

Gone but not forgotten: the breweries of North-West England - Furness

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Introduction

Virtually every town in the North West of England once had its own brewery - or, very often, more than one.

To me personally, walking down Memory Lane and recording the reality of a lost web of local breweries before they become ghosts and disappear altogether is a really important piece of our shared history not just here in the North West of England but in Britain as a whole. I'm clearly not alone in thinking this and I must acknowledge the fantastic debt of

gratitude I owe to CAMRA and particularly its Furness Branch as far as this article is concerned for so enthusiastically embracing this project and giving their permission to use the photographs on their website.

Mysteries still remain. There is a Brewery Street in Barrow (Fig. 1). What was clearly once the site of the brewery has now been built on. Despite numerous enquiries, I have been unable to establish who owned the brewery which was once to be found there, nor what happened to it: the best guess is that it might have once had something to do with nearby Case's.



Figure 1. Brewery Street.

Furness breweries

Many years before the Industrial Revolution made Barrow-in-Furness the large industrial town most famous for its shipbuilding (and most notably submarines) which it is today, it was a small village. At that time, beer was supplied to its populace by four existing breweries in Ulverston - 14 miles away - as well as

Matthew Denney's Brewery in much nearer Dalton-in-Furness.

Here is an attempt to record the history of these breweries before they are lost - along with the ales and beers they produced - to the mists of time.

Ashburner's Dalton Brewery. This was actually the Dalton Brewery described below which was bought-out with all its tied houses by Sidney Hall and William Ashburner in 1884.¹ Under this guise, it was offered for auction in both 1901 and 1903 but wasn't sold on either occasion as the reserve price wasn't reached. It was finally sold privately in 1904 and closed-down in the same year.²

Barrow Brewery Company. This replaced the Important Fact Brewery (see below) during 1877, buying-out its predecessor and establishing a share capital of £20,000. It was capable of producing 40 to 50 barrels of beer per week and this capacity was increased to 120 barrels weekly by 1880. Two years before this, though, both the brewery and the company had been put up for sale, Barrow Brewing becoming tenants on a ten-year lease. Once the lease was up, the company folded, the Brewery closed down and the brewing equipment was sold-off.³

Richard Baines opened a new, small brewery on Hindpool Road in Barrow during the mid 1800s. This is very likely to have been the brewhouse bought by GS Heath in 1871 that was to become the Devonshire Brewery in later years.⁴

Beckside Brewery. One Mr Rawlinson had a brewhouse built at Beckside during 1867. According to Alan Gall, the

brewery stood on Beckside Road, opposite to what is now the ground of Dalton United Football Club. The residential building called High Beckside marks the spot.

Rawlinson let the brewery once it was completed to New Dalton Brewery. Alan Gall adds:

Joseph Rawcliffe was in partnership with James Stuart and Robert Bell at the brewery. When the partnership broke up in January 1875 the business was continued by James Stuart.⁵

John Booth. This gentleman ran what was to become Hartley's premises on Brewery Street in Ulverston from 1755. On 17th July 1896, he sold it to Robert and Peter Hartley who then established the brewing company which carried their name for almost the next hundred years.⁶

Burlington Street Brewery. This was Barrow's first recorded home-grown brewery of any size and it developed from a small brewhouse which was opened in the 1800s on Burlington Street. Once the Furness Railway was opened in 1846 - a development which joined Barrow, isolated on its peninsula on the extreme North Western tip of what was then still part of Lancashire, to the rest of the country - the brewery became both bigger and more prosperous but not big enough to cope with the huge demand for

beer that came with the increase in size of Barrow as a town. In 1861, tenant of ten years standing, James Tyson, bought the brewery with its malt kiln and the hotel he managed. As a result of his efforts, the brewery acquired another four pubs in Barrow and one more in nearby Askham-in-Furness. In a 1884 version of a Compulsory Purchase dispute, Barrow Town Council were eventually ordered to pay Tyson's heirs £13,713 for the site (required to construct the High Level Bridge which Michaelson Road currently passes over), the brewing equipment was sold off and the Brewery demolished.⁷

RF Case & Co. A company known as Case's opened a small brewery at Ulverston on King Street in 1860. Case & Co was presumably established by Robert Fell Case's father as a Wines & Spirits merchant in the town during 1840.⁸ Buying Barrow's Cavendish Street Brewery in August 1867 gave Robert Case the opportunity to develop brewing on a truly vast scale; an opportunity he never lived long enough to see come to fruition: he was killed in an accident on the site aged just 29 only seven months later. His name lived on, however and the business (which became a limited company in 1904⁹) continued to prosper to the extent that - a century later - it owned fifty-two tied houses and ten off-licenses. During 1959, the company disappeared as it was swallowed-up by Yorkshire-based Hammond's who merged with Midlands brewers Bass and Mitchell's and Butlers in 1966 in order to form national conglomerate Bass Charrington

a year later. Despite all the changes, beer continued to be produced at Cavendish Street until 1972. The brewery buildings were subsequently used variously as a builders' supply and milk storage depot until the whole site - to be found fronting Cavendish Street and spreading towards Crellin Street at the back - was demolished to make way for sheltered housing during the 1990s.

Although nothing now remains of the Brewery or its buildings in Barrow, at least one part of it still lives on in Lithuania of all places. According to Paul Iredale, owner of the Ukmerge wood products business in the Baltic country, his father bought a 'Lancashire steam boiler' from Case's brewery when it was being dismantled in 'the very early 70s', adding:

It was built by Thompson in Wolverhampton, originally a chain grate and constructed from rolled plate and riveted. My Father converted it to medium fuel oil and operated it producing hot water for heating his greenhouses near Preston until the oil price rises made it unviable. It then sat until 1996 unused, I then had it re-tubed and shipped to Lithuania where I have a factory producing wood components. It is now fired on wood waste and has been heating timber drying kilns and factory heating ever since. Wood, unlike coal or oil, has no sulphur so it's got a very gentle fuel so it could have a long life! So a little bit of a Barrow brewery does live on!

From the beer mat collections I have seen on-line and elsewhere, Case's produced at least the following beers:



Figure 2. Picture of Case's Brewery, courtesy of Furness Camra website: <http://www.furnesscamra.co.uk> Another (grainy) photo of the brewery in operation in 1940 is available here: <http://www.southlakes.addr.com/userreq/cases.jpg>

Draught: Best Bitter, Elizabethan Ale, Imperial Pale Ale, Special Ale, Strong Ale.

Bottled: Barley Stout, Export Bitter, Imperial Pale Ale, Nut Brown Ale, Own Stout.

Known Case's tied houses in and around Barrow included:

Ambrose Hotel, Duke Street. This large hotel was bought by Case's during 1884 and despite the demise of the company over half a century earlier, was still operating as one of Barrow's better licensed premises in 2011.

Bay Horse, Hawcoat. The original pub by this name was rebuilt in 1927 by Case's on the opposite side of Rakesmoor Lane

from where it once stood. The old building was once a Beerhouse owned by George Leeming.¹⁰ The new pub is currently still operating as a free house.

Brewery Inn, 100-113 Cavendish Street. This pub already existed close to the Cavendish Street Brewery when Case's bought it to become their Brewery Tap during 1871. It was bought by Heath's at a public auction for £5,500 presumably once Cavendish Brewery was sold by Case's to Hammond's in Yorkshire during 1959. The pub is still there, ironically currently sporting a Bass sign: this was the huge conglomerate which swallowed not only Case's and Heath's, but also Hammond's itself.

Castle House, Biggar Bank, Walney Island. This was bought by Case's during 1954 and is currently still trading as a hotel.

Concle Inn, Rampside. Bought by Case's during 1939, this old pub - which has certainly seen the coming and going of many breweries and conglomerates over the years - currently continues to trade in this beautiful location overlooking Morecambe Bay.

Crown Inn, 21 John Street. 1911's *Bulmer's Directory* informs us that this pub was once a Beerhouse owned by Stephen Begley. It was sold to Case's in December 1880 and closed on 31 March 1969. John Street itself effectively disappeared during the redevelopment of the town centre which took place at this time.

Lamb & Packet, 37 Duncan Street. This was let to Case's during 1910 for £25 annual rent but closed only a year later. The house at this address currently is a private terraced one with no evidence it has ever been a beerhouse of any sort.

Majestic Hotel, Duke Street. 'For many years, Case's regarded The Majestic as its premier public house'.¹¹ It cost a majestic £31,000 to build and opened in 1905. The building remains a four-star hotel in the centre of Barrow near the Town Hall to this day.

Market Tavern, (address unknown). It was sold to Case's in 1877 and survived the demise of the brewery. Sadly, it didn't survive the building of the Portland Walk shopping centre: it was demolished to make way for this during 1996.

New Inn, Franklin Street. 1911's *Bulmer's Directory* lists the New Inn as a beerhouse owned by Margaret Anne Swarbrick. It was sold to Case's during 1873. Franklin Street now appears to be exclusively made up of relatively modern houses: there's no sign of a public house anywhere there.

Prince of Wales, 23 Ramsden St. According to 1911's *Bulmer's Directory*, this was once a beerhouse owned by a Joseph Westwood. It was bought by Case's in 1897. 'Closure was averted in 1933' for reasons unknown.¹² It is currently an 'Irish Pub' renamed Costello's.

Railway Inn, John Street. This was once a beerhouse owned by John Ashcroft. In

1902, Case's bought it for £4,000. It was demolished in 1968 as John Street itself disappeared in the redevelopment of the town centre.

Ship Inn, Roose. This pub - with an ancient history - was re-built during the 1960s by Case's successors to carry the brewery's name and would appear to still be in business currently.

Shipwright's Arms. 53, The Strand. The Strand is one of those places in Barrow where locals told me: 'If the Luftwaffe didn't get it first, the Council would flatten it for them - nothing is sacred in this town!' Maybe Herr Goëring should have just have written to the Town Hall with a list of things he wanted removed: it could have saved everyone a lot of bother. The pub was bought by Case's in 1887, missed by the Nazi Air Force during the 1940s but destroyed by the Council during the 1960s.

Steelworks Hotel. 3-7 Buccleugh Street. 1911's *Bulmer's Directory* lists this pub as a beerhouse once owned by Thomas Sandford. Case's acquired the premises during 1882 and it is currently still trading.

Theatre Inn, Cavendish Street. Case's bought this pub during 1937 and it is currently bucking the trend of closures by remaining in operation.

Union Tavern. 24-26 Greengate Street. According to 1911's *Bulmer's Directory*, this was once a beerhouse run by Mary

Mcllwane. Today, Greengate Street appears as an expanse of brick and concrete-rendered terrace houses. In the good old days, though, this street was the site of a pub so notorious even in a heavy-drinking and basically pretty rough and tough industrial town that it was known locally as The Bucket of Blood. It was bought by Case's during 1879 and shut-down (long before the demise of the brewery and therefore presumably for what would now be called 'socially responsible' reasons) during 1934.

Washington Hotel, Roose Road. This pub was bought by Case's around 1897 for £6,500 - a price for which you could still buy a terraced house (in which much of their 'working class' clientele existed at the time) a whole hundred years later. This huge pub still exists.

The Wellington, Rawlinson Street. 1911's *Bulmer's Directory* tells us that this was once a beerhouse owned by Dominic Ward. This pub was bought by Case's during 1875. In recent times, it has been re-branded Dominics, maybe in tribute to the original owner. But there again - maybe not.¹³

The Cavendish Brewery. Given that the combined efforts of local brewhouses still couldn't satisfy the demand for beer in 'Barrer' at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, a new, much larger, brewery was planned to be built on a site then just outside the town (and long ago swallowed-up by the expanding metropolis.) The site chosen was a field

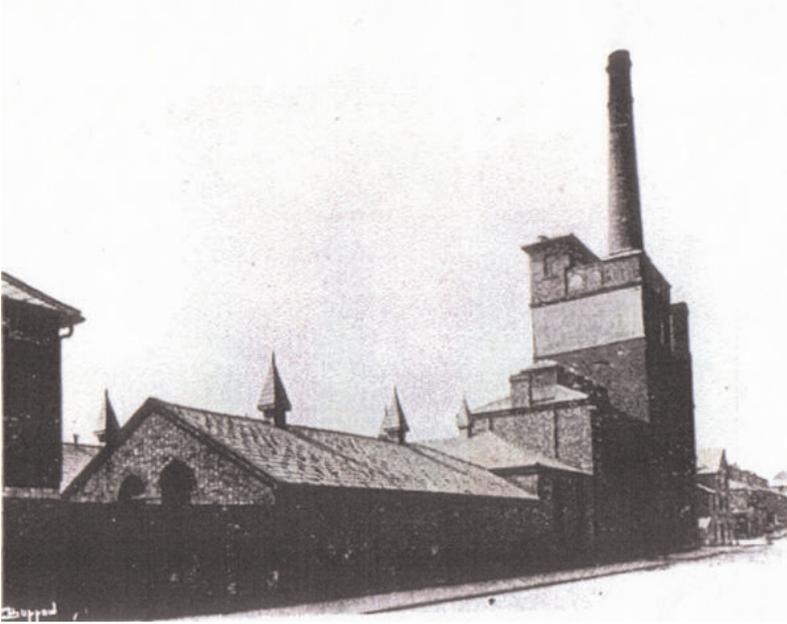


Figure 3. Photograph of Cavendish Brewery, year unknown. (Courtesy of Barrow Libraries).

called 'Black Lands' and building began in 1865 for Messrs T Hindle and T Thwaite (who apparently had no known association with the brewers of Blackburn who are still in business today.)¹⁴ The new plant was christened the Cavendish Brewery - Lord Cavendish was the largest local landowner. The brewery had a well which was 250 feet deep, giving it access to hard water which 'supplied all their requirements as it never failed' (the water was pumped to a cistern on the top of the brewery tower).¹⁵ Within no time at all, the brewery was bought by one Robert Fell Case, who had been a wine

and spirit merchant in Ulverston since 1860: its demise is charted in the entry for Case's.¹⁶

Denney's Brewery. Matthew Denney opened a brewery with this name at Dalton in Furness sometime in the nineteenth century. This could well be the Dalton Brewery mentioned next - if it wasn't, its location and what happened to it is currently not known.¹⁷

Dalton Brewery, The brewery could once be found on Market Street in the town and was established in 1834. As

just mentioned, research indicates that it was once owned by a Matthew Denney. By 1874, however, it was sold because the owner - which at that time was one George Scott - was declared bankrupt.¹⁸ It became Ashburner's Dalton Brewery once the sale went through - see separate entry.

The following are details of a couple of tied houses known once to have been owned by this brewery:

Bay Horse. This pub could once be found between two shops at 120 Dalton Road in Barrow.¹⁹ According to 1911's *Bulmer's Directory*, it was once owned by Frances

Collet and was then known as Ye Olde Bay Horse. It seems to have disappeared without trace.

Peacock Inn, 147 Cavendish Street, Barrow. This pub was opened in 1868 and sold to the Dalton Brewery presumably shortly afterwards. By the beginning of the next century, 1911's *Bulmer's Directory* had it listed as a Beerhouse owned by Elizabeth Slater. As mentioned later, it still currently exists.²⁰

Gill Brewery. Robinson's of Stockport have cast a long shadow over Ulverston by taking over Hartley's. This isn't the only influence Robinson's have had on



Figure 4. The Gill Brewery.²¹

the town, though: one RT Robinson once owned a brewery by this name on Brook Street in Ulverston. All that I have been able to unearth about this brewery is that it was quite a large complex and - according to a picture brought to my attention by John Mulholland of Furness Camra - once produced a beer called Kentora Hop Bitter Ale.

The Hartley family had built-up an estate of fifty-seven tied houses by the time they decided to sell the company to Stockport Brewers Robinson's on 26 July 1982.

According to the Good Beer Guide, the Brewery produced the following beers:

XB (1041 - an excellent bitter; sweet and heavy); bitter (1032 - smooth and light); mild (1032 - dark, with a touch of sharpness).

CAMRA's Furness Branch produces evidence of a greater range of beers than this, though.

Bottled Beers: Brown Ale; Extra Strong Ale; India Pale Ale; Mild Ale; Oatmeal Stout; Pale Ale; Special Bitter Export; Special Strong Ale.

Initially, brewing of Hartley beers continued but it was shut-down because the local authority deemed that the mains water that was used for brewing was not fit for the purpose. Yes - it was presumably good enough for the local residents to drink out of the tap or make tea with but it wasn't suitable for making beer any-

more. This is a shame: from personal experience, I can attest to the fact that Hartley's XB was a truly excellent drink: the stuff of the same name that is now brewed in Stockport is the merest shadow of its former self. Hartley's Brewery is now empty, the equipment sold to Black Sheep Brewery in Masham and the now sadly defunct Butterknowle Brewery in the North East: the building and the yard is currently just used as a depot by Robinson's (Figs. 5, 6 & 7).

The *Good Beer Guide* of 1987 suggested that Hartley's still owned 57 pubs. Most of them are listed in Table 1 below, many of which are still operating as public houses.



Figure 5. Part of Hartley's old brewery entrance.



Figure 6. The tallest of the brewery buildings in 2011.



Figure 7. Hartley's Brewery when still operating. (Courtesy of CAMRA, Furness branch).

Albert, Queens Square, Bowness-on-Windermere.
 Anchor Hotel, Lindal near Ulverston.
 Bird in Hand, (Fig. 8) 1-3 Brewery Street, Ulverston.
 Boot Inn, Eskdale Valley, Holmbrook.
 Britannia, Pennybridge near Ulverston.
 Brown Cow, Dalton-in-Furness.
 The Castle, 47 Holborn Hill, Millom.
 Cattle Market, Neville Street, Ulverston.
 Cavendish Arms, Market Place, Dalton-in-Furness.
 Cross Keys, 1 Park Road, Milnthorpe.
 The Crown, North Scale, Walney Island, Barrow-in-Furness.
 Crown, Tilberthwaite Avenue, Coniston.
 Crown, Market Street, Flookburgh.
 Farmers Arms, Allithwaite near Grange-over-Sands.
 General Burgoyne, Church Road, Great Urswick near Ulverston.
 Gilpin Bridge Inn, Bridge End, Levens.
 Globe, Queen Street, Ulverston.
 Golden Ball, Tudor Square, Dalton-in-Furness.
 Golden Rule, Smithy Brow, Ambleside.
 Hope and Anchor, Daltongate, Ulverston.
 Hope and Anchor, 11 Market Street, Flookburgh.
 Kings Arms, Market Place, Cartmel.
 Kings Arms, Quarry Brow, Hawcoat.
 Kings Arms Inn, King Street, Ulverston.
 Lancaster Arms, 37 Lancaster Street, Dalton-in-Furness.
 Lowther Arms, Hensingham near Whitehaven.
 Manor House, Oxen Park, Ulverston.
 Miners Arms, Swarthmoor near Ulverston.

New Hall (formerly Hole in 't Wall), Robinson Place, Bowness-on-Windermere.
 New Crown, Whitehaven Road, Cleator Moor.
 New Inn, Yealand Conyers near Carnforth.
 Old Friends, 49 Soutergate, Ulverston.
 Old King's Head, Station Road, Broughton-in-Furness.
 The Ormsgill, Park Road, Barrow-in-Furness.
 Outgate Inn, Outgate, Ambleside.
 Piel Castle, Market Street, Ulverston.
 Pig and Whistle, Cartmel, Grange-Over-Sands.
 Queens Head, Hawkshead.
 Queens Head, Town Head, Troutbeck near Windermere.
 Queens Head, Hawkshead, Ambleside.
 Railway, Princess Street, Ulverston.
 Red Lion, Lowick Bridge near Ulverston.
 Robin Hood, Crellin Street, Barrow-in-Furness.²²
 Rose and Crown, King Street, Ulverston.
 Rose and Crown, Cark-In-Cartmel near Grange-Over-Sands.
 Royal Oak, Beckermert near Eskdale.
 Royal Oak, Lindale near Grange-Over-Sands.
 Sawyers Arms, Stricklandgate, Kendal.
 The Ship, Yarlside Road, Roose, Barrow-in-Furness.
 The Ship, Bowmanstead, Coniston.
 Swan, Little Urswick near Ulverston.
 Unicorn, North Road, Ambleside.
 The Union, Union Street, Ulverston.
 Victoria, Church St, Barrow-in-Furness.
 Wagon & Horses, 27 St. George's Quay, Lancaster.
 Wellington, Market Street, Dalton-in-Furness.
 White Hart, 2 Highgate, Kendal.
 White Lion, 46 Mount Pleasant, Barrow-in-Furness.²³

Table 1. Hartley's pubs. Source: Robinson's website; personal memory plus old Good Beer Guides.



Figure 8. This pub seems to have once been the Brewery Tap for Hartley's. These pictures show it in February 2011, eerily empty in the shadow of the closed brewery which looms over it in the distance.

Heath's Devonshire Brewery. A Mr GS Heath bought the Devonshire Hotel on Hindpool Road in Barrow during 1871. It already had a small brewhouse attached - possibly the one created by Robert Baines earlier in the century. Whether it was or not, Heath obtained permission to build a new, bigger one, during 1879. Over the years, Heath's acquired an increasingly large estate of pubs and also brewed for nearby bottling company Thompson's. The Heath family sold the company lock, stock and (literally) barrel to Hammond's Brewery of Yorkshire in

1959, having received 'assurances that brewing would continue at the Devonshire brewery'.²⁴ It didn't: brewing ended in January 1960 and the brewery tower was demolished during the early 1970s. At the time of writing, the brewery buildings still exist and are for let as offices. Figure 9 shows what remained of them just before Christmas 2010.

The Devonshire Arms - now renamed Healey's - remains next to the derelict brewery buildings (Fig. 10). There was a stone plaque in the wall adjoining the



Figure 9. Heath's Devonshire Brewery.



Figure 10. Heath's brewery tap.

brewery yard which apparently read 'DEVONSHIRE BREWERY' until relatively recently: only the final word remains as a veritable headstone to brewing in Barrow: not a single brewery created before the 21st century exists there anymore.

The only information I have about the names or types of beers that Heath's once brewed is that they once produced Invalid Stout.²⁵ I do know, however, that the following photograph features Heath's Head Brewer - Robert Scott - posing by a company vehicle done out as a float (Fig. 11). The brewery's trade mark can be clearly seen on the door of the vehicle.

Known Heath's tied houses in Barrow:

Alexandra Hotel. Corner of Paxton and Thomas Streets. Although Paxton Street still exists, there is no evidence of a Thomas Street anymore. The Alex was bought by Heath's for £4,125 in 1891. The pub was closed in June 1968 and subsequently demolished when the shops on adjoining Dalton Road were redeveloped.

Brewery Inn, Cavendish Street. Case's opened a pub by this name at this location during 1871; it was later bought by Heath's - presumably after Case's sold-out their brewery in 1959 - at a public



Figure 11. This photograph of Heath's Head Brewer Robert Scott was given to the Furness CAMRA website by Robert's grandson, Dave Scott and is used with permission.

auction for £5,500. Apparently, this pub has also suffered the fate of the nearby brewery: it seems to have been demolished.

Bull Hotel. Paxton Terrace, Dalton Road. Heath's bought this at a public auction for £7,000, year unknown. It was shut in 1969 and then demolished to make way for construction of Barrow's new market hall.

Devonshire Hotel. This was Heath's Brewery Tap and stood next to the brew house on Hindpool Road. It still exists but is known these days as Healey's (see picture above).

Imperial Hotel, Crellin Street. Heath's paid £5,950 for it during 1890. The only pubs I am aware of currently on Crellin Street are The Robin Hood and The Blue Lamp. One of these may once have been the Imperial but my feeling is that the pub has long since been demolished.

Junction Hotel, Fisher Street. In 1884, in very poor condition, this was bought by Heath's for £2,000. It closed in 1964. It would seem that not only does the building where the pub could once be found no longer exist, Fisher Street itself has been a victim of bulldozers and late 20th century Town Planning.

Swan Inn, Salthouse Marsh. Bought by Heath's during 1887. It would appear that this pub no longer exists.²⁶

John Hodgson. A gentleman by this name once brewed beer at Canal Head

in Ulverston. Where and when he did this and whether it was in a brewhouse or a full-scale brewery is not known.²⁷

Hodgson Brothers. These gentlemen once owned a bottling plant on Fountain Street in Ulverston where they produced Mineral Waters and Soda Water. Apparently, they also produced bottles beers as well - whether these were brewed by themselves or bottled for others is not clear.

Important Fact Brewery. At a time when large breweries were beginning to appear elsewhere in town, this small brewery was built during 1867 on the corner of Paradise Street and Ramsden Street in Barrow on a patch of land behind the Sun Inn. The people responsible for this development were J Hartley, J Baines, JP Hodgson and J Hunter.²⁸ By 1875, it acquired its name: quite why it was called the 'important fact' is not clear but an important fact is that it was bought-out by the Barrow Brewery Company (see above) in 1877.²⁹

Edward Jackson. The Ellers, Ulverston. The Ellers still exists as an address. A



Figure 12. The Ellers.

this sign (Fig. 12) is set into the wall of a pub now known as The Stan Laurel after the film star from yesteryear who was born in Ulverston. It was called The Britannia until 1976 and what could once have been a brewhouse attached to the main body of the building still exists. Whether this is (or isn't) evidence of brewing activities is something I have been unable to discover. Furness CAMRA list 'Edward' Jackson as a brewer at this address but Alan Gall has suggested that a John Jackson - possibly late of Jackson, Fell & Co (see entry below) could be found brewing here in 1868.



Figure 13. The Old Brewery entrance.

T Jackson, Fell & Co. According to the information I have gleaned so far, a company of this name ran a brewing business in premises which existed in the place where Hartley's now disused brewery currently stands. Jackson, Fell & Co seemingly existed for almost a century before the Hartley family acquired their brewery.

CAMRA suggest that what became Hartley's brewery was sold to 'T Jackson, Fell and Co' in 1850. This company then ran it until the mid-1870s, when John Booth took it over. According to Alan Gall:

The people involved with Jackson Fell were: John Jackson, James Penny Machell and William Fell. You would expect the company to be J Jackson, Fell & Co rather than T Jackson, Fell & Co, so maybe the T is a misprint. The partnership dissolved in 1834 and John Jackson continued alone. Later on (c 1868) there was a John Jackson at Eilers Brewery, Ulverston.³⁰

John Lowe. John Lowe is listed as a brewer operating from Cartmel presumably at some time in the distant past. My best guess is that he was actually running a beerhouse as allowed by Wellington's Act of 1830 - but I may be mistaken.³¹

Old Brewery, Brewery Street, Ulverston. John Booth, as already mentioned, began brewing on this site in 1755. According to the plaque on the wall which still exists, 'On the 17th July 1896 the Old Brewery was conveyed from the trustees of John Booth to Robert & Peter



Figure 14. Thompson's bottling plant, December 2010.

Hartley.' After Hartley's was acquired by Robinson's on 16 July 1982, brewing finally ceased altogether on the 8 November 1991.

RT Robinson. Perhaps as a portent of things to come (as already mentioned, Robinson's of Stockport have cast a long shadow over Ulverston in recent times), one RT Robinson once owned the surprising large Gill Brewery (as mentioned separately) on Brook St in the town.

Thompson's Brewery. This title was something of a misnomer: the company

James Thompson established in 1873 never actually brewed any beer of its own. Originally, the ales sold in Thompson's houses were produced by the Whittle Springs Brewery in Chorley. When the latter were taken over by Nuttall's of Blackburn in 1923, Thompson's briefly had their beer brewed by nearby Heath's. During 1932, Thompson's came to an arrangement with Hartley's in Ulverston to brew beer there, using their own recipe and their own brewer. In return, Thompson's bottled Hartley's as well as their own beers plus soft drinks at their dilapidated

premises on Albert Street. Barrow Town Council actually condemned these premises during 1959: the cost of running repairs to keep them open was given as a major influence on the firm's decision to sell its 48 pubs and offices on Dalton Road to Whitbread in 1966 for £792,000. By 1969, Whitbread dropped any pretence that Thompson's beers existed at all and the name was dropped in favour of its own in pubs previously owned by the company. The bottling plant struggled on until July 1980 when, finally insolvent, it closed forever. 17 jobs were lost and the management still blamed the cost of maintaining its premises, adding: 'the recent growth of the big breweries also hit the smaller enterprises'.³²

Thompson brews I am aware of include:

Sparkling Bitter Beer; Sparkling Mild Ale; Nourishing Stout.

According to John Mulholland of Furness CAMRA, Thompson's also bottled the following ales (he should know; he still possesses them, unopened - and probably now undrinkable!):

Stingo Strong Ale; Best Bitter Export.

They also bottled at least

Nut Brown Ale.

Marketing gimmicks are considered to be a modern phenomenon but Thompson's were producing them way back when in the shape of playing cards.

Among Thompson's Barrow pubs sold to Whitbread were:

Clarke's Arms, address unknown. Thompson's acquired a pub by this name at the turn of the century and rebuilt it.

Ferry Hotel, The Promenade, Walney Island. This pub - currently still open - was bought by Thompson's in September 1920. At the time, it was still referred to as the 'Walney Ferry': the bridge to Walney was built during 1908.

Furness Hotel, 13 Bath Street. This was the first pub ever to have become a Thompson's tied house. The building is still there but its future as a pub (given that it was recently for sale on an auction site) must be open to considerable doubt.

Mason's Arms. This pub, built where Paxton Terrace once met Forshaw Terrace, was completely rebuilt by Thompson's during 1890 for £3,500. It was demolished in 1968 to make way for a new shopping centre.

New Inn, Biggar Village on Walney Island. This pub started life - according to 1911's *Bulmer's Directory* - as a beerhouse owned by Thomas T Richardson. It was bought by Thompson's during 1929 but closed on the 18 April 1974. It is currently a private house.

Peacock Inn, 147 Cavendish Street. As has already been mentioned, this pub

was once a beerhouse and was also once owned by the Dalton Brewery shortly after it was established in 1868. Once the brewery failed, it was sold to Worthington's (presumably of the later Bass, Charrington, Worthington group) and then Thompson's during 1913. The pub has survived all these crises and remains open at the time of writing.

Queens Arms, 2 Cavendish Street. In June 1903, Thompson's bought this pub for the princely sum of £3,500. A relatively modern Chinese take-away appears to have been built where this pub could once have been found.

Rifleman's Arms, Foundry Street. This pub - with a Whitbread sign as well as one indicating that this location is Salthouse Road - currently is still in business. Thompson's once bought it for a mind-boggling £2,450 in 1893; 1911's *Bulmer's Directory* lists it as a Beerhouse run by William Woodburn.

Sheffield, Church Street. This pub was once known as the Welcome Inn and had a small brewhouse of its own when Thompson's took it over in 1879. Over a century later, Peill & Co were in charge of auctioning it - the pub is currently a Chinese take-away.

Strawberry Hotel, Abbey Road. During 1886, this hotel - which currently is still trading - was acquired by Thompson's.³³

Welcome Brewery. One John Mashiter once owned this Brewery on Church

Street, Barrow. It would seem that his brewhouse could be found behind the Welcome pub on this street. (As mentioned above, the Welcome was renamed the Sheffield in tribute to the ship of the same name which was lost during the Falklands War - it closed some time ago and is currently a Chinese take-away).³⁴

Thomas Wilson. This gentleman once owned a brewery at Redbeck, Egton-cum-Newlands. Despite researching all these terms, I have sadly been unable to unearth any more information about this brewer and the only clue as to the whereabouts of the brewery (thanks to Alan Gall) has come from Steve Bulman's website concerning Cumberland and Westmorland Breweries which - using information from *Bulmer's Directory* of 1849 - suggests the site is in 'Ulverston': 'In Egton-Cum-Newlands Township, Wilson, Thos., brewer, &c., Redbeck, or Low Smithy'.³⁵

Alan Gall adds:

I'm fairly certain that it will be spelt Red Beck and the district is definitely Egton-cum-Newland, not Newlands, better still, Egton-with-Newland as it is now known. Low Smithy is still there, on the A5092, at Penny Bridge. Penny Bridge is about 4 miles (north north east) from the centre of Ulverston.³⁶

There is a Smithy House at the rear of a terrace to the west of the nearby River Crake along with a Smithy Cottage marked on an Ordnance Survey Map of

Penny Bridge: whether or not this had anything to do with the mysterious Mr Wilson, I do not know.

Note

The opinions about the beers and the breweries that have disappeared forever have been honestly given. On my shoulders, however, lies the responsibility for any mistakes or omissions. If you have anything to add - breweries I have missed; photos, ephemera or - perhaps most precious of all - memories of a particular beer or a favourite pub - please get in touch:

not4got10brews@gmail.com

References

1. Watts, J. (2001) *One On Every Corner*. Barrow-in-Furness: Burlington Associates, p.18.
2. *ibid.* p.57.
3. *ibid.* p.54.
4. *The News Friday*. 17 March 1972.
5. Personal e-mail to the author from Alan dated 28 May 2011.
6. Information from Plaque currently attached to the Old Brewery building.
7. Watts, J. (2001) *op. cit.* p.56.
8. Richmond, L. and Turton, A. (1990) *The Brewing industry. A Guide to Historical Records*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. p.96.
9. *ibid.*
10. *Bulmer's Directory*. (1911).

11. Watts, J. (2001) *op. cit.* p.29
12. *ibid.* p.35.
13. *ibid.* p.57; *The News Friday*, 17 March 1972; Furness Camra website: <http://www.furnesscamra.co.uk>; CAMRA *Good Beer Guides*, various years.
14. *The News Friday*. 17 March 1972.
15. *ibid.*
16. *ibid.*
17. *ibid.*
18. Watts, J. (2001) *op. cit.* p.57.
19. *ibid.*
20. *ibid.*
21. Lowe, P. and Bennett, C. (2007) *Ulverston (Images of England)*. Stroud: The History Press. p.126. Used by permission.
22. This was listed by 1911's *Bulmer's Directory* as a Beerhouse owned by one William Turner.
23. 1911's *Bulmer's Directory* tells us that this was once a Beerhouse run by a Annie McNichol.
24. Watts, J. (2001) *op. cit.* p.58.
25. John Mulholland, CAMRA Furness Branch.
26. Watts, J. (2001) *op. cit.*
27. John Mulholland.
28. *ibid.*
29. Watts, J. (2001) *op. cit.* p.56
30. Personal e-mail to the author from Alan dated 30 May 2011.
31. John Mulholland.
32. *North Western Evening Mail*. 14 July 1980.
33. Watts, J. (2001) *op. cit.*
34. John Mulholland.
35. *ibid* and http://www.stevebulman.f9.co.uk/cumbria/cumberlandbreweries_f.html
36. Personal e-mail to the author from Alan dated 30 May 2011