

King William Brewery: St. Philips, Bristol 1856 - 1891

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The King William Brewery was founded c. 1856 by Edward Stretton at the back of William the Fourth Tavern in Folly Lane, St. Philips, Bristol. The Brewery soon expanded to meet the needs of the increasing population that was densely packed into this rapidly growing industrial area. Richard Jones and Frederick Dowding lease the brewery from Edward Stretton when he retires in 1875, but the partnership is short lived and is dissolved in 1880. Richard Jones continues at the brewery until his death in 1890, when, following failed attempts to sell the brewery, it closes in 1891.

Edward Stretton, King William Brewery 1856-1875

Edward Stretton was a licensed Victualler turned Brewer, he was born c.1812 in Bristol and was likely the son of William and Sarah Stretton (both born c. 1786). William was governor (1836 - 1845) and Sarah the Matron of the Lawfords Gate House of Correction, Bristol, which was also known as Gloucester Prison, Gloucester Road (the road was re-named Lawfords Gate in 20th century).

Edward was Victualler at the Duke of York tavern in Jubilee place, Baptist Mills from 1837 to 1846 with his first wife Arabella, where several of his children are born (the pub still exists and was Bristol & District CAMRA's Pub of the Year 2008). He moves to the 'Carpenters' in Hills Buildings, St. Pauls in 1847 where he is now listed as a 'Person to retail beer, under list of William IV. Cap. 56'. The following year he takes over the Folly Tavern & Tea Garden on Barton Hill from his mother Sarah who had become insolvent following the death of her husband William (she later married J. Browne of St. Georges on 24th November 1847, and died in April 1856 aged 70). Edward marries his second wife Jane Huish on 13th February 1849.

It would appear that the Folly Tavern had two names, depending on which road it was approached from. Mathews directory of 1848 listed 'Stretton Edward, William the Fourth, Folly Tea gardens, near Barton Hill', and under Public houses 'Folly Tavern, Barton Hill, Edward Stretton'. He is listed as the licensee at both the Folly Tavern 1848-1864 and William the Fourth 1848-1869 (the pub

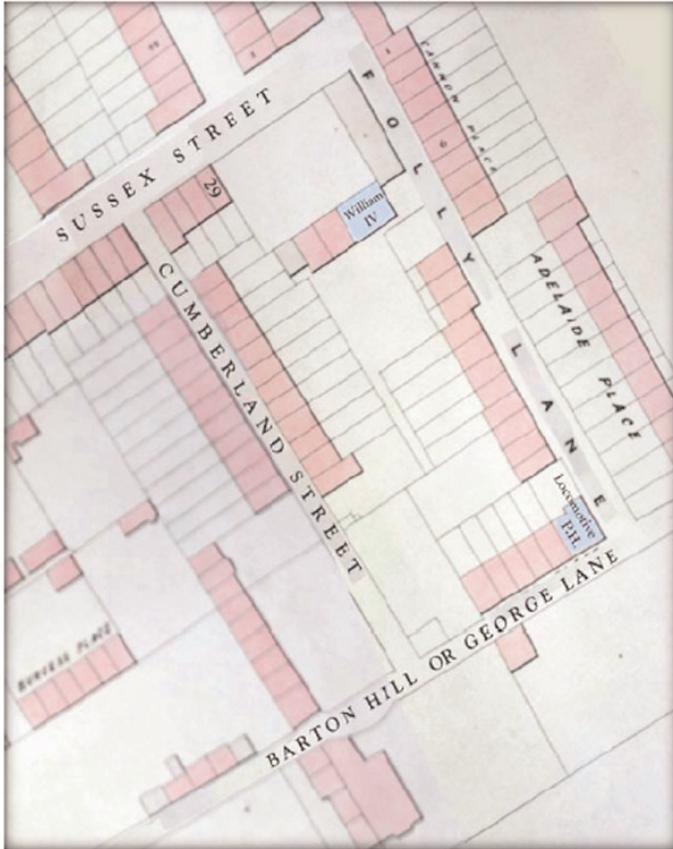


Figure 1. Ashmeade Map of future brewery site 1855.

changes its name to King William in 1867).

Edward Stretton would have been brewing beer for the Folly Tavern in common with other local pubs at that time, but it is not until 1856 that we see him listed as a commercial brewer in Barton Hill. The obituary of his four month old son William Edward James, in February 1857, refers to the King William Brewery, and is the

first confirmation of the brewery name. By 1860 the brewery has expanded, and now has an entrance in Barton Hill and Sussex street, and a year later has an entrance in Folly Lane as well, where Edward is living with his second wife Jane and seven children.

In early 1861 he is employing two men and a boy at the brewery, but by September 1862 the continued success

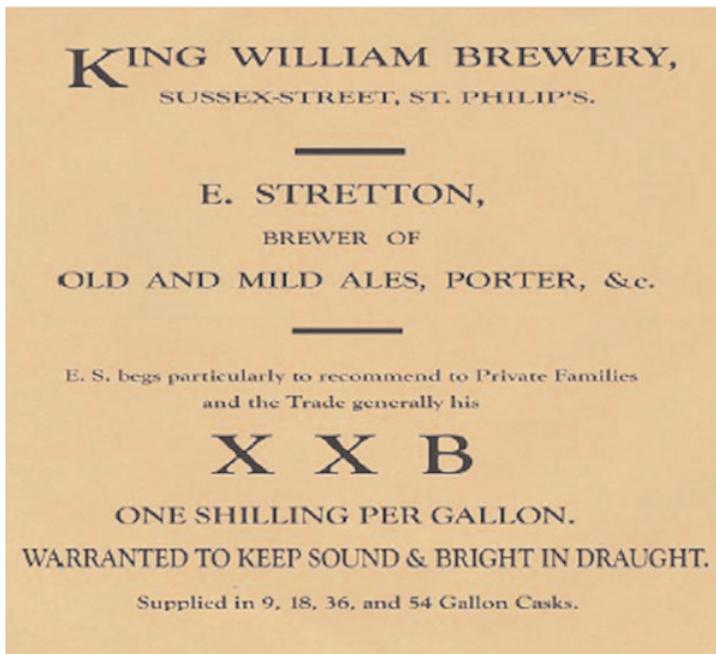


Figure 2. Advert from Bristol Mercury 1870.

of the brewery sees him looking for a working brewer, to take some of the workload off him.

The person he employs may not have been that steady, as this account dated 5th March 1864 shows.

At the Council-house, Mr Edward Stretton, brewer, Folly Lane, St. Philip's, was summoned, on an information, that he, on the 10th of December, 1863, at his brewery, altered a certain entry theretofore made by him, as brewer of beer, purporting to be made on the 9th of December, 1863, and

stating that he intended to mash 2 quarters and 2 bushels of malt on the morning of the 10th; and that he altered the entry to 3 quarters 4 bushels of malt, whereby he had incurred a penalty of £200. Mr. Pigeon, representing the defendant, said his client pleaded guilty, but there were mitigating circumstances. It was necessary that an entry should be made in a paper the day before any quantity of malt was wetted, and the brewer of the defendant received instructions from him to brew ale on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and beer on Friday. The defendant thought that the brewer would obey his instructions, and

made an entry in his paper that a certain amount of malt had been used. On Thursday afternoon the brewer came and said that he had orders for a quantity of grains that had been brewed that day. The defendant told him that he could not have the quantity he wanted, as he had been brewing ale. The brewer then said he thought the defendant told him to brew beer, which at once alarmed the defendant, who told him that he did not, and he must increase the entry of the amount of malt; and it was for that alteration he had been summoned. The magistrates said that under the circumstances they were inclined to mitigate the penalty to £50. Mr. Pigeon then asked the Board of Inland Revenue to further mitigate the penalty, but Mr. Barrow said it required some consideration before they did that. The collector, who was in court, remarked that there were circumstances in the case which he was certain would not

induce the board to make any further mitigation. The parties then left the court.

The comments made by the Tax Collector, would lead one to presume that there might be more to this incident than just a simple misunderstanding between brewer and owner, because three weeks later the brewer has gone and Edward Stretton is advertising for another working brewer, this time one who is thorough, of good character, ability and sobriety!

This doesn't appear to have affected the success of the King William brewery, which soon started to drive the local brew pubs out of business, and the first to sell up was the Bunch of Grapes Inn, Sussex Street (which was practically next door to the brewery) in April 1866. The auction listed the contents for this five barrel brewing plant as

KING WILLIAM BREWERY.
—
EDWARD STRETTON,
MALTSTER and BREWER,
SUSSEX ST., & FOLLY LANE,
ST. PHILIP'S BRISTOL.
XXB 1s. per Gallon.
—
*N.B.—Orders per post, punctually
attended to.*

Figure 3. Advert from Mathews Bristol & Clifton Directory 1872.

One copper furnace, containing about 208 gallons; mash and kive tubs, coolers, malt mill; 7 casks, 85 gallons each; 6 ditto, 150 gallons each; various other casks, tubs, lead pipe, iron boiler; and numerous other effects.

A year later, the Locomotive Inn on Barton Hill Road goes under the hammer. This Inn is described as a well established Home-brewing Double-licensed Inn, but it does not detail the brewing plant. The Locomotive was first listed at the same time as the William the Fourth in 1847, and survived well into the 1950's. In December 1868, for reasons unknown, the King William Brewery need to sell an egg-end boiler measuring 9 feet by 3 feet which is described as nearly new.

It is believed that Henry H. Wright is the brewer, and in 1870 is living at the King William Brewery as it is reported that on June 15th his wife gives birth to a son at the brewery. Edward Stretton continues brewing and malting from the Sussex Street Brewery until he retires in 1875.

Jones & Dowding, King William Brewery 1875-1880

In 1875 Frederick is in St.Philips, Bristol leasing the King William brewery. He is living in Rodney house on Cheltenham road 1877 to 1879, before moving to 11 Stratford Road, Cotham in 1880, and later to Lynwood, Cotham Gardens. In March 1881 he is living with his wife Louisa and five children in Brandon View

on Coronation Road, Bedminster, and owns the West Street Brewery, Bedminster, Bristol (see *Brewery History* 133). The house and brewery are sold in June 1882 following the liquidation of his Assets. It is believed he emigrated to New Zealand with his family in 1884, possibly with an inheritance from his father.

In 1877 they are appointing purchasing agents throughout South Wales to sale their 'first class Pale ale, Mild beers, and Stout' which would indicate a change from the style of beers that Stretton had been producing (Old Ales and Porter). On 9th October 1880, the *Birmingham Daily Post* carries the announcement of the Partnership being dissolved.

Frederick William Dowding was born in Marshfield, Gloucestershire to Charles J. and Rebecca Dowding in c. 1843. Charles J. Dowding owned a brewery in Chippenham, Wiltshire where Frederick learnt his trade. In 1871 he is living in Chippenham with his parents and brother Francis Edwin (c. 1847-1894). Francis inherited the Chippenham brewery in 1884 when Charles J. Dowding died.

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Richard Jones was born at Brislington, Somerset c. 1831 and lived at Eversleigh Villa, 5 Leigh Road, Clifton with his wife Clementina R. Jones and seven children, from 1876 till his death in 1890.

R. Jones & Co., King William Brewery 1880-1891

Following the dissolution of the partnership between Richard Jones and Frederick Dowding in 1880, Richard continues as R. Jones and Co. at the Sussex Street brewery until 1891. The brewery sells a quarter share in the business for £150 on 10th September 1886 at an

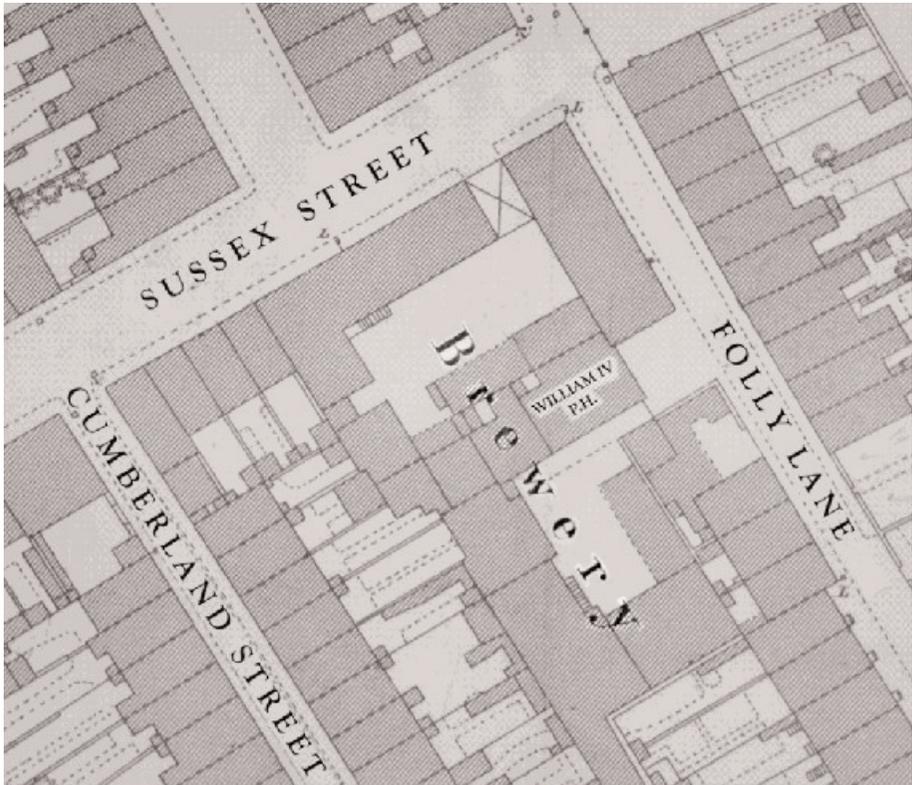


Figure 4. O.S. Map 1883.

auction held at the Full Moon hotel, North Street. When Richard Jones dies in 1890, the brewery shuts down. In September

1890 (shortly after his death), the trustees had tried to sell the lease for the brewery, but without success, so in early

**TO BREWERS, MALTSTERS MANUFACTURERS
AND OTHERS.**

SALE of an Established LEASEHOLD STEAM BREWERY, with the FREEHOLD
FULLY-LICENSED KING WILLIAM TAVERN adjoining:
TWO MALT HOUSES, COTTAGES, YARDS and PREMISES
situate in FOLLY LANE and SUSSEX STREET, ST. PHILIP'S, Bristol.
ALEXANDER, DAIEL, SELFE, & CO.

will SELL by AUCTION, at the BANK AUCTION MART, CORN STREET, Bristol,
on THURSDAY Next, 26th February, punctually at Three o'clock.

The Valuable, Well-known and Conveniently-arranged
STEAM BREWERY,

With Capital Cellarage and Stores, Two Malt Houses of 12^{1/2} Quarters each, Offices, Cottages,
Stable, Yards, Workshops, and Premises; also the Double-Licensed House adjoining,
known as the KING WILLIAM TAVERN, Situate in FOLLY LANE and
SUSSEX STREET, ST. PHILIP'S, Bristol.

The Brewery was for many years conducted (until his retirement from business) by the late Mr Stretton, to whose estate the property still belongs; then by Messrs Jones and Dowding, at a rental of £225 a year; and subsequently until his recent decease, by Mr Richard Jones, at the reduced and totally inadequate rent of £180 per year.

The King William Tavern comprises - Bar, long taproom, two kitchens, and w.c.; large clubroom, four bedrooms, good cellar, and minor offices; and the lease upon which it is now held terminates on the 25th March, 1891. The Leasehold portion of the Premises comprises the Sussex Street Brewery, St. Philip's, held for the residue of a term of 1000 years, from the 29th September, 1856, at the yearly rent of £10; also all those Freehold Premises known as the King William IV, and the Two Messuages adjoining, situate in Folly Lane, St. Philip's aforesaid, subject to an annual rent of £24. The representatives of the late lessee are prepared to render possession on the 25th March next, if required.

The property is situated in the midst of a densely populated manufacturing neighbourhood, and may be very easily converted to general manufacturing purposes, workshops, artisans' dwellings etc.

Further particulars may be obtained of the Auctioneers, Corn Street, Bristol (and 34 Old Jewry, London. E.C.): of Messrs BRAMBLE & WATTS, Solicitors, City Chambers, Nicholas Street, Bristol; or of

Mr JOHN CUMBERLAND, Solicitor,
5, Clare Street, Bristol.

Figure 5. The advert describing the sale of King William Brewery

1891 the Executors announce the 'Auction in lots' during February, of the Brewing Plant, Steam Engine and Boiler, Store Vats, Carriage Casks, Stock-in-Trade, Draught Horse, Dray and Cart, Harness and Miscellaneous Effects of Mr Richard Jones, deceased.

Following the death of Richard Jones in 1890, his trustees decide to sell up and on 23rd February 1891 they advertise the sell of the lease for all the property, as well as the brewery.

Nothing exists of the brewery buildings today and the site is now a builders merchants and modern industrial units.

References

Bristol Central Reference Library for the following:

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

Bristol Record Office for the following:

Ashmeade map 1855 St. Philips.

Ashmeade map 1874 St. Philips

Ordnance Survey map of St. Philips, Bristol 1883.

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