



The Annual Journal of the
Scottish Brewing Archive Association



IN THIS ISSUE

McEwan's history through their labels

by John Martin

*Also: William McEwan's house / HMS Edinburgh / The Youngers of Alloa /
Heritage exhibition / S&N transport / Scotch ale in Belgium*

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Contents

- 5 **The Edinburgh home of William McEwan**
Eleanor Docherty takes us on a guided tour of the brewer's former house
- 13 **HMS Edinburgh**
Bill Sneddon and John Martin look into the history of HMS Edinburgh and its unexpected beery connection
- 18 **McEwan's beer labels over the years**
John Martin looks at the story of Edinburgh's biggest brewery through its labels
- 29 **Transport of delight**
George Douglas continues his study of the transport used by S&N
- 43 **Raise Your Glass! reaches Haddington**
Allan McLean reports on the latest Brewing Heritage Scotland exhibition
- 46 **The Youngers of Alloa (part 2)**
Michael Clark concludes with the second part of the story of the brewing family
- 58 **The other John Martin**
A mix-up on the phone led John Martin to discover that he had a namesake in the beer trade – who was much more important to his employers than he was...

Back issues

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Figure 1: The McEwan house at Palmerston Place

The Edinburgh home of William McEwan

Eleanor Docherty

SEVERAL years ago an SBAA group visited the beautiful Victorian townhouse at 25 Palmerston Place, Edinburgh. This house, which is now the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Centre, was designed by architect George Gilroy and built in 1881 as a family home for William McEwan, the successful brewer, politician and generous philanthropist.

Born on 16 July 1827, William was the third child of John McEwan, a shipowner from Alloa, and his wife, Anne Jeffrey. His father died when William was only four years old, but his grandparents paid for him to attend Alloa Academy, so he had a decent education. His early career was not exactly fulfilling for him. At 16 years old, he became a clerk at Alloa Coal Company and two years later, he became an accounts clerk in Glasgow. His next job was as a cashier in a textile company in Yorkshire, where he was paid £70 per annum (more than twice his previous wage).

However, he was not happy there and when his uncle John Jeffrey, who owned the Heriot Brewery in Edinburgh, offered him a five-year apprenticeship in brewing, he accepted.

In 1856, with a £2,000 loan, William McEwan established what would become the highly profitable Fountain Brewery in Edinburgh. Business flourished throughout Scotland and also in Tyneside. During the 1860s, trade in the British colonies grew, resulting in one of McEwan's most famous products – McEwan's Export. Initially the beer supplied to the British colonies was McEwan's IPA and as it was popular the name changed to McEwan's Export years later. The IPA reference was always included on the label.

McEwan's original Fountain Brewery was built in 1856 (later called Old Fountain) and in 1973 the New Fountain Brewery was built on the opposite side of the road. The site both Old and New Fountain was closed in 2004 and demolished. However, the construction of apartment blocks on part of the former brewery site in the newly-created McEwan Square ensures that William McEwan's name lives on in Fountainbridge.

McEwan's house at Palmerston Place is now the Arthur Conan Doyle Centre: a spiritual centre and host to a Spiritualist church. The Centre was founded by Ann Treherne, chairman of the Palmerston Trust which bought the building in 2011, and exists to provide for the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of society and community needs in Edinburgh. While Arthur Conan Doyle is well-known as the famous creator of Sherlock Holmes, what is less well-known is that he was a Spiritualist, who devoted the later years of his life to promoting Spiritualism throughout the world. It was thought fitting, therefore, that he should be commemorated in Edinburgh, his home town, by naming this grand building after him.

There is a saying in Spiritualism that "there is no such thing as coincidence". However, there are a remarkable number of coincidences in the lives of William McEwan and Arthur Conan Doyle.

They were both Liberal politicians – with McEwan serving the Central Edinburgh division from 1886–1900. He was so popular that he was returned unopposed in 1895, even gaining support from the temperance movement! When William McEwan retired as an MP in 1900, Arthur Conan Doyle ran for his vacated seat, but was unsuccessful. When they bought the house, The Palmerston Trust did not know who its illustrious prior occupant had been, but now William McEwan's vacated house is home to the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Centre!

They were both avid readers – McEwan writes in his journal on 25th July 1849: "I have now attained the age of 22 years. Ever since my school boy days I have



Figure 2: William McEwan



Figure 3: Entrance hall and main staircase



Figure 4: Former dining room

been what is termed a considerable reader and have dabbled a little in almost all subjects.” In his autobiography ‘Memories and Adventures’, Conan Doyle recalls “During these first ten years I was a rapid reader, so rapid that some small library with which we dealt with gave my mother notice that books would not be changed more than twice a day.”

They were both Deputy Lieutenants – McEwan was Deputy Lieutenant of Edinburgh for 30 years and Conan Doyle of Surrey, when he was living at Undershaw, his home in Hindhead.

Both were offered knighthoods by King Edward VII – McEwan refused the title, stating “I would rather be first in my own order, than be at the tail-end of another.” He did, however, accept the position of Privy Councillor to the King in 1907. Arthur Conan Doyle was also offered a Knighthood by Edward VII and was inclined to turn it down. However, he was persuaded by his mother to accept, with her telling him it would be an insult to the King if he didn’t (King Edward VII knighted Arthur Conan Doyle in June 1902 for his work in defence of the British involvement in the Boer War. He wrote ‘The Great Boer War’ and ‘The War In South Africa: Its Cause and Conduct’).

They both received the LL.D. (Doctor of Law) from the University of Edinburgh – McEwan received his in 1897 upon the opening of the McEwan Hall and Doyle received his in May 1908.

One of the many wonderful things about this building is that, although its use is now quite different from when it was the McEwan family home, it retains so many of its original features that it doesn't take too much effort to imagine how it might have been at that time. A wander around the rooms reveals much about its history.

Today, the basement floor houses our kitchen, two small offices and two large function rooms. Previously, this was where the scullery, kitchen, wash house, wine cellar, hall and a WC were located. The housekeeper also had a large room and a bedroom on this floor. This was definitely the 'engine room' of the building.

The ground floor (entry level) was known as the Dining Room Floor in McEwan's time. Upon your arrival, you are greeted with the most breathtaking grand stairway in rich red mahogany (picture 3). It is a truly magnificent sight! It spirals all the way up to the 2nd floor, complete with a luxurious deep red carpet. If you look up, you will see the spectacular glass dome, etched with stars and surrounded by gold stars painted on a midnight blue background – you might call it a stairway to heaven!

Our beautiful Sanctuary is in the former dining room and boasts beautiful stained glass windows depicting three of the seasons (picture 4). This room houses photos of some of the pioneers of Spiritualism, including Conan Doyle himself. The Fox Sisters are credited with introducing the famous "knock once for yes and twice for no" system. Upon hearing repeated knocking sounds in their home in Hydesville, New York, they used this system, extending it to include letters of the alphabet. The message received led to the discovery of the body of a travelling salesman buried in their cellar. He had been murdered by the previous occupants, who clearly didn't want to pay him! We also have a photo of Helen Duncan, the last person in Britain to be tried for witchcraft. She was sentenced in 1944 to nine months in prison under the Witchcraft Act of 1735! Our largest function room is named in honour of her.

Our Sherlock Holmes Tearoom was once William's billiards room, our toilets were a pantry and WC and our Library was, coincidentally, his library. In its day, we hope it contained some Arthur Conan Doyle novels! Climbing up the stone, spiral stairway used by the McEwans' servants, you reach a mezzanine level, with a small storeroom, which was once the housemaid's closet. This was probably used to store linens etc.

On the first floor our Helen Duncan room (picture 5) is now a large, airy function room, but was previously the drawing room. It retains the magnificent original cornice, ceiling rose and fireplace. The original window shutters are also in place, but unusable now due to the installation of modern secondary glazing. The Mary Duffy room next door is used by us as another function room, but was originally a bedroom. There is now a large adjoining door between these two rooms, but this must have been added by later occupants, as it does not appear on the original floor plans. Facing the landing, we have three small therapy rooms, which were



Figure 5: Former drawing room

originally a bedroom with an adjoining dressing room. There is now a doorway from the Helen Duncan room which leads directly onto the therapy rooms' corridor, but this did not exist when the house was built. While the room configuration is slightly different now, in the corridor you can still see the elaborate cornices which show the outline of the original rooms.

Opposite our Mary Duffy room there are now toilets, which were originally a bathroom. On the landing, there are carved wooden faces above four of the doorways (picture 6). We do not know who these are. However, it has been suggested that they could represent either the four winds or the four seasons. If anyone can enlighten us on this, we would be most grateful!

Moving upwards, the second floor, or Bedroom Floor, is now occupied by two therapists. This floor originally housed a further three bedrooms, two dressing rooms and a bathroom. Two of the bedrooms sat either side of a dressing room and were linked by a small hallway. This is where William and Helen McEwan would have slept, as it was common for wealthy Victorian couples to have separate bedrooms. The third bedroom with adjoining dressing room would have been their daughter Margaret's.



Figure 6: The mysterious carved faces on the landing

The third floor was originally the attic floor, with one servant's bedroom and a cistern room. This was also the top floor of the building until 1886, when William McEwan added a further floor to include six small bedrooms (presumably for servants) and a box room. These are built around the dome, so that light still floods in. These rooms are now used by artists as their studios and by a creative writing school.

Over the years, the building has had many different owners and uses. Upon McEwan's death, the house was gifted to the University of Edinburgh. During the First World War, the Scottish War Committee held their meetings here. In 1985 St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, which sits just across the road from the Centre, opened the building as their Music School. Thankfully though, the house has not suffered the same tragic fate as so many beautiful New Town properties, which have ended up as sterile modern offices, with no heart left inside. The heart of this magnificent building still beats strongly, ensuring a warm welcome to all who visit us and it will continue to do so for many years to come.

If you would like to visit us, we would be delighted to show you around our beautiful Centre. We offer free guided tours on Tuesdays from 11am-4pm and you are most welcome to stay a while and treat yourself to something tasty in our Sherlock Holmes Tearoom. We also have a small shop and we have recently produced a souvenir guidebook, which is available at the Centre or online. We look forward to welcoming you soon!

For more information, please contact us on 0131 625 0700 or bookings@arthurconandoylecentre.com

You will find our website at www.arthurconandoylecentre.com

Sources of Information

Extracts from *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* by Ian Donnachie
SNM 13/3/12: William McEwan's Notebook 1848-51 at Scottish Brewing Archive
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Photo of William McEwan courtesy of the Scottish Brewing Archive



Figure 1: HMS Edinburgh

HMS Edinburgh

Bill Sneddon, John Martin

THERE have been six ships named HMS Edinburgh over the years, dating from 1707 to 2013 and two that were named HMS Duke of Edinburgh.¹

During World War II, HMS Edinburgh was a Town class light cruiser and saw a great deal of combat service, especially in the North Sea and the Arctic Ocean.

¹ This article was delayed for several years as the plan was to publish it in the same year if HMS Edinburgh – a Type 42 destroyer was to be saved and to turn it into a floating visitor centre near the Royal Yacht Britannia in Leith, similar to HMS Belfast on the Thames in London. However the outcome of a feasibility study last year ruled that it would be too expensive and the idea was left dead in the water. As a result of this decision the authors thought it still best to include the article this year, which would you believe has a connection with beer.

During active service it played a minor role in the hunt for the German battleship Bismarck in 1941 and provided cover to Arctic convoys bringing aid to the Soviet Union.

Its last voyage was carrying gold bullion back to the UK, which was a partial payment by the USSR for the supplies of war material and military equipment from the Allies. Its value was £1.5 million in 1942 and equivalent to over £40m today. The ship was badly damaged by a German U-boat and three large German destroyers. Badly crippled, the ship was scuttled in the Barents Sea, rather than risk the valuable cargo falling into enemy hands. The Barents Sea is located off the northern coasts of Norway and Russia.

The gold was partially salvaged years later in 1981 when 431 bars were brought to the surface before bad weather forced the diving operation to be suspended. A further 29 bars were brought up in 1986 bringing the total to 460 bars, leaving five bars unaccounted for.

The sixth ship to be named HMS Edinburgh was a Type 42 destroyer launched in 1983 and was known as the “Fortress of the Sea” and was the last of its kind to serve in the Royal Navy. It was decommissioned in 2013.

Its main operations of note were as follows:

- 1994 was present to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the D-Day landings
- 1998 was deployed to the South Atlantic to patrol the waters around the Falkland Islands.
- 2002 sailed into the River Mersey to escort the yachts at the end of the Clipper Round the World Yacht race.
- 2003 was deployed to the Persian Gulf and took part in the Gulf War against the dictator Saddam Hussein.
- 2004 was deployed to the Mediterranean to monitor sea-lanes as part of the War on Terror.
- 2005 took part in Exercise Neptune Warrior to conduct high seas firing of her Sea Dart missile system.
- 2008 deployed to the Middle and Far East took part in an interception of a drugs cargo.
- 2010 underwent a refit including a refurbishment of its weapons and communication system.
- 2011 deployed to Cape Verde and the Falkland Islands.
- 2012 fired the last ever Sea Dart missiles after a 30-year career.
- 2013 started a farewell tour of Great Britain including a visit to Edinburgh.
- 2013 a campaign was launched to save the ship and be deployed as a floating museum and visitor attraction at the Port of Leith. For financial reasons this was not successful.



Figure 2: The Main Wardroom bar – April 1988. Left to right: Bill Sneddon, Scottish Brewers Free Trade Design Manager; William McKinlay, MD McKinlay Joiners; Alistair Ross, Captain HMS Edinburgh; Tony Belfield, MD Scottish Brewers (S&N)

Scottish Brewers, the retail division of Scottish & Newcastle Scotland formed a business structure that provided a total support of all the products it produced, supplied and developed. This structure allowed the company to be continually in contact with the trade.

Scottish Brewers' interests extended in many other ways within Scotland, by actively supporting such interests as the Yorkhill Children's Hospital, brass bands, rugby and football at all levels, the Tall Ships race hospitality, the 1986 Commonwealth Games and theatres such as the Usher Hall and the Lyceum.

It also sponsored Ingliston including the design and build of a licensed unit, Rangers FC in-house design and build of bars in hospitality suites during the clubs reconstruction and strongly involved in the early relationships (via the free trade) in establishing and developing overseas potential interests in beer product trading in Canada and America.

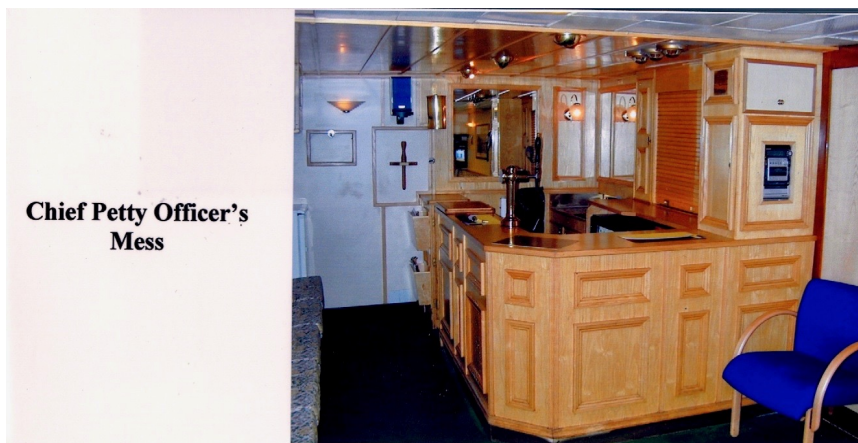


Figure 3: Chief Petty Officer's Mess

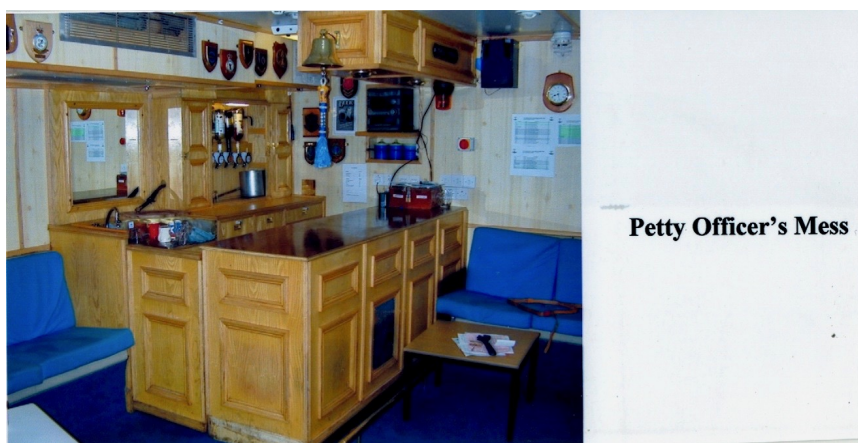


Figure 4: Petty Officer's Mess

HMS Edinburgh and its then Captain Alistair Ross and crew had a very close relationship with Tony Belfield, MD of Scottish Brewers. When in port at Leith the Captain and crew invited the workforce of Scottish Brewers and families to an open day on board with great hospitality extended.

In gratitude and response to this close relationship, Tony Bellfield decided to improve on the very basic bar facilities which existed in the main Wardroom (The Wardroom is the mess room for commissioned naval officers and provides a place of recreation as well as being a dining and hospitality room for guests).

He instructed Bill Sneddon of the Scottish Brewers Free Trade design service to carry out this design and build project. The work was carried out and completed to a very high standard in 1988. This was followed up two years later by forming two additional bars, one for the Chief Petty Officer Wardroom and the Petty Officers Wardroom.

It was not normal for work of this nature to be carried out on a Royal Navy ship; normally such works would be carried out by the Ministry of Defence to a basic standard.

The ship in its many duties overseas was required from time to time to extend hospitality when in foreign ports to royalty and dignitaries. The bars added an additional high standard and ambience to that already provided by the ship and crew.

Sources of information

Edinburgh Evening News, 2013

Michele Blagg, *Let Her Rest in Peace- HMS Edinburgh and Her Cargo of Gold*, Institute for Contemporary British History, King's College London



Figure 1: McEwan's Pale Ale label.

McEwan's beer labels over the years

John Martin

THE name McEwan resonates with many people in Scotland and means only one thing – a great quality beer and after more than 160 years it is still a strong seller.

Perhaps you remember the advertising jingle: “McEwan's is the best buy, the best buy, the best buy / McEwan's is the best buy – the best buy in beer”.

William McEwan learned the craft of brewing from his uncle John Jeffrey in Edinburgh and thereafter established his brewery at Fountainbridge and started production in 1856.

The following is a journey through McEwan's history by examining some of the beer labels, although there are many more than can be reproduced here.

William McEwan's first beers were strongly influenced by those being produced at Heriot Brewery in Edinburgh, where he learnt to brew, and George Younger's brewery in Alloa, the town where he was born.

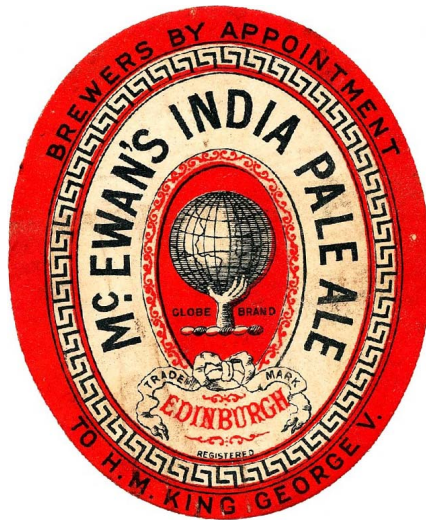


Figure 2: India Pale Ale label.

Pale Ale, IPA and Export

Edinburgh's water, being hard and gypseous, was ideal for brewing Pale Ale which became world famous.

McEwan's first trademark seen in figure 1 was the globe to underline the company's success with exports to Australia and New Zealand to begin with and developing the colonial markets, hence the flags.

The first Pale Ale was a clear, refreshing beer flavoured with hops, which proved popular in hot countries. The first shipments went to Scottish immigrants in the West Indies and later to India. The Pale Ale had a long life and travelled well, qualities that other brewers found difficult to achieve at that time. Pale Ales shipped to India were named India Pale Ale due to their popularity and the name stuck.



Figure 3: McEwan's Export label. It can be seen that it was still described as India Pale Ale.

Built on the success of the colonial export business, McEwan's IPA became more widely known as Export as it was being exported worldwide, although India Pale Ale was retained on the label until more recent times when it was removed under Marstons. You could say a true cavalier, as it is to this day Scotland's biggest selling canned ale. Like many beers the recipes were changed over the years. Today's McEwan's Export is a sweet, full-bodied beer with an ABV of 4.5%.

In 1960 Scottish Brewers and Newcastle Breweries joined forces to form Scottish & Newcastle, which grew to become the largest brewing company in the UK after acquiring Courage in 1995.

Strong and Scotch Ale

Scotch Ale is a strong ale that became more popular abroad.

The Cavalier trademark seen on several labels was adopted in the 1930s and was broadly based on the Fran Hals painting “The Laughing Cavalier”. This Dutch artist was a particular favourite of William McEwan who had purchased several of his other works. The Cavalier became synonymous with McEwan's beers.



Figure 4: McEwan's Strong Ale label.

In 1997/98 the UK supermarket chain Tesco challenged brewers to create a new beer, and the outright winner of the competition was McEwan's No. 1 Champion Ale.

The beer is rich and full bodied with a strong malty flavour and has a unique sweet and fruity character with an ABV of 7.3%.

Heineken along with Carlsberg took over Scottish & Newcastle in 2008 and three years later the Wm. Younger and McEwan's brands were sold to Wells & Youngs.

It was not long afterwards that the Champion beer label design was changed (figure 6). The No. 1 no longer appeared on the body label but was incorporated in the neck label.

McEwan's 80/- (figure 7) is a Scottish traditional ale and brewed since the late 1800s and derived its name from the time when beer was invoiced in shillings and dependent on its strength. Please note the caption “To copy it is forgery”.

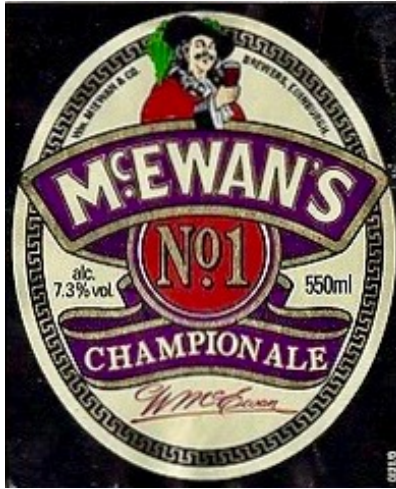


Figure 5: Original label for No. 1 Champion Ale, 1990s.



Figure 6: Later version of the Champion label.



Figure 7: McEwan's 80/- label from the 1990s.



Figure 8: This beer label example is for the American market. Note around the edge of the label it reads: Brewers By Appointment to H.M. King George V.



Figure 9: Many of the McEwan's beers that were exported included the Royal crest on its labels, perhaps used as a good selling point. Under the crest it reads "By appointment to Her Majesty the Queen, Brewers". The beer was produced for a sole agent based in Los Angeles, California.



Figure 10: On inspection of this label you may think there are two obvious errors, but not so. The International Division of S& N changed the spelling of McEwan's on their beer labels for the French market as the French had difficulty in pronouncing the name. Months later it was changed back to the correct spelling as the French were pronouncing it as "Mace wan". The other was the use of the Wm. Younger Father William trademark rather than the Cavalier trademark of McEwan's. This was a marketing ploy as the Father William trademark was better known abroad.



Figure 11: MY Lager label.

Lager

In 1931 Wm. Younger and Wm. McEwan, the two largest brewing companies in Scotland at that time, amalgamated to form Scottish Brewers and thereafter established a separate company named McEwan-Younger (MY) to handle all military and naval contracts and overseas business.

McEwan's Lager was first launched in 1976 and used a "teaser" advertising campaign to begin with using the caption "People were asking for this". Other successful advertisements were to follow, including "Alive & Kicking", "Chinheads" and the "Grousebeaters" using catchy tunes when on TV.

Recent developments

In 2017 Marston's took over Wells & Youngs and with it came a further change in the beer labels. This time the McEwan's labels were standardised with all products having a similar design.

The Cavalier trademark no longer appears on the body label as in the Export label in figure 3 but is on the neck label and crown.

Marston's gave a new name to the McEwan's Scotch whisky beer that had been previously developed by Wells & Young's and called it Headspace: a balanced blend of Scotch whisky and a smooth fruity beer.



Figure 12: Early McEwan's Lager label. Within S&N it was called McEwan's Cavalier Lager (MCL).



Figure 13: Marston's revised Export label, no longer featuring the Cavalier.



Figure 14: Latest, Marston's-era label for Champion.



Figure 15: McEwan's Headspace, a new product introduced under Wells & Young's, and given a new name by Marstons.



Figure 16: Over the years McEwan's sponsored many events and in this case the very first Rugby World Cup Sevens held at Murrayfield in 1993. The game of rugby sevens was played for the first time at Melrose, one hundred years previously. The bottle is 355ml (12oz), an unusual size for the UK market.

Today Marston's produce a wide range of McEwan's products and not just the ones above. Others include:

- 60/-
- 70/-
- 80/-
- Lager
- Best Scotch
- Scotch Ale

Under Marston's ownership the McEwan's brand has introduced its new promotion: "McEwan's by name, McNificent by nature."

Sources of information

Berry Ritchie, *Good Company*

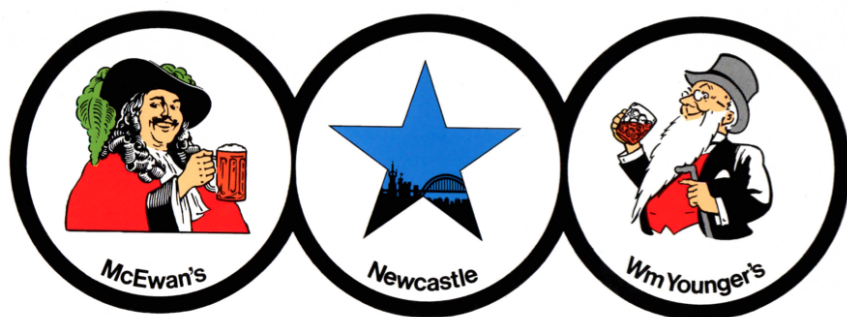


Figure 1: The well known trademarks of McEwan's, Newcastle and Younger's

Transport of delight: the story of Scottish & Newcastle Breweries Ltd. through vehicles

George Douglas

As a youngster growing up in Edinburgh I did take an interest in railway trains of the time and “sort of” went trainspotting, but I found myself more intrigued by what I saw of the posters and other material advertising rail travel. Stunning examples were commissioned by all of the earlier railway companies, and the practice was continued and taken to a new level when British Railways was formed, often featuring the work of some of our most talented UK artists.

In my teens I seemed to notice a plethora of very smartly turned out road haulage vehicles and I later learned that the haulage industry in Scotland, more than elsewhere in the UK, also had a fine history of outstanding commercial art.

In later years I did a graphic design course at Edinburgh College of Art which further honed my awareness of things visual, and now as an elderly codger in his second childhood I am researching brewery company transport, which has had a fascinating history in its own right. The subject is a large one and having been asked to present information on this I am pleased to attempt it but can only give a flavour of it here.

In any consideration of the history of UK brewing in general and in Scotland in particular the contribution made to this by Scottish & Newcastle Breweries Ltd (S&N) is truly remarkable.

This company was formed in 1960 by the amalgamation of Scottish Brewers Ltd and Newcastle Breweries. Prior to this in 1931 when Scottish Brewers Ltd (SBL) was formed when two of Edinburgh's finest brewing companies, William Younger & Co Ltd (established 1749) (WYL) and William McEwan & Co Ltd (established 1856) (WML) joined forces. Before 1931 these two famous names traded as separate entities but with strong links between them. This worked well for twenty-nine years and in 1960 there was the creation of Scottish & Newcastle Breweries Ltd (S&N) which grew to be the largest brewing conglomerate in Britain by 1995 and the third largest brewery concern in Europe by 2005.

The S&N group achieved an enormous output, creating equally enormous transport challenges but the distribution of beer in bulk, bottle, keg and can was addressed with great efficiency. Significantly there was a strong *esprit de corps* in the transport section of the company, both in management, admin and the two- or three-man local delivery teams and long distance trunk fleet drivers.

Several brewery companies both big and small were absorbed in the initial creation of S&N and the largest of these was the Newcastle Brewery (NB) which was of course the reason for the new company name. Some of the other breweries that were acquired but closed down were Robert Younger, T & J Bernard and J & J Morison, all of Edinburgh.

Takeovers and disposals were very much a feature of big business at the time and since. Ironically enough S&N itself eventually fell victim to a takeover by Carlsberg and Heineken in 2008 – to many the end of a truly great era.

An earlier high-level decision by S&N directors to outsource the S&N Trunk Transport Fleet (the long distance delivery set-up) in 1991 was highly controversial and while this was seen in some quarters as an economy it took away direct control of valuable in-house efficiencies.

At a much earlier time WML and WYL did use railways for distribution of products but not to a very great extent.

Figure 2 shows what is known to have been a type built in 1944 with a paint date of 14th August that year. The body and wheels were black, the tank was as per the colour of the WML Albion lorry in Figure 7, had the top line of lettering in red and the rest in bright green. It is known that WML sent a weekly quantity of beer in rail tanks from Slateford sidings in Edinburgh to Glasgow for bottling in the mid-1940s. Although I have been unable to establish much about the WYL rail tank in figure 3 (which is removable for road transit if necessary) this is probably of the same period and in WYL dark blue with white lettering.

Brewery transport by road was of course for a long time by horse-drawn carts or drays, and in common with many other Scottish brewery companies WYL and WML

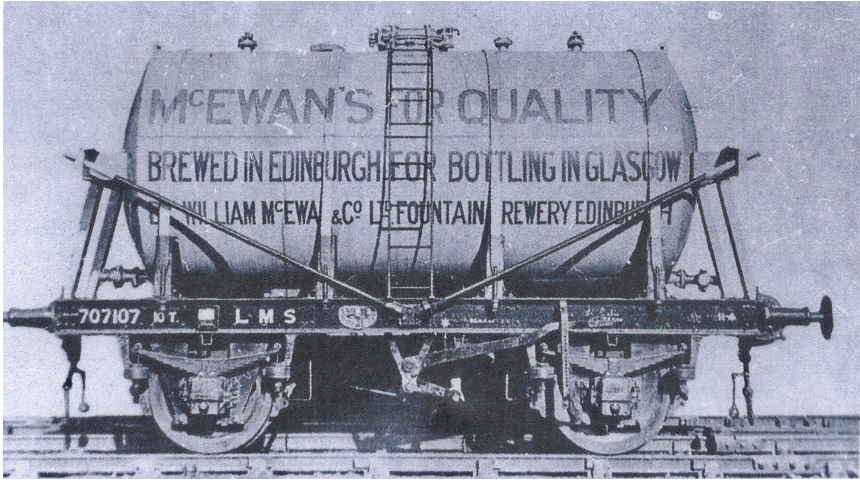


Figure 2: Rail tanks like these were used in the 1940s.



Figure 3: Younger's rail tank, probably of the same period as the one in Figure 2



Figure 4: A 1939-built rail tank in S&N livery photographed on 26th July 1982 at Exeter Riverside yard awaiting scrapping. It was last painted on 28th December 1965 after the creation of S&N but I do not know if it had ever been in WYL or WML use prior to then.

had a considerable number of horses for this. Here the powerful and gentle-natured Clydesdale breed was well suited to delivery work and a single horse could cope well with the weight of a fully loaded dray.

The Newcastle Brewery and many other English breweries used lighter horses, generally in pairs, but some breweries saw the value in having heavy Shire breed horses in pairs, which generated valuable public relations – everyone absolutely loved them – whether seen working in traffic or appearing at agricultural shows etc.

During the period 1931 to 1960 WYL/WML/SBL beer recipes were many and varied, and labels for the different brews sold in bottles carried the names of either William Younger & Co Ltd., William McEwan & Co Ltd., or Scottish Brewers Ltd., and some were marketed as joint McEwan-Younger items and branded “MY” on labels.

During this time each of the three companies had their own vehicles in distinct liveries, in which each brewery’s personnel generally took great pride. Drivers were actively encouraged to enter the transport industry’s driving award competitions of the time, and there were also WYL/WML/SBL in-house annual award schemes for safe driving records by dray and trunk drivers on company journeys.



Figure 5: WYL tanker bearing the “Get Younger Every Day” advertising slogan.

WYL vehicles (Figure 5) were red, white and dark blue with the original WYL trademark appearing on the cab door and above the cab which was given the name “triple pyramid” (three red and white triangles superimposed on each other). On the body of this vehicle also appears the Father William motif which had been created for advertising in 1927 by the artist Alfred Leete and which quickly became increasingly popular with the public. It was Leete who in 1914 produced the famous “Your Country Needs You” First World War military recruitment illustration showing Lord Kitchener adopting a withering stare and vigorously pointing at the viewer.

Before motorisation WML had many horses and a few steam powered Sentinel S4 and Super Sentinel dray lorries which were painted green. Figure 6 shows a restored S4 type which operated from a Newcastle depot they had at this time and to which Edinburgh-brewed beer was sent by road and also by ships from Leith.

This make of steam powered lorry had a ten ton payload and were built by Alley and MacLellan Ltd at Sentinel Works in Glasgow, who subsequently took over the vacated Rolls Royce works in Shrewsbury and went on to great success. Their early adverts proudly stated “Cartage at one fourth of horse rates”.

By now the WML trademark was the Cavalier. William McEwan was a great admirer of the work of the Dutch artist Frans Hal whose most famous painting was



Figure 6: S4 Sentinel steam-powered dray lorry in WML livery.

The Laughing Cavalier. William was a great collector of paintings and the collection was continued by his daughter Margaret. You can visit the family country home Poldsen Lacey near Dorking to enjoy the McEwan collection.¹ In my opinion both the Cavalier and Father William are timeless and among the best ever examples of UK advertising icons.

At the time of SBL coming into existence, WML vehicles were in colours as Figure 7 which is of an Albion Chieftain built at Albion Motors' Scotstoun works in Glasgow: ivory and green with red lettering.

Initially SBL vehicles were turned out painted ivory all over and while some had cab roofs painted black I have been unable to establish a logical reason for this. Dray vehicles had the "raves" (the body side rails) in maroon with gold leaf lettering. Tankers had the tank painted maroon at each end and the front half of the sides black and the rear half maroon, although this was sometimes reversed.

The SBL trademark on the cab doors was formed by four squares as seen in Figure 8; top left quarter maroon with letter S in gold, top right gold with Father William, bottom left gold with Cavalier, bottom right black with the letter B in gold.

¹ See SBAA Newsletter April 2018.



Figure 7: McEwan's livery on a repainted Albion Chieftain. This vehicle never actually saw revenue-earning service in the WML fleet but was purchased and put into authentic company colours for publicity purposes. One of its first public appearances was at the Open Golf Championship at St Andrews, allegedly with Arnold Palmer standing on the cab roof and swinging a golf club.



Figure 8: Tanker with Scottish Brewers branding.

This was repeated on the rear of tankers and all SBL vehicles carried the names of the two constituent companies WYL and WML in small text on both sides and on the cab front either in black or gold depending on background. The band below the windscreen was maroon at the first half and black at the second with Scottish Brewers Ltd in gold along the length of it.

In addition to SBL owning and operating their own vehicles they had Edinburgh haulier William Dobson Ltd doing some work for them too, with some of their vehicles entirely dedicated to this and having both SBL lettering and Dobson lettering in cream on Dobson's dark green bodywork colour, as seen on the four axle Atkinson in Figure 9.

On formation of S&N in 1960 the livery for vehicles included a logo (largely as per the SBL one) which acknowledged tradition but with the top left quarter now having S&N on a half maroon/half black background and the bottom right quarter having the five-pointed NB star with a Newcastle bridge graphic added, see Figure 12.

By this time WYL/WML/SBL had become not only an extremely successful brewing organisation but one with a highly respected transport organisation, such that many vehicle builders, suppliers, paint, tyre, fleet personnel clothing manufac-



Figure 9: Dobson's four-axle Atkinson in service for SBL. This is quite a well known publicity shot and I hope the large number of barrels on board at the time were empties!

turers and others placed numerous adverts in the press as satisfied vendors pleased to provide goods and services to the group.

In 1961 following the creation of S&N the previous year the Harp Lager consortium was formed comprising S&N, Guinness and Courage and Figure 10 is of an "anonymous" Dobson artic tanker operated by them for S&N but with only Harp credentials visible.

Figure 11 is one of several vehicles known to have been used extensively in advertising. It is a special vehicle built in 1963 with an ERF (Eric Richard Foden) chassis and engine with a sixty barrel refrigerated and insulated tank by Darham Tanks Ltd.

The vehicle taxation weight was kept down to 7 tons 11 cwt and the housing for the refrigeration unit can be seen at the rear. For various reasons this vehicle was able to execute more efficient delivery as part of a brewing contract that had been in place between S&N and the John Martin company of Belgium for a number of years. It was previously done by an ERF artic tractor with an ordinary flatbed trailer and a removable uninsulated and unrefrigerated tank.



Figure 10: Dobson artic tanker in Harp colours, seen at the owner's then-new premises at Straiton outside Edinburgh.



Figure 11: A special vehicle built in 1963 which found service taking Scotch Ale to Belgium.



Figure 12: This vehicle is known as a cellar tanker which were common sights in North East England designed for taking different brews of beer in bulk to the many working men's clubs in this shipbuilding and mining area. Quenching results for thirsty work!

It had a dedicated transport diagram to leave Fountain Brewery every Thursday to travel to Belgium with a special brew known as No. 3 Br. for John Martin in Antwerp, sold at that time as Gordon Highland Ale.

The largest company absorbed when S&N was set up was Newcastle Breweries (NB), which had been a hugely successful company in its own right. It also had a large transport fleet of its own, and after an assessment of their vehicles at takeover those which had quite a bit of life left in them were retained with modifications to paintwork. NB's attractive ochre and vermilion colours were kept with the addition of Father William and Cavalier together with the amended Blue Star, updated S&N logo and company name in full in white lettering on a black background (Figure 12).

Road tankers are required to have internal baffles to prevent bulk liquid from moving excessively in transit, which can make the vehicle unstable. If the load is made up of different brews, there will be separate compartments (the one in Figure 8 has three), so there will be no need for baffles. The tanker at Figure 11 can be recognised as a cellar tanker (with five compartments) because it has a housing at the rear for the necessary delivery discharging equipment.



Figure 13: A publicity shot of a large capacity dray seen at Roseburn Park adjacent to SMT Commercial's Edinburgh premises where many hundreds were built for S&N. It is a Bedford KG twin-steer three-axle 14.5 ton flatbed with a nine ton payload.

Published articles have confirmed the considerable extent to which S&N personnel involved in the vehicles of both the distribution fleet and trunking fleet were encouraged to be innovative and much of what became standard practice in the industry was the result of S&N innovation. An example of collaboration is seen in Figure 13.

To overcome steering difficulties on a fully loaded two axle-dray with a heavy load of casks or kegs (which would be removed firstly from the rear for placing returning empties), this design had two front axles for additional loading and beneficially had a low platform height of 42 inches, due to smaller 17-inch wheels. The vehicle had an S&N-developed aluminium body and headboard and a version was made to meet requirements of London bye-laws, which stated that drays working there must have vertical side stanchions and horizontal rods or chains with quick release locking devices. Otherwise on dray delivery vehicles loads of casks, kegs, crates and boxes were secured by nine inch square thick rope netting. This became incredibly heavy and difficult to handle when wet from rainfall. Tarpaulins were put in place to cover the cardboard boxes for beer cans to keep the boxes dry. S&N, always keen to reduce costs, trialled designs to reduce the weight of keg/barrel cradles and pallets, overhead loading gantries at depots were installed to enable elimination of catwalks



Figure 14: Legislation meant tandem (and by now tri-axle) trailers were taller and longer and provided a publicity department and graphic designer's playground for eye-catching results, as seen here at Fountain Brewery loading bank.

and ladders from road tankers (with the added benefit of being safer for personnel) and the end of vehicles carrying spare wheels was implemented. Collaboration with manufacturers York, Boalloy, Donbur, Dennison etc on curtain-sided trailers resulted in simple but effective changes, such as sloping the sides inwards which helped to avoid roof damage by the tops of the tall guide rails on forklift loaders.

In time a Group Regionalisation Policy creating distinct UK areas was decided upon by S&N, giving area management teams a degree of autonomy for liveries. The areas were designated as Scotland, (to be known as Scottish Brewers Ltd.), North east of England, (to be known as The Newcastle Breweries Ltd.), Midlands, (to be known as McEwan-Younger Ltd.) also William Younger and Company (Yorkshire) Ltd. with south of the Humber Estuary (to be William Younger and Company Ltd.) and also S&N Breweries (Ireland) Ltd., Northern Ireland.

Attractive new cab door graphics, trendy new texts and continuing use of our friends Father William and the Cavalier, together or separately, appeared on brightly coloured vehicles which saluted the company's history with reappearances of the William Younger/William McEwan/Scottish Brewers names.

At this time there began a trend in the transport industry whereby more and more operators were economising by purchasing new vehicles (particularly tractor units) in ex-works white paintwork, designing simpler, less expensive liveries and using wrap-on self-adhesive graphics. S&N purchased many hundreds of such new vehicles. For corporate image purposes large numbers of existing vehicles (including strong and/or dark coloured ones) were required to be repainted to be white. This



Figure 15: a Leyland Freighter curtainsider with "McEwan's Export Class in a Glass" and Cavalier on the side with Home Brewery on the front, recalling that Nottingham brewery which was taken over in 1986.

almost certainly caused the same colour change to the hair of several hard-pressed area Fleet Engineers!

Alas, Scottish & Newcastle is no longer... the end of an era indeed.

Sources of Information

Good Company by Berry Ritchie

National Railway Museum

William Dobson

S&N Annual Report 1989

Sentinel Drivers Club



Figure 1: Advertising memorabilia at the Haddington exhibition.

Raise Your Glass! reaches Haddington

Allan McLean

THE latest exhibition in the “Raise Your Glass!” series was held at the John Gray Centre in Haddington from mid-January to the end of April 2019 and organised by members of the SBAA who are also linked with the community interest not-for-profit company Brewing Heritage Scotland.

The exhibition, with the involvement of the owners of the centre, East Lothian Council, featured previously seen information about Scottish brewing as well as more specific material relating to East Lothian in general and Haddington in particular. East Lothian is a great barley-growing county previously known as Haddingtonshire.

Among displays was a representation of Archerfield Ales, one of the “new” breweries in the county, the far-famed but now-closed Fowlers from Prestonpans, and, of course, Belhaven which is celebrating 300 years of brewing west of Dunbar.

Haddington once featured several breweries and distilleries. The town has had a long association with brewing and distilling, related industries that were able to use the barley growing nearby.



Figure 2: Information panels displayed provide details of Brewery Park, The Sidegate Brewery, The Nungate Brewery and The New Nungate Brewery.

One of the earliest documented references by the Privy Council came in 1568 to “carrie forward, with baken bread, brewed aile, and flesche to furnish the camp by and at the siege of Dunbar”.

Surprisingly, Brewery Park featured brewing for a shorter time than its name might suggest. Like other places in Haddington, however, its location can still be seen clearly. This proved helpful for people visiting the exhibition, as well as walking around town.

The Brewery Park complex was built by William Shiells junior (1799–1847). His father, William Shiells senior (1757–1824), had been a brewer for 30 years at the site now known as Shiell’s Close. On the death of William junior, Brewery Park passed to his son, William Goodall Shiells (1826–1892). It was leased for a time by J. H. Inglis & Co. James Henderson Inglis had been a shawl manufacturer in Edinburgh, a city he returned to as a bookkeeper, cashier and accountant. Following the death of his partner in 1854, the brewery at Brewery Park was sold.

Brewing at Brewery Park eventually came to an end after only about 30 years or so, although malting continued. Ross Shiells (born 1834) tried to run the brewery in 1857, but failed to make the business a success. Come 1861, he had moved into Edinburgh as a maker of sacks and twine. Parts of the Brewery Park complex survive, although no longer for their original purposes.

Sidegate Brewery was located east of Sidegate. John Martine junior (1811–1891) was the brewing interest here. After suffering bankruptcies he left the brewing business to become a grain merchant. He was noted for writing several books on local history. Brewing and malting later became successful for other men.

The Haddington Brewery Company bought Sidegate Brewery in 1896 and many of the brewery buildings still survive as private housing.

The original Nungate Brewery was on Bridge Street. The New Nungate Brewery was the second in Nungate and was known as “New” to distinguish it from the earlier one. It belonged to the brewing business of Mark Binnie & Co, a famous Haddington business taken over in 1937 by the William Younger brewing concern of Edinburgh. The beers produced by Mark Binnie & Co included: 30/- Table Beer; 54/- India Pale Ale; 60/- Bitter Beer; 80/- Ale; 100/- Ale; 140/- Strong Ale; Double Brown Stout; and Four Guinea Ale. After a fire in 1969, the brewery site was cleared for housing.

As part of the exhibition there were two folders that contained more detail pertaining to the brewing, malting and distilling industries of Haddington, researched by Forbes Gibb.

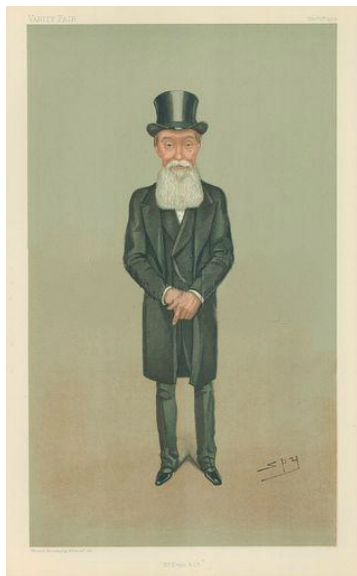


Figure 1: Caricature of William McEwan, dressed for the House of Commons, late 19th century.

The Youngers of Alloa (part 2)

Michael Clark

THE Youngers of Alloa and related McEwan family began a tradition of political and military service from the late 19th century onwards.

After his third oldest nephew William Younger (1857–1925) was considered experienced enough to manage his uncle’s Fountain brewery, William McEwan (1827–1913) was the first of four family members to become an MP, when he was elected in 1886 as Liberal candidate for Edinburgh Central, a constituency which continued in existence with occasional boundary changes until 2005.

William was a Gladstonian Liberal and sufficiently popular with the local electorate to stand unopposed in the 1895 election.

He served on the backbenches of the Commons and stood down in 1900 having refused a title, although he subsequently accepted an appointment as Privy Councillor in 1907. He spoke in favour of Irish Home Rule, a subject that had significant support within the Liberal Party during that period.

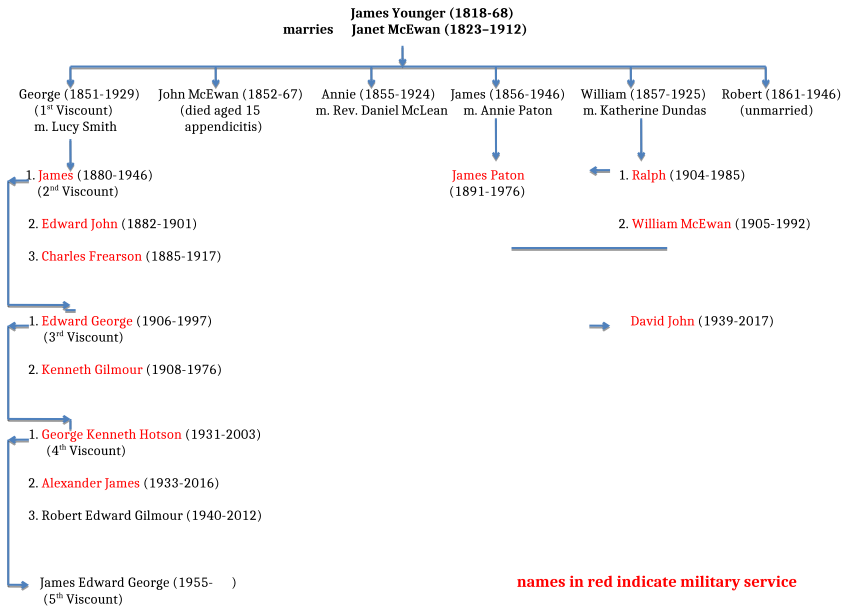


Figure 2: Younger family tree from 1900–1940

His attitude to the Temperance crusade, another cause embraced by the Liberals, appears less well publicised, although he is known to have made charitable donations to groups within the movement.

In 1906, his eldest nephew George Younger (1851–1929) was elected Unionist MP for Ayr Burghs – at his second attempt, after abandoning endeavours to secure his local Clackmannanshire & Kinross-shire constituency, which, despite attracting a consistently respectable share of the votes, he had failed to win in 1895, 1899 and 1900.

He spent his parliamentary days as a backbencher although he held the office of chief whip during Lloyd George’s coalition government. His significant influence on party policy towards the end of his career is evident as he is recognised as the leading figure in the political manoeuvres which ended this coalition. He also held the posts of Unionist Party Chairman and Treasurer on separate occasions, and is remembered for restructuring the party’s administrative machinery.

The next family member to serve as an MP was Kenneth Gilmour Younger (1908–1976), the younger son of James (1880–1946), 2nd Viscount Younger of Leckie.



Figure 3: George Younger outside the House of Parliament in 1907 after being elected.

In total contrast to his grandfather, Kenneth was a Labour politician and represented Grimsby between 1945–1959 and held junior ministerial office.

A determination to acquaint himself with the working lives of his constituents led him to undertake an arduous eight-day stint as a deck hand on a local trawler fishing the North Sea.

The last family member to serve in the Commons was George Younger (1931–2003) who held cabinet rank very briefly as Minister of State for Defence under Ted Heath in 1974, then as Secretary of State for Scotland 1979–86, and finally as Secretary of State for Defence 1986–89, both under Margaret Thatcher.

His political career began when he unsuccessfully contested North Lanarkshire for the Tories against the long serving incumbent Labour MP Peggy Herbison at the 1959 General Election. A respectable performance led to him being adopted in 1963 as candidate for West Perthshire – but he stood down the following year to allow Alec Douglas-Home access to win a safe parliamentary seat in order to enter the House of Commons.

A grateful Tory party did not forget this accommodation and rewarded him with the candidacy to contest the more marginal seat of Ayr in 1964, a constituency whose boundaries had changed significantly from when his great-grandfather was the local MP earlier in the century.



Figure 4: Kenneth Younger KBE, Labour MP for Grimsby 1945–59.

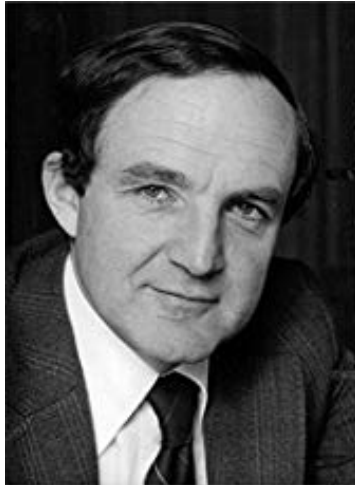


Figure 5: George Younger, 4th Viscount Leckie of Younger as a young man.

After winning Ayr in 1964 George held it through seven further parliamentary elections until 1987 where a greatly reduced majority of 182 votes resulted in it becoming the then fourth most marginal constituency in the UK, and the most marginal in Scotland.

When George Younger retired from politics in 1989 his successor Phil Gallie held the constituency for the Tories with an even smaller majority of 85 votes. However, further boundary changes in 1997 worked in Labour's favour and they took the seat later that year.

The Youngers of Alloa: Military Service

The first of the family to enter regular army service was Edward John Younger (1882–1901), the second of the three sons of George Younger (later 1st Viscount Younger of Leckie) and his wife Lucy.

Edward went from Harrow public school to the Royal Military College, Sandhurst and on graduating was commissioned on 11th August 1900 as a subaltern in the 16th Queen's Lancers, before proceeding to South Africa with his regiment in January of the following year.

On 22 December 1901, his regiment formed the rearguard for a convoy from Calvinia to Clanwilliam in Cape Colony, 300km north-east of Cape Town. The convoy was attacked by a party of Boers determined to seize supplies and who kept up a running fight for more than 20km, before withdrawing in the face of heavy artillery fire.

The following day 2nd Lt. Younger was killed in action leading his men against the enemy – dead at 19 years of age whilst serving his country, without having reached majority and not having the right to vote. It took four days for the tragic news to reach Alloa, just after Boxing Day, and it is said that his mother never got over the loss of her son at such an early age.¹

This Younger family loss was not the only tragic sacrifice they endured. Their youngest son, Charles Frearson Younger (1885–1917) was serving as a Lieutenant in the Lothian and Border Horse when he was mortally wounded by a stray bullet at St. Leger in France on 20th March 1917, he died the following day.

Unlike his late older brother Edward who was regular army, Charles started his military career as a territorial officer.

¹ In 2013 I was fortunate to be able to identify the grave location with the invaluable help of a local museum curator, details here for anybody interested.
<http://www.alloaadvertiser.com/news/13536556.clacks-mans-quest-to-find-resting-place-of-fallen-soldier/>



Figure 6: Edward John Younger at Harrow circa 1898.



Figure 7: Badge of the 16th Queen's Lancers.



Figure 8: Charles Frearson Younger (1885–1917), and his headstone in Avuely military cemetery, Picardy.

Charles was a talented left arm bowler for Clackmannanshire County Cricket club, and as a first class player he represented Oxford University and Scotland between 1907–12. In his professional life he was managing director of the family brewery before the First World War intervened.

This second grievous loss left James Younger (1880–1946) as the sole survivor of the three brothers, and he was not to escape the Great War altogether unscathed either. He became a volunteer reservist with the Fife & Forfar Yeomanry in 1902 and saw active service with them in Egypt and Palestine between 1917 and 1918, fighting the Turks, at one point promoted from Major to acting Lieutenant Colonel in order to assume command of the battalion in the field. He was hospitalised there for some time like so many others who succumbed to the debilitating diseases contracted in foreign climates during the campaign. The battalion was reorganised as a Black Watch formation and transferred to France with newly promoted Lieutenant Colonel Younger in command, it was there that he was wounded fighting against the Germans, an action for which he would be decorated:

Distinguished Service Order (DSO), 2nd September 1918, 1919, Lt. aCol. James Younger, 14th Bn. Royal Highlanders, T.F. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. During the operations at Moislains on September 2nd, 1918, when a strong enemy counter-attack was developed and a heavy barrage put down by them, he at once went forward through the barrage and steadied and reorganised the battalion. He was severely wounded in doing so, but continued to command until relieved. He behaved most gallantly.

James's cousin, James Paton Younger (1891–1976) served as a Captain in the 3rd battalion the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders during World War I before returning to civilian life as a director of the family brewing business.

Edward George Younger (1906–1997) became 3rd Viscount Younger of Leckie in 1946 upon the death of his father. He was a Territorial Army (TA) officer before and during World War II and had a reservist commission in the 7th battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, his local regiment. He had distinguished himself in a HQ staff officer role in the early part of the war as part of the BEF in France, and only just managed to get back to the UK. His eventual rank of full colonel was unusual for a TA officer.

Edward's younger brother Kenneth (1908–1976) was a major in the Intelligence Corps during WWII before winning a Commons seat for Grimsby in 1945.

Among the last members of the "Alloa line" to serve in the military were George Kenneth Hotson Younger (1931–2003) and his younger brother Alexander (Sandy) James Younger (1933–2016). George, who later became 4th Viscount, joined the 1st



Figure 9: Lt. Col. James Younger DSO, later 2nd Viscount Younger of Leckie.



Figure 10: Edward Younger OBE, TD, as a young man.



Figure 11: Sir Ralph Younger (1904–1985) with his many decorations.

Battalion A & S.H. as a National Service officer in 1950 just as the Korean War was about to break out. Since he was only 18 he was temporarily attached to the Black Watch in Berlin until he could join his regiment at age 19 where he spent 4 months on active front line service during the bitter winter of 1950–51 opposing Chinese and North Korean forces, a “pretty scary” experience in his own words.

His brother Alexander followed a similar path, first as an officer in 1st Battalion A & S.H., followed by an attachment to the Black Watch where he saw active service in Korea 1952–53 and was wounded. On return to civilian life both served in the local territorial 7th Battalion A & S. H. for many years. In the late 1960s George was prominent in leading the successful campaign and petition to prevent the disbandment of this famous regiment in which his father and brother had served.

On the detached “Edinburgh” side of the family there were also prominent military figures.

Major General Ralph Younger (1904–1985) was the elder son of William Younger (1857–1925), brother of George, 1st Viscount Younger of Leckie.

He had a long and highly distinguished military career in WWII and beyond with several decorations, the only Younger to achieve General officer status. Anybody interested in a more detail should search via Google, otherwise this article would extend prodigiously.

His younger brother, William McEwan Younger, is better known as the first managing director and CEO of Scottish & Newcastle from its formation in 1960, although he had seen notable service as a major with the Territorial Army in 40th



Figure 12: Sir William McEwan Younger

Light Anti Aircraft (LAA) battery Royal Artillery in the defence of Tobruk for which he was awarded the DSO.

After promotion to Lt. Col. he remained in North Africa until taking part in the Salerno landings of 1943 and serving in Italy until the Armistice.

Last, but not least, as we approach the end of the direct descent lineage from the “Alloa” Youngers is Sir Ralph’s son, David John Younger (1939-2017) of Ravenswood near Melrose who served 28 years in the same regiment as his father, the Queen’s Own Hussars, and reached the rank of Lt. Col. before retiring in 1986.

His long career took him to Germany and the UK, as well as trouble spots in Aden and Ireland where he gained a reputation as a capable and dependable staff officer.



Figure 13: Lt. Col. David John Younger, Queen's Own Hussars.

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



Figure 1: A 90-barrel tank demountable of Scotch Ale (No. 3 Br.) destined for John Martin Ltd in Belgium.

The other John Martin

John Martin

WHEN I first started work for Scottish & Newcastle in the late 1960s, I became aware that S&N brewed beer for Belgium. The following tells the story of how I found out and the further research I carried out.

When working at Abbey I contacted the Head Brewer at Fountain Brewery to query the details of an invoice.

When I phoned, it was the Head Brewer's secretary who answered and explained he was in a meeting and unavailable until after the meeting. When I mentioned my name, the secretary answered saying the Head Brewer would definitely want to speak to me and although I said he could phone me back, the secretary was already interrupting the Head Brewer's meeting. Seconds later I could hear someone running towards the phone and answered by thanking me for phoning. When I started to explain the purpose of my phone call, there was a pause before the Head Brewer asked me who I was and was it in connection to the last delivery of No. 3 Brussels beer. I repeated my name as John Martin and explained I was phoning from Abbey Finance to query an invoice. The Head Brewer then answered my query and very promptly put down the receiver.



Figure 2: Gordon Xmas in its famous thistle shaped glass.

I later found out that the Fountain Head Brewer thought I was representing John Martin Ltd from Antwerp who bottled the No. 3 Br. from Fountain and sold it on the Belgian market as Gordon Highland Scotch Ale.

It was many years later, when I worked at Home Brewery in Nottingham, that the Group Production Director John Chambers presented me with a bottle of beer with the name John Martin on the label, all the way from Antwerp – a bottle I have treasured ever since.

However many years later one of our members George Douglas lent me a book titled *The Finest Drinks - John Martin's Story*, which explained the background and why the beer No. 3 Br. was brewed by S&N.



Figure 3: Label for John Martin's Pale Ale.

The Belgian connection

John Martin, a master brewer from England, settled in Belgium and founded his beer company in Genval (Walloon Brabant) in 1909. As a family company, his grandson Anthony Martin currently runs it.

The company started as a distributor for Guinness and besides brewing Belgian-style beers it also imports British and Irish beers and also produces soft drinks for Schweppes under license.

It was around about 1920 that John Martin turned his attention to Scotch Ale and as a result the Gordon brand was born. The trademark "Gordon" was first registered in 1924 when John Martin was convinced there was a potential in the Belgian market for a high quality Scotch Ale. Trial brews were carried out by Guinness to begin with and later by John Jeffrey, a brewer from Edinburgh. However the product did not meet market requirements. It was to take a further ten years to find a suitable beer and a brewery capable of producing the product that met the high standard of quality demanded to meet the required "Belgian taste".

The company approached George Younger of Alloa and head brewer Mr. A. Clark Doull was entrusted with the operation and in 1935 Gordon Scotch Ale was launched in Belgium. However when George Younger was taken over by United Breweries Ltd and the retirement of Mr Doull, the brewing was transferred to S&N where it was brewed at both Holyrood and later Fountain breweries in Edinburgh. This product would be known for decades by S&N as "3 Br."



Figure 4: Scotch Ale label using the alternative Douglas brand for the French market.

Over the years S&N produced four variants of Scotch ale for John Martin Ltd: the traditional Scotch, the popular Christmas version “Gordon Xmas”, Gordon’s Finest Gold (a 10% strong lager), and Gordon FIVE developed for the export markets.

The Scotch and its Xmas versions are today brewed by the Palm brewery in Belgium following the closure of Fountain brewery and during the transitional stages of transfer, John Chambers would play a crucial role in the product’s development.

The Douglas brand

Douglas was initially developed for trademark reasons for the sale of the Gordon Scotch Ale in France, as Diageo (the owners of Gordon’s Gin) did not wish the Gordon name to be used in other countries for beer. It took many years before Diageo did allow the company to use the Gordon beer brand worldwide.

Although a Belgian beer, please note the Scottish thistle on a tartan background on the beer label.

McEwan’s

On the Belgian and French markets, McEwan’s Scotch also joined the range of beers following an agreement with Richard Keith the Managing Director of S&N International Division.

Ironically it is worth remembering that Belgium’s strong golden ale Duvel originally started using McEwan’s yeast, a strain that remains unique to this day.

Scottish-style beers have been very successful in the Belgian market, hence the use of names such as Gordon and Douglas. A big part of its appeal is that in Belgium and other continental countries people love the idea of a beer that is associated with Scotland.

So next time you are in Belgium or perhaps approaching Christmas time why not look out for a Gordon Scotch or Xmas Ale and remember its origins started in Scotland.

Sources of information

The Finest Drinks – John Martin’s Story



Above: A horse-drawn dray in Scottish & Newcastle livery. The wooden casks and hop garlands suggest this is a showpiece dray rather than a working vehicle. We would be delighted if any reader is able to identify the precise date and/or location of this photograph.



Above: This George Younger of Alloa sign is still in situ at the Tigh-an-Truish Inn, Clachan Seil, Argyll. Considering its age, it is in remarkably good condition. The pub does not display any other brewery signage.

Front cover: This Red Label Sparkling Beer label advertises the brewer's royal appointment and displays the old-style McEwan's globe motif, predating the introduction of the Cavalier.