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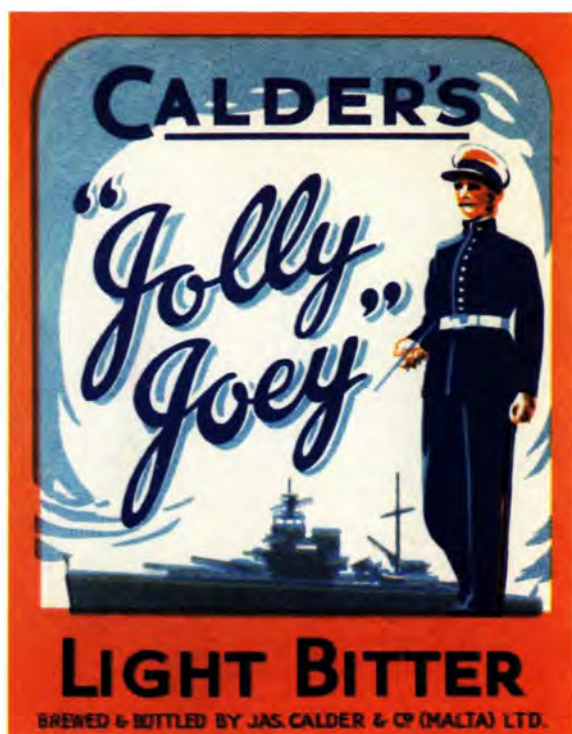
Scottish Brewing Archive



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A Life on the Ocean Wave . . .



SCOTTISH BREWING ARCHIVE

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Editor: Edward Burns

All archival enquiries should be addressed to:

Wiebke Redlich

The Scottish Brewing Archive

Glasgow University Archives

13 Thurso Street

Glasgow

G11 6PE

Phone: 0141 330 6079 Fax: 0141 330 2640

E-mail: W.Redlich@archives.gla.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.archives.gla.ac.uk>

Please send all articles and letters for the Journal to:

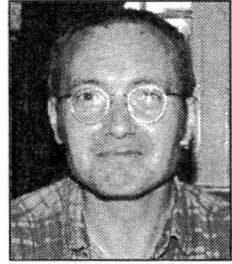
Edward Burns, 30 Earls Court, Alloa, FK10 1BZ

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EDITORIAL

I'm a member of the Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Wood. It is a society that does not appear to have any branches in Scotland. I suppose that's probably because we don't put any of our beers in wooden casks anymore, although I'd love to be proved wrong on that one.



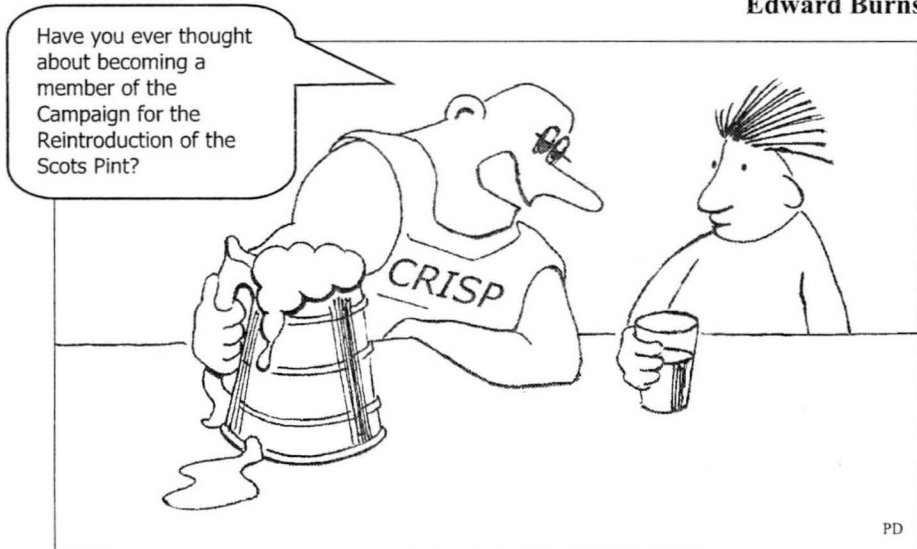
You know, the English do a lot of things better than us; rural pubs with old beams and old dogs, for one. They possess a much more intense desire to preserve their past. We, I reckon, are less keen to do so.

The past is important. We can learn so much from it. That's why archives like the SBA play such a crucial role in today's world, a direct link between us and those who once were, and to the memories of buildings long gone.

In those good old days we used to send whisky around the world on sailing ships for no other reason than that it somehow imparted to the spirit nuances in character attainable by no other means. It's strange, I know, but perhaps such a journey also added desirable qualities to ale once shipped in those same breathable wooden casks.

If someone could give me a grant to test the theory, I'd be ever so grateful.

Edward Burns



A MERCHANT PRINCE OF ALE

(This article, by Steve McGrail, was first published in *The Scots Magazine* in October 2002)



*And there will be Lang-kail and
Pottage
And Bannock of Barley-meal;
And there will be good sawt
Herring
To relish a Cog of good Ale*

So goes the old verse, and it very much describes the food of most Scots in days long gone by – plus one of their favourite tipples. And, when it comes to

the latter, Scots have been “relishing cogs” of it for a good while, and have been emptying them with corresponding enthusiasm, too!

Granted, today’s drouthy chieles aren’t maybe drinking proportionately as much ale as their forebears did (with wine sales overtaking beer sales, especially amongst young people), but they’re still doing their best. One person they have to thank for the foaming liquor that they now sup was born in Alloa 175 years ago.

He was William McEwan, bearer of what was to become a famous surname. His trade, brewing, has a long history in Scotland, much of it traditionally concentrated in the area beside the Forth and around Glasgow. But the quality of the product wasn’t always that high — the “good old days” didn’t necessarily apply when it came to much Scottish ale of the past. The better reputation of the modern item owes much to the likes of William McEwan and other brewing giants such as John and Robert Tennent and William Younger. They were responsible for many of the innovations that we now take for granted.

Before their arrival, finding a good pint could be a bit of a lottery. In 1589 Fynes Moryson wrote that Scottish beer was so bad that “it would distemper a stranger’s body”. A century later the English traveller Thomas Kirke was almost as dismissive, commenting that “whilst the better sort brew it in large quantities ... it is sorry stuff”. Little wonder, then, that Burns made so much of coming across “good ale” since he probably had to drink a

lot of the "sorry stuff" first! Sadly for him, though, he never saw his country's brewing boom, from the late 1870s onwards.

McEwan wasn't born into a brewing family; his father was a shipowner. But there were family connections with brewing: his uncle John Jeffrey, who owned the Heriot Brewery in Edinburgh. William opted for a career in brewing and served his apprenticeship with his uncle. He couldn't have had a better introduction because the Heriot complex, although fairly small, was reckoned to be highly innovative. Jeffrey, for instance, pioneered lager brewing in Scotland in the late 1880s, along with John Tennent.

He took to brewing like, well . . . like a vigorous yeast coming into contact with a vat of malt just waiting to be fermented . . . He positively bubbled with ideas and when only 29, in 1856, he established his own Fountain Brewery at Fountainbridge in Edinburgh. He probably used family capital for this but we can't be sure: records of his life are disappointingly few — many have been lost or apparently destroyed. The Fountain was handy for the Union Canal and the Caledonian Railway line, as he had quickly worked out that the railways would be the best way of moving his product beyond the capital.

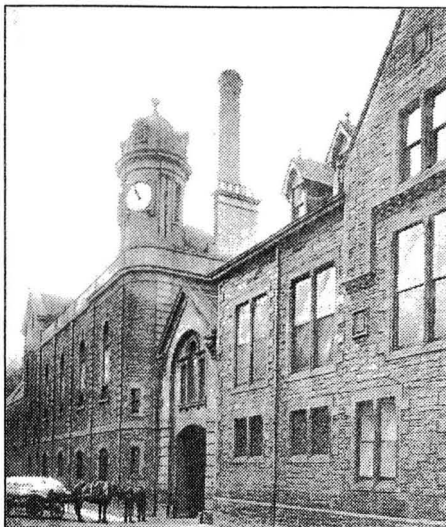
Leaving aside his overseas trade, McEwan's "empire" would eventually stretch from Wick to the Borders, even going into Tyneside and Teesside. By 1865 his Newcastle and Stockton ventures equalled about 10 per cent of his turnover. Eventually, it would go farther south still. His arrival on the scene coincided with — and of course helped along — the 19th century's brewing boom. To the Victorians, hard work and science could solve most problems, and one that had to be solved was that of quality. Brews could still be erratic, so customers complained and profits were potentially under threat.

McEwan, together with Youngers and Tennents, came up with the classic Victorian answer: they hired specially-trained scientists, set them up in well-equipped laboratories, told them to find out what was going wrong and how to fix it. The scientists duly did so, and if this "appliance of science" seems obvious commonsense to us now, it would have seemed positively revolutionary to some of the brewers of earlier times.

Over the years, McEwan's various enterprises prospered. His products were particularly popular around Glasgow, in the thirsty mining and steel communities of Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and Lanarkshire, and in more rural areas like Fife, Angus and Perthshire. Later, in the 1890s they would be available in London, too, although this was an area basically dominated by his rival William Younger.

Scotland alone wasn't enough for McEwan's restless spirit, however. There was also the chance of huge sales across the seas, throughout the

British Empire. The prospect beguiled him, although he fully knew the difficulties of supplying that market. There were high shipping charges, constant breakages, huge insurance costs and long journey times. His fellow brewers had wrestled with these with some success.



William McEwan's Fountain Brewery

By 1850 they were somehow managing to ship 21,000 barrels to the likes of the East and West Indies, Asia, India, New Zealand and Australia. High temperatures in the ships' holds on these extended runs did nothing for the beer but fortunately, India Pale Ale (invented in England) was proving a solution. Its high hop content was an excellent preservative. McEwan and the others soon realised that IPA could be even more profitable than their strong Export beers and so they began producing it in bulk.

In 1863 he made his first serious foray into the Australian and New Zealand markets, sending keg and bottled beers to booming centres like Hobart, Wellington and Dunedin — Down Under liked what they got and clamoured for more.

It was a bit of a struggle for him in the beginning, nevertheless. For example, the total cost of sending one particular consignment to Guadeloupe came to over a third of the value of the beer itself with quay duties, hire of porters, storage and so on. He persevered and in 1868 sent out fully 250 shipments worth nearly £34,000 to his agents overseas, a huge sum then. His beers seemed to be making a name for themselves, McEwan's Export probably the best known of them all.

To make sure that his name was always to the fore, McEwan went for the (at first) radical idea of giving the beers brand names and registered trade marks to distinguish them from the competition. Dryborough's and William Younger had also tried this new idea and had similarly found that it paid off.

All the while, the industry was changing and expanding. In 1850 there were around 100 small brewers, with just 25 of them producing about four-fifths of the national output. McEwan was one of the market leaders, and riding high. By 1870 the industry's capital was over £2 million — half of it

accounted for by the top six companies. One of them, naturally, was his. Between 1884 and 1905, his "authorised capital" stood at £1 million, the biggest in Scotland, alongside William Younger. Not for nothing has brewing industry expert Ian Donnachie called McEwan "clearly the most dynamic of the Scottish brewery capitalists". McEwan would have liked to have heard that. He was a staggeringly rich man, as one of the aristocracy of brewing jokingly called the "beverage" rather than the "peerage"!

The fortunes of these new aristocrats were often intertwined; thus, for instance, McEwan's sister Janet married James Younger, the Alloa brewer. One of their sons was William, who joined his uncle's firm once his education was over. Another son was George, the brewer and Conservative politician, later to become Viscount Younger.

But money didn't seem to be everything to McEwan, even if he had a lot of it. When he died in 1913, his total estate was worth £1.5 million, an enormous amount then. It came from shares in his own company, various railway companies in Britain and abroad, plus mining concerns.

A Scot of his times, McEwan also had a strong belief in the value of public service, and so decided to go into politics. Not that his decision was wholly altruistic: the growing Temperance Movement was affecting his industry and by becoming an MP, he could challenge it more effectively. He did so (as did George Younger) once he was elected as a Liberal MP for the Central Division of Edinburgh in 1886. To give himself more time for politics and other public duties he turned McEwan's into a limited liability company, passing over management responsibility to his nephew William. Cannily, he still kept hold of most of the shares, though. The new set-up was called William McEwan and Co.

As a local MP he seems to have been well respected; at any rate, in the 1895 election he was returned unopposed. But he never made much of an impact at Westminster. The exception was when he made the headlines for demanding that the government take action to give Home Rule to the Irish, not exactly a popular cause at the time. He stayed on until 1900.

On retiring, he might have gone for some sort of title or honour but didn't seem interested. As Ian Donnachie observed, he didn't like pomp and show. He was happy enough knowing that he'd succeeded in what he'd set out to do, to become a successful industrialist.

Once asked about gaining a title, he said: "No, I would rather be first in my own order than be at the tail of another." The matter was closed.

He became involved in philanthropy and gave hefty sums to his adopted city, and a Rembrandt painting to the National Gallery. Also, he had architect Sir Robert Rowand Anderson design what he hoped would be a building for Edinburgh University's new Medical School. The amazing

result in Bristo Square, The McEwan Hall, has been (rather unkindly) described in *The Buildings Of Scotland* as looking like "magnificent petrified blancmange". It never became a teaching facility.

The University had wanted a special hall for graduations but the government refused to stump up the £150,000 required, so this building became the graduation hall. It has been used as that and for other important functions ever since its formal opening in 1897. McEwan allowed himself a bit of vanity with it: inside, one of the panels shows an actual image of himself. The University gave him an Honorary LLD degree, he received the Freedom of the City Of Edinburgh and in 1907 he was made a Privy Councillor.

Illness blighted his declining years, and there was the loss of his wife in 1906 to contend with. When he died in 1913, aged 86, an obituary called him a "shrewd, hard-headed hard-working business-man, one of the merchant princes of Scotland".

His legacy remains, although the McEwan family name has been absorbed into the mighty Scottish & Newcastle Breweries, which has an annual turnover of £3.5 billion.

The Fountain Brewery still functions, one of seven S.&N. breweries in Britain and Ireland. The old man would have been amazed to see it as it is today, turning out the equivalent of two million barrels every year. He would surely have approved: he'd set out to take on the best, and this would be all the proof he needed that he'd achieved his goal.

Steve McGrail

The QUESTION

Why are Leith Docks now closed to the public? I used to like wandering unhindered from dock to dock, past an old old crane that must surely have been used hundreds of years ago to put casks of beer and whisky onto ships. There were ships of every shape and form, and you could walk for mile upon mile through a nautical wonderland. Now they've put up a big gate and you and me are denied yet another of life's pleasures. Why?

COASTING ALONG - THE MCEWAN FAMILY SHIPS

In 1902 *Vanity Fair* described William McEwan as ‘a very well known yachtsman.’¹

At 75 years old, he had the money and leisure time to spend on sailing for pleasure. In contrast, his grandfather, Peter Jaffrey, uncle William McEwan and father John McEwan were all in the shipping trade to make a living. They owned small sailing vessels of less than 90 tons that plied between Alloa and Grangemouth, through the Forth and Clyde Canal to Glasgow, or down the east coast to Newcastle, London and over to France. These were coasting vessels, the sailing equivalents of the later Clyde “puffers”, carrying unglamorous cargoes like pig iron and coal, and probably beer.

Evidence about their ships from 1814-1855 has been gathered from three main sources: documents in the William McEwan & Co Ltd collection; family testaments (wills) and inventories at the National Archives of Scotland, and Lloyds Register of Shipping. Most of this research was carried out in 1995, however, the new collection of McEwan letters purchased by Scottish & Newcastle plc in 2002 has provided the final piece in the jigsaw: why and when the family sold their shares in their two vessels. William McEwan’s notebooks and letters sent to him by his relatives provide facts about the business and the ships, the family dynamics, the shipping trade, news of seafaring acquaintances. Quotes from the most relevant documents are included, complete with spelling peculiarities and lack of punctuation.

The earliest document referring to ships is from 1814 and shows that John McEwan was already in partnership with Peter Jaffray, his future father-in-law, and with Robert Crawford in the sloop *Fame*.² This Jaffray/McEwan/Crawford partnership was to last until 1855.

William’s uncle, William McEwan, was a master mariner in Alloa. He died on 4th March 1827 and at that time was joint owner with James Smith, an Alloa merchant, of the vessel, *Mary* of Alloa, each holding thirty-two 64th shares. She had been built in 1824 by James Ainslie, Shipbuilder in Perth, and was registered at the Customs House in Alloa on 19th Oct 1824. The vessel is described as:

‘... *Mary of Alloa* which is of the burthen of seventy three 23/94th Tons and whereof William McEwan aforesaid is Master;.....that the said Ship or Vessel has one fleisk Deck and one Mast that her length from the

*fore part of the mainstem to the after part of the stern post aloft is 54 feet 3 inches, her breadth at the broadest part taken above the Main Wales is 18 feet two and 1/4 inches, her depth of Hold is 9 feet 9 inches that she is Sloop rigged with a running bowsprit; is square stemmed carvel built; has no Galleries and no figure head;....'*³

After William's death, his widow Mary offered to sell half of the vessel to his brother, John McEwan, for £350,⁴ but instead an agreement was reached whereby John bought eight 64th (1/8th) parts of the vessel as follows:

*'In consideration of the sum of £87, 10/- sterling instantly advanced and paid to me by John McEwan Shipowner in Alloa as the adequate and agreed on price and value of eight, sixty fourth parts or shares of the ship or vessel called the Mary of Alloa. with a proportional part of her Boats Cables Chains Anchors Sails Masts rigging and appurtenances belonging to her.'*³

William's father, John McEwan, was described in various documents, especially on receipts for building work on his new house, as 'captain', 'ship-owner', 'seaman' and 'shipmaster'. There is no evidence in the collection as to where or when he received his naval training, whether locally, in the navy or merchant navy. Indeed, biographical information about him is sparse. He certainly made a good enough living from the coasting trade to build a new three-storey stone house at 15 Forth Street, Alloa at a cost of over £700 in 1827-28 for his wife and growing family. John died on 13 January 1832, leaving a widow, Ann, and children Janet, William, Anne, Peter and the unborn John. He had drawn up his will on 30th December 1831, just 15 days before he died.

The inventory of his personal effects shows that he owned shares in these sloops:

32, 64th shares of the *Fame* of Alloa, valued at £175,
 22, 64th shares of the *Ann* of Alloa, valued at £73.6/-8d, [52 tons]
 16, 64th shares of the *Catherine* of Alloa valued at £100,
 8, 64th shares of the *Mary* of Alloa valued at £50. [73 tons]

He left instructions about the vessels in his will:

'..... my said Trustees are hereby empowered to trade with the foresaid vessels and any others in which I may have an interest at the

time of my death and to sell and dispose of my share thereof in whole or in part and generally to manage the same in such manner as they shall consider for the interest and benefit of my family and the free profits thereof and of my whole moveable estate to be divided amongst my lawful children procreated or to be procreated share and share alike.'⁵

His wife Ann, Thomas Jeffray, his brother-in-law and David Fotheringham, a brewer at Cambus, as Trustees of his will, kept on John's share in at least one vessel, *Fame*, to provide an income for his young family. Mary, Ann and Catherine had been disposed of by the early 1840s. In 1835 a new *Fame* was built at Duncanson's yard in Alloa. It was described in Lloyds Register as being a schooner of 85 tons, registered at Grangemouth, a Clyde coaster and was owned in partnership with the Crawford family. From 1832, the brothers Robert and John Crawford were the working partners in the arrangement. By 1842, another vessel, *Rose*, had been acquired. She was an 80-ton schooner, built at Alloa in 1837, and registered at Grangemouth⁶. Peter Jaffray owned a third share of the *Rose* when he died in 1842. He also owned one share of the Stirling Steam Boat Company.⁷

A record of the expenses for *Rose* and *Fame* survives for 1843-1845⁸ which includes the amounts spent on wages, provisions, horse hauling, insurance, pilotage and also the proportion of shares owned in the vessels. A statement of accounts was drawn up every year and the profits divided up among the partners in due proportion to their shares in the vessels.

1843		1844	
Stirling & Co. for 1/2 duty for 6 months	\$ 296-0-0	Stirling & Co. for 1/2 of the 7 months trade	\$ 274-11-6
Maintenance ship	210-10-0	June 20 - 1/2	448-18-9
Maintenance on the ship	6-0-0	June 21 - 1/2	447-5-3
Horse Haulage	93-12-0	June 20 - 1/2	428-3-3
Stirling & Co. Pilotage	69-11-6		
Stirling	67-0-0		
Light Grangemouth	18-7-6		
Light on the Canal	16-19-9		
Stirling & Co. Pilotage	31-2-0		
London & Glasgow	20-10-0		
Stirling & Co. Pilotage	10-5-0		
London & Glasgow	12-0-0		
Stirling & Co. Pilotage	1-10-0		
Stirling	55		
Stirling & Co. Pilotage	2-5-0	A Crawford for 2/5	100-0-2
Stirling	2-15-0	B Crawford for 2/5	71-3-9
Stirling & Co. Pilotage	8-10-0	John Crawford for 2/5	71-3-9
Stirling & Co. Pilotage	10-10-0	John Crawford for 2/5	136-17-9
Stirling & Co. Pilotage	57-10-0		
Stirling & Co. Pilotage	102-12-16		
		Stirling & Co. Pilotage	389-11-0
			1138-18-6

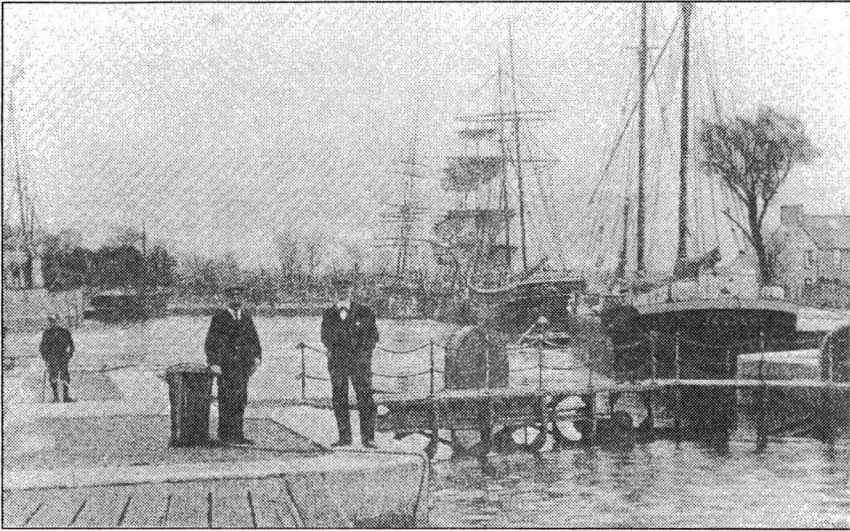
A list of voyages also survives for *Rose* and *Fame*, 1852-1853, scribbled in pencil in one of William's notebooks.⁹ It shows that *Rose* shuttled back and forth from Grangemouth to Newcastle, London, Demkirk [?Dunkirk] and Calais with Mr Crawford, Mr Edward and Mr Hutton as masters. *Fame* went from Grangemouth to Newcastle, Demkirk, London, Leith, Calais and Rye with Mr Rankine and Mr Beattie as masters.

There is also a separate account for voyages and expenses for two trips by *Fame* to Gothenburgh and one voyage each to Dpaine [De Panne?] and Newcastle in 1853.¹⁰

Although the Crawfords were the working partners, Thomas and William Jeffrey, and William and John McEwan all kept a close eye on the business. While working in Glasgow between 1845-1847, William purchased copies of *Lloyd's List* (a weekly shipping paper) to send to his brother John (then a schoolboy), no doubt to keep abreast of shipping news.

By 1851 the Jeffreys and McEwans were raising concerns about the business and were considering selling the shares in the *Rose* and *Fame* to purchase an annuity for Mrs McEwan to provide her with a more stable income. However, it was another four years before they got out of the trade altogether. Letters from 1851-1855 provide the evidence for the decline and ultimate dissolution of the shipping partnership with the Crawfords. Mrs McEwan's brother, William Jeffrey, a minister at Riccarton near Kilmarnock, gave the reasons for selling up in this letter to William McEwan, dated 18 Feb 1851.¹¹

'....we considered your mother's connection with the Rose and Fame. It appears that for a considerable time she has received no dividend from the Crawfurds. No settlement of the Fame's accounts has been made since 1849 I think. Than such a state of matters nothing can be more unsatisfactory. We came to the conclusion that Thomas as one of the Trustees on your late Father's estate should wait upon the Crawfurds, and urge a settlement after which your mother, it is thought, should sell her interest in the ships. We have not the slightest hope that they will do any more good. The Fame is laid up, and her Commander is wandering like another personage to and fro on the face of the earth. The Rose is running without insurance and may be lost altogether. Indeed, we see no alternative but to be done with the concern. The Shipping Trade is annihilated. The Free Trade measures of the country have introduced a large amount of Foreign ships into our commerce and all the slow ships, which can not make distant voyages with expedition have been



Alloa Docks c1900

(Courtesy of Clackmannanshire Libraries Archive Department)

thrown upon the Coasting Trade which has literally reduced it to nothing. All persons holding property in this class of vessels will see it day after day gradually disappear. Such are some of the beautiful fruits of Free Trade. The incomes of thousands will be destroyed and though the masses may get on well enough while they continue to devour the property of those who employed them, they will have their own day of retribution, when they have none to give them employment. I shall be glad to hear from you touching the above arrangement. Your mother is perfectly willing to follow the course which is considered next but it is well to do nothing hastily.'

William's sister, Anne, wrote:

'Alloa March 8th 1851

My dear William

We are glad to see your letter on Thursday. We thought you had forgotten the way to write.

Mother was at Throsk [Thomas Jeffrey's farm] two or three days last week. Tom [Jeffrey] had never been at Grangemouth he excused himself by saying that though John and William [Jeffrey] thought it advisable to be off with the Crawfords still he had not had Mother's opinion on the subject. The real secret is he can't

*bear to part with the vessels he thinks protection will soon be on again and then the shipping trade will be as good as ever. Mother told him all he had to do in the mean time was to request a settlement with the Crawfords then we would see what should be done.'*¹²

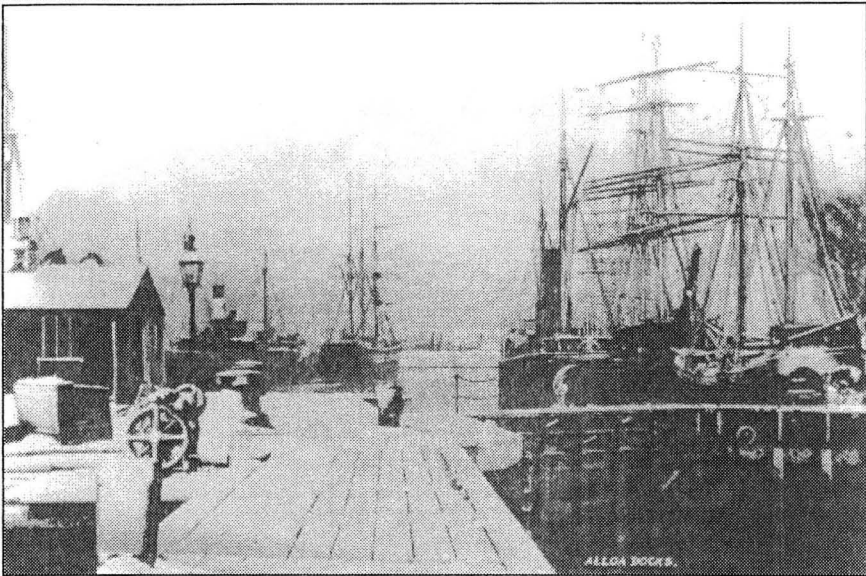
In 1853 Thomas Jeffrey was conducting negotiations with the Crawfords about the accounts and about selling the McEwan share of the *Fame*. This was not well received by the Crawfords who would rather have continued with the partnership. On the 21st November, Thomas wrote to William about the negotiations and that Robert Crawford and his son John had visited Thomas at Throsk to get the accounts settled for the ships. Thomas had offered to sell their share of the *Fame* for £150. Attached to this letter is a list of questions in William's handwriting - rate of seamen's wages; how many tons in a keel of coals; if a keel of coals is the same as a keel of any other commodity; average amount of provisions requisite for a man for a day or a week.¹³ It looks like he was querying the accounts.

John Crawford, then in charge of the Crawford share of the vessels, must have been annoyed by the questions as Thomas Jeffrey wrote back to William 9 days later:

*'Since seeing you in Edinburgh I have made an offer of 21/64 shares of the Fame to John Crawford & I went to Grangemouth on Monday and settled the accounts as you seed the copy of. I received £3.10.10½ as your Mothers part for the Rose the Fame nothing. I found her loading Pig Iron for France at 19/- per ton & the Rose is to load Iron for London I think at 16/- per ton he is to accept the offer in course of post to Chrystle & McFarlane at £150 = he considers himself cut by being wrote to by you and would rather have continued the partnership if your mother or me had settled the accounts but if not he would rather give £150 for the Rose, we made the offer for the Fame that the price be paid when the receives the vandition [vendition]'*¹⁴

While the Crawfords bought the share in the *Fame* for £150 in 1853/54, the share of the *Rose* does not seem to have been bought until 1855, as this letter from John McEwan implies: *'I was glad to hear that we were in a fair way of getting out of the hands of the Crawfords, and that we would get something pretty satisfactory from them for the Rose.'*¹⁵

And here the references to the ships cease.



*Alloa Docks in winter, a long long time ago
(Courtesy of Clackmannanshire Libraries Archive Department)*

The depression in the home shipping trade did not stop William using ships. In July 1853, when he was working at Jeffrey's brewery in Edinburgh, he speculated by sending a cargo of 150 bags of oats to Rückers & Co in Melbourne on the ship *Jessica* from Dundee. He then sent a ton of arsenic to Melbourne on the *James* from Leith.

A letter from his brother John shows how his speculation could have turned out a financial disaster:

*'My uncle saw in the papers lately that Rückers premises in Melbourne had been burnt to the ground and property to the amount of £30,000 destroyed. I hope it has not affected your speculation. Your oats must surely have been sold before the burning took place.'*¹⁶

From 1857, after William opened Fountain Brewery, he used ships (not his own) to transport barrels of beer around the British coast. The first company letter book¹⁷ reveals consignments by sea to Anstruther, Aberdeen and Nairn, but consignments of barrels to Glasgow went by rail. Once he started exporting to Australia in 1863 and to New Zealand in 1864 the company cash ledgers contain dates and costs of these early "adventures", including name of ship, freight charges, insurance etc. They also have lists of drawbacks [reclamation of beer duty on exports] which include the names

of all the ships used. By 1867 the cash ledgers also have pages for foreign suspense accounts that have all his “adventures” to foreign shores. For example in 1870, destinations for his beer included the Caribbean, Chile, San Francisco, Australia, Penang, India, Ceylon, Shanghai and Java – a long, long way from the coasting trade in Alloa, Grangemouth and Newcastle but that’s another story.....

Alma Topen

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 - 6 Lloyds Register of Shipping, 1845
 - 7 NAS. SC67/36/22, pp 97-105. Inventory and testament of Peter Jaffray, 1842
 - 8 SNM13/3/4. Accounts for *Rose* and *Fame*, 1843-1845
 - 9 SNM13/3/24. William McEwan’s notebook, 1852-1857
 - 10 SNM13/3/4. Settlement of the *Fame*, 1852-1853
 - 11 McEwan letter 223. 18 Feb 1851
 - 12 SNM13/3/19. Anne McEwan to William McEwan, 8 Mar 1851
 - 13 McEwan letter 485. Thomas Jeffrey to William McEwan, 21 Nov 1853
 - 14 McEwan letter 48. Thomas Jeffrey to William McEwan, 30 Nov 1853
 - 15 McEwan letter 451. John McEwan at Bonn to William McEwan, 15 June 1855
 - 16 McEwan letter 466. John McEwan, Riccarton, to William McEwan, 4 Aug 1854
 - 17 SNM3/1
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THROUGH REVOLUTIONS, STORMS, AND EARTHQUAKES THE TRAVELS OF JAMES MARSHALL

Between August 1875 and January 1876 James Marshall, a board member of the Glasgow brewers J & R Tennent, undertook a journey to research export markets for Tennent's beer. He must have travelled regularly on behalf of the brewery, however, we only know in greater detail about this particular journey in the 1870s, which took him first to South America, then to the United States and finally to the Caribbean. During his travels he kept in regular contact with the management of J & R Tennent by means of letters and telegrams, and it is due to the survival of James Marshall's copy letter book that we can today get a rare insight into the way Tennent's managed their beer export department over one hundred years ago.

By the time of James Marshall's journey, J & R Tennent had been involved in foreign trade for many decades. A consignment of Tennent's ale for expatriate Scots in the Americas was recorded as early as 1797 (McMaster and Rutherford; no pagination) "and by the mid-1850s the firm had connexions with nearly a hundred different markets in the West Indies, United States, India and Australasia" (Donnachie, p. 225). It appears that Tennent's ale was particularly suitable for export as it kept well and the company continued to expand its international markets. By the 1880s J & R Tennent was named amongst the leading Scottish brewers in the export trade (Donnachie, p. 225).

Since the beginning of the 1830s Tennent's exports to North and South America were mainly shipped from Liverpool (Donnachie; p. 136). James Marshall, thought to be the son of Liverpool shipping agent William Marshall, was a merchant in the city. In 1861 he entered into a partnership with William Middleton Tennent to carry out the business of general merchants, commission agents and forwarding agents in Liverpool under the name of Tennent and Marshall (T1/3/1). Between 1864 and 1882 James Marshall became one of the Board of Trustees who ran the business of J & R Tennent (T3/2; Introduction by D I H Johnstone). Unfortunately, nothing more is currently known about James Marshall.

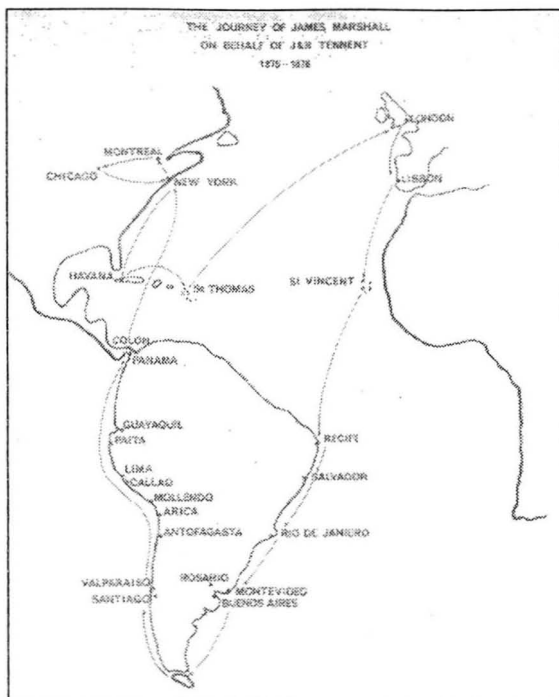
It is thanks to research carried out in the 1980s that James Marshall's letter book has become an easily accessible source in the Scottish Brewing Archive. In 1985 David I H Johnstone, former Head Brewer of Tennent Caledonian Breweries, undertook the painstaking exercise of transcribing and annotating the entire letter book. As a result of Johnstone's work, the SBA now not only hold the original letter book, but also its full

transcription. This is a great aid since the original letters, surviving mostly only on the thin copy paper, are often difficult to read.

The letter book contains 19 letters and notes of varying lengths from which we can follow James Marshall on his journey (see map). He caught the steamer "Elbe"

probably from London or Southampton around 10 August 1875, sailing via Lisbon and St Vincent (Cape Verde), where the ship stopped for coal, to South America. There his first stop would have been Pernambuco (now Recife) in Brazil, but bad weather did not allow the ship to land there. He then proceeded to visit Bahia (now Salvador), Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires and Montevideo before sailing through the Strait of Magellan for Valparaíso. On the western side of South America he visited Arica, Callao, Lima, Paita and Guayaquil before sailing to New York via Panama. James Marshall also stopped in Montreal and Chicago before embarking on his return journey via Havana and St Thomas, one of the Virgin Islands. He probably returned to Britain in February 1876.

This was a long journey, but James Marshall did not have to travel unaccompanied. Since David Johnstone's work on the letter book, a second copy has emerged which had been used on the same journey. It was put into the care of the SBA by D Macleod in 2000. This book (as yet uncatalogued) contains both business and private correspondence and it is from the more personal letters that it becomes apparent that James Marshall did not travel alone, as previously thought, but that he was accompanied by his wife. On 27 December 1875, for example, he mentions in a letter, addressed to "Dear Munro" that he decided "on sending home a portion of Mrs Marshall's



Map designed by David I. H. Johnstone

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jewellery. (She found she had too much with her, & in these foreign countries there was great risk of robbery.)" Marshall sent the jewellery home on board the "Britannia" where he had trusted the purser, a Mr Power, to deliver the precious freight to an A Riddell in Liverpool on 21 January 1876 when the ship was due to arrive in the city. The private side of James Marshall's travels are not the subject of this article, however, but the second letter book is here in the SBA for anyone wishing to carry out further research along those lines.

As to the business side of Mr Marshall's journey, he reported regularly to J & R Tennent on his findings abroad and advised the company on measures to be taken as a result of his observations. The letter book also shows how James Marshall tried to keep in close contact with the running of the business at home as he wished to be informed about the business in his absence and expected to be sent "extracts of foreign letters", which provided information on the market and the sales of Tennent's beer (T3/2; letter of 7 August 1875). The purpose of his expedition is described by him in one of his letters:

"Its [the trip's] chief objective & value, I take it, is to enable me to form an estimate of the character & requirements of these countries, to ascertain wherein our brand is defective or unsuitable & where an improvement could be made, to measure the extent & nature of the competition we have to face, to come presumably into contact with the dealers, & so to get as such principles etc. as will be useful guide for future business, [...]" (T3/1; letter of between 7 and 11 December 1875)

And this is what he did. His letters shed light on many aspects and problems of the export trade, such as shipping, the quality of beer in comparison to the competition, trade mark fraud and world events. In the following I have assembled snippets from the letter book to illustrate these aspects.

Exporting beer from one continent to another would "always be a risky business because of the uncertainties of shipping, storage and climatic extremes" (Donnachie; p. 142). Breakage was a common problem and thus Marshall regularly examined Tennent's stock as part of his work on his journey to see in what condition the product had arrived at its destination. On one such occasion in the Custom House in Callao, Peru, he reports the following:

"I [...] found the Beer without exception in good condition. The breakage, however, is dreadful. Partly, it must be owned caused by the wholesale pilferage that goes on in the Custom House, & which it seems impossible to prevent. At the same time greater care than ever must be taken in the strawing & packing at home. Hard straw must not be used & broad staves in the casks must be kept out. Green bottles also must be done away with & exclusively those of dark auburn used - as frequently insisted on before. An improved capsule must also be ~~used~~ introduced & you can have samples of such ready for me against my return." (T3/1; between 7th and 11th December 1875)

Poor quality of the beer could be another factor for lack of sales and Marshall checked samples of the Tennent's stock wherever he went. In Bahia Marshall observes that Tennent's beer "is not in repute here [...] the Beer was not good. I satisfied myself as to this by sampling a good many bottles taken from different casks [...]." He is however optimistic as he explains "I do not care to abandon the market however, as the consumption is large, & with a few shipts [shipments] of Beer arriving in good order, we shall bye & bye obtain a better footing." (T3/1; letter of 30 August 1875)

In Buenos Aires Marshall finds time to sample beer and stout from seven different shipments of 1874 (already at least a year old) and finds "some trifling differences of character in these". He requests "samples of the beer to be preserved till I return, if they are still on hand" (T3/2; letter of 29 September 1875). In general, though, Marshall could not find anything wrong with the beer in Buenos Aires and reports back to Glasgow: "The beer all round, I am glad to say, is in good condition, and is not surpassed by any in the market." (T3/2; letter of 27 September 1875)

Comparing Tennent's brand with the competition was another important part of Marshall's market research. In Bahia he notes: "Bass' Beer (Ihlers & Bell) & Hibbert's porter are the favourite brands, but, judging from what I sampled there is nothing whatever to hinder us from competing successfully with both. [...] The native Beer & porter – with English labels – are rubbish & cannot permanently damage genuine importations" (T3/1; letter of 30 August 1875). In Valparaíso, however, he finds a different native product. He writes:

"I must confess that, for the first time, I have been staggered by the quality of native beer. It is sound, a little dark in colour and 'aley' flavoured, and looking at its cheapness – just half of the price of

English beer – will prove I fear a formidable rival to our home manufacture." (T3/2; letter of 29 October 1875)

Apart from comparing it with other products, the popularity of their own brand could also be measured by the degree of trade mark fraud. While in Rio in early September 1875 James Marshall had noticed the problems caused to Tennent's exports by the falsification of their trade marks by local brewers. He reports:

"You may fancy the extent of the mischief we suffer from this fraud, when from a small brewery to which I gained admission, not less than 100 barrels were made, sent out capsuled and labelled with Bass and Tennent's marks. The proprietor laughed derisively when the irregularity was pointed out (he did not know who I was) and seemed to think it was rather a good joke. From a large chest he took out handfulls of our capsules and freely admitted that these were what he used." (T3/2; letter of 13 September 1875)

Marshall was optimistic though that a new law to be passed in Brazil the following January would give the much needed protection to all registered trade marks. For the moment, and although Tennent's trade was damaged by the trade mark fraud, he "did not think it desirable to raise the trade mark question thro' our own English representatives in Rio, as the native legislators are jealous of interference or even of advice from without after they have taken the matter up of their own hands." (T3/2; letter of 13 September 1875)

A few weeks later Marshall observes that the trade mark piracy can be seen as an indicator of the popularity of a certain beer, and even bemoans the fact that Tennent's labels are not illegally used in Buenos Aires:

"There is none of ours [labels] now falsified by the importing German houses [in Buenos Aires] which is not by any means a good sign. I should rather that it were and could be put down, than that the practice should be voluntarily abandoned." (T3/2; letter of 27 September 1875)

From the records available in the SBA J & R Tennent registered their oval label, which included the "T" trade mark in Brazil in 1895.

Political instability had an immediate effect on the sales of an expensive imported good such as Tennent's beer. And there was no other solution than to abandon the market until signs of improvement. One such case was

Uruguay in the 19th century. The country had gained independence from Argentina and Brazil in 1828 but continued to suffer from invasions of both neighbours. Furthermore the civil wars caused by the struggles between the liberal *Colorados* and the conservative *Blancos* caused the country to descent into anarchy until the end of the 19th century (*Der Grosse Ploetz*; p. 1317). While in Buenos Aires Marshall had been informed of the state of Montevideo, which he intended to visit. He describes the situation to the Tennent's trustees:

“Monte Video is in a dreadful state. The revolution is gaining ground, the city is besieged, troops are crowding the streets arresting suspicious characters, annoying if not insulting strangers, & neither life nor property is safe, while the steamboat communication [between] the town and B. Ayres is all but suspended. I expect to find my way down next Monday [...] but don't at all relish the idea.” (T3/1; letter of 29 September 1875)

However, despite these pessimistic reports, Marshall was not deterred from visiting the town himself, but only to find his fears confirmed that no sales were to be made there:

“When I was down in Monte Video there was really nothing for me to do. I saw some of the dealers & brokers but it was not in the least a question of price [even a low price would not help the sales]. In the present state of the country business is at a stand still [...]. There is no hope of a revival of business in this place until it is taken possession of by England or America or even Brazil, & these perpetual revolutions put an end to.” (T3/1, 29 October 1875)

Another factor which could cause the collapse of a market were natural disasters and James Marshall had witnessed the devastation caused by an earthquake in Arica, a seaside town on the border between Peru and Chile. The earthquake took place on 30 August 1868 and the two tremors and resultant tidal wave destroyed the entire town. Reports said that the Andes were seen to shake from the sea (T3/2; notes by D I H Johnstone, p. 28). Now, seven years later Marshall sees signs of improvement, but by no means a full recovery.

“In Arica I saw Mr Campbell an Iacuna agent & was glad to find that we were beginning to recover lost ground in his market; altho' the people both here & in Arequipa are still suffering from the effect of

the fearful earthquake & tidal wave of 1868. I never saw anything approaching the desolation of Arica, even now. Three fourths of the city are still a mass of ruins & you have literally to climb thro' some of the streets. It is or was a city of houses built on sand.

In next shipment to this market, some porter may be included and please to see that it is carefully selected." (T3/1;13 November 1875)

James Marshall must have been a man of great energy and reading through his letters shows how much effort was put into monitoring the success of Tennent's beer in the Americas. The export business was no longer a matter of trial and error as it had been in the earlier part of the 19th century, and by the 1870s Tennent's were making use of - albeit of a rudimentary form - market research to improve their sales. On his return journey, while still in Havana, James Marshall was already thinking ahead to his next possible trip. In the last piece of writing contained in the letter book he says:

"[...] and if it was found desirable that I should visit the other hemisphere next year, I think I could more profitably deal with them [i.e. Jamaica and Demerara which he could not visit on the present trip] on my way, say thro' Mexico and the Southern States of California, than now." (T3/2; notes of 21 January 1879)

Wiebke Redlich

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JOHN WRIGHT & CO PERTH'S FAMILY BREWING CONCERN

This article first appeared in the Brewers' Guardian in October 1960 (pages 45-57), and was later reproduced in a booklet. I have been unable to determine who to approach re permission to use the material, and if the author would care to make him or herself known I would be only too happy to mention them in the next journal. Some of the illustrations that originally accompanied the article have not been included here. (Ed)

Some fifty miles north of Edinburgh the small brewing concern of John Wright & Coy. (Perth), Ltd., carries on business from the Perth Brewery. It is an excellent example of the family concern upon which the modern brewing industry of this country has been built.

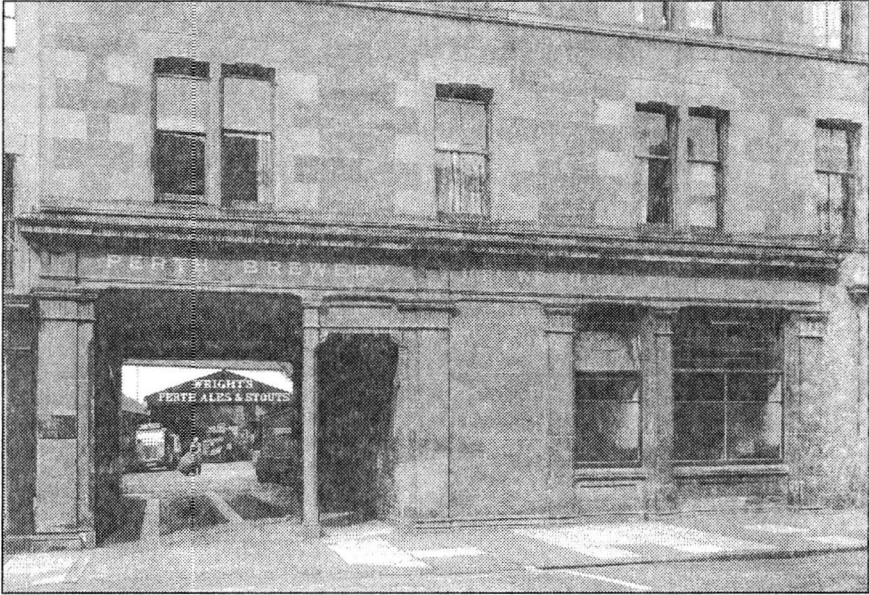
It has been suggested quite recently that the brewing industry of this country is rapidly moving towards eventual control by some twelve or fifteen very large companies; indeed, there are some who would have us believe that there is no place in our modern economic system for the small company.

Fortunately, one can still find small family brewing firms whose calm pursuance of their way, unperturbed by the appearance of the Goliaths of the day, is a reassurance of the great part they have played, and continue to play, in what is usually summed up in the phrase "our way of life". The continued existence of these small firms, side by side with giant concerns, is proof from within the industry that the consumer gets the drink he wants – and that the small firms can still offer as wide a variety as can be found in the houses of their bigger competitors.

Such a firm is that of John Wright & Coy. (Perth), Ltd., at Perth. They share with similar sized concerns certain fundamentals: they are old concerns, they have been owned by local families with strong local ties; the members of those families have always played a prominent part in the civic lives of their communities, and continue to do so to this day; their strong local ties are reinforced by a preference for local materials, particularly insofar as they are a mainstay of the surrounding agricultural community.

In the sophisticated atmosphere of modern business methods, these fundamentals may appear rather old fashioned. On the other hand, how many communities are there, perhaps, now regretting the passing away from their midst of a small family concern that was guided by personalities with a rich sense of local patriotism and paternalism which had a consolidating effect upon the whole community? The development corporations of the

modern satellite towns, in seeking to create a local homogeneity, have probably regretted their inability to incorporate into their plans a nice small family brewery.



*Brewery entrance, c1950s
(R. A. Laing)*

Since 1786

The Perth Brewery has without doubt been on its present site since 1786 – tradition has it that a brewery was in operation there somewhere around 1700; but the first definite fact known about the premises is that in 1786 some merchants in Perth, including a William Wright and a maltman, Alexander Ritchie, obtained from the Town Council a site for a brewery on part of the former lands of the Blackfriars Monastery. The venture prospered and when William Wright died in 1810 he was succeeded by his nephew, John Wright, who in 1835 became the sole partner and proprietor of the business, and from whom the company took its name.

John Wright naturally took a prominent part in local affairs; he was Lord Provost of Perth in 1831 and 1832 – a portrait of him wearing his chain of office hangs in the company's Board Room. He was engaged in the business for nearly half a century, and on his death there were various changes until in 1885 the business was acquired by Mr. Robert Nimmo, a banker of Bo'ness, and Mr. R. B. Wallace, a brewer from Alloa – two families which have continued to operate the brewery from that day.



Two men (anyone know who they are?) and a dog in the brewery yard, c1930s.

The business thrived under these two partners. During the first decade of their ownership they rebuilt the brewhouse and also constructed a new office block, with dwelling houses. They introduced the bottling of aerated waters, together with the bottling of cider, of Burton Ales, and of London and Dublin Stouts. Reflecting upon the so-called modern idea of offering the customer a choice of beers from other breweries, it is well to remember that this little family concern was already doing so sixty years ago. As the years passed, they added the handling of lagers and other beers on an agency basis.

A major step was the purchase of a small aerated water factory and beer bottling business in Dunkeld before the 1914-18 war. Though the firm had thus stepped into the world of mergerdom, it was not until 1931 that operations were finally closed down at Dunkeld.

Nimmo & Wallace Families

Just after the end of the 1914-18 war Mr. Nimmo's eldest son, Mr. Robert Nimmo, junior, became a partner in 1919; last December, Sir Robert Nimmo, as he is today, celebrated forty years' continuous service with the firm. Six years after young Robert's entry to the firm Mr. Wallace's son, Mr. Alexander Wallace, C.A., joined the firm in 1925. The business was then converted into a private limited company, Mr. Alexander Wallace becoming a director and secretary of the company – as he is to this day.

In 1926 the firm acquired the only other brewery in Perth, the South Inch Brewery, owned by Messrs. Muir & Martin, and which had been established in 1815. The sole partner, Mr. David Martin, an original member of the Institute of Brewing, then joined the firm's board.

It is interesting to note how the various members of the firm have at times given their services to local affairs. Mr. R. B. Wallace, one of the original partners, was a member of Perth Town Council, a magistrate, and honorary treasurer of the Town Council. Mr. Martin was for six years Provost of Auchterarder, and a Justice of the Peace for Perthshire. Mr. Robert Nimmo, junior, became a member of the Perth Town Council in 1927 and thus began a long record of public service, one of whose highlights was that of being Lord Provost of Perth for ten years from 1935 to 1945, when he retired from the Council. In 1944 he was knighted for his public services.

Today, Sir Robert is a Justice of the Peace, an Honorary Sheriff Substitute for Perthshire, a member of the Scottish Gas Board and chairman of the Consultative Council of that Board, and continues to hold other public offices. He is also chairman and managing director of the firm, Mr. R. B. Wallace having died in 1936, Mr. Robert Nimmo, senior, in 1943, and Mr.

David Martin in 1948.

In 1950 Sir Robert's eldest son, Mr. R. W. ("Bob") Nimmo, qualified as a brewer and joined the company becoming head brewer, and being appointed a director in 1953. He had served with the R.A.F. in the Far East in the Burma Campaign during the war, and afterwards went to the Heriot Watt College in Edinburgh, passed through the brewing course and became an associate member of the Institute of Brewing. Recently he was elected Chairman of the Scottish Section of the Incorporated Brewers' Guild. He is also taking an active part in local affairs, being already a Past President of the Perthshire Junior Chamber of Commerce, and representing the firm on the Senior Chamber of Commerce.

Eight years past, the beer bottling and aerated water manufacturing business of Thomson Craik & Co., Ltd., of Perth, was amalgamated, and under the arrangements then made Mr. W. Y. P. Scott became a director of Wright's while continuing as director in charge of the aerated water business. This enabled the parent to concentrate on the brewing, beer bottling and agency business, while the subsidiary in its turn took over the whole of the aerated water business.

Many years ago, in advance of the Scottish practice of the time, the firm decided that a small brewery could only continue to operate if it had its own outlets, so a policy of gradually acquiring houses, to be put under management, was adopted. All these houses are within a reasonable delivery distance, and are mainly with six-day licences.

In the post war years the company was able to secure a site in a large housing development in Perth and there it has constructed a substantial modern house, The Welcome Inn, which at the moment is undergoing further extensions. It will be the subject of a feature article in a subsequent issue. During these years the company has seen to it that all its houses were brought up to accepted modern standards.

Container Beer

Small though it may be, the firm keeps up with modern developments. Today a good proportion of the bulk trade is handled in eleven-gallon stainless steel double aperture drum-type containers, both the containers and the special fittings in the houses for dispensing having been supplied by Joseph Sankey & Son, Ltd. Three beers are now handled in this manner - the company's Light, Heavy and Export ales.

Old & Modern

These post-war years have seen a great amount of modernisation and re-equipment – each item perhaps small in itself, but in total adding up to a

considerable amount. Yet somehow the brewery retains the charm of age. There are new walls – but they adjoin some of the original four-foot thick walls. The brewing copper is one of the traditional direct-fired open vessels – one of the few of this type remaining in use today, and worthy of a visit by young brewers whose experience is limited to the modern welded enclosed steam-coil heated copper.

Many of the operations have been electrified; but in a tour of the brewery one finds that much of the old apparatus for driving off a steam engine remains in situ and in good state – in fact, some of it only became redundant in the very recent past. It is this juxtaposition of the old and the modern that makes a visit to the brewery intriguing and full of interest.

Malting

The firm have always carried out their own malting, utilising grain purchased from the farmers in the surrounding countryside; a point of interest in this connection is that a favourite variety is Ymer, of which little is seen South of the Border. There was a fire in the malthouse in 1900, but the partners made good the damage.

Since the war, however, under the direction of Mr. Bob Nimmo, a second 25-qtr. Floor has been brought back into use, additional barley storage bins have been constructed, and electric drives have been installed for the barley and malt conveyors. Thus today malting is carried on not only for the brewery's own needs but also on commission for distillery malt. Further, a considerable amount of barley is dried for grain merchants.

Brewhouse

There are now electric water pumps, electric wort pumps and an electric drive to the mashing machine, this latter having been effected only this year. A new Porteus two-high malt mill was installed in 1955, and both mash tun and hop back have had new gun-metal strainer plates fitted. A new open wort cooler has been installed, and the cooler room given a new angled roof. Robert Morton & Co., Ltd., supplied the counter-current refrigerator for the wort. There is also a new sugar dissolving plant.

Since the war, four new wood fermenting vessels have been installed – they are 44-barrel vessels constructed by Maclean's, of Alloa. For yeast storage, Mr. Bob Nimmo had a special stainless steel vessel fabricated by Associated Metal Works of Glasgow, this being complete with an internal cold water coil; two yeast wagons were included with this yeast storage plant.

From this brewhouse the brewer produces two draught beers, light and heavy – corresponding to the southerner's mild and bitter – and six beers for

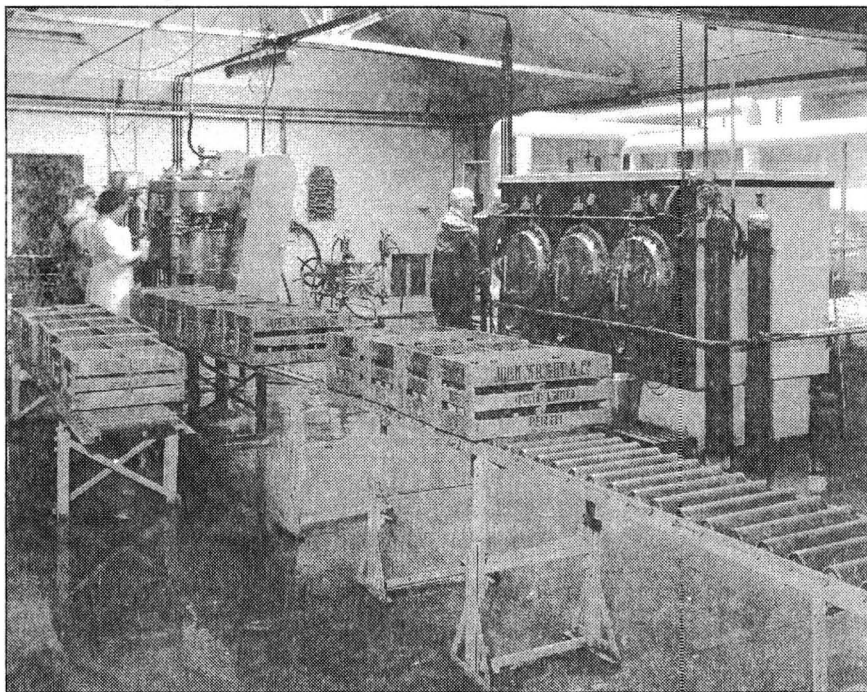
bottling: Strong Ale, Export Ale, Sweet Stout, XXX Stout, Pale Ale and Brown Ale.

Water is drawn from an artesian well and used for all purposes except the boiler, which utilises soft river water, and for bottle washing, for which the town water is used. This well was formerly in the grounds of the brewery, but the bottling hall has been erected above it, so it is now encased beneath the floor of that building. It is interesting to note that this is the only private water supply in Perth – a supply of very high purity.

Bottling

The firm, as previously mentioned, have been carrying on bottling operations for many years including Guinness and Barclay Perkins Red Label Stouts – the company holds the Scottish Agency for the latter; but such beverages as the natural conditioned beers of Bass and Worthington are still bottled by means of siphon fillers.

Soon after the end of the last war the firm was able to add a considerable extension to the bottling hall, and at the same time construct an additional



*The Bottle Sterilisation Plant, c1950s
(R. A. Laing)*

beer cellar. Shortly thereafter in one of the very fine old cellars were installed E.M.P. glass-lined tanks and A.P.V. aluminium tanks, all of 21-barrels capacity, with stainless steel to main to the bottling hall; at the present moment plans are being made to extend the capacity of this cellar, tanks having been ordered from E.M.P & Clark.

New plant has been provided for the bottling hall, since the war, and an older bottling line is being used for the bottling of ciders. In 1950 Pontifex put in a new three-chamber chiller to replace a similar make two-chamber model. Two Dawson Woodford bottle washers have been installed, together with a Pontifex filler and two Flower power-operated crowners. There are also two Purdy Junior labellers.

Filtration is performed by two Carlson plate sheet filters, obtained in 1955, this operation being carried out straight through from conditioning tank to cooler to filter to filler. Experience has shown that the firm's beers are extremely stable, possessing a naturally good shelf life.

No attempt has been made to "serialise" the labels in use; yet, as will be seen from the illustration of the labels [*Ed – sorry, not included here*], there is a strong family likeness evident. For many years J. & J. Murdoch, Ltd., of Glasgow, have been the firm's label printers; the close relationship between printer and customer has produced labels each with its own individuality, but still with a family background.

Incidentally, all labels are coded by means of a Sauven dating machine.

Power & Transport

The boiler house installation was effectively modernised last year when a Prior automatic stoker was fitted to the Lancashire type boiler, and electric automatic feed water pumps installed. A new hot water tank has also been put in to deal with cask washing demands, particularly in relation to the stainless steel containers now in use.

Handling of materials between floors has been simplified by the installation of an electric goods and passenger lift. In addition, fluorescent lighting has been installed throughout the premises.

New garages have been constructed for the firm's small fleet of road transport vehicles which, although operating over a comparatively small area, have to be maintained to cope with the many gradients to be encountered in the surrounding countryside. A Karrier Bantam low loader has been found particularly suitable for local delivery in busy city streets.

Aerated Water Plant

With the merger with Thomson Craik & Co., Ltd., the firm was able to segregate the activities of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, the latter

being manufactured and handled at Thomson Craik's premises in Glover Street in another part of the town.

Since the merger eight years ago a considerable amount of re-equipping and extension has been carried out. Originally there was a filling line consisting of a Miller Hydro washer, Hayward Tyler carbonator, and Purdy Junior and Universal labellers.

Another line has been added consisting of a Dawson Woodford washer, Bratby Velvaspeed 16-head syruper-filler-crowner and stopperer, with a Bratby automatic labeller just installed. This line operates with an automatic Bratby Rapid Carbonator. There is also a Metafilter water filter.

The mixing room on the first floor has been equipped with stainless steel syrup pans and storage vessels. A new addition is a "Sparkling Sunfresh" plant, for which the firm has the local franchise.

All hot water and steam demands are met from a Cochran vertical boiler which, eighteen months ago, was equipped with the latest model Riley automatic stoker.

Conclusion

John Wright & Co. retains its character as a family business in the best traditions, serving the needs of the surrounding countryside from a centre which a gazetteer romantically places "14 miles from Auchterarder, 15 miles from Blairgowrie, 49 miles from Braemar, 22 miles from Dundee, 30 miles from Dunfermline, 17 miles from Kinross, 37 miles from Lochearnhead, 27 miles from Pitlochry, 31 miles from St. Andrews and 35 miles from Stirling" (London – 415 miles).

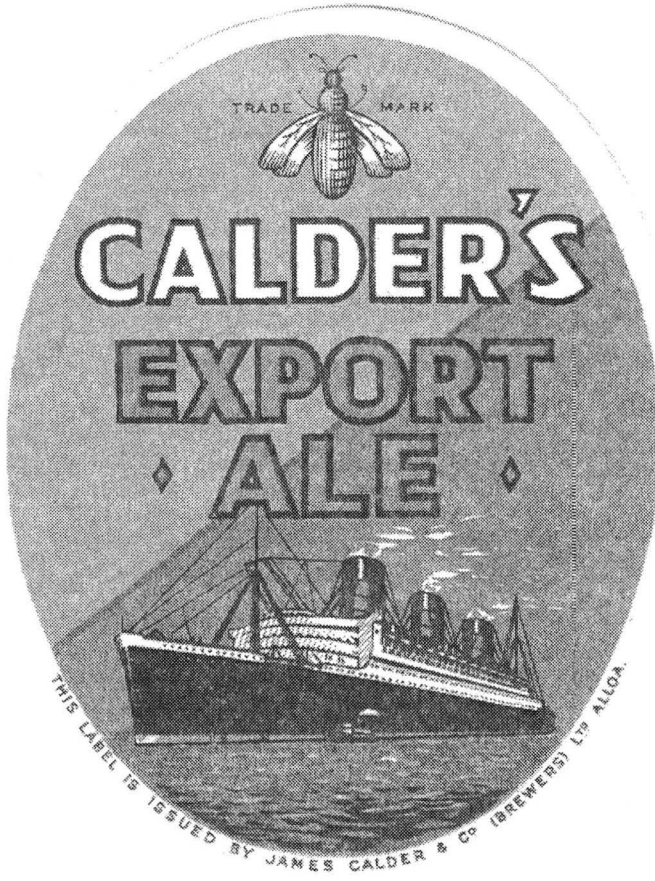
Over the years it has made itself almost self-sufficient – making its own malt, brewing beers to suit a variety of tastes, importing beers for those of a foreign palate, making its own soft drinks, owning its own trade outlets. Above all, it is still giving its own personal services, either as a business or as individuals, to the community of which it is a part.

DATING BOTTLE BEER LABELS

(This utterly fascinating insight into the date codes on beer bottle labels was published in THE BREWING TRADE REVIEW on 1st September 1915.)

Within recent years the dating of labels has become fairly general. In most cases the labels are perforated with the date of bottling, very seldom with the date of brewing. Perforating in plain figures is useless if it is to be used as a protection against the publican. Where the customer has overstocked himself, or perhaps as most of them do, putting the fresh deliveries in front of old stocks and using from them first, with the result that the old beer has probably gone sour or thrown a heavy deposit, cases have been known of the publican taking the labels off the fresh deliveries and re-labelling the old sour stock with them, then returning the bottles to the brewery for allowance. It usually commences by having a few bottles now and then being returned, so naturally it takes a little time before the trick can be discovered. To avoid this, code numbers have been used, only the responsible heads having the key; we have always found it advisable that no outside man should possess the key. If the traveller receives a complaint about a particular delivery, then let him either remove the label or copy the perforated letters or figures and send to the head office. Perforating labels has many drawbacks; only a certain number can be punched at a time, and if the labels are not carefully punched it is sometimes almost impossible to decipher them, and more often than not some of the pins are missing from the dies, having possibly been broken through faulty punching. It also takes a considerable time, especially so in these short-handed times, to punch the daily requirements. If labelling machines are used, no matter of what type, then perforating is quite out of the question. Should the perforations not be exactly placed in that portion of the label that is not gummed, the roller forces the gum through the perforations on to the next few labels, with the result that they have to be destroyed, or owing to the fact that the labels have had to be perforated in batches of 25 to 30 they are loosened, and when the picker comes up for the label it takes more than one. Several devices have been made to date the label with a rubber stamp just before it is placed on the bottle by the machine. So far as we know the mechanism for doing it is perfect, but it is impossible to ink the rubber stamp properly. The most sensible and simplest method to adopt is to have a certain code number or letter for each week, and to print this code number on the labels. The code letter or figure should be printed in very small type, about the size called brevier or 8-point, and placed in the top upper part of the label. It generally

involves a slightly extra cost for the labels, but infinitesimal when compared with the cost of perforating and repairs to the perforating machine. It is also necessary to hold a larger stock of labels: if it is a million extra it only means an outlay of about £30, but it is usable stock. For instance, if the code number of the week be AB it would represent that the beer was bottled some time between, say, Aug 9 and 14; the daily bottling book would give the numbers of the brews bottled during that week, and the sales book would give the date of delivery; therefore it would be extremely easy to ascertain the gyle number of the brew. As we have said, the only objection against this system is that a larger stock of labels must be held, but it is the safest and surest.



TODAY'S BREWERIES

THE INVERALMOND BREWERY

Fergus Clark has his own business. It's a brewery. Master of his own destiny, and free beer to boot – what more could a man want? Well, how about a wish to create the best beer ever – the Holy Grail of beers?

'I want people to drink my beer,' said Fergus, 'and say, "You know, this is the best beer I've ever tasted."'

I suppose it is the dream of every businessman, to be the top in whatever field he or she is in (although I have it on good authority that there are a few out there who are in it solely for the profit – the scoundrels), but for the small brewer 'the best beer ever' must be the ultimate goal.

Fergus was born in Glasgow, which is a good start in life because I myself was born there, and although the Rottenrow has been demolished, I'm delighted to say that I'm still around. As is Fergus. He learned his brewing skills from Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, and honed them to perfection while brewing for the likes of Ruddles, Courage and Scottish & Newcastle. Unfortunately, for a Scot, working down in England usually brings with it a deep desire to be back up north (yup, I've been there, and for me it was something as simple as the rather poor quality of the water and the fish suppers in Oxford).

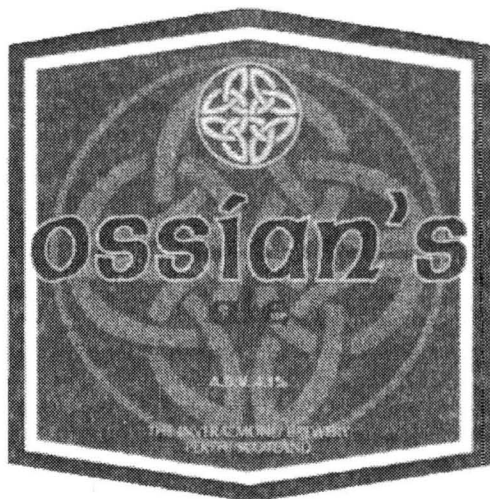
And so, with thoughts of home and an inkling to try his hand at something on a smaller, more personal scale, he returned to Scotland and in 1997 created The Inveralmond Brewery.

Unlike quite a few people who start up a small brewery, Fergus did not require the advice of brewing consultants. He knew exactly what he wanted, and once premises were found on an industrial estate on the outskirts of Perth it was simply a case of trying to fit everything into the given space. What was once a Parcel Force depot was now given over to that wonderful task of brewing beer. The equipment came from a variety of sources, some new and some second hand, and it wasn't too long before the first two beers to be produced saw the light of day: 'Independence' and 'Lia Fail.'

In the few years since the brewery was born the beer range has increased. New beers have been introduced to cater for variations in public



taste. On a regular basis there's still 'Independence' and 'Lia Fail,' along with newcomers, 'Ossian's Ale' and 'Thrappledouser.' There are also a number of limited edition beers, most available at certain periods during the year, like 'Inkie Pinkie,' described as 'a superb summer session ale' and 'a light beer with a refreshing, fruity and pleasing hoppy aroma.' Then there's 'Amber Bead,' 'Pint Stowp,' and 'Pundie.' It's so nice to see the use of old Scots words.



The style of the beers came about through a combination of Fergus's personal tastes and a market-led need to create something the man in the street would wish to drink. And even enjoy. In fact they were enjoyed so much that their popularity grew and it wasn't long before 'Ossian's Ale' became the 'Champion Beer of Scotland.' And rightly so, for it is a lovely beer. I have fond memories of drinking it in the Hogshead in Stirling in the good old days (i.e. two years ago) when they received barrels directly from the brewery. It was nectar, let me tell you. But how things change. The Hogshead hasn't had any in for ages, and as a result I rarely darken their door.

As with most breweries nowadays the process isn't just as simple as throwing together some malt, hops, yeast and water. To produce something delicious is not easy, and a blend of natural ingredients goes into every brew. Seven types of hops are used at the brewery, most English, along with some from America and Czech Republic. All the malted barley comes from Munton's and, in addition, malted wheat is used in all the beers. Torrified wheat is also used, although not all the time. The water used in brewing is

treated with sulphuric acid to reduce the pH, along with various salts like gypsum, calcium chloride and magnesium sulphate.

With a weekly capacity of 50 barrels or 1,800 gallons (14,400 pints, to you and me), you have to wonder where they sell all that ale. Well, it's not easy, and it's getting harder. According to Fergus, the market is in turmoil. The number of free houses is dropping, and the number of new breweries is increasing, making it more difficult to sell. But you can't keep a good product down, and Inverlamond ales are drunk all over the country in both draught and bottled versions. You can, for example, buy bottles in Tesco, Safeway, Jenners, Oddbins, and the like. They are even sold in places like Sweden, Finland and Denmark. In fact, at the time of my visit they were working on a beer specifically tailored for the American market: 'Blackfriar' (7% abv). And, of course, I am more than pleased to say that, where their draught beers are concerned, a good portion of public houses are still supplied direct from the brewery. I am not entirely sure why, but there can be no doubt that beer direct from a brewery always tastes so much better than one that has gone on an extensive journey around the country. (Which almost brings me back to my rant about a possible need for a return to wooden casks...!)

The beer is bottled by the Forth Brewery in Alloa. Bottle labels are designed by Athole Fleming, a local designer, and they are printed by Gavin Watson's in Glasgow.

After my meeting with Fergus I retired to Greyfriars bar in the heart of Perth, opposite the attractive frontage of the old Salutation Hotel. Over a house pint of 'Friar's Tipple' (brewed at Inveralmond), I thought to myself, 'You know, this might just be the nicest beer I've ever tasted.'

It was so good that I'm sure the Fair Maid herself would have liked it.

Edward Burns

**YOU CAN CONTACT
THE INVERALMOND BREWERY
ON
01738 449448
OR VISIT
www.inveralmond-brewery.co.uk**

Ed's Trade Mark Series – No. 1 BEER, by Edward Burns. Available only from the author at 30 Earls Court, Alloa, FK10 1BZ. Please send cheque for £5.50 (inc. P&P) made payable to Edward Burns. For further details see web site <http://homepages.tesco.net/edwardburns>



An interesting little book, apparently hand-made at the author's address. We imagine Ed's living room with various sets of pages scattered over the floor or jammed down the back of the sofa; others protrude from cupboards and shelves - all awaiting assembly. (No - not the cupboards and shelves!)

But the end product is entirely professionally put together, and well worth the £4.50 required for Ed to set the wheels of cottage industry in motion to churn you out a copy. From Amanda Henrietta Butcher's refined label image signifying the *Purity and Strength* of Butcher's Ales and Porter (was the maiden supposed to be Amanda ?) to the faintly ridiculous *LADY & BICYCLE BRAND* of long deceased Alloa brewers, Archibald Arrol & Sons, the illustrations are fascinating. A bit light on words, but the pictures are the real stars here. Sit back with a beer and wallow.



Paul Dean

AITCHISON JEFFREY LTD

(No.11 in a series of short articles on Scottish beer labels)



For those collectors lucky enough to have one, a label inscribed AITCHISON JEFFREY LTD may seem a little puzzling. There is no obvious reason why the old and venerable Scottish brewing firms of John Aitchison & Co. and John Jeffrey and Co. should have been this closely linked. And yet the association is plain to see, although the rather impressive double-barrelled name was very short lived indeed.

Aitchisons could trace their history back to the Borders town of Peebles - the original founder of the company being a certain William Aitchison. He was succeeded by his son John in 1837 after the brewery had moved to Edinburgh. John Aitchison & Co. became a limited company in 1895 by which time a large local trade had been built up as well as considerable business in and around the Newcastle area and a thriving export trade. Their Scotch Ale was particularly appreciated in Belgium, but Aitchisons also exported to many of the existing and former British colonies. In later years, the Dalkeith Brewery of McLennan & Urquhart Ltd was taken over.⁽¹⁾

Jeffreys on the other hand had their roots in the Edinburgh Grassmarket, gradually moving out to Roseburn (where they remained). By 1900 the Roseburn complex was known as Heriot Brewery⁽²⁾ and the business had grown to the extent that Jeffreys, already well represented in the home trade, were themselves exporting to various places around

the world – particularly India and the East Indies. They also sold their famous Camel Brand beers in Egypt. Interestingly, the firm did not become a limited company until the 1930s.

So, other than being Edinburgh based, what was the connection? For this we look across the Atlantic to Canada, where Edward Plunket Taylor had been busy consolidating his brewing interests, which by 1937 were formed into the giant Canadian Breweries Ltd. Among the mainstays in his portfolio was the Carling brand. E. P. Taylor first cast his eye over the British market in 1952 when he entered a partnership agreement with Hope & Anchor Breweries of Sheffield to brew and distribute Carling Black Label.⁽³⁾ He soon saw that the post-war downturn in the fortunes of many of the independent British brewers made them ripe for takeover.

Throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, Taylor began to buy out breweries on both sides of the border. The first Scottish acquisition came in 1959 when his Bradford based Hammonds United Breweries (HUB) assumed control of Aitchisons. Not long thereafter, Jeffreys (in which he had earlier secured a 40% stake) was merged with HUB and Hope & Anchor to form Northern Breweries Ltd. More Scottish companies were targeted the same year (1960) with Aitkens, Calders, Fowlers, Murrays and George Younger all being taken over and grouped together as Caledonian Breweries.

The business activities of Aitchison and Jeffrey were separated from those of the English firms in 1961, giving the parent company, now called United Breweries, two Scottish subsidiaries – Caledonian Breweries and Aitchison Jeffrey Ltd. This particular arrangement did not last long, however, because within a year or so, all of the Scottish interests were integrated under the banner United Caledonian Breweries Ltd. (UCB)

So, what then of Aitchison or Jeffrey? Brewing ceased at Aitchisons almost immediately and production transferred to the Heriot Brewery. The bottling plant in Dalkeith (McLennan & Urquhart Ltd) shut down. Aitchison's site was used as a store for a while before being demolished. Surprisingly, the Heriot Brewery hung on in production until the early 1990s – as part of Tennent Caledonian (itself a subsidiary of the Bass empire).

As far as we know today, only four different Aitchison Jeffrey labels were ever produced – the two illustrated (one of which was for the renowned Dalkeith screwtop) plus an Export Ale (showing the popular 'Wee Aitchie' character) and a size variation of the Blue Seal Pale Ale.⁽⁴⁾

- (1) In 1955 – principally for access to the modern bottling plant which they had installed.
- (2) Jeffreys original brewery at Grassmarket (purchased in 1837) was also called Heriot Brewery.
- (3) In return, Canadian Breweries marketed Hope & Anchor Jubilee Stout in Canada.
- (4) Thanks go to Mike Jones for the Blue Seal image.

Sources (not otherwise indicated in the text) :-

C. McMaster & C. Rutherford, *The Tennent Caledonian Breweries* (1985)

E.P. Taylor Website (www.eptaylors.com) (2003)

Paul Dean



OLD PHOTO CORNER

Hi. Notice anything peculiar about Old Photo Corner? ... anything perhaps even slightly odd – no? Well, I fear we may have hit the pinnacle of strangeness on this occasion, because this is not a photo, it's not in a corner, and it's not even anything to do with beer! How much stranger do you think we can get here? Seriously though, if you wish to look at lots of nice pictures like this one, then check out Ed's Trade Mark Series at <http://homepages.tesco.net/edwardburns>



BREWING WORDS

wash whadyamacallit

wort wotsit
the thingy

draff dootah



SCOTS PINT – According to *Chambers Dictionary*, a ‘pint-stoup’ is a ‘vessel for holding a Scots pint,’ a Scots pint being equal to about 3 imperial pints. I have to be honest and say that I do at times wonder if this volume is somehow related to the drinking culture in Scotland, which of course it is, but could it be partially responsible for the serious amount of drunkenness that we presently see in this country, and for a culture of getting ‘bloated’ that has been passed down to us by previous generations?

In my first trade marks booklet (*Scottish Brewery Trade Marks, 1876 to 1900*) there is an interesting little mark registered by Lorimer & Clark in 1890. It shows a drinking vessel with the words, ‘De’il tak them that hae the smallest pint stoup.’ In other words, the more you can drink the better the man you are. It is part of an ethos that has seen us dragged kicking and screaming through the centuries and the darkness of the evils of drink. (Prey forgive me, but did I tell you I had joined the Band of Hope?)

But enough of this, here’s some stuff on the Scots pint, all of it courtesy of that amazing website, *Ask Jeeves* (is there *anything* that man does not know?).

The Treaty of the Union, 1706 – ‘VII. That all parts of the United Kingdom be for ever from and after the Union lyable to the same Excises upon all Exciseable Liquors excepting only that the 34 Gallons English Barrel of Beer or Ale amounting to 12 Gallons Scots present measure sold in Scotland by the Brewer at 9/6d Sterling excluding all Duties and Retailed including Duties and the Retailer’s profit at 2d the Scots pint or eight part of the Scots Gallon, be not after the Union lyable on account of the present Excise upon Exciseable Liquors in England, to any higher Imposition than 2s Sterling upon the forsaid 34 Gallons English barrel, being 12 gallons the present Scots measure And that the Excise settled in England on all other Liquors

when the Union commences take place throughout the whole United Kingdom.'

The Heart of Midlothian, by Sir Walter Scott - A postscript bore, 'I learned from a decent woman, a grazier's widow, that they hae a cure for the muir-ill in Cumberland, whilk is ane pint, as they ca't, of yill, whilk is a dribble in comparison of our gawsie Scots pint, and hardly a mutchkin, boiled wi' sope and hartshorn draps, and toomed down the creature's throat wi' ane whorn. Ye might try it on the bauson-faced year-auld quey; an it does nae gude, it can do nae ill.--- She was a kind woman, and seemed skeely about horned beasts. When I reach Lunnon, I intend to gang to our cousin Mrs. Glass, the tobacconist, at the sign o' the Thistle, wha is so ceevil as to send you down your spleuchan-fu' anes a year; and as she must be well kend in Lunnon, I doubt not easily to find out where she lives."

This one's nothing to do with the Scots pint, but it does go to show (maybe... a BIG maybe) that everything we had up in Scotland was much better than that teensy English stuff...

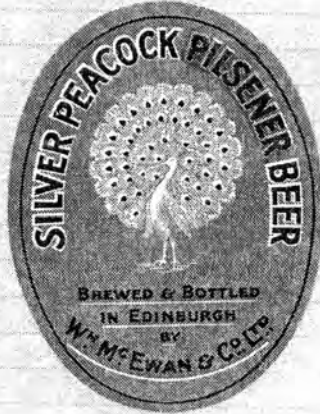
Scottish Tourist Board leaflet - 'By 1744 the shipowners and merchants of Bo'ness were worried about the condition of Bo'ness Harbour, the quays were in a poor state and the harbour was silting up. Ships already paid 1¹/₂d per ton for anchorage, but this proved to insufficient funding for the purpose. After due deliberation they decided to tax Bo'ness beer at the rate of 2d Scots per pint (£1 Scots was 20 pennies compared to 240 pennies in £1 Sterling). An Act of Parliament was past and trustees appointed, but needless to say there was great opposition from the brewers and ale house keepers. Ironically it was through the harbour for which the beer tax was imposed that most of the illicit beer was to be smuggled into Bo'ness.'

You see? £1 Scots was equal to 20 pennies, while £1 Sterling was equal to 240 pennies, all of which can only mean that we had much bigger pennies. Surely?

Anyway, enough from me. Must dash. They've just had a fresh consignment of cherries delivered to the fruit shop around the corner and I desperately need to buy my own. Toodleoo.

26th Feb. 1967.

After full consideration, Mr. Guthrie has decided that the Silver Peacock label should be re-registered, under the new Indian Trade Mark Law, for the initial period (under the new law) of seven years; but suggests that, if, during those seven years, the Silver Peacock label is not used by us, it would then be desirable not to re-register.



The above letter, part of the Scottish Brewing Archive's extensive collection, is very interesting indeed. The label attached to the letter incorporates the image of a peacock that bears more than a passing resemblance to that shown on the left. The image on the left was registered as a trade mark by James Aitken & Co, Falkirk, in 1877.



MORE THOUGHTS FROM ED – If my mind hasn't deserted me, I'm sure a while back I heard of plans to add vitamins to beer. I can't recall the exact details, but I assume it was something along the lines of providing vital life-sustaining nutrients to those who might be undernourished through spending so much of their time in pubs supping ale instead of eating food.

Well, I actually think we may have something here, but I suspect that while the idea is a good one, it really needs tweaked a bit. I mean, why stop at vitamins? Can we not liquidize a few squillion hamburgers and add that to the fermenting tank? In fact, why don't we offer a special service that would give the term 'liquid lunch' a new and altogether more interesting meaning? ... a 'Chicken Tikka Masala Pint', for example – sure to be a winner. Or what about a 'MacDonald's Bun-in-a-Pint'? And, not forgetting those who would purport to be following a healthy lifestyle: 'Waldorf Salad Ale.'

You know it makes sense.

EB

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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)

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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 120 companies including breweries, maltings, a cooperage, some public houses and hotels, the Brewers' Association of Scotland and the Institute of Brewing (Scottish Section). A complete list of collections is available on the web site.

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 and brewing equipment.

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

THE EDITOR WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING FOR EITHER CONTRIBUTING TO, OR ASSISTING WITH, THIS JOURNAL: WIEBKE REDLICH, ALMA TOPEN, PAUL DEAN, R. A. LAING, STEVE MCGRAIL, THE SCOTS MAGAZINE, FERGUS CLARK, CLACKMANNANSHIRE LIBRARIES ARCHIVE DEPARTMENT, THE PERSON WHO FIRST THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA TO ADD VITAMINS TO BEER.

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