

THE BOOK
OF THE
OLD EDINBURGH
CLUB

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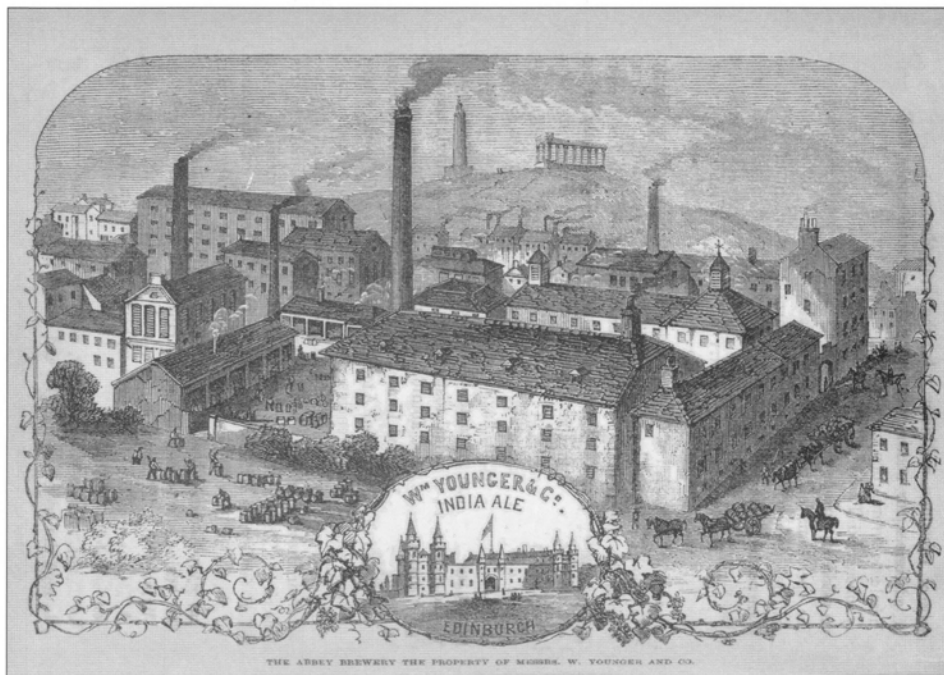
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NEW SERIES
Volume 5
Vols 1-5 Index

2002

COVER

The Abbey Brewery the property of Messrs. W. Younger and Co.

*Anonymous engraved view published on p. 218 of
The Official Illustrated Guide to the North British Railway, 1861*

Occupying a prominent site at the foot of the Canongate, William Younger and Company's Abbey Brewery is shown in its Victorian heyday. The Younger dynasty's brewing fortunes began modestly in 1749, when William Younger, a former exciseman, established his brewery. Later, attracted like other brewers by the pure springs and wells in the area of Holyrood palace and the lower Canongate, two of his sons established breweries within the Abbey precincts, thereby avoiding the city's 2d tax on each pint. Robert Chambers described Archibald Campbell Younger's ale as 'a potent fluid which almost glued the lips of the drinker together' (*Traditions of Edinburgh*, 1868 edn, p. 184). The firm's growing prosperity and ambitions led in 1825 to the purchase and demolition of the Marquess of Lothian's house, Lothian Hut, on the west side of Horse Wynd. The site was redeveloped as the Abbey Brewery, incorporating a few picturesque fragments of the mansion. Horse Wynd, which was made into a thoroughfare some time after 1765, and from which the brewery was entered, appears on the right.

The premises expanded from 1829 by piecemeal acquisitions of adjoining houses and other minor brewing and malting premises in the Canongate until 1886, when the Dukes of Roxburghe's former town house was acquired and demolished to make way for additions to the brewery and a new school (Milton House School). The Canongate, formerly an area of aristocratic residences, also boasted the Duke of Queensberry's imposing mansion, extended in the 1690s. Falling out of use as the family's town house, in 1803 it was sold for use as a barracks. In 1815 it became a hospital, which it remained in various forms until 1996. It is shown at the top left.

Up the Canongate to the west, and off to the left of this view, lay another brewery, acquired by Younger's in 1858, known as the Holyrood Brewery. From their adjacent premises Younger and Co's products were distributed to a wide market, including India, hence the popular India Ale plainly advertised in the vignette of Holyrood House. In the 20th century Younger's became part of Scottish and Newcastle plc, whose administrative headquarters were in the Abbey Brewery, and which opened a new brewery in Fountainbridge in 1973. Brewing ceased in the Canongate in 1986.

A programme of urban housing regeneration on the huge site was in hand when the success of devolution proposals in 1997 necessitated the choice of a location for the new Scottish Parliament. A lively public debate ensued, in which many argued for the old Royal High School site on Calton Hill, seen in the background of this view. However, in January 1998 the site of the Abbey Brewery, and adjacent land across Holyrood Road, was announced as the chosen site. In 1999 all the brewery buildings were demolished, and construction of the new Parliament building began, to designs by Enric Miralles and Partners.

T.N.C.

Courtesy of the National Archives of Scotland (BR/LIB(S)/18/52)

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GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

1. Authors are invited to send a preliminary letter outlining the proposed contribution to Dr Fraser at the above address. An early indication of the illustrations envisaged would be helpful.
2. Copy should be submitted in typescript, double spaced, on one side of A4 paper, with wide margins. It is helpful if finished copy is also supplied on disc when the contribution is produced by word processor.
3. Notes and references should follow the text, with arabic numerals inserted consecutively at the appropriate places in the text.
4. References to printed sources should be set out as in the following examples:
Sir Daniel Wilson, *Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Edinburgh 1891) II, p. 59.
J. B. Morrell, 'Medicine and Science in the Eighteenth Century', in Gordon Donaldson (ed.), *Four Centuries: Edinburgh University Life, 1583-1983* (Edinburgh 1983), pp. 38-52.
R. K. Hannay and G. P. H. Watson, 'The Building of the Parliament House', *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, 13 (1924), pp. 1-78.
5. References to manuscript sources should be in accordance with the practice of the repository in which the documents are housed. Examples are:
Edinburgh City Archives (ECA), Town Council Minutes, 12 August 1752.
National Library of Scotland (NLS), MS. 638, ff. 9-10.

NOTE ON PREDECIMAL CURRENCY

Before the present decimal currency was introduced in 1971 the system of currency in Great Britain divided the pound into 20 shillings and the shilling into 12 pennies. This was expressed as £ s d, or pounds, shillings and pence (from Latin *librae, solidi, denarii*). Conventions varied but amounts were usually expressed thus: £5 13s 11d, or £5. 13. 11, i.e. five pounds, thirteen shillings and eleven pence. Shillings could be expressed as e.g. 5s or 5/-, and shillings and pence as e.g. 5s 6d or 5/6. The penny was further subdivided into two halfpennies or four farthings. One guinea was 21 shillings, or £1. 1. 0. A crown was five shillings and a florin two shillings.

The pound Scots was originally the same as the English pound (pound sterling), but by the seventeenth century had declined in value to one-twelfth of the pound sterling. The Scots merk or mark was 13s 4d Scots. Scots money was abolished by the Act of Union in 1707 but calculations in pounds Scots remained current in Scotland till late in the eighteenth century.

Information on pre-decimal currency, and on pre-metric systems of weights and measures, is given in Colin R. Chapman, *How Heavy, How Much and How Long? Weights, Money and other Measures used by our Ancestors* (Lochin Publishing 1995). For the separate system of Scottish weights and measures see A. D. C. Simpson and R. D. Connor, 'Interpreting Scots Measurement Units', in Glen L. Pryde, *Dictionary of Scottish Building* (Edinburgh 1996), pp. 104-105.

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