sandy's life was Iris Patricia Findlay whom he met at Heriot Watt and who served in the WAAF during the war. They were married in 1944 when they were in their mid-20s. They had 46 happy years together enjoying a rich tapestry of social events with friends from farming, brewing, the army, rugby, the church, the lifeboat and their many other activities. They were best friends as well as spouses and perhaps their only disappointment was that they were never to be blessed with a family.

Whilst Monkscroft was of course a much lonelier place for Sandy when Pat died in 1990 he still had the great friendship and companionship of his housekeeper Sheila who has been such a caring and kind friend to him over a period of almost 40 years.

On one of my last visits to see Sandy in Belhaven hospital, he wasn't responding much and he barely recognised me although he did say something along the lines of - "You're looking rather smart today" - in such a way as to suggest that I didn't usually look very smart.

It was difficult to make conversation with him that day and he wasn't really looking himself at all, he wasn't with it. However, Shelia came in shortly after that and his face just lit up like a beacon. It was as if someone had flicked on the switch. His smile personified comfort, pleasure and happiness as he recognised Sheila. For me to watch that was indeed a very lovely and very poignant moment.

I obviously didn't know Sandy when he was a young man, but I have seen many photographs of him and he cut a dashing figure. He was a handsome man, a cross between Sherlock Holmes and P G Wodehouse's Jeeves. But Sandy's life was much more in the mould of Bertie Wooster. He loved fast cars and one of his pride and joys was his Sunbeam Alpine which he used to show in the vintage car rallies. He put it to good use on many occasions, using it as an open air carriage to ferry the young lifeboat queen on annual Gala Day which was one of the many ways he supported his favourite charity, the RNLI.

He was a keen sportsman, a fast sprinter and he played his rugby on the wing at Dunbar in the halcyon days of Rupert Chalmers-Watson, Jackie Smeal and many of his other great mates. He was an animal lover, often holidaying with Pat in Africa on safari and he was very proud of his two pet Alsatian dogs. Indeed all the pet food costs went through the books of the brewery coded to security expenses. Whilst I never thought this was fully justified, I didn't think it particularly wise to raise it as an issue. I was petrified of his pets and after an evening's overtime in the office I always used to edge my way gingerly out of the brewery with my back firmly to the wall.

At Belhaven, Sandy's primary interest was of course the art of brewing cask conditioned ale and he was an absolute star, an icon in the eyes of the Campaign for Real Ale which did so much to put Belhaven on the map during Sandy's time in charge. Sandy's job as a master brewer was also his great passion and he loved nothing better than to hold court in the sample cellar at the close of business each day and share his views on the most recent ales with his trusted foreman and right hand man Jock McCallie. If the beer was in great nick he glowed with pride; if it was slightly awry in taste or nose or colour or clarity then it was of course always the fault of his head brewer Alistair Mouat. Jock was world famous for three words in the sample cellar "Aye, I ken".

But he was also a closet marketeer and he is widely accredited as the creator of the famous motif Belhaven Bill who was a pot-bellied avuncular sailor with ample beard and even more ample girth whose



profile was usually framed against Dunbar harbour. I remember incurring the sharp end of Sandy's tongue - and that didn't happen very often - when I introduced a bottle label which depicted a slightly slimmer version of Bill with a change of sweater from plain to hoops. It didn't take me long to get Sandy's message - don't mess on my territory sonny.

Sandy used his interest and contacts to great effect when the then reigning Miss World, a lovely lass from the Pacific island of Guam, visited Belhaven in 1980. Always a man with an eye for a pretty girl, Sandy whisked her down to the harbour in the Sunbeam and then out with the lifeboat which was tracked by a helicopter. Out of the helicopter one of the crew climbed down a rope ladder with a box of Wee Heavy tucked under his arm for the beauty queen.

This was one of the great photo shoots of all time and it was, of course, all over the Scottish press the next day. I remember well him bursting into my office with more than a glint of triumph in his eyes - there you are, you young know-it-all, go burn your marketing text books and follow the instincts of your boss.

Sandy lived in the right era. He didn't enjoy the aggressive style and questioning of his boss Gordon Currie and his main objective was to keep out of his way. If Currie was on the prowl, he used to jump in the car to go up to the pet food shop in Edinburgh, or he would escape from the brewery out to the Monks Retreat garden where he could potter around and enjoy the relative peace and tranquillity of his favourite greenhouse. Sandy, I often surmise, would not have welcomed the fruits of the technological age. Mobile phones, laptops, Blackberrys - what a nightmare of accessibility.

Another killjoy for Sandy would undoubtedly have been speed cameras. A complete and utter pest when you've got a Saab which can touch over the ton on the uphill stretch of the old A1 at Pencaig Hill.

Sandy was an avuncular man, very kind, very friendly and generous in spirit, a man who got considerable vicarious pleasure from the success and happiness of others. He possessed a keen sense of humour and was full of life and vitality. All who knew him had great respect and affection for him, including all his employees at Belhaven. He was a true gentleman brewer, perhaps the last of his kind.

I am sure I speak for us all gathered here today when I say that I consider myself very lucky to have had my life enriched by my friendship with Sandy. I send condolences and sympathy to Richard, Rosemary and the wider family and I have one final message for Sandy - great characters like you, who live forever in the memories of those you have left behind, never really die.

**Stuart Ross**





**Packing cases being prepared to deliver bottles of a famous Edinburgh brew to an appreciative and thirsty audience.**

Over on the other side of Edinburgh from Holyrood, William McEwan set up the Fountain Brewery in the west of the city in 1856. Here, too, is an area that has undergone dramatic change in recent years. Its brewing heritage should be better recognised in Scotland's Capital, which once was such an iconic brewing centre on the world stage.

---

# **M<sup>c</sup>EWAN'S BEER**

*Everyone's Choice*

