

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **Good Honest Tales: 150 Years of Batemans Brewery Cartwright, A.**

**Stroud: Amberley  
2024, Pp.128, £16.99  
ISBN: 978 1 398-11769-3**

Published 2024, in conjunction with the brewery to celebrate their 150 years. The publicity mentions the rare and previously unpublished images from the company archives:

This richly illustrated and thoroughly researched book takes you through the full story of Batemans, blending history and recollections to produce a fitting tribute to this unique firm.

It very much does what it says on the tin. Ideal for spreading the word, in a most readable style, hopefully appealing to the wider public. The illustrations are indeed of a high quality and presumably added to the cost of printing.

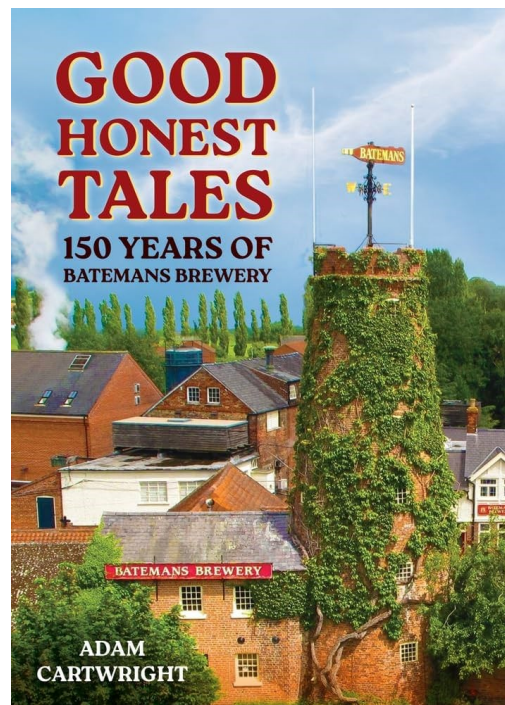
I was intrigued by the ‘carriage cask system’ (p.55), which might be described as a poor man’s Burton Union. I wonder if they were the last to use such a method of fermentation. Perhaps members might be able to comment. What also struck me, is that they are said to have used the same yeast strain since the brewery was founded. I wondered how it coped with the introduction of stainless-steel fermenters in 1952. However, I appreciate that such topics might not fit in a book aimed at a more general readership.

I’m not sure if adulteration or “bobbing”, by some rivals, was a largely harmless practice (p.17) given the arsenic scare of the late C19.

It seems Amberley have also published a book covering Lincolnshire Industrial Heritage, though I don’t know if there is any coverage of old brewing sites. The text does mention other breweries in the county eg chapter 3 and gives some details of their closure and estate, where it involved Batemans. However, it should be noted that the wine and spirit business which they purchased in 1918 – Ridlington & Son of Boston, also had a brewery at one point, but this had probably ceased in the late nineteenth century.

There is a slight quibble about Matthias Wharram of Burghle-Marsh, who is described as at the Kiln House brewery (p.18). Our files suggest he was at the Steam Brewery in Brewery Street, whilst John Henry Berry was at the Kiln House site from 1881 to 1894 (see below). The confusion arises because it seems T.E. Walls trading as Wharram & Co. bought the Kiln House brewery and its estate in 1903 and then used the site as a bottling store (see also *Brewers of Britain*). Bateman’s 1920 purchase (p.37) was the 5qtr brewery in Brewery Street/ Lane, parts of which remain.

There is a series of three articles in our own *Journals* of 2004 by Steve Andrews, which are worth reading along with the book. He article considers that their survival was very much down to the family and this is abundantly clear from this book (p.14 in No.117). There are numerous stories of their concern for their tenants, workers and customers. Though, the coverage of the dark days of the 1980s in chap



ter 7 shows how close we came to losing this quintessential British brewery. At a time of publicity for the impact of inheritance tax on the family farm, it should be noted that the general result of government legislation and taxation on family brewers has been equally deleterious. One can only hope that such well-written and soundly sourced books might just help the average drinker understand that there is more than just badged and UK brewed ‘Spanish’ lagers.

MIKE BROWN

**Brewing in Hertfordshire**

**Cornell, M.**

**Stroud: Amberley**

**2024, Pp.96, £15.99**

**ISBN: 978 1 398-10844-8**

**Brewing in Manchester and Salford**

**Woodman, D.**

**Stroud: Amberley**

**2024, Pp.96, £15.99**

**ISBN: 978 1 398-11331-2**

*Brewing in Hertfordshire* is described as the latest in a popular series and Amberley, the publishers, are to be commended for such. Hence, it is aimed at the general public rather than a directory for us geeks. For that, see Helen Poole (*Here for the Beer: Gazetteer of the Brewers of Hertford*

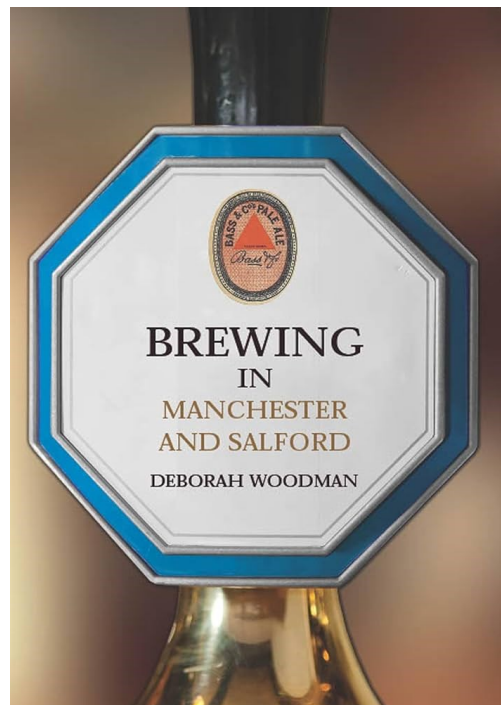
*shire*, 1984) and Allan Whitaker (*Brewers in Hertfordshire: A Historical Gazetteer*, 2005), which should be read in conjunction with the text, since Whitaker gives more detail on the pubs owned and lists other individuals.

It covers the period 1700 to present day, with a separate section on the modern micro-breweries. It has a straightforward layout, alphabetically by towns. Not a county beset by boundary changes, which is a help for researchers, though some towns such as Barnet have been swallowed up into London.

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*Brewing in Manchester and Salford* is another in the excellent little series on brewing from Amberley. However, as it says, it relies on the work done by Neil Richardson and Alan Gall in their publications on Manchester brewers. Hence it doesn't always look at some other aspects e.g. in the section



on Boddingtons doesn't mention the battle with Allied in 1969, nor some of the family difficulties in the nineteenth century.

The businesses included are those which had a presence in the city centres e.g. Lees and Robinsons, rather than titling it as Greater Manchester.

There are also a couple of mistakes which need rectifying. For example on page 54 the image of Hyde's Queens Brew-

ery is actually repeated on page 71, where it is correctly identified as the Regent Road site of Groves & Whitnall. Similarly, on p56 the statement that Red Tower was the first UK lager is not correct.

Nevertheless, one hopes that the book, as with others in the series, helps spread the message. Not least that Manchester has always been the real capital of ale, writes a Mancunian.

MIKE BROWN