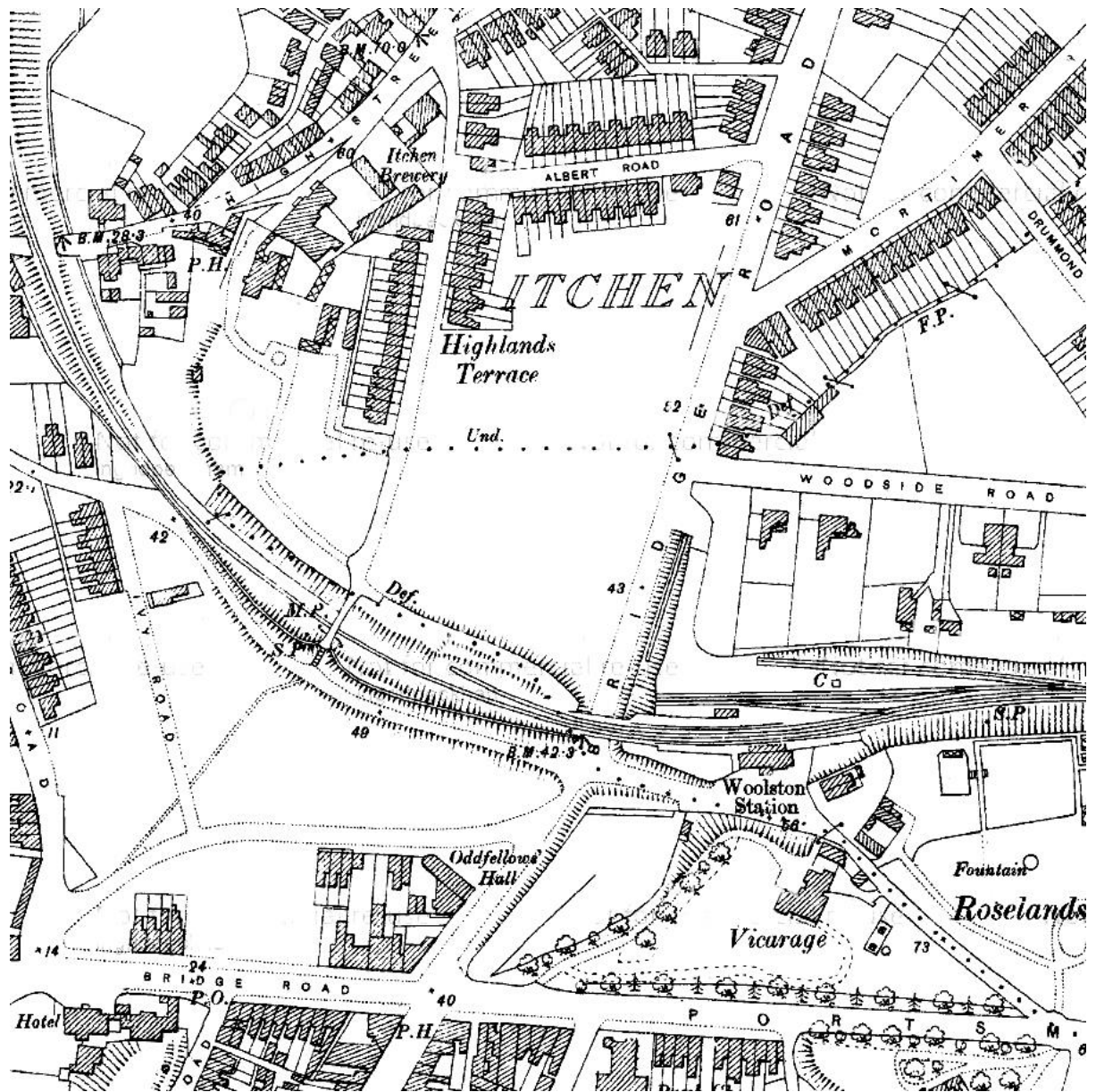


ITCHEN BREWERY

Beryl Varilone





1897 MAP. ITCHEN BREWERY IN TOP CORNER

IN THE BEGINNING

During the late 18th century and the whole of the 19th, on the eastern side of the River Itchen, high on the hill behind Itchen Ferry Village stood the massive, imposing building of Bell & Son's Itchen Brewery, the towering chimney increasing its height even more.

According to one of their adverts the brewery was established by the Bell family in 1765. As most of the early eldest Bell sons were named John, and were described as bakers or brewers and bakers, it was not easy to sort out, but the first I can pin point is John (1) and Sarah who had a son John (2) in 1761 who married and had 7 children before he died in 1812. They were named as John (3) born 1786, Richard, Henry, Ann, Mary, Marie (or Maria) and Elizabeth. From his will I learned that he was a baker and brewer. He owned several public houses and at least 7 cottages with gardens.

The next in line was John (3), followed by John (4) who married Sarah Kerley in 1807 and George Henry was born in 1808. I found further about this child.

In 1817 Sarah died. Three years later - in 1820 - John remarried. This time to Elizabeth Parley.

There were two houses on the brewery premises, each had a kitchen, scullery, 2 sitting rooms and 4 bedrooms, so were quite roomy.

John (3), now a widower, was living in one and John and Elizabeth settled down in the other where they produced John Henry in 1827.

In 1848 John Henry married Laurie Henderson Sutton and they had 9 children, the relevant ones being Richard, born in 1851, Frederick, 1857 and William in 1865.

It seems that John Henry was suffering from a progressive and very painful illness. In spite of this, he led a very full and active life. In November 1874, at the young age of 43 he died.

In his obituary the Hampshire Advertiser wrote "... his sufferings had been intense lately, but he bore them with a resignation and cheerfulness which was quite comforting...

The list of his "Good Works" is endless. To mention just a few – for fifteen years he was a church warden at St. Mary's Extra; he was a Guardian of the Poor, a Quarter Master in the 1st Hants. Volunteer Artillery; a member of the Clausentum Lodge of Freemasons and many other projects.

He must have been popular, as the same report said the whole of the houses in the village and neighbourhood exhibited signs of mourning while the funeral was taking place.

Laurie moved to "Fernleigh" in Onslow Road, where she lived until her death in 1914.

In the 1891 census she was described as a retired brewer. Her unmarried daughter, Anne was living with her "partly on mother's means". Also still at home was 20 -year old Solicitor's clerk, William.

After John's death in 1874 when his sons applied for probate, the estimated value of the property was £3,230. Richard was described as a gentleman and William Henry as a solicitor, presumably they had no interest in the brewery.

The third son, Frederick, was living at "Bordeaux" in Onslow Road, and was described as a brewer. Later he was listed as a corn Chandler.

The 1881 census shows 30-year old Richard, a brewer, as the head. Also living at Itchen (presumably in the brewery) was his 24 year-old brother, Frederick, listed as a corn Chandler and his 25 year-old sister Ellen, who was a governess.

There were two other sisters, Caroline, 20 and Anne 17. Another brother, 16-year old William, who was a law student and their 3-year old niece, Ethel King.

The land on which the brewery was built appears to have been leased from Lord Kirkcumbright. I cannot find much connection between him and Itchen Village.

An article written in 1894 titled "Southampton - Illustrated" gives a good description of the extensive brewery premises. There were offices, store yards, spacious cellars, stabling, cooperage, cask washing, bottling and other departments

The actual brewery part was large, lofty, well-constructed and equipped with the latest machinery. There was praise for the manufacturers and the end product. " . . . During the last 128 years the Itchen Brewery has maintained a reputation for turning out the finest ales produced on the South Coast, and the popularity of these beverages has greatly increased . . ." Also, of course, there were the two comfortable houses.

As well as managing the Brewery, the family sold corn, hay, straw, meal, malt and hops. By 1851, they were employing 8 men, even so, they advertised for estimates for doing extensive work and building additions to the premises. Was trade so good?

ESTABLISHED A.D. 1765.

ITCHEN BREWERY,

ITCHEN, NEAR SOUTHAMPTON.

JOHN BELL & SON,
Ale and Porter Brewers,

ARE PREPARED TO SUPPLY TO ALE AND
STOUT CONSUMERS

BRILLIANT PALE ALE at 1s. per Gal.

BASS & ALLSOPP'S ALES & COURAGE'S STOUT

In Bottles, Kilderkins, & Firkins, at co-operative Prices for Cash.

Corn, Hay, and Straw; Meal, Malt, and Hops, at the
Lowest Market Prices.

Gentlemen, Traders, & Contractors, and others, wishing to obtain the
above named articles (and sure prompt attention) are respectfully
requested to favour

Messrs. BELL and SON

With their esteemed orders.

Vans Deliver Daily. Weight and Quality Guaranteed.

OFFICE AND STORES:

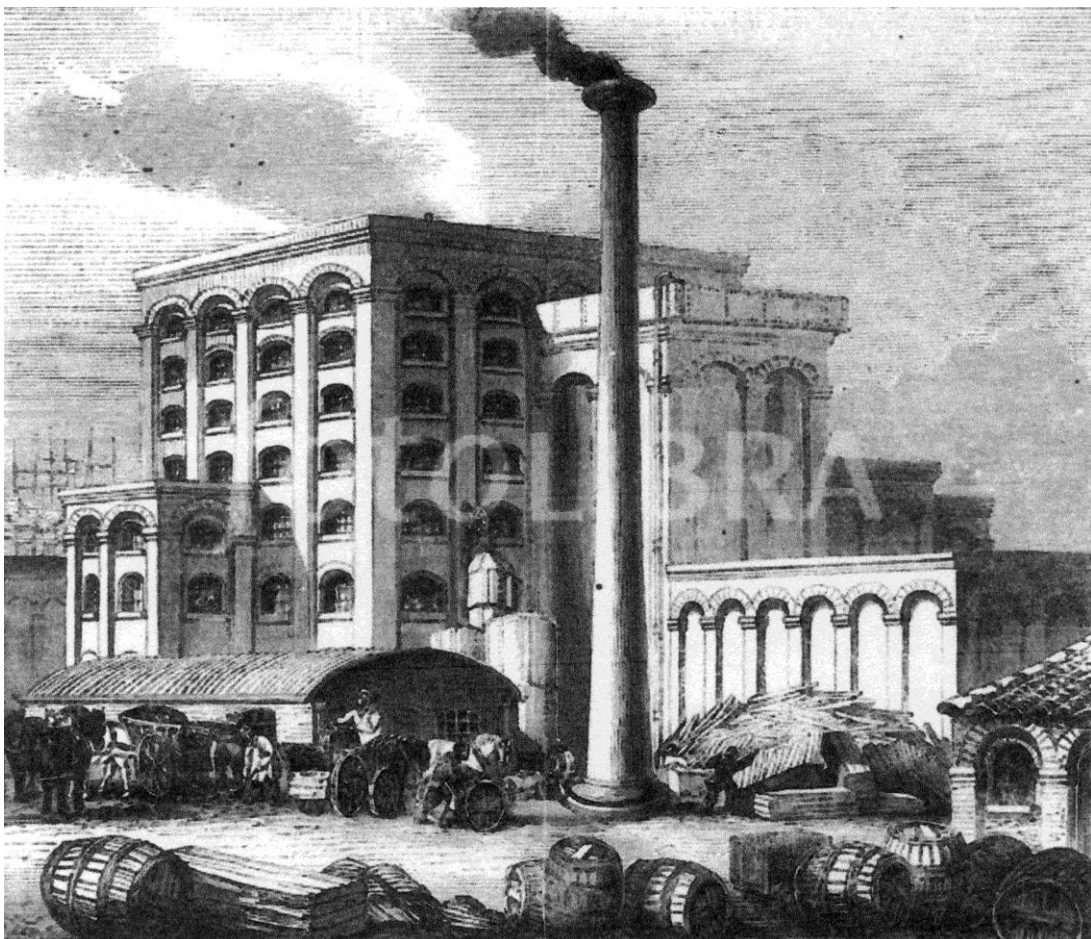
Itchen, near Southampton.

MOVING ON

In 1889 William Garton, a director of Messrs Crowley & Co., bought the brewery for £2,140., retaining the name of Bell & son. Frederick seems to have taken over the corn chandlery.

Unlike the Bell family, William did not live in the brewery, but bought "Roselands", a fine house in Portsmouth Road in Woolston. There he settled down with his wife, Ellen and their family of four sons, Richard, born in 1858, Charles 1860, William, 1868 and in 1870, Frederick. They also had two daughters, Catherine and Rosa.

William, senior had been born in 1832 in Bath where his father, who died very young, had a small brewery. After his death, William and his elder brother, Charles, had helped their mother to keep it going for a while. They later had their own brewery and were very interested in experimental work. They became directors of and partners in, several brewery companies, including the Anglo-Bavarian Group, which concluded that a paler, lighter ale, such as was brewed in Germany, could be produced by using sugar products, and adding saccharin. This produced a less alcoholic but superior flavoured drink.



THE SUGAR REFINERY IN CANUTE ROAD

William's sons, William, Charles, and Richard grew up and became active in the firm. They continued the experiments and won a medal for their ale in the 1862 Exhibition. They became very rich men. (I do not know what happened to Frederick. He must have chosen a different career, because he does not seem to be mentioned at all in connection with the brewery).

They needed to produce things on a larger scale so, together with a Mr. Thomas Hill they started up a sugar factory just outside Southampton Docks. Thus they could produce their own "sacchrum" to use in their own brewery.

I know nothing at all about Mr. Hill except that he was a well-known Southampton shipping agent. Was his job to arrange for the transport to England of molasses, etc., and then the shipping abroad of the finished beer?

The following anecdote is not at all relevant, but I will include it just to illustrate the kind of thing that used to happen. Sugar factories were notorious for the dreadful accidents that happened in them - mostly men falling into the huge vats of boiling sugar.

There were many other accidents. In one case, a man who had been a respected grocer fell heavily into debt, lost his business and ended up working in a sugar factory. Unfortunately a hogshead of sugar fell onto his head and killed him. "Dashing his head to atoms".

He left a widow and six young children, one of whom was a cripple. A few days previously, all their furniture had been sold to pay part of their rent. Because this did not raise nearly enough money, every window and door had been taken out of the house and the chimneys blocked up. So what was going to happen to this little family? They had already been destitute before this last blow! This was reported in the Liverpool Mercury, who opened an appeal for help for the family.

Here at home, on the 25th of May 1895 a very severe fire at the Brewery caused several thousand pounds worth of damage. It broke out at the top of the building and worked its way down to the cellars. It destroyed the tank room, the copper room, the mill room, the mash tun room part of the roof of the cooling room and cellar and a lot of damage had been done to other parts of the premises. The report in the Southampton Times said that "... a message had been sent over the telephone to the Southampton Fire Brigade. Superintendent Johnson and his men turned out very shortly and within twenty five minutes of this they were on the spot, notwithstanding they had to cross the river by means of the Floating Bridge. By this time the fire had gained a firm hold and it was feared the whole of the premises would be destroyed.

Despite many problems with the water supply, the firemen managed to subdue the fire in two hours., but several men were left on the premises for some hours, just to

make sure that it did not break out again.

Unfortunately, the fire happened at an extremely busy time, when the brewery had just been extended and business had increased anyway. However, they quickly informed everyone that, because of their vast resources, all the orders would be met.



A FIRE ENGINE OF THAT PERIOD.

REPRINTED WITH KIND PERMISSION OF MR ALAN HOUSE

In 1871, Carton & Hill had bought the Shepton Mallett Pale Ale Brewery. The next year they changed the name to The Anglo/Bavarian Brewery. Here they employed about 50 people, so it was quite large. Even so, they spent a great deal of money modernising and enlarging it, even having their own electricity plant installed so that work might be continued during the night when necessary. Eventually it was large enough to need 200 workmen to keep it going.

Even after this, they soon needed to look for larger premises and began by moving their sugar refinery to Battersea.

William senior, was a well-known, but very modest, philanthropist, giving a lot of money to good causes, specially the Royal South Hants Hospital., where he was a governor and also on the Visiting Committee. He did such a lot for them that a ward was named after him. Another of his interests was the Hartley Institute, where he was a Director.

He was greatly interested in agriculture, specially roses, always winning prizes with the blooms from his magnificent garden. He gave a lot of support to the Netley and Hound Agricultural Society.

Indoors he had what was reputed to be the finest art collection in Hampshire.

He died in 1905 at the age of 75. Although he had been ailing for some time, his death was still unexpected. He had a very large funeral with at least nine carriages following the hearse and an enormous number of floral tributes.

His son, Richard, attended university and attained his degree as a chemist before going to Germany and taking courses in various aspects of brewing. He became director of several brewery companies. With his brothers, he continued the experimental brewing. Even so, he managed to make time for his favourite past-time of horse racing and breeding.

He, his wife, Ellen, and their six children lived in Guildford until about 1902 and then moved to Haslemere. Here, like his father, he gave very generously to his local hospital. Like the rest of his family, he was a great philanthropist. He established The Garton Foundation for the study of international relations, also a British Empire Cancer Campaign.

At some period he was connected with the Army, which in 1908 led to him being knighted, and so he and Ellen became Sir Richard and Lady Ellen. Then in 1918 he was created G.B.E.

He died in October, 1934, leaving an estate of £2,641 million.

William, junior, like the rest of the family, was committed to the brewing business and was on the board of several breweries, including 40 years as a director of the Southampton brewers, William Cooper. He was a rich man and a local benefactor, especially to the Royal South Hants Hospital. He was well respected and liked in the neighbourhood. As far as possible he tried to keep his good works secret.

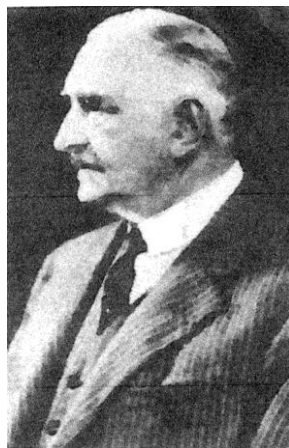
He lived in "Sarisbury Court" in Bursledon for many years, then moved to "Brixiedone." This was probably in the same area. I know it was a large house overlooking the Hamble river.

He was a founder-member of the Royal Automobile Club, a committed yachtsman, a gardener and keen on shooting.

In early 1934, his health began to deteriorate and he had to relinquish a lot of his directorships. His brothers Charles and Richard had already died earlier in the year and in November, at the age of 67 William, too, died -a further blow to the family, to lose three members in one year.



WILLIAM GARTON
1832 – 1905



SIR RICHARD GARTON
1852 – 1934

THE END

At some point the Itchen Brewery Company had been sold to Crowley and Co., a Southampton Company who had a large brewery close to the Bargate in Southampton, and

who already had connections with the Itchen Brewery. What happened after that?

Presumably they sold it on. I read that for a while it was used as a fire lighter factory, with people taking their old wood there to sell. I think that eventually another fire completely destroyed the building and it was never rebuilt. I cannot find any official information on this.

What an undignified and pathetic end.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REFERENCES

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