

BOOK REVIEWS

Built to Brew: The history and heritage of the brewery

By Pearson, L.

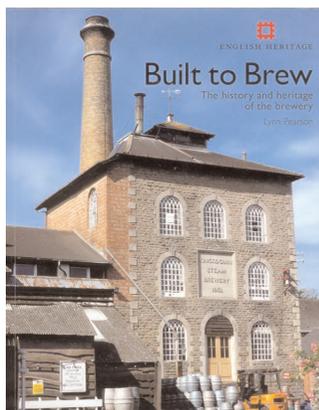
Swindon: English Heritage

2014, Pp. vii + 256, £25

ISBN 978-1-84802-238-6

This is a fascinating insight, which links up neatly with economic history, such as that developed by Peter Mathias's *The Brewing Industry in England 1700-1830*, and begins to give us a stronger basis for understanding the growth of the brewing industry, rather than relying on late Victorian tales of ale conners sitting in pools outside pubs. The high quality of the book should make it attractive to the public at large, spreading the message beyond the confines of ourselves.

Given the distinctive nature of architecture, the author makes comparison with other countries and it is certainly true that until recently in this country we have failed to appreciate its contribution to the landscape of our town centres. Hopefully, the book, together with the



research sponsored by English Heritage, will highlight the need to preserve what remains, though, as Lynn Pearson points out, the destruction of most of the Tetley site in Leeds doesn't

seem to have been a good example. One can only hope that Cains' of Liverpool receives better attention.

The book is particularly well-illustrated, with many images which must be new to most of us. The sections on the Royal Navy brewhouses are most welcome, since it is an area which has only been touched upon briefly elsewhere. It is worth noting, that despite the title, there is also good coverage of maltings.

The text describes how equipment suppliers such as Pontifex et al became involved with breweries to protect their investment and in some cases recoup the money they had spent on providing equipment (Chapter 5, p.121). This was also true of the Young family of back-makers etc, involved in several concerns and of course the Ram Brewery, London, many images of which are shown.

Different styles of production are described, but links to the type of yeast and its impact on beer flavour might have been further developed (see p.113 and p.144). Though that is of course a bete noir for the reviewer, it can help understand how different structures were influenced by the nature of the fermentation system, whether union or square. Similarly, perhaps the Aluminium Plant & Vessel Company could be given more space, though the impact of their development of aluminium vessels (see pp.140 and 148 on link with Fullers Brewery of London) is documented in their own company history and is primarily 20th century. One point which hadn't occurred to me is on page 25 where it is pointed out that the revenue might object to utensils being sunk in the floor (as often seen in Europe) and it is this depth of thought which makes the text so good.

One slight quibble is that the background to Samuel Whitbread (p.29) tends to follow the company story, but

the Brewery History Society's forthcoming book on London suggests it may have been more complex than simple country boy makes good, and more reliant on family connections. One which hopefully the Society's Brewerpedia website will nail is that the Griffin site has not vanished completely (p.33), but contains buildings recognizable from the days of Mr Barnard's visit. For some reason, perhaps because it was used for other purposes for most of the 20th century, this is one which always seems to get away. Similarly, in terms Fig 3.23 of Eadon's Plant Brewery in Doncaster, David Parry's book, *South Yorkshire Stingo* (p.18), suggests that it is only the clock which remains from the original building. We may differ slightly on Collins of Richmond as well!

Although at the top end of the price range for some, the book is an ideal present for Christmas, so start dropping hints now.

MIKE BROWN

Brew Britannia: The Strange Rebirth of British Beer

By Boak, J. and Bailey, R.

London: Arum Press

2014, Pp. 298, £12.99

ISBN 978-1-78131-186-8

Scan a library of beer books and there is a very conspicuous gap: there is no book about Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). Ray Bailey and Jessica Boak's *Brew Britannia: The Strange Rebirth of British Beer* goes some way to filling that gap.

In Peter Haydon's *Beer and Britannia*, published 1994, CAMRA gets only a fleeting mention in the chapter 'The Modern Era: The national Brands' and escapes the book's index. Martyn Cornell's *Beer: The Story of the Pint*, published nine years later, gives CAMRA four indexed mentions, constituting a total of perhaps a third of a chapter. Whereas the Haydon and Cornell books range from the middle ages to the modern era, *Brew Britannia* tells the story of British beer from the merger-mad mid-sixties to the craft beer present. As CAMRA looms large in the liquid landscape of the country in that era, the organisation is heavily featured. CAMRA's presence in the index gives a flavour of the content. A

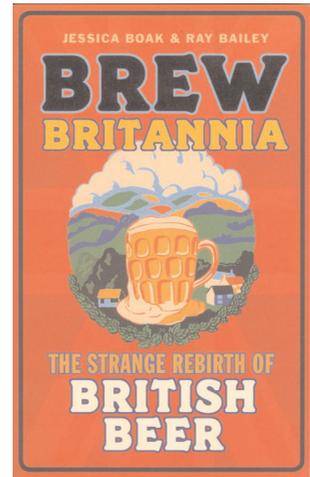
total of 28 sub entries include everything from 'achievements' via "craftophile" members' and 'member stereotypes' to 'What's Brewing newsletter'.

Where Haydon and Cornell focus on the mergers and mass-production, Boak and Bailey examine the backlash. The prologue introduces us to Christopher Hutt (future CAMRA chairman and author of *The Death of the English Pub*) and his experience of a beer dysphoria on moving to Norwich to attend university in the mid sixties. This is contrasted with a visit in December 2013 by the authors to Bristol where we hear,

What was previously a nightclub has become 'The Beer Emporium'. Housed in a Victorian industrial building, it has an atmospheric vaulted cellar bar of exposed brick. When we first visited in August, we found it crammed with earnest twenty- and thirtysomethings drinking expensive imported American India pale ale by the half pint, or locally produced Belgian-style sour beer from champagne glasses. It boasts twenty-four taps, as well as fridges crammed with bottled rarities from around the world. Fifteen years ago, this might have been the most remarkable selection of beer on offer in any pub in the British Isles. Now it isn't even the best on the street.

It is the history from Hutt's visit to that of the authors' which is covered in the book's seventeen chapters. Along the way they visit many of the country's mavericks and entrepreneurs who took it upon themselves to prevent the death of the English pubs and beer.

Pre-dating CAMRA by a decade or so, The Society for the Preservation of Beers From the Wood, is covered in some depth. The authors tracked down the only surviving original member, John Keeble, who provided the minutes of the first meeting of the society and other



materials. The authors paint a picture of the organisation as well-meaning but somewhat shambolic; more drinking club than a serious campaigning body.

With the renewed interest in the beer styles and dispense methods succinctly branded 'real ale' by CAMRA came a new wave of small breweries (an appendix lists all the breweries that appeared between 1965 and 1978). Several significant ones receive a more detailed study: Traquair House; Selby Brewery; the Miner's Arms at Priddy; Litchborough Brewery; Penrhos Brewery. At the same time, home brewing was growing in popularity and The Durden Park Circle and the books of Dave Line receive due recognition.

By the late 1970s the beer revival started to look stagnant. Real ale was revived: new breweries were dedicated to it, pubs specialised in it, and older breweries rediscovered it. But CAMRA's membership dwindled and although real ale was firmly re-established, there just wasn't enough of it. The main impediment was the tie system: small brewers struggled to find pubs to sell their beer. Here the authors tread gingerly around conflicts of interests that were arising. The small brewers knocked on the door of the Brewers' Society and were turned away. CAMRA supported the regional brewers who dominated the Brewers Society. Small breweries struggled to find routes to market, most pubs being tied - including those owned by regional breweries. We are told, 'More than one SIBA brewer spoke to us in disdainful terms about CAMRA and, though it might be assumed their interests were aligned, in fact CAMRA had always balanced a supportive interest in new breweries with loyalty to established ones, especially regional family concerns'.

Into the 1980s the narrative shifts away from CAMRA towards SIBA, the Society of Independent Brewers. Entertainingly, we learn that SIBA started informally as SLOBA - The Small London Brewers' Association. Devoid of the equivocation exhibited by CAMRA, SIBA campaigned against the tie system and brewery loans, both seen as anti-competitive tools of market dominance used by the big brewers. By the mid eighties several small brewers had closed, including Penrhos, owned by Martin Griffiths and Monty Python Terry Jones. SIBA continued to lobby the Department of Trade and Industry and eventually gave evidence to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission as part of the process that led to the Beer Orders of 1989 - a remark-

able achievement for an organisation whose members' output amounted to no more than 1% of the UK's beer (as grumbled the Brewers' Society). This era is played out over four pages. A more detailed study would be a fairly dry read, and as such the authors have wisely avoided bombarding the reader with legislative detail.

The 1990s were characterised by the continuing rise to dominance by lager, and a general increase in appreciation and availability of imported beer - Michael Jackson being given much of the credit. Just as CAMRA had been a backlash against the Big Six, there were flurries of activity constituting a backlash (sometimes explicitly stated) against CAMRA's narrative 'real ale is the only good kind of beer, and the traditional pub is the best place for it'. A hardcore of recalcitrant brewers and entrepreneurs had the temerity to devote themselves to quality lager, keg dispense and shiny modern venues, not afraid to price their beer at relatively high prices. Luke Johnson and Alastair Hook and the Belgo restaurants are identified as key figures.

The first beer landmark of the 2000s was the introduction of Progressive Beer Duty in 2002 which 'had an electrifying effect on British brewing ... between 2003 and 2005 more than a hundred new firms came into existence'. Among these was Thornbridge who receive a glowing write-up. Founders Jim Harrison and Simon Webster receive the honour of a photograph - one of only a dozen or so in the book.

The mid 2000s saw the emergence of the contentious term 'craft beer'. From here on the narrative becomes more intricate, presumably reflecting the authors' direct experience of the history they are reporting. An appendix contains two diagrams of craft brewers in the style of rock music family trees, but they do not shed any more light on the connections between craft breweries than that granted by the text. They tie in the increasing influence of American IPAs, the employment of young foreign brewers unafraid of venturing far outside the paradigms of real ale, and the outspoken young Scottish rebels of Brewdog as key signifiers of the emergence of 'craft beer'. Craft beer is described as a cult in the heading of the chapter it gets to itself. A rare clue into the authors' cultural allegiances is granted when they nail their colours to the craft mast by declaring: 'Kegging also [as well as US-influenced IPAs] works well, in our view, for lagers and other Continental styles, where a

certain crispness is a part of the appeal'. Surely these words would have been unutterable by beer fans in the earlier decades of the strange rebirth of British beer.

The late 2000s saw the rise of several new keg-friendly bars and pubs to service the new keg-friendly breweries of the craft beer movement: 'now there are beer-focused bars (as opposed to 'real ale' pubs), if not in every town, then at least in every corner of the country'. In describing these new establishments the authors fail to recognise a key ingredient - the change in the licensing laws of November 2005 when it became easier to obtain a new license for previously non-licensed premises, and cafes and restaurants were allowed to serve alcohol without the customer ordering a meal. The authors also fail to recognise the rise of craft beer bars was aided by the rise of social networking - blogs, Facebook and Twitter allowed beer drinkers to find new, like-minded friends and new places to drink.

All in all, Brew Britannia is very welcome addition to the national beer library. The writing style is light and engaging with occasional slight lapses into the colloquial. The perspective is detached but the authors' obvious passion for the subject is never in doubt and the notes suggest they undertook an exhaustive survey of primary sources. Inevitably some readers will find themselves having thoughts that start 'they should have included ...', but these will only be minor quibbles as no significant episodes have been overlooked. Certainly more detail could have been added, particularly where alcohol-related legislation is concerned, but this would have run the risk of reducing the book's readability. As it stands, Brew Britannia, is a well-researched, easily-readable pleasure deserving of the attention of a wider readership than keen beer drinkers.

JEFF PICKTHALL

The Geography of Beer: Regions, Environment, and Societies

Edited by Patterson, M. and Hoalst-Pullen, N.

Dordrecht: Springer

2014, Pp. xiii + 212, £79

ISBN 978-94-007-7786-6

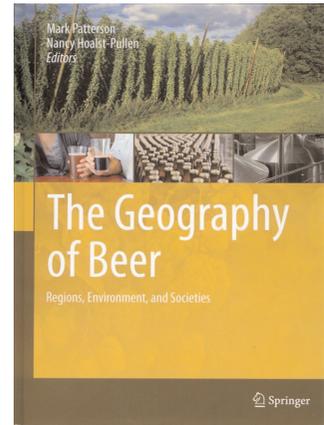
This book is a fascinating collection of 17 essays (chapters) by 27 contributors mainly from within geography,

history and related urban studies departments of North American universities. - concentrating, but not exclusively, on the US scene

From the book title the reviewer was a little hesitant that The Geography of Beer was sufficient, however the first essay by the Editors summarized the problem, 'How can such a simple beverage be so complex? In a word - geography'. So from then on geospatial technologies from all the subsequent authors attack every facet of beer and brewing to produce a readable and wide ranging volume. Perhaps it should be additionally titled, *A History of Beer and Brewing in Europe and North America*, so as to attract non-geography readers.

The book divided into three sections entitled: Regions, Environment and Societies. Each chapter within the sections I consider as standalone essays. They are complete with a well defined structure of abstract, thesis, clear and novel diagrams and tables, conclusions followed by a very complete list of references which include journals, books as well as recent website references as appropriate. At the core of each essay is the role of spatial perspectives to effectively map the topic and identify changes, challenges, patterns and location of the geography of beer. There is jargon, but it is readily digestible, there are some new words like skunkworks (p.156) which can be guessed.

The first section, The Regions, contains six essays and are all about beer and breweries in Europe and the Americas. The topics covered are: beer in Europe from 1000BC to 1000AD, the spatial diffusion of beer from its Sumerian origins, mapping United States breweries between 1612 and 2011, a case study of brewing from micro to macro and back again in Wisconsin, an historical overview of brewing in Mexico, and the development of beer styles.



Four essays make up the second section, The Environment, two of which cover raw materials, hops and water. Cereals were covered in the earlier chapter on the spatial diffusion of beer which also analyzed ancient brewing materials (rather unkindly called additives) and it acknowledged that additional factors question the validity of the usual reasons for a North/South divide for beer and wine consumption. The remaining two essays push the boundaries on the effect of climate change and the difficulties that the three pillars of sustainability present to economic industrial (in our case brewing) progress.

Whereas the two previous sections have set a wide brewing scene, particularly for micros, beer styles, beer *terroir* and historic perspectives, the third section, The Societies, contain six specialist papers developing their topics with valuable insights, personal interpretation and sometimes overlapping historical, economic, cultural, environmental and physical viewpoints. The subjects in this section are; the origins, dispersion, and evolution of the India Pale Ale, the spatial analysis of the craft brewing industry in the US, globalization and consolidation, the geography of America's microbreweries, neo-localism and the branding and marketing of beer in Canada, and the role of social media in the regionalism of craft and local beers.

Inevitably some of the overlap between essays seems inconsistent and the generalisations loose some of the brewing science reasons for the geography of beer. However, the opportunity to stretch the envelope and be forthright has not been missed. I continue to be enjoyably amazed at the facility of language and alternative erudition presented by the authors. Many little gems emerge some surprising, some amusing and some provocative so to quote a few:

During the fall of IPA the temperance movement contributed to its demise (p.125).

The rise of micro breweries from the mid 1980's in the USA was an example of 'resonance marketing', the tailoring of products to the specific demands of consumers, rather than general demands (p.135).

Snippets of price fixing, merger and acquisition strategies and faux microbrews as the beer market moves to a global duopoly (pp.158-163).

To big brewers, the really meddlesome thing about micro-brewers is that they are a strong indicator of a far more encompassing national trend: the consumer's willingness to spend more - lots more - to leave their traditional brands for wholesomeness, variety and novelty ... the microbrewers ability to command premium prices in a declining market is pure seduction.

This is an extract from a beer distributors convention speech (p.173).

The US micro boom was not all upward - as it took a pause or shakeout in the late 1990s dropping by about 10%. Many of the survivors became stronger - by confirming not just their beer diversity but their 'neolocal' credentials (p.174). So is born another -ism explored later in the book and corrupted by 'bastardization' (p.197).

If you thought it was all over just watch your tweets. The final essay is like a chapter from Orwell's *1984* with big brother watching as it analyzes the distribution of geocoded social media (cyberscape) that references beer and related terms. These are early days as the results are very much what one would expect from these first simple models. However, developments will follow with digital geographies overlaid on physical space (p.208) and beer will easily be one of the subjects as it is close to our heart and we love talking (tweeting) about it.

This book is for dipping into, reading and reflecting a bit at a time. It is very interesting.

CHRIS MARCHBANKS

Capital Beer: A heady history of brewing in Washington, D.C.

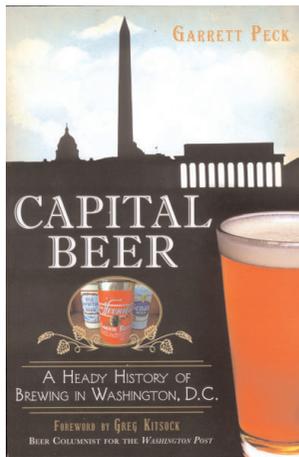
By Peck, G.

Charleston: American Palate

2014, Pp. 188, \$19.99

ISBN 978-1-62619-441-0

To those living beyond the shores of the U.S.A., Washington, D.C. can seem an odd place. Established in 1791, it was originally an exact 100-mile-square plot of land that straddled the Potomac River. It was donated by the States of Virginia on the river's south-west side and



Maryland on the north-east bank (although the former was returned to Virginia in 1846). The District is not, therefore, part of a State, yet neither is it a State in itself, rather it is under the control of Congress. In 1961, after the

23rd Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, it was granted three electoral votes in the presidential elections, but it still has no representation in the Senate. This is the source of the District's unofficial motto, 'Taxation without Representation', a direct echo of the colonialist's grievance against the British government during the 1760s.

Coincidentally, it is just after this time, around 1770, that the first brewery was established in Washington, D.C. and this is the point where the author of *Capital Beer*, Garrett Peck, begins his history. The first brewery in the District was established by Andrew Wales who ran his eponymous concern for nearly three decades, finally retiring in 1798. Like much of the area's brewing heritage nothing remains of the buildings, the only evidence for its existence is a Wales Alley that would have run along its side.

Wales was followed by a number of brewers who began their businesses on both sides of the Potomac, most of them originally from Britain. The book contains the first known image of a Washington brewery, a painting by George Cooke, dating from circa 1833. 'City of Washington from Beyond the Navy Yard' depicts not only the docks, but also the adjacent Washington Brewery. Built by Cornelius Coningham in 1805 it is portrayed as a tall, brick building on the shores of the Anacostia River, a tributary of the Potomac.*

Some 20 years after Cooke had finished his painting the District's brewing scene would undergo a dramatic change. Peck describes the impact German immigra-

tion; not only did they introduce lager, but also beer gardens in which to consume it. A chapter of the book is devoted to this phenomenon, as well as saloons and other drinking establishments.

All these, of course, were to disappear with the onset of Prohibition in 1920. Only two breweries survived the 'Noble Experiment' and one of these for just two years after repeal. The remaining firm, the Christian Heurich Brewing Company, carried on until 1956 when it could no longer compete against the national beer brands.

There then followed a 55 year period when no brewery existed within Washington, D.C. To fill this rather depressing gap the author provides us with, rather fittingly, a chapter entitled, 'Where Are the Brewers Buried?' This directory of graves covers many Washingtonians associated with the brewing trade.

It was not until 2011 that full scale brewing returned to the District and the final chapter charts its recent history.

Garrett Peck is to be commended for producing a very readable account of Washington, D.C.'s brewing past, especially as very few physical remains exist above ground. This point relates to my one criticism, it would have been extremely useful for the book to have contained a map showing the former locations of all the major sites. That said, it does include a good number of illustrations, some in colour, plus an Appendix listing all the District's breweries and brewpubs in chronological order. This is an interesting addition to U.S. brewery history and a valuable guide to all those living in or visiting this corner of America.

* More on this subject will appear in a future issue of *Brewery History*.

TIM HOLT

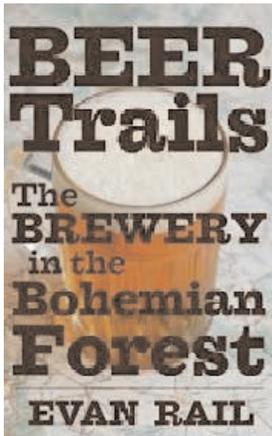
Beer Trails: The Brewery in the Bohemian Forest By Rail, E.

Kindle edition

2014, \$2.99

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00KRPY4GE>

Evan Rail has done it again; he's written an illuminating long-form nonfiction piece about our favorite subject.



According to the author of *Why Beer Matters*, *Triplebock*, and *Why We Fly*, newest title 'is meant to be the first in a new series of long-form writing dedicated to our favorite beverage. The next *Beer Trails* titles should be coming from Stan

Hieronimus and Joe Stange later this year'.

It's a fascinating read, part narrative essay, part memoir, with a touch of the lyric essays that allow poets and prose writers to further illuminate their favorite subjects. Rail was kind enough to email the author and offer up a glimpse of his newest treatise on what else but the beautiful bottom-fermenting beers of Bohemia's esteemed Pivovar Kout na Šumavě.

If you've been to Bohemia or Bavaria, you've likely heard the stories of widowed countesses killing their kids to marry their love, or of a bartered bride who brews the best beer in all the land, but her evil husband has already murdered his first dozen brides and now she is to be beheaded. These are folk tales and their human element is shrouded in the super natural woods. In a way, that setting is replicated by Rail. That is not to say Brewery in the Bohemian Forest is a folk tale, but the nonfiction presented is peppered with the vividness of an enchanted setting filled with lore of centuries past.

It makes sense that this 21st century story would be steeped in the lore of centuries past; a central point in the book is a recurring mention of a historic brewing log. Rail writes of Kout,

they'd found the brewing log while they were cleaning out the area around the old steam furnace, and that it had been buried in the wall, and that it had taken them a long time to figure it out because it was written in *Švabach*, the Czech term for a long-forgotten type of black letter script. It was a

pity we couldn't see it because it was in a safe-deposit box, but it certainly existed.

Beyond the fascination with the centuries-old book (first the author's, then the reader's), there is the Czech countryside and the feeling one can somehow know Narodni park Sumava, a true impossibility with the national park's 100km length bordering Germany and Austria. Rail describes a drive from the pivovar back to the train station,

we passed dense clumps of trees, thick stands of woods which were all that remained of the once-great Hercynian Forest. I imagined them as part of the old woods, when it was filled with strange creatures and unusual discoveries, the watershed of secrets to which no outsider would ever be truly welcome.

Beyond providing an intimate look at the Czech pivovar, Rail's narrative provides a unique profile of the Kout owner, Mr Jan Skala. Not quite as infamous as Josef Groll, but close in that his persona takes on a legendary form as the reader feels closer to the owner despite having never met him. Rail writes:

I asked about the flavour profile of a classic Czech tmavé pivo, and how he would describe what made it different from a German Schwarzbier or a Munich-style Dunkles, which resulted in my favorite quote from the session: 'Well, I've never had a Schwarzbier. Nor any Dunkles.'

The book picks up where *Why Beer Matters* left off in that it is more than a piece of literature in praise of beer culture. On the last page of *Why Beer Matters*, Rail writes, 'At the pub, there's a chance I'll reread these lines and think of other reasons why beer matters to me, something I've overlooked and forgotten', and here he has done what so many essayists hope to do. He has imparted or at least lead the reader to the important role beer plays in the world. Perhaps he has even encouraged his readers to come up with their own reasons as to why beer matters beyond the temporal ending of his narrative, which literally ends with a trip to a traditional Czech pub.

Why Beer Matters set up narratives that furthered the American and English reader's understanding of Czech beer culture - a culture that can certainly be an insular one - but in *The Brewery in the Bohemian Forest* Rail shows scenes in which he is an outsider himself. Further

illuminating the narrative nonfiction is a fantastic glossary that ties in a ton of references to European and Czech history, as well as brewery terms, ingredients, processes, and procedures.

Rail captures the incredible spirit of the Czechs, their ingenuity and affinity for hard work. The details Rail provides are exquisite. All of this helps the reader feel a connection to Czech beer. This kind of connection is rare but with the help of the author the reader feels well informed and part of an inner circle by the end.

MICHAEL STEIN

Iron Rails and Whisky Trails

By Peaty, I.P.

Clophill: Irwell Press

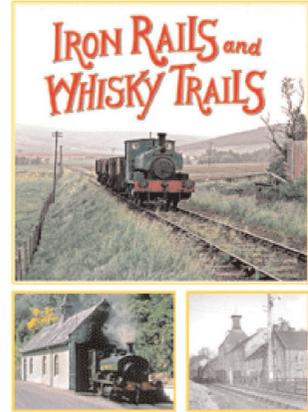
2014, Pp. 184, £19.95

ISBN: 978-1 906919-53-5

This book fulfils a promise made by the author to television presenter, Julia Bradbury. For those who saw the programme, you will recall as part of her show, *Railway Walks*, she strode through the Scottish Highlands, following the Great North of Scotland Railway route. Whilst at Dailuaine she ‘bumped’ into Ian Peaty and they discussed the rolling stock and its usage in the area. A parting promise from the author was for this book to be published.

The A4 format allows ample space for text and picture, in fact a large number of evocative pictures recalling an age, as all railway books always do, when steam was king and all freight was moved around by train. These are to a good quality and show well the wide range of loco types and train configurations in use across the years. The images also give a feeling for the manual effort needed to bring in the raw materials and take out the finished product. To supplement a number of colour adverts for the product, there are many of the author’s own paintings. These present in good artistic detail, scenes which otherwise would not have been recorded. The comprehensive text is supplemented by large scale Ordnance Survey maps showing how the various lines came in and out of the distilleries, and how they connected to the local mainlines. There is a great deal of technical data within the text and I have no expertise in this area to comment of the accuracy or otherwise.

However, to my untrained eye it certainly gives a wide based description of the history, expansion and decline of the rail companies who provided transport. This covers the makers and styles of the locomotives used over the year, including the uniquely Scottish ‘puggies’.



This book will appeal specifically to those with an interest in the history of whisky distilling and, separately, to those with an interest in the freight networks of Scotland. To the general layman like myself it could easily stimulate further research and on the ground investigation.

I note that a lot of the images were supplied by the modern day owners of the distilleries. This is refreshing and shows that at least some of their rich heritage is being preserved.

Recommended if you hanker after the history of the ‘wee dram’ and how it got to your glass.

KEN SMITH

Pubs of Royal Leamington Spa - Two Centuries of History

By Jennings, A., Ellis, M. and Lewin, T.

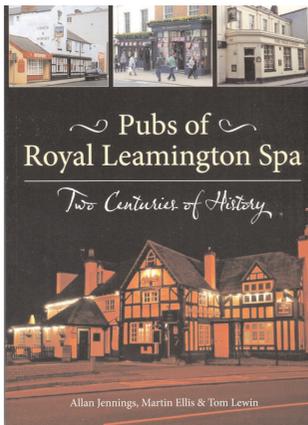
Studley: Brewin books

2014, Pp. 229, £24.95

ISBN: 978-1-85858-522-2

This is a large and comprehensive book covering all the public houses of Royal Leamington Spa.

The authors have combined histories of the pubs along with licensing listings, giving a comprehensive view of each outlet, including historical and current photographs



book feel. This is no bad thing and I would hope that it may well form the definitive work for the locale. I am not knowledgeable of the geography and history of the town so are unable to report on how well they have covered the area. Nevertheless it feels very broad in scope and has a depth of details I have never seen before. You certainly get a lot of book for your money.

The majority of the photos are on the small side and only just do the book justice. Most are in colour and relatively recent. I would expect that it is because of the

where possible. Each entry has the history of the premises followed by the licensed holders by name and their dates, a very academic approach to pub history.

This scholarly methodology gives the publication a text

usual trade off in the publication world, words versus images. In this case words won - hence my comment about the book feeling like a text book. Good to see that the publishers have allowed the pictures to go right to the edge of the page, thus maximizing the space available.

There are numerous extracts from the local press covering events in the history of the relevant pub. Additionally, simple newspaper adverts from the past are used to illustrate the story. However, I notice that there are no beer labels or brewers adverts in the book despite frequent mention of the brewing companies of old that had these pubs in their estate. Again I suspect space was the issue rather than availability but as most of the book is in colour it would have helped. All is not lost though as the authors promise a follow up to utilise material that did not find its way into this edition.

This is a great reference source for those who live in and around the area and a book that feels value for money. Personally, I wish we had more town pub books of this quality; it would certainly help the genealogists amongst us.

KEN SMITH