



The Annual Journal of the
Scottish Brewing Archive Association



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The Youngers of Alloa
by Michael Clark

Also: The James Fleming Scrapbook / Maclays / Brewing in Leith /
Scotch ale / 1860s beer comes home / The Tartan Club

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Back issues

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Figure 1: Maclays' Thistle Brewery Alloa in the 1980s.

Maclays of Alloa: a phoenix from the ashes

Duncan Kellock

WHEN I joined Maclay and Co. in the early 1970s as assistant to Charlie Ritchie little did I know the fun that lay ahead. Maclay at that time was riding the cusp of the cask beer revolution and was enjoying great sales success, mainly in the central belt of Scotland but also much further afield. During my time at Maclays I was involved with developing beer sales in Sweden, the USA and Canada. We had our beer brewed in Stockholm by Spendrup's Brewery, the largest Swedish brewery of the time.

I had come from Lorimer's Brewery in Edinburgh more than a bit wet behind the ears. At that point I was offered four roles – one in Maclays, but also the Alloa Brewery, Guinness in Dublin and Vaux in Sunderland. In those days Sunderland and Dublin seemed so far away that I opted for Alloa and the opportunities that Maclays offered, even at substantially less money than my previous employment!

Going forward more than forty years (where did the time go?) Michael Clark, Susan Mills and I had arranged to meet on a cold January morning in The Old Brewery bar in Alloa, where Maclays Victorian offices had been converted into a highly successful bar.

By arriving there early we ensured that we got the use of the prime table – the one which was situated in what had been the Head Brewer's office with the wee



Figure 2: A very young Duncan Kellock in a remarkably white coat standing beside the cask racking machine at Maclays brewery in the early 1970s.

round window at the front of the building. This had been my office for ten years or so and I always like to sit there now if I can – reliving old memories. I am proud of the fact that Maclays old offices are still involved with the selling of beer, if not its manufacture.

My office was strategically placed at one corner of the cobbled brewery yard and had the brewery time clock immediately outside. An important part of my life was to ensure that the brewery operators had arrived in that morning; if someone was more than three minutes late they were “quartered” i.e. 15 minutes’ pay was taken from their weekly wage. Four quarterings in a month resulted in a verbal warning and a chat with the boss – ah, the memories...

At another corner of the yard stood the “Old Horne Tavern”. This was the famous watering hole used by the directors of the company. It was where my initial interview was completed and where I remember, when I became Head Brewer, I finally gained full access. I felt like I had really arrived at that point.

James Maclay founded his brewing firm in 1830, having gained experience of the business at John H. Syme’s Hutton Park Brewery. He leased the Mills Brewery until 1875, when he moved into his newly built Thistle Brewery. He died just a month later, and was succeeded by his two sons, James and John, who traded as the partnership of J. & J. Maclay. The Thistle Brewery was established by James Maclay



Figure 3: The current “Old Brewery” bar interior.

in 1875 in the East Vennel. A “vennelle” was an old French word for a narrow street used archaically in Scotland and Durham.

It passed through the hands of a number of owners until it was finally acquired by the Matthew family in 1991. The brewery remained operational until 1999. The company’s trademark was a thistle – hence the “Thistle Brewery”.

In my time I can remember the extremely heavy cast iron Thistle device, which sat 40 feet up atop the malt handling area in the brewery, becoming loose in a storm, and being cut off and lowered down manually before it fell off and hit somebody on the head.

Amongst the beers produced by the firm were Imperial Stout and Oatmalt Stout, the latter of which won a Prize Medal at the Vienna Exhibition in 1894.

I had a hand in recreating Oatmalt Stout in the 1970s – in fact I still have the recipe. An important part of the recipe was Italian liquorice – there was still some in the brewery laboratory. This was something like fifty years old so I decided to modernise this element of the recipe by going to RS McColl’s every morning when we were brewing and buying a 1lb bag of liquorice allsorts with my own money to lob into the copper during the boil! It made all the difference.

In 1896 it was decided to convert the business into a limited company – Maclay & Co Ltd. The business won a prize medal at the Newcastle Exhibition of 1898, and two medals at the Paris Exhibition of 1900.



Figure 4: Maclay thistle trademark (Picture: Forbes Gibb).

When the Matthew family acquired the business the name of the company was changed to Maclay Inns Ltd in 1994. In 1999 brewing ceased and the company focused its energies on managing its pub group.

Brewing

Brewing was carried out in a traditional manner – water was extracted from two 600 feet deep wells. There was something of a competition for water in Alloa amongst its breweries. From time to time a brewery would decide, because of lack of water, to bore down a further 20 feet to get first shot at the water. I presume this would be done in a clandestine manner – better not tell other competing breweries as they would just want to do the same! Our water was fairly hard, although we still had to “Burtonise” it by the addition of a quantity of gypsum into the hot liquor tank to achieve good quality fermentations.

Malted barley was purchased from both Simpson’s at Berwick upon Tweed and the Bass maltings in Alloa. A Maclay dray vehicle was sent along the few hundred yards every fortnight to the local Bass maltings and our draymen undertook the task of loading 130 × 75kg sacks onto a dray. This constituted an extra task over and above the main deliveries and was never a popular way of starting the day. Malted barley was delivered in 75kg sacks and stored in malt bins which had originally



Figure 5: The interior of the brewery water storage well. This was not one of the two productive wells.

been used for the bulk storage of Maclays' own malted barley. Infestation by mice was always an issue in an environment like this and a brewery cat was a necessity! There was a system of small cat flaps in this area: they were opened at night after the operators had left, to allow the cat to have hunting opportunities overnight. The brewery cat in my time was called "Tibbles" and was pretty wild – you certainly would not have stroked it if you wanted to retain your full complement of fingers!

Malt was milled in the Seck mill and then mashed in. Typically this process started at about 3.00am. Wort was then allowed to run into the "big copper", where it was boiled with hops.

It was known that Charlie Ritchie, the boss in my early days, would not come to the copper head during a boil as the steam would cloud his spectacles; this was then taken as licence by the operators for an extra rest period.

Brewery Characters

Maclays cellarman was the famous Johnny Cushley. Johnny had been working for the company since just after the Second World War. He held the key for one of the most important parts of the brewery, which was the renowned "cage" or sample cellar. The name did not sound very pleasant but it was the field of dreams for the stream of Alloa worthies who appeared to just be able to walk down to the cellar to be entertained by Johnny with copious amounts of free beer at whatever time of day they wanted. Johnny was a popular lad!



Figure 6: Malt bins with 75kg bags of malt.



Figure 7: Top left: The “copper fire” – heavy fuel oil fired. Right: Seck mill. Below: Filling CO₂ cylinders.



Figure 8: The 120 barrel capacity “big copper”.

These arrangements were all part of the system called punde. It appeared when I started at Maclays that one was allowed to drink beer virtually all the time – first at 7.30am, then at 11.00am, then at lunchtime. The cage opened up properly at 4.30pm to allow the final drink of the day to send you homewards with a spring in your step.

Punde extended to the dray wagons. When a lorry went out in the morning to make its deliveries a crew was allowed a crate of, typically, 12 × pint bottles of Pale Ale (3% abv) as it was considered that they would miss out on the brewery available beer during the day.

The cellar had not changed much over the years – when I arrived it still had blackout paint from the Second World War on the windows!

We used to fill mainly 18 gallon kilds or kilderkins in my time but also 36 gallon barrels and the occasional 9 gallon firkins. 36 gallon cask sales were limited to a very few big beer pubs, the most famous of which was Lochore Miners Welfare Club. This was a great institution which was close by the famous “Red Goth” or Gothenburg pub in the middle of Lochore and which took up to 15 × 36 gallon casks of 3.4% abv SPA per week. I remember once when it was decided to send them some stronger beer – 80/– or Export; a few weeks after this was delivered, I received a complaint from Lochore to say that the chap who always sat at the end of their bar and drank ten pints every night had fallen off his seat as a consequence of the stronger beer and could we please stop delivering it?

Finings was made up from dried isinglass as required – it took an hour or two to properly dissolve, so the cellarman always had to ensure a decent supply.

“Paucheling” was always an issue – beer seemed to disappear regularly and when I arrived as a young lad from the bright lights of Edinburgh I had great difficulty working out where it was going to (or, perhaps, what was happening to it). It was only much later, attending the sad event of a brewery funeral, that someone made mention of the fact that the deceased had always liked to make a “home delivery” – beer to be enjoyed at one’s leisure while watching the telly at night!

Geordie Fyfe came from Clackmannan and could not drive. He cycled in to start his shift at 2.30am on the most beat-up bike you had ever seen. He did not so much cycle but hirpled into work. Geordie was an “upstanding” wage earner. The standard working week was 40 hours, but Geordie routinely completed double that – 80 hours; for this additional time he was given the princely sum of an extra £5. This was changed in my time to pay him fully for the overtime completed at time and a half.

Geordie had started off his brewing day in the early days by going down the stairs to the Lancastrian coal-fired boiler and picking up a shovel full of “red”. These

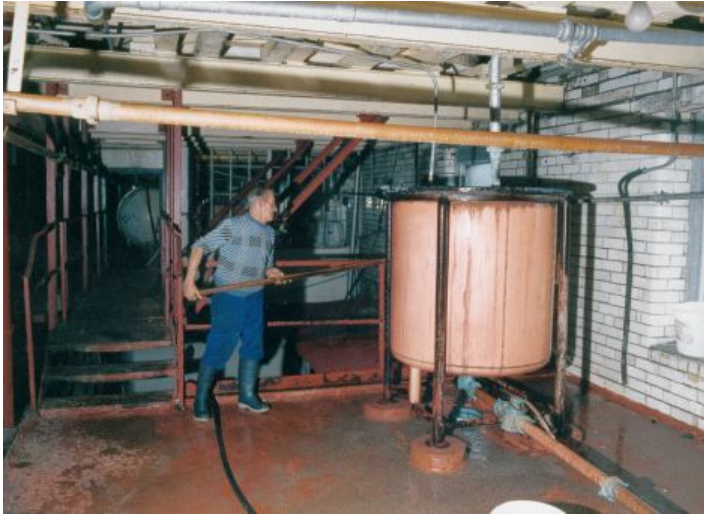


Figure 9: Geordie “brightening” a copper vessel by brushing on dilute sulphuric acid

were red hot coals which were used to start the copper fires before the advent of fuel oil-fired burners.

Another part of Geordie’s routine was to go round to pick up some rolls from Hope’s the bakers at about 5:30am. He then took them up the stairs to the howff, took out his false teeth or “choppers” and then ate his breakfast. His teeth were there for purely cosmetic purposes, were very ill-fitting and would have fallen out if he had tried to use them to eat rolls.

Geordie used to go along to the market on a Thursday, the main purpose being to get his weekly supply of Askit powders, a traditional cure-all in the Alloa area. Geordie never complained of a “sair heid”. Geordie worked for the brewery for fifty years; there are not many who manage that feat nowadays. He held brewing together for most of that time and his knowledge of the process was second to none. Another great lad!

Roger Ryman was the most successful of the assistant brewers who worked with me in the Thistle Brewery. Roger was intensely interested in raw materials and deservedly succeeded in getting the role of Head Brewer of the St Austell Brewery. He later became the Parliamentary Brewer of the Year and is still brewing.

Maclays operated up to eight delivery lorries or drays. Generally speaking there were two-man crews, but whenever we judged that there was the chance of goods



Figure 10: The old dray loading arrangements were made from in front of the office block

being stolen the management granted a third man, someone to keep an eye on the vehicle when the delivery to a shop or pub was being made. This did not always succeed – frequently goods went missing; in fact on one occasion I remember a dray wagon being hijacked and driven away. The police were called but by that time, needless to say, there had been a fair amount of “paucheling” and most of the beer had made its way to a new home.

I remember when we got our first curtain-sided vehicles. One of the perceived advantages of this was that the vehicles were “pilfer-proof”. Sadly the designers had not counted on the ingenuity of the locals – a Stanley knife could cut through the curtain sides, allowing the relocation of a keg or two.

Bottling

Maclays operated a bottling system when I arrived. It was fairly basic and one had to watch not to get one’s white coat dragged into the works. There were still some of the bottling hall ladies left after the war – Mima, Jeanie and Mattie were all experienced souls who worked at the brewery over a long number of years. They all wore large aprons, not to keep themselves clean, but to hide, as I later found out, bottles of strong ale at 7.5% abv which were everyone’s favourite. The wearing of clogs or “clugs” as they were called had ceased by the time I arrived; instead, rubber boots were the norm.



Figure 11: The Thistle Brewery yard, showing the brewery gates installed during Evelyn Matthew's time

As a brewer you had to pick up a wide range of unlikely skills. One, which I knew nothing about at first, but later in my time at Maclays I could have written a book about, was steelwork. I had two main issues – one was the “Main Brewery Frontage Support Beam”. This was the large mild steel beam situated down in the cellars, which held up the brewery itself. It had seen better days and was corroding rapidly. Maclays spent a lot of money with local consulting engineers CRA Ltd to keep an eye on this.

I remember vividly the sad occasion of the brewery closure. I had spent the previous year researching the building of a new brewery, as we were all aware that the main brewery building was potentially unstable. I was never an advocate of keeping the traditional tower brewery going, as it had had its day.

The second interesting lot of steelwork was that in the cask racking cellar. The story goes that when this was built there was a shortage of steel and the Head Brewer of the day picked up some rails from the local railway – they comprised the support steelwork for the cellar!

Customs and Excise

In my early days there was a Customs and Excise office in Drysdale Street in Alloa, with four officers in attendance. They used to come to check the charges, that is the

volume and strength of wort declared in a fermentation vessel prior to fermentation. I always thought they were very considerate to us in Maclays, as we did not have the sophisticated systems that our larger neighbour the Alloa Brewery had.

I remember when the first computer was delivered to the Customs Office. This was treated (deservedly) with the utmost suspicion, one of the officers saying again and again “this will be the end of our jobs”. Five years later the office closed and the attendant jobs were indeed lost.

Another job the Customs Officers had was to check the destruction. This was beer passed back to the brewery by a pub as being substandard. A cellarman in a pub was not worth his salt if he did not manage to recoup some money from “returns”. There was quite an industry involved with this and if the Customs people had seen the lemon peel and old fag ends in the beer for destruction they would not have passed it. Once the destruction had been seen to, the Customs men expected a trip down to the sample cellar for a pint or two before continuing with their work.

The role of cooper had stopped just before I arrived. Wooden casks had been the norm but when I arrived aluminium was the way ahead! Unfortunately aluminium had a value and there were scams happening to melt casks down for a price.

There was a lot to admire about traditional businesses like Maclays. Maclays was a very local business – the owner lived in Dunfermline and the management all lived locally. There was always a very definite social edge to it. Care was always taken that, when someone was getting on a bit, a suitable job was found for them without the heavy lifting required of, say, a drayman. I remember an older gentleman called Joe who was a case in point; when Joe was not fit to work in the van any more, a lighter job was found for him in the cellars. Good folk and good memories.

Sources

Susan Mills

Michael Clark

The James Fleming Scrapbook

John Martin

ONE of the oldest brewing records held at the Scottish Brewing Archive is the Scrapbook of James Fleming at Summerhall Brewery and dated 1818–1822 – although there are other items included that pre- and post-date these years.

The book is small and looks insignificant until you open it and appreciate its age. Although you can read most of the writings, a transcript was prepared of the brewing section by the archive that makes it easier to follow.

The scrapbook begins with handwritten notes, “Theoretical and Practical Remarks on G. Blake’s System of Malting and Brewing”.

The content of the book covers the following in some detail.

- System of Malting
- Analysis of Hops
- Quality of Water
- Ringwood Ale
- Dorchester Ale
- Bells Edinburgh Ale
- Burton Ale
- Brewing Porter
- Fermentation
- Remarks on the construction and use of Blake’s new and improved Saccharometer
- Laws with regard to Beer Barrels
- Legal distinction of Strong and Small Beer

In addition to the information on brewing there are many pages of religious and philosophical writings.

Also pasted in the inside front cover is a letter dated 1715, from an Andrew Bell. It is not clear why this letter was kept in the scrapbook, although there is reference to Bell’s Edinburgh Ale further on in the scrapbook. Evidently there is a connection with this letter and Bell’s brewery in Edinburgh.

Bell’s brewery was situated near the corner of South Back of the Canongate (today, Holyrood Road) and the Pleasance, and was run by John Bell and his son Hugh in the later part of the 18th century. Although the brewery changed hands several times it was always known as Bell’s Brewery. Today the Bell’s brewery buildings have been converted into a sports complex owned by Edinburgh University.

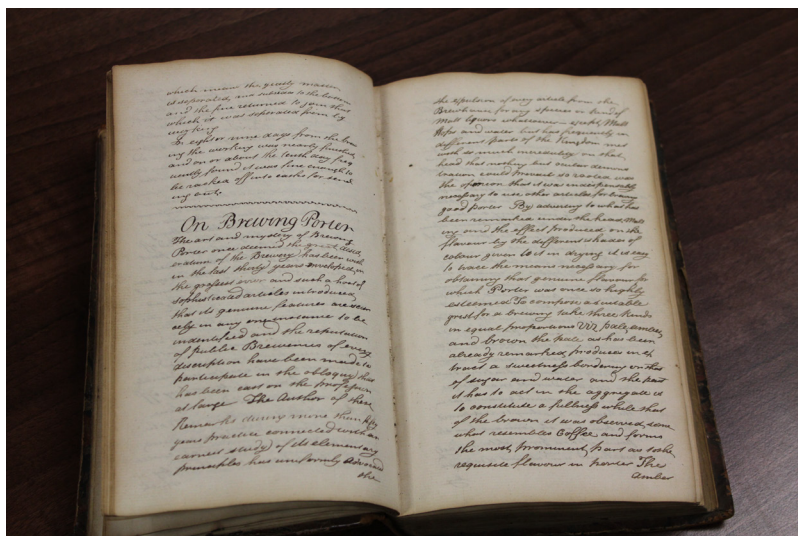


Figure 1: The Fleming scrapbook's advice on brewing porter.

It was Robert Fleming and Wm Robertson who owned the brewery in the 1820s when the contents of the scrapbook were written. There is a copy letter dated 1824 that mentions that Mr Robert Fleming was in bad health and wished to give his relation, James Fleming, a share of the business. As a result this may have led to valuations and an inventory of Summerhall brewery recorded in the scrapbook at this time. These inventory valuations included the brewing equipment, cooper's tools, horses, carts and office furniture.

James Fleming must have visited other breweries, as mentioned in the scrapbook, namely, Langholm Brewery and Maxwelltown Brewery and also included is a list of the quantities brewed by Edinburgh brewers in 1850, including a transcript to make it easier to read.

The heading is, "Quantities Brewed by each of the Brewers in Edinburgh to 10th Oct. 1850", a date much later than the dates at the front of the book and long after Fleming's occupancy.

You may recognise many of the more famous Edinburgh brewers with Wm. Younger clearly the most prolific producer at this time. Also interesting to note that the brewer Berwick was the second largest in quantity; a few years later in 1858, Wm. Younger acquired the Alex Berwick (Holyrood) brewery, which was situated only

Brewer	Quantities
Aitchison & Co.	2800
Bernard	1105
Berwick	7570
Blair	904
Burnetts	1466
Campbell	5304
Crease & Taylor	879
Dick	4539
Drybrough	2363
Disher, E & L	3089
Fulton	964
Jeffrey	2942
Muir & Son	1569
J & J Morison	771
Melvin	988
McNair, Leith	3290
Ritchie	1419
Robertson	917
Usher	2346
Younger	10292
Total	55520

Table 1: Quantities Brewed by each of the Brewers in Edinburgh to 10th Oct. 1850

300 yards from their Abbey brewery at the foot of the Canongate and Holyrood Road.

The quantity produced at Summerhall in 1850 appears under the brewer's name, Robertson.

The following is an extract from the Scottish Brewing Archive that summarises the history of Summerhall Brewery in Edinburgh.

James Fleming was a relation of Robert Fleming, brewer at Summerhall Brewery, Edinburgh in 1815. James came to Summerhall Brewery around 1818, and whilst there, kept a "scrap book" of copies of letters, brewery business, (that chiefly concerned breweries other than Summerhall), and religious tracts. If a copy letter of 1824 is to be wholly believed, James came to be a more permanent fixture at the brewery at

Quantities brewed by each of the
Brewers in Edin'gurd to 10th Oct 1850

	Quarts	
Archieison & Co	2800	
Bernard	1105	
Bennet	7578	
Blair	904	
Burnett	1466	
Campbell	5304	5370
Craze & Taylor	879	
Dick	4539	
Dryburgh	2363	
Disher & Co	3089	
Fulton	1964	
Gaffrey	2942	
Muir & Son	1569	
J & J Muir	771	
Melvin	988	
McNair & Leith	3290	
Ritchie	1419	
Robertson	917	
Usher	2346	
Younger	10292	
	<u>55520</u>	

Figure 2: The manuscript of the brewers' output table.

the request of his relation Robert, who, suffering from ill health, was proposing to bestow on James a share in the business.

But Summerhall has a history that both pre and post dates James Fleming's family's occupancy and subsequent interest in it. The brewery was probably in existence by 1704, when one Robert McClellan bought land situated to the South of Edinburgh, from Anna Byres. McClellan was describing himself as "gardener at Summerhall" the following year, and it is likely that he was soon brewing because he was one of the 1725 Petitioners signing his name to a petition against a malt tax imposed in 1725. It is perhaps more than coincidence that his first wife was a member of a well-known family of brewers. A definite record of there being a brewery on the site appears in records dated 1733 when McClellan went into liquidation, and then again when he disposed of the brewery around 1739. And so it was that Thomas Bryson, who was probably working at the brewery before 1739 became brewer at Summerhall, remaining there until at least 1788, and witnessing the fire that claimed the brewery in 1739. It seems Thomas was still residing at Summerhall in 1788, or it may have been his son Peter, who took definite possession of the brewery in 1792. In 1795 it was the turn of Robert Clunie as brewer, though Francis MacNab, gardener at Summerhall, owned the brewery. Clunie moved from Scott's Brewery in Gibbet Loan to Summerhall, remaining until 1815, when Robert Fleming, property dealer and relation to James, took over.

Whilst Robert owned Summerhall Brewery, William Robertson, also a property dealer, began working at the brewery, and it was he who became the next brewer in 1826, up until 1861. The 1851 Census Records show that 11 men were working at the brewery in this year, but by 1871 the Census Record shows a workforce of 120 men, 4 boys, 3 clerks and 2 travellers. This is perhaps indicative of the fact that in 1862, for the first time in the Brewery's history, a limited liability company took control. The company was named Robert McMillan & Co. Ltd, and was owned by two business partners of the same names from Glasgow. In 1889 Summerhall Brewery was bought for £320,000 by Edinburgh United Breweries Ltd but around 1908 the company sold the brewery. Nothing further is known about the company, and it is possible that it no longer existed after 1908.

On the Summerhall site the Dick Vet College was built and was inaugurated in 1916. Today it is a multi-arts complex and events venue. It is also where Andrew Barnett is now brewing Barney's Beers, established in 2012, the first brewery at Summerhall in over 100 years.



Figure 3: The binding of the Fleming notebook.

The James Fleming scrapbook does provide a good insight for anyone that is researching 18th century breweries and another good example of a “little gem” that is held in the Scottish Brewing Archive.

Sources of information

Scottish Brewing Archive – Papers of James Fleming, brewer, Edinburgh, Scotland (GB 248 FL)



Figure 1: The first touring Tartan vehicle

The Tartan Club

George Douglas

THIS is the first in a series of articles entitled “Transport of Delight” about brewery transport vehicles with an interesting tale to tell. The transport will be both road and rail and, yes you’ve guessed it, the delight will be beer!

In the mid 1970s a social club was built adjacent to Fountain Brewery in Edinburgh by Scottish & Newcastle for the benefit of its staff and was called the Tartan Club. The social club included facilities for concerts, dancing, eating and drinking and also had an adjoining sports hall for squash, badminton and 5-a-side football.

However not so well known was its forerunner in the form of a vehicle, which toured the country, offering a party night and promoting Tartan Special in Scotland or Tartan Bitter when in England. Tim Lewis, the Sales & Marketing Manager of Scottish & Newcastle and main board director, was the man responsible for this initiative with the aim of giving the beer a distinctive Scottish identity.

The photograph reproduced in figure 1 is the first of what was to become three such tractors and trailers. It was on a 1967 Edinburgh registration plate MFS532F, (allocated Fleet number 9126a) seen when new at Moray Park Maltings.



Figure 2: George Douglas' model of MFS532F.

The three units were attached to each of Edinburgh, Newcastle and Acton premises but never listed as S&N transport fleet vehicles, which were to be the responsibility of the Public Relations Department and maintained by SMT Commercials at Roseburn in Edinburgh who built them.

The vehicle used was a Bedford TK tractor and trailer, which housed a very elaborate portable bar. The 32 feet trailer was fitted not only with a bar but included fixed and moveable seating and had a tartan carpet and décor.

The tractor unit did look slightly odd as it was modified to have a petrol-fuelled generator in the rear of the extended cab, to provide refrigeration to keep the beer in good condition at the time of dispensing at the bar in the trailer.

The generating equipment in this, the first of these vehicles, had been anticipated as being too noisy for location on the trailer, so the tractor was parked some distance from the trailer when it was in use.

The value of additional promotional vehicles was soon recognized and three unmodified TK tractors were subsequently supplied, together with two new trailers, with quieter generating equipment fitted on the trailers, the first trailer being retro-fitted with this upgrade.

The first tractor with its somewhat noisy generator was sold on to a family of Scottish showmen and used successfully by them to haul and power their living quarters trailer.

The second photograph in figure 2 is of a 1:76 scale model of MFS532F from the collection built by George Douglas. The models are based on photographs and date of brewery transport vehicles including those of Wm. Younger, Wm. McEwan, Scottish Brewers and constituent companies, which formed the S & N Group. The models are usually displayed at four commercial vehicle shows in the UK per year and can also be made available for charity fund-raising purposes.

Sources of information

Essanden (S & N staff magazine), Summer 1968

Vintage Roadscene magazine, June 2017

Berry Ritchie, *Good Company* (The story of Scottish & Newcastle)

John Murdoch, former S & N Scottish fleet transport vehicle inspector.



Figure 1: A label for Gordon Scotch Ale and an advert for Douglas Scotch Ale

A pint of Scotch

Allan Mclean

IN A pub in Newcastle in the mid-1970s I heard a fellow drinker place an order that sounded a bit startling.

“A pint of Scotch, please,” said this other customer.

The bar person did not bat an eyelid but promptly poured a pint of McEwan’s Best Scotch Ale.

Scroll along a few more years and I was in a pub in Belgium, drinking Gordon’s Scotch Ale. Two beers with the name “Scotch”. But only one was brewed in Scotland. I wondered why at the time and started to ask a question that gained what proved to be a very long answer.

For one thing, Scotch ale? Which one? There was once upon a time more than one beer with that Scottish title. Scotland was indeed the original source. But not forever.

To my personal annoyance, I discovered that “Scotch” must be from Scotland if it is whisky. But not if it is beer. I was horrified to learn that no legal protection on place of origin was given to beer if it was “Scotch”.

The designation in England in Victorian times for pretty well anything Scottish was that it was “Scotch”. For example, the daily Edinburgh/London train later known as “The Flying Scotsman” was previously known as “The Flying Scotchman” and originally the “Special Scotch Express”.



Figure 2: Labels for Campbell's Scotch Ale and the Continental Brewing Co's "Inverness Brand" Scotch Ale

Back to that McEwan's Best Scotch. Once an ale brewed in Edinburgh, by the time I heard it being ordered it was brewed in England for a localised market in the North East of England. Then there was the one in Belgium. Gordon's Scotch Ale – a Martin's of Antwerp brand – was at that time brewed in Edinburgh by Scottish & Newcastle to an order from Antwerp. As Gordon's meant gin in Italy – as in some other countries! – the beer could not be called Gordon's when it was re-exported to Italy from Belgium. Therefore, elsewhere including in Italy, it was branded Douglas Scotch Ale.

Prior to 1963 this fine, strong, dark, rich-tasting brew was produced in Alloa by the George Younger company for Martin's of Antwerp. Tales were told in Alloa of the way that when "The Belgie" (pronounced with a soft "g" as in "George") was going through, people who worked at George Younger would bring in vessels for the carrying of liquid so that some of the brew could be enjoyed elsewhere later. I am reminded of the way that when it was being brewed in Edinburgh in later years, there would be some visitors to the brewers' sample room keen to help check on the latest batch of "The Belgie".

When I tasted Gordon's Scotch Ale in Belgium, it was served from bottles into thistle-shaped glasses. I was told that if you asked for "scotch" in a Belgian bar, it was beer that you got, not whisky, because spirits were not normally sold in pubs in



Figure 3: Lorimer's Best Scotch

Belgium at that time. This meant that “scotch” for the Belgian market was stronger than the “Scotch Ale” that was sold in England.

In addition to the McEwan's Best Scotch Ale that I heard being ordered in England more than 40 years ago, there were others, including William Younger's Best Scotch Bitter, that is commemorated on an old advertisement reproduced on a pop-up banner that is used these days to promote the SBAA.

And of course, there was another “Scotch” ale for the English market long brewed in Scotland. This was Lorimer's Scotch for Vaux pubs in North-east England. It was to secure Scottish beer for the English market that Vaux of Sunderland acquired the Lorimer & Clark brewery at Slateford Road in Edinburgh, known as The Caledonian. The “Caley” brewed Lorimer's Best Scotch, mainly for export to England. Before Vaux themselves ceased to brew in Sunderland, they had the gall to claim that this was “green beer” from Scotland that no longer needed to be brewed in Edinburgh. In the meantime, Vaux had rebranded another of their Edinburgh acquisitions, Usher's, as Lorimer's, apparently at least partly in response to the formation in the 1970s of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA): in the keg ale era of the 1960s, Usher's was no longer deemed to be a good name in some quarters. Vaux, who could also brew really good ale, became a tainted designation among some drinkers as well.

Among other “Scotch” ales drawn to my attention by colleagues, notably Neil Lawrence, were several produced for, and in some cases in, North America (Canada as well as the United States). Some were obviously to be found elsewhere too.

Gordon's Scotch Ale is still to be had in Belgium. But it is produced in that country these days rather than being brewed in Scotland. In 2010, or perhaps the year 2011, I was somewhat startled to find a pub in Brussels selling bottles of beer labelled "Campbell's Edinburgh Ale". Not "Scotch ale" as such, this pleasantly refreshing Belgian brew still proudly boasted on that label of its Scottish origins, around 40 years after the Campbell, Hope & King Brewery in Edinburgh had closed.

My own view is that Scotland has lost jobs by failing to protect the geographical origin of "Scotch ale". Protection for whisky resulted from legal action initiated in England to prevent English pubs from selling "Scotch" whisky that failed to come from Scotland. As far as ale is concerned, "Scotch" is just a generic title that can come from anywhere. A bit like Dundee cake.

However it is good to know that Scotch ale is making a comeback in today's ever-popular beer market.



Figure 1: James Younger (1818–1868)

The Youngers of Alloa: Part 1 – Through the generations

Michael Clark

THE family brewing business was founded by George Younger (1722–1788) after he bought adjoining buildings in Alloa in 1762 and 1764 respectively. These formed the Meadow Brewery which still stands today, having been converted into flats.

The latter property is documented as having been bought from Robert Stein (1733–1815) a significant member of that renowned distilling family, described as a farmer and maltster.

The brewery passed down through the next three generations, James (1763–1809), George (1790–1853) and James (1818–1868) until the middle of the 19th century when it began to expand.



Figure 2: Part of the remaining structure of the Meadow Brewery

None of those three succeeding generations appears to have been first-born sons.

It was the aforementioned James “The Second” who played a major role in developing the business from that of one of local significance to that of national prominence.

In 1850 he married Janet McEwan (1823–1912) the elder sister of William McEwan (1827–1913) who was later to become a famous brewing figure in his own right.

Incidentally this marriage forged links across four Scottish brewing concerns. Janet’s uncles, David and John Jeffrey, were proprietors of the Heriot brewery in Edinburgh and this was where her brother William went to learn the trade between 1851–55, thereafter founding his own brewery in 1856.

James’s younger brother Robert (1820–1901) had established his own St. Ann’s brewery in Edinburgh in 1854, after having trained in his native Alloa and later at Drybrough’s in Edinburgh.

James and Janet had five sons and one daughter. Although one of the boys tragically died in his mid-teens (appendicitis), his four brothers attained national significance in their lives. Their only sister Annie (1855–1924) married the Rev. Daniel McLean who spent all his 29 years of ministry in Alloa.

George Younger + Catherine Allan
(1722 - 1788) (? - 1785)

James Younger + Mary Bleloch
(1763 - 1809) (? - 1837)

George Younger + Jane Hunter
(1790 - 1853) (1798 - 1890)

George Younger & Sons, Alloa

James Younger + Janet McEwan
(1818 - 1868) (1823 - 1912)

George Younger + Lucy Smith
(1851 - 1929) (? - 1921)

James Younger + Maud Gilmour
(1880 - 1946) (1882 - 1957)

Edward Younger + Evelyn McClure
(1906 - 1997) (? - 1983)

George Younger + Diana Tuck
(1933 - 2003) (1932 - 2015)

Robert Younger & Sons, Edinburgh

Robert Younger + Barbara Henderson
(1820 - 1901) (1827 ? - 1897 ?)

John Younger + Marion Bingham
(1862 - 1944) (? - 1953)

Oswald Younger + Betty Hobbs
(1907 - 1989) (? - 1996)

David Younger +
(1939 -)

Figure 3: Outline family tree



Figure 4: The Younger family circa 1858. Back left: George Younger; in front is his younger brother John who died aged 15. Centre: Janet Younger (nee McEwan) with infant son William on her knee, and James to her right, with Annie on the far left. Missing from the photo is father James, and the as then unborn Robert.

The sons of James & Janet Younger

George Younger (1851–1929) greatly expanded the Candleriggs brewery both in trade and physical size until it became the third largest (in terms of real estate) in Scotland. The maltings built during his stewardship were the largest in the country.

He became an Unionist MP in 1906 and remained in Parliament until the General Election of 1922 which saw the Tories into power. He was a prime figure in the so-called “1922 Committee” of Tory backbenchers. He was Treasurer and Chairman of the Unionist Party and played a key role in reconstructing the party’s organisational structures.

For his services to the Unionist party he was elevated to 1st Viscount Younger of Leckie in 1923, having previously been knighted in 1911.

John McEwan Younger (1852–1867) died aged 15 from appendicitis.

James Younger (1856–1946) became a senior director in the family business. He married Annie Paton, daughter of John Thomson Paton of the famous locally based textile family, in 1886 and settled at Mount Melville near St. Andrews. He and his wife funded and donated the Younger Hall to the University in 1930.

William Younger (1857–1925) served under his uncle William McEwan in the Fountain brewery where he was appointed managing director in 1886 when William McEwan entered politics as MP for Edinburgh Central.

His younger son, William McEwan Younger (1905–1992) – later Sir William – was the first managing director and chairman of the newly formed Scottish & Newcastle Breweries in 1960.

Robert Younger (1861–1946) studied Law and practiced as a barrister before being appointed as a High Court Judge. He was a principal British delegate at the post World War I Treaty of Versailles proceedings. Robert was created Baron Blanesburgh in 1923.

Postscript

It was brought to the attention of the SBAA during their visit to the Broughton brewery in 2017 that the original gates of the St. Ann’s brewery had recently been discovered.

One of the two co-founders of the Broughton brewery near Biggar in 1979 was Capt (Rtd.) Sir J. D. B. Younger, a seventh generation of the extended Younger brewing clan.



Figure 5: Four generations of the Youngers of Alloa, 1907. Left: George Younger, elected MP for Ayr Burghs the previous year and later elevated to 1st Viscount Younger of Leckie. Seated: the remarkable Janet Younger who outlived her husband by 44 years. Right: James Younger, who succeeded his father as 2nd Viscount Younger in 1929. The infant Edward Younger, born 21st November 1906, and who became 3rd Viscount in 1946.

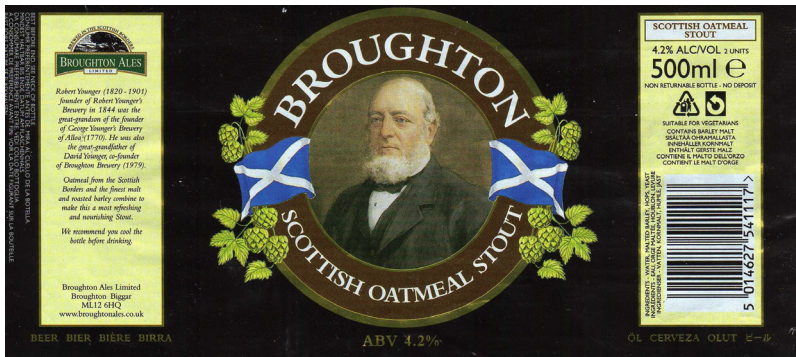


Figure 6: Label for Broughton Scottish Oatmeal Stout

David, as he is known (his second name), is the great grandson of Robert Younger who founded the St. Ann's brewery in Edinburgh. After leaving the Army in 1969 he worked ten years with Scottish & Newcastle.

The Broughton Scottish Oatmeal Stout (shown above) was an acknowledgment of his great grandfather and the wider family brewing connections.

The second part of this article will appear in next year's Journal.

Sources of information

Burke's Peerage.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography 2004.

The Independent, January 27th 2003.

A Short History of George Younger & Son, n.a. circa 1927

Personal contact with various members of the extended Younger families, such as Sir James E. G. Younger, the Right Honourable 5th Viscount Younger of Leckie; Capt. (Rtd.) John D. B. Younger of Glenkirk, Biggar; The late Lt. Col. (Rtd.) D. J. Younger of Ravenswood, Melrose; Mr. Stephen Younger of Strathkinness, St. Andrews; The late Rt Hon Robert E. G. Younger, Old Leckie, Gargunnoch, Stirling.

Charles McMaster, *Alloa Ale*, 1985.

Brewing in Leith

John Martin

LEITH is first mentioned in the Foundation Charter for Holyrood Abbey from 1128, when David I gave the existing harbour and land on the north side of the river to the monks of Holyrood.

Leith is steeped in history and never more so than when Mary Queen of Scots arrived at Leith in 1561 and began her short and turbulent period as Scotland's monarch.

Leith became a thriving port and as a result became a centre of industry, the more famous ones being

- Shipbuilding
- Rope, twine and sail making
- Wine trade (importing)
- Flour milling
- Biscuit making
- Timber trade (importing)
- Sugar refining
- Bottle making
- Spirits – blending, bonding and exporting

And of course, brewing.

In the days of the Auld Alliance with France, Leith was a noted wine shipping port, and was a major centre for the whisky industry, with numerous whisky bonds. It was also the home of the Yardheads breweries, a collection of long established breweries.

In Scotland as early as the 1670s a glass and bottle works was established by Sir James Stanfield in Leith, largely to supply his nearby Yardheads brewery, the first large scale “Publick” brewery in Scotland.

Many brewers were established in Leith during the 18th and 19th centuries in or near the Yardheads, a street name that still exists today. And not to forget Brewery Lane, a street that is north of Great Junction Street leading to Yardheads.

Yardheads may have been built as a military way serving the new ramparts of Leith. Its name derives from its position at the head of the closes or yards in this area. Yardheads is highlighted on the map in figure 1.

Listed in table 1 are the Leith breweries as per the 1773/74 Post Office Directory and gives a good indication of the extent of brewing at this time.

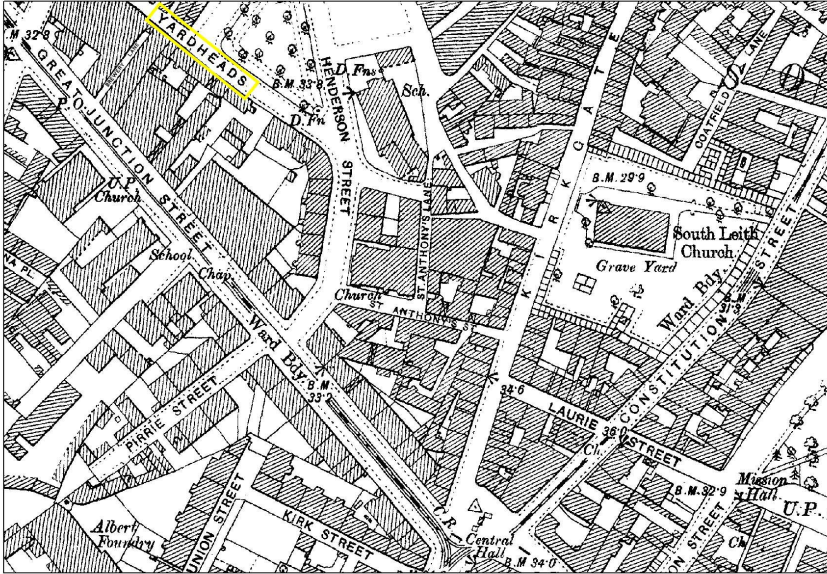


Figure 1: Map of Leith showing Yardheads

Alexander Anderson	Yardheads
Thomas Baker	Yardheads
William Comb	Yardheads
Matthew Comb Senior	Kirkgate
Matthew Comb Junior	Sherriff Brae
James Cundle	Sherriff Brae
John Cundle	Sherriff Brae
Robert Cairns	Lee's Quarter
Mrs Giles	Lee's Quarter
John Merrylees	Yardheads
John Muckle	Yardheads
Mrs Mitchell	Lee's Quarter
William Scott	Kirkgate
James Young	Lee's Quarter
Thomas Hadaway	Yardheads

Table 1: Leith breweries as listed in the Post Office Directory of 1773/74.

Perhaps the most famous name in brewing who came to Leith in 1749 to learn how to brew beer was William Younger. Although he trained as a brewer to begin with, he quickly realised that being an exciseman offered a more lucrative career. In 1753 he not only became an exciseman but also married Grisel Sime.

William was very astute and invested wisely in property and bought a share in a brig named William of Leith. However he died in 1770 aged only 37.

Grisel Younger had to bring up a young family, and in 1772 married Alexander Anderson, another Leith brewer. The name Mrs. Younger Anderson appears as a brewer in the Post Office Directory of 1784/85 in Yardheads.

Her eldest son Archibald learnt the craft of brewing and set up his own brewery in Croft-an-Righ near the grounds of Holyroodhouse Palace, and so began the famous William Younger brewing dynasty. The Wm. Younger brewing company became one of the largest and best known brewing companies in Scotland.

William McEwan, another famous Scottish brewer, began exporting his beers in 1863 from Leith, a mere seven years after starting brewing at Fountainbridge in Edinburgh, and very quickly built significant trade, in particular with Australia and New Zealand.

In 1931 Wm. Younger & Co amalgamated with McEwan's to form Scottish Brewers and in 1960 Scottish Brewers joined forces with Newcastle Breweries to form Scottish & Newcastle which grew to become the largest brewing company in the UK and third largest in Europe. You could say, from little acorns mighty oaks grow.

One Leith brewer, a Mr. Giles who established his brewery in St. Anthony Street and through time his reputation grew with extensive sales both home and abroad and with it became rich and acquired property in Peebles-shire. The business grew and became Giles, Black & Co., which then passed into the hands of John MacNair, another Leith brewer, and carried on extensively for many years mainly in the London trade.

However by the mid 1850s many of the breweries in Leith were in decline, with the St Anthony Street brewery the only one that existed at that time.

Another brewing connection with Leith, although you could say indirectly, were the Pattison brothers, Walter and Robert, who took over the Pattison Whisky Co. in Leith from their father in 1881, and went on to build a brewery at Duddingston in 1895. The brewery was very successful for a number of years, however due to their flamboyant life style, their business was later declared bankrupt (see the SBAA Journal Volume 14 for the full story).

Many people will remember Crabbie's Green Ginger Wine which was established near Yardheads, Leith, although originally the company produced a range of malt

and blended Scotch whisky. Crabbie's was still made in Leith until the 1980's when it was purchased by MacDonald & Muir, another Leith blender. Today it is now promoted for ginger beer with the brand owned by Halewood International Holdings.

During my research of brewing in Leith I found out that vinegar brewing was at one time a large-scale industry in lowland Scotland in the 19th century and went on to discover that in 1928 Grimble & Co. merged with Beaufoy & Co to form Beaufoy Grimble & Co. Three years later it became part of British Vinegars Ltd. It still continued to trade as Beaufoy Grimble & Co at its brewery in Jane Street in Leith, however it was closed in 1983 with production transferred to England.



Figure 2: Label from Brew Shed's revival of Leith Brewing Co.'s Heavy

In 1982 the Leith Brewing Co. was founded and one of the beers produced was Leith Heavy with an ABV of 3.8%. Three years later under new management it was renamed the Argyle Brewery Co. The company was dissolved in 1993. Sadly one of the founder members of the Leith Brewing Co. Tony Dean died earlier this year.

The good news is that the trade name Leith Heavy has been re-born and brewed by Brew Shed Beers who are based in Limekilns and was launched at the Oxford Bar last year.

Today there are three breweries based in Leith and all in Jane Street: Pilot Brewery, Liquid Brewery and Campervan Brewery.

May brewing continue to flourish in Leith again.

Sources of information

<http://www.leithlocalhistorysociety.org.uk/guidebook/pdfs/guidebook.pdf>

<https://leithdistillery.com/history/>

Old Edinburgh Club Journals

Scottish Brewing Archive Newsletters

Neil Lawrence

Allan McLean

Post Office Directories

Pints of View Issue 70

It's coming home

Ivor T. Reid

IN January 2018 Wellpark Brewery received an e-mail from Jim Anderson, a member of the Geelong Skindivers Club in Australia, wondering if we had any interest in a bottle of Tennent's beer that he had recovered from the wreck of the barque *The Light Of The Age* that had sunk just outside Port Phillip Heads near Melbourne on 16th January 1868.

He was particularly interested to know if we could analyse the liquid contents to determine the type of beer and recipe employed.

Jim had been persistent, as he had actually recovered the bottle from the wreck back in the 1970s and had previously contacted the brewery without getting a response. This time the enquiry was passed to me and I was immediately motivated to find out more.

Such finds are neither unique nor surprising, as in the 1860s Tennent's Wellpark Brewery was the world's foremost exporting brewery, trading on Glasgow's "second city of the empire" status and Tennent's reputation for producing quality beers which would survive arduous journeys to warm climates.

I have personal experience of two instances: one a wreck in the Philippines, the other in San Francisco, where the divers initially thought they had discovered a Spanish galleon loaded with wine. Of course, when the cases of bottles were brought to the surface they were marked "J & R Tennent Glasgow". These wrecks were sunk in the mid to late 19th century, around the same time as the wreck visited by Jim off the coast of Australia. Intact bottles returned for analysis did reveal that the alcoholic content was around 7%, fairly typical for beers of that period. However, the flavour and other attributes had deteriorated to such an extent that the product was undrinkable and identifying the type of beer was impossible.

Recognising that, returning the bottle contents for analysis was futile. John Martin of the SBAA arranged for the inspection of Tennent's brewing records from the period at Glasgow University Archive. One thing for certain, the beer on the Australian wreck was *not* Tennent's Lager, as lager was not brewed at Wellpark until 1885.

Records from the 1860s are not complete. However we can deduce certain beers that would be likely to be on board: these are *stouts* – single and double – brewed with a proportion of brown malt to give the characteristic dark colour with a typical original gravity of 1.074; or *Scotch ale* which for export would be relatively strong.



Figure 1: This is the Tennent's bottle recovered from the wreck that sank in 1868 off the coast of Australia

Brewing records from the early 1870s shows that EIB (East India Beer) was the most prolific brew for export. It proved very popular in warm countries, being light in colour and hoppy. The hop rate was high (six pounds per barrel), and compared with modern beers would be considered very bitter in taste. The high hop rates gave the beers a sterile quality that protected the beer from spoilage. The properties of these Pale Ales were typically an original gravity of 1.062, fermented down to give alcohol content of up to 6.8%. The current trend for IPA (India Pale Ales) owes its heritage to this type of beer.

While at the Glasgow archive we discovered labels that may have been used on bottles from the period.

You can just about make out “Wellpark Brewery” embossed on the capsule; unfortunately this has deteriorated since recovery.

If you think the story of the beer is interesting, its journey is fascinating. The vessel, a clipper named *The Light Of The Age* set sail with 32 crew and 42 passengers and general cargo including liquors from Liverpool on the 13th October 1867.



Figure 2: Examples of labels that may have been applied to the bottle found on the wreck.

Tennent's had well established agents in Liverpool at the time and regular shipments from the Clyde to the Mersey would have taken place.

Only recently did I make a connection between old Wellpark Brewery cellar names and export destinations. Records show that a cellar named Geelong was demolished as part of Wellpark brewery redevelopment in 1966. Geelong is Jim Anderson's home town and the destination of the ill-fated vessel, so there was definitely a strong connection between Wellpark Brewery in Glasgow and Geelong in Australia during the 19th century.

The details of the voyage are well documented and include running aground shortly after departure and the loss of the main masts and three crew members in heavy seas off the Cape of Good Hope on the 9th of December 1867. However the behaviour of the ship's captain, Thomas Reid Porter, gives insight into the ship's fate. He was reported drunk before the ship had even left Liverpool, confined to his cabin in a state of drunkenness during the repair of the masts and he had an "inappropriate relationship" with one of the two female passengers. He was finally described as "stupidly drunk" when the ship hit the rocks in sight of its final destination off the coast of Australia. Fortunately no lives were lost, and he was stripped of his captain's licence at the subsequent enquiry. Given his appetite for alcohol we are perhaps lucky to have found an intact bottle from the cargo!

We are currently planning to return the bottle to Wellpark Brewery after 150 years' absence and it will form part of the display at the new Tennent's Story visitor centre, scheduled to open later this year.

113 119 JCH

Date Brew	Date of Brewing	No. of Brew.	Quarters Malt.	Lbs. Hops	Lbs. Extract p Quarter.	Extract p Barrel.	Barrels Brewed.	Barrels Backed.	Waste p Cent.	Case of Beer
1877 Dec.	1877 Sept.	19	43	220	197	1088	125			160 16 6
		20	43	220	175	1070	108			160 16 6
1878 Jan.		26	43	80	199	1088	126			153 44 10
		27	43	80	198	1070	122			153 44 10
	Sept.	2	43	80	192	1070	118			153 44 10
		3	43	80	203	1070	125			153 44 10
Feb.		9	43	220	182	1070	112			160 16 6
		23	43	-	200	1073	118			148 18 2
	Oct.	2	43	-	204	1071	124			148 18 2
		9	43	240	190	1070	117			160 3 2
Mar.		14	43	240	211	1077	118			160 3 2
		20	40	240	213	1071	120			148 15 2
		28	40	-	227	1077	119			137 10 2
		30	38 1/2	-	226	1072	121			132 6 6
Apr.	Nov.	4	38 1/2	-	227	1073	120			132 6 6
		6	38 1/4	-	215	1070	118			131 10 3
		11	39	-	223	1072	121			132 19 2
		18	39	80	220	1071	121			137 2 4
Dec.		21	39	80	219	1072	119			132 18 2
				19	1860					

Above: An 1878 Tennent's production record detailing the original gravity and quantities brewed of their X4 ale.

PRICES OF MALT LIQUOR FOR EXPORTATION,

FREE ON BOARD AT GLASGOW,

INCLUDING BOTTLES, CASKS AND PACKING, &c.

(Bottles Wired, Labeled, and Tinfoiled, in Barrels containing not less than 3 Dozens Quarts and 6 Dozens Pints.)	BOTTLED LIQUOR, IN GLASS.		BULK LIQUOR, IN WOOD.	
	Quarts.	Pints.	Hbds.	Half Hbds.
	Per Doz.	Per Doz.		
East India Pale Ale,.....	6/6	4/6	75/	40/
Double Strong Ale,.....	7/	5/	110/	57/6
X Porter, (not supplied in Bottles).....			55/	30/
XX Porter, or Brown Stout,.....	6/	4/	72/	38/6
XXX Porter, or Double Brown Stout,.....	7/	5/	90/	47/6

(Extra Charge of about 6d. per Dozen Quarts for
Cases or Stoneware Bottles.)

The Terms of Settlement are Cash, within Fourteen days after the date of the Invoice, subject to 4 per cent. discount. Discount is allowed only for payment within the time above specified.

The Excise Drawback, in all cases, shall be J. & R. Tennent's property.

Inland Transit.—As the sellers can assume no risk or liability whatever in regard to the inland conveyance of the shipment from hence to Liverpool, London, &c., purchasers are particularly requested, immediately on giving their orders, to cover such risk by insurance so as to protect themselves from all contingencies.

The Harbour Dues on Shipments from this Port, are paid by the sellers.

The special market for which the shipment is intended ought always to be mentioned in transmitting orders, and Shippers are recommended to avail themselves, so far as practicable, of direct vessels from the Clyde.

Engagements for Freight will be effected on favourable terms for purchasers when desired.

As the whole process, from the Brewing to the Packing, is conducted by the Sellers, Orders can be executed with promptitude, and to the best advantage.

Above: A nineteenth-century export price list from J & R Tennent of Glasgow. One of these or the X4 Ale detailed on the inside back cover may have been the type of beer contained in a bottle salvaged off the coast of Australia, whose story Ivor Reid tells in this issue.

On the front cover: This window displayed George Younger's "Y" trademark in the Station Hotel in Alloa until recently (The image, taken from inside the pub, has been mirrored for legibility).