

West Street Breweries: Bedminster, Bristol 1880 - 1882

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The West Street Brewery of Frederick William Dowding was in existence for a very short period of time; it began sometime between November 1880 and March 1881 and went into liquidation in May 1882. It was once thought that the West Street brewery of Hy Workman (this is only listed for 1880) was taken over by F.W. Dowding, but the evidence strongly suggests that is not the case, and points to Hy Workman being a brewery agent or representative. Both 'breweries' were never listed in the trade sections of the Bristol directories, and

only appear in the actual street listing section.

In the Mathews directory for West Street Bedminster of 1880 it lists 'Hy. Workman, new model brewery, from the Star Brewery, Oxford Street, London'. This is situated between Henry Hallett in Zion Cottage to the east (a cork cutter who had been there for some time), and Saville, Ewens & Co., chemical works to the west (a new business started in this year, and later known as the Albert Chemical works). There is no listing in

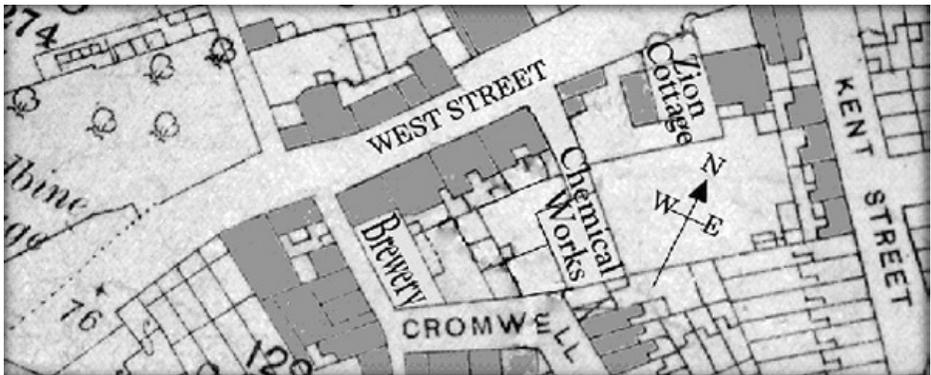


Figure 1. The location of the brewery, chemical works and Zion cottages.

the names section for a H. Workman and he is not listed for any other years. The Bristol & Region Archaeological Services produced a report in 2003 (when this area of Bedminster was redeveloped), where the author believed this listing was an error, and that the location should have been to the west of the Chemical works. I think this entry may not actually refer to a brewery here at this location, but is more likely to be an agent, or salesman, either for the Star Brewery, or an equipment manufacturer. If Hy. Workman had bought the plant from the Star brewery, it would have been quite a substantial set of equipment, (the Star Brewery was capable of producing over 10,000 barrels per year) and the buildings would have needed to be a lot more substantial than those shown on the map (see Fig. 1). The brewery equipment sold in 1882, when the West Street Brewery of Dowding goes into liquidation, does not match the description for the Star brewery plant, which further reinforces the argument that Hy. Workman's New Model 'brewery' was not an actual brewery on this site.

Star Brewery, 11 Oxford Street, London

The proprietors of the Star Brewery at No.11 Oxford Street, London, were Williamson and Wass, who had leased the premises, warehouse, shops and a large adjoining residence from Samuel Sandell, from at least 1825. In march 1842, Draper, Child & Co. are the owners, but by December 1847, they wish to

dissolve the partnership 'after many years at the brewery'. They had demolished and rebuilt the brewery 18 months previously, at an enormous cost, incorporating all the latest scientific and brewery techniques. It was described as having a large frontage onto Oxford Street and the business had a substantial Public house trade exceeding 10,000 barrels per annum in Porter and Ale, and with care and admirable character of the situation and brewery, may soon be doubled. Frederick William Lightfoot & Co., own the Star Brewery in December 1859 when they charge one of their draymen with embezzling three small sums of money collected on their behalf. In 1876 the freehold to the Star Brewery Nos.11 & 12 Oxford Street is sold for £39,950.

F.W. Dowding, West Stret Brewery 1881-1882

Frederick William Dowding set up the West Street Brewery following the split with his business partner Richard Jones. The pair had been partners since 1875 after leasing the steam brewery of Edward Stretton which was based at Sussex Street, St. Philips, Bristol and known as the King William Brewery. They parted company in October 1880, Jones continued on at the King William Brewery while Dowding moved to Bedminster. They had been producing mainly Pale Ales, Mild and Stout as well as selling their Malts.

There is no mention of a brewery in West Street in the 1881 Bristol directories,

however, the census of March 1881 records F.W Dowding as a brewer living in Brandon View and employing 5 men and a boy. The 1882 Bristol and Suburban street directory is the only year that the West Street brewery is mentioned, and even then there is no listing under the Trade directory section (for Brewers or Maltsters). Under the street listing section for West Street Bedminster, it lists 'F.W. Dowding, brewer' with the chemical works to the east (so this brewery is on the other side of the chemical works to the 1880 listed 'New Model Brewery'). The Names listing section in the directory gives it 'Dowding F. W., brewer, West Street, Bedminster - residence, Brandon view, Coronation Road' and the street listing for coronation road states that Brandon View is somewhere between Sandford Villa and

Lichfield House in Nelson Terrace. The house is still standing, but because many of the names are now missing or crumbled from the gate posts, and the street directory of the time only listed the houses of significant people, it was only possible to pin it down to a ten house range (somewhere between 108 and 117 Coronation Road).

The brewery site has been cleared and redeveloped for housing recently, although the building had long ceased to be used as a brewery.

In May 1882 it is announced that Frederick William Dowding of the West Street Brewery and 5 Nelson Terrace Bedminster has a 'Liquidation by Arrangement', and in the following month this advert is placed.

**IN LIQUIDATION.
BREWING PLANT, CARRIAGE CASKS, CRANK-AXLE CART, AND EFFECTS,
AT THE WEST STREET BREWERY, WEST STREET, BEDMINSTER.**

Messrs. Alexander, Daniel, & Co.

Will sell by auction, on the premises (by direction of the Trustee of the Estate of Mr. F.W. Dowding), on Wednesday, 21st June, 1882, positively without reserve,

All the capital brewing plant and utensils:
Including two working rounds, refrigerator, three 12-barrel store pieces, 19 butts, barm troughs, hop back, racking taps, Indiarubber hose, crank-axle cart, sack trucks, a large number of carriage casks, and numerous utensils. Also Beam Scales by Parnall and Sons, Office furniture, and other effects at the West-street Brewery, West street, Bedminster.

The Sale will commence at Eleven o'clock.

For further particulars apply to the Auctioneers, Bank-chambers, Corn-street; Mr. W. H. Phillips, Chartered Accountant, Small-street; or to Mr. Gerard Mosely, Solicitor, Shannon-court, Corn-street, Bristol.

Figure 2. Advertisement of the West Street Brewery's liquidation.

The 1883 OS Map Gloucestershire Sheet LXXV.4.23 shows Brewery in Cromwell Street (off of West Street) in the area of 45-53 West Street. The building is still shown on the 1903 second edition (surveyed 1881-2, revised 1902) but not marked as a brewery.

Further information on Frederick William Dowding will appear in the next issue of the Journal in an article on the King William Brewery.

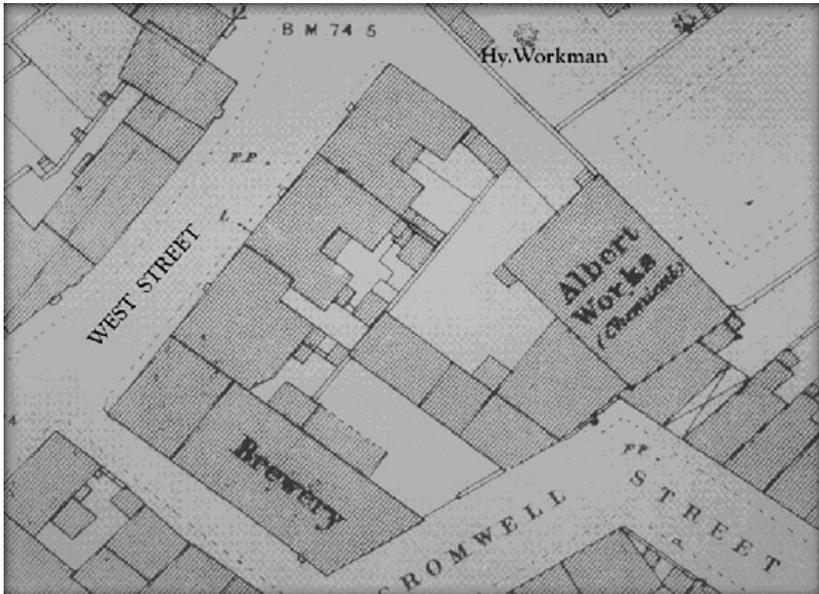


Figure 3. 1883 Ordnance Survey map showing the location of the brewery.

References

Bristol Central Reference Library for the following:

Mathews Bristol Directory and Bristol & Clifton Suburban Directories 1821-1891
Bristol Mercury and *Bristol Mercury and Daily Post* Newspapers.

Bristol Record Office for the following:

Ordnance Survey map of Bedminster, Bristol 1883.

Rod Brewer's enquiry to BHS, printed in Newsletters 44 & 45.

Peter Insole, Archaeological Officer, Bristol City Council. 2003 Desk-based archeological assessment on 45-53 West Street, carried out by Bristol & Region Archeological Services.

Census Records for England 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891.