

12

# Fowler's Brewery

– *Famous since the '45*

David Anderson



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*Embossed Fowler's dark green bottle*

## FOREWORD

This series of books was specifically developed to provide an authoritative briefing to all who seek to enjoy the Industrial Heritage Museum at the old Prestongrange Colliery and, more broadly, what were the medieval baronial lands of Prestoungrange and Dolphinstoun. They are complemented by learning guides for educational leaders. All are available on the Internet at [www.prestoungrange.org](http://www.prestoungrange.org) the Baron Courts' website.

They have been sponsored by the Baron Courts of Prestoungrange and Dolphinstoun which my family and I re-established when we were granted access to the feudal baronies in 1998 and 1999. But the credit for the scholarship involved and their timeous appearance are entirely attributable to the skill with which Jane Bonnar, assisted originally by Annette MacTavish of the Industrial Heritage Museum service, found the excellent authors involved and managed the series through from conception to benefit in use with educational groups.

We thank the authors one and all for a job well done. It is one more practical contribution to the Museum's wider role in helping its visitors to lead their lives today and tomorrow with a better understanding of the lives of those who went before us all. For better and for worse, we stand on their shoulders as we view and enjoy our lives today, and as we in turn craft the world of tomorrow for our children. As we are enabled through this series to learn about the first millennium of the two baronies we can clearly see what sacrifices were made by those who worked, and how the fortunes of those who ruled rose and fell. Today's cast of characters may differ, and the specifics of working and ruling have surely changed, but the issues remain the same.

I mentioned above the benefit-in-use of this series. The Baron Courts are adamant that it shall not be 'one more resource' that lies little used on the shelves. A comprehensive programme of onsite activities and feedback reports by users has been designed by Jane Bonnar and is available at our website [www.prestoungrange.org](http://www.prestoungrange.org) – and be sure to note the archaic use of the 'u' in the baronial name.

But we do also confidently expect that this series will continue to arouse the interest of many who are not directly

involved in educational or indeed museum services. Those who live locally and previously worked at Prestongrange, or had relatives and ancestors there (as I did in my maternal grandfather James Park who worked in the colliery), will surely find the information both fascinating and rewarding to read. It is very much for them also to benefit – and we hope they will. The reception thus far certainly seems to show the authors' work is greatly appreciated.

Finally, of course, the titles have provided an excellent basis and complement for the Arts Festival the Baron Courts have initiated, most especially the murals programme.

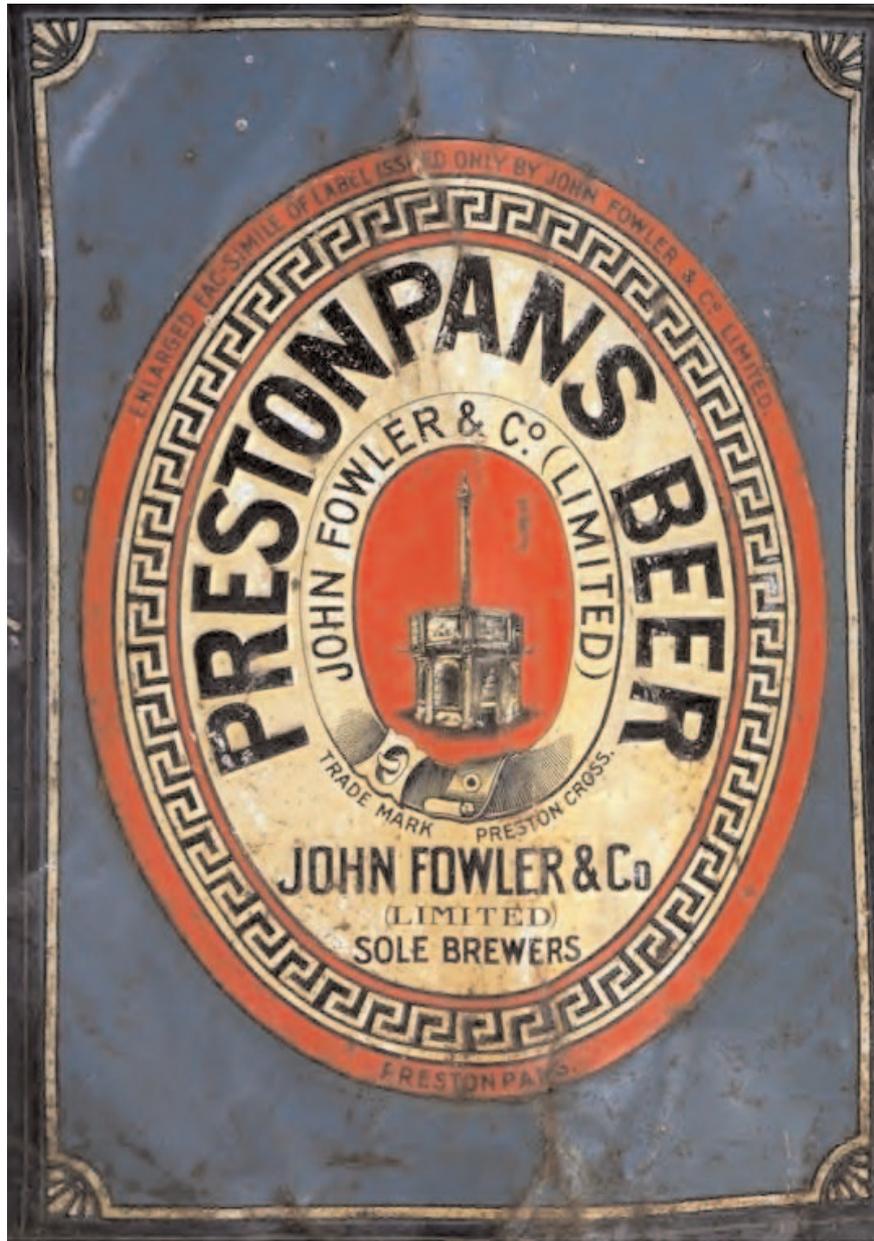
Dr Gordon Prestoungrange  
*Baron of Prestoungrange*  
*February 26th 2002*

### **David Anderson**

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*Metal advertising sign to be found outside public houses and off licences*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Writing in the late eighteenth century, the Reverend John Trotter recorded in the *Statistical Account of the Parish of Prestonpans* that ‘in the year 1754 there were 16 brewers whereas there are only 5 brewers now’. By the mid-twentieth century, there was only one. It traded from the Prestonpans Brewery under the name John Fowler and Company Limited and had established a national reputation as a brewer of strong bottled ales. In 1960 it was absorbed into a brewing conglomerate and did not long survive. Most of Scotland’s provincial breweries suffered a similar fate. However, such was the reputation of the established Prestonpans brands a ‘Fowler’s Wee Heavy’ strong ale is still available today, although it bears little relation to the original.

Who the early brewers of Prestonpans were is obscure. Reliable sources are few. However, the Prestonpans parish records of births, marriages and deaths were exceptionally well kept and the professions of many individuals are recorded. The Register of Sasines of the County of Haddingtonshire is preserved in the National Archives of Scotland; it is a chronological list of property transactions. The entries often record considerable detail of individual premises but this source is probably incomplete – short lived changes of use and lessees rather than proprietors within a long tenure of a property are generally not recorded. But the occurrence of brew houses and maltings within the bounds of Prestonpans is noted with some regularity. Individual testaments also provide collaborative detail. Despite the limitations of the sources, it is possible to sketch in and assign some dates to a number of early brewing families and indicate the location of some of their works. Some of these concerns can be followed through the eighteenth century, observing on the way the appearance of Robert Fowler. Fowler, and his successors, survived in the trade while all local competitors ceased trading. The firm grew throughout the nineteenth century even if at some times the leaders of the family firm diversified their interests into other areas of business, including land, potteries and distilling.

After the middle of the nineteenth century, it was the ‘other interests’ of a descendant of the Fowlers that brought about the sale of the company – he was a firm believer in Temperance.

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The new owners refloated the brewery as a limited company, which continued to flourish for a further century. Indeed, it became one of the burgh's largest employers as other major industries in the area went into decline or were superseded. Given the robust reputation of the company's products, its sale and closure in the early 1960s came as a great surprise. The decision was irreversible however and brought to an end another of Prestonpans' fine old traditions.

## 2. BREWING IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

### **Brewing in Scotland**

Many Scottish brewing operations counted as little more than cottage industries in the early part of the eighteenth century. They were generally of a small scale and catered to a purely local market. Frequently, breweries and maltings were run as one operation and, equally as often, the proprietor might have other sources of income. Many of them were innkeepers, farmers or merchants. In the grain growing districts of Scotland there was a multiplicity of breweries in every town, with a focus on Edinburgh where there was an organised Brewer's Guild and where the country's first large brewery had been established at Leith. This prompted the growth of a number of other large concerns, which began the process of centralising the industry in fewer, larger units. After the Union of Parliaments in 1707 legislative changes, including increased duties, appear to have provided impetus for centralisation and a progressive decline in the number of breweries is recorded – although the surviving units were increasingly of a greater scale with correspondingly larger outputs (Ian Donnachie, *The Brewing Industry in Scotland*, John Donald Publishers, 1979).

Much of their output would be unfamiliar to today's real ale enthusiasts. Hops are presently universally used as a flavouring and bittering agent but until the end of the eighteenth century their use was almost unknown in Scotland. Appendix 3 indicates the ingredients that might be used for porter around 1800. Breweries in rural areas generally remained small-scale and could even be seasonal producers. Around 1,000 barrels (each of around 36 gallons) would be an average output.

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### Brewing in Prestonpans

In the early eighteenth century Prestonpans was an unremarkable seaside settlement extending along a single street running east to west by the shore. There were associated but separated settlements at Preston, around the old market cross and tower, Cuthill, to the west and Morrison's Haven even further west. Much of the surrounding land was still owned by the barons at Preston (lands to the east) and Prestoungrange (lands to the west) who normally retained their feudal superiority to property within the town.

The principal trades of the town and district during the 1720s, as recorded in the Parish Records, included good numbers of mariners and fishermen, colliers and salters (the traditional industries) as well as weavers, gardeners, masons, smiths and wrights (of all sorts), tailors, shoemakers, a variety of customs-house men and excisemen and even Archibald Heriot, a wigmaker. A large number of individuals are simply recorded as 'workmen' having no specified trade. In addition to those noted there was an upper class of merchants, farmers and shipmasters and notice of a few 'glasshouse workmen' indicate that Morrison's glassworks was still in production. A tilemaker, forerunner of hundreds of potters, appears in the records during 1731. The liquid wants of the inhabitants were supplied by the subjects of the present investigation, who appear as brewers, maltmen and coopers (although this last group also supplied their wares to the fish curing trade).

Brewers between 1720–32 were James Anderson, James Hetherwick and Thomas Robertson (who had progressed to the description 'merchant' by 1728). In the same period the malt trade was represented by a maltster, John Couper, and maltmen, James Peacock, George Mitchell, William Muat, Patrick Shepherd, James Jack (who is described further as maltster in 1728), Patrick Thomson, and James Shiel.

Between 1740 and 1765 an increased number of brewers appear some of whom, from the consistent witnesses associated with recorded events, can be grouped with maltsters and merchants, perhaps business partners. For example, Peter Thain (brewer), Alexander Nevoy (maltster) and James Johnston (maltman and periodically workman) all appear as primary entries and as witnesses for each other. William Warroch, a member of a prominent local merchant and property owning family, also appears sometimes as their witness and after 1752 James Johnston is associated with Robert

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Nicol, another brewer. A superficial reading of these entries in the Parish records suggests a three-handed brewery and maltings (brewer Thain succeeded later by Nicol with maltster Nevoy assisted by Johnston) with possible backing from the Warrochs. Similarly, the brewers John Melvil and William White appear to be associated with John Warroch, and each other.

By the 1780s a significant number of potters had appeared in the Prestonpans workforce and the proportion of gardeners (commercial market gardeners) had also increased. The new trade of vitriol worker had gained a significant place. Increasing industrialisation suggests the town would, of necessity, be growing also, providing a reliable local market for brewed products. Agricultural changes were well in hand and the county's grain crop was reckoned amongst the best in Scotland. Much of the crop was absorbed by Edinburgh but maltings, breweries and distilleries were a feature of all the county's towns and many villages. The Statistical Account numbers five brewers in Prestonpans around this period and the Parish Records record the same number of brewers in that decade: William Law, William Foggie, Robert Watt, John Fowler and Mr James Dow. The latter's designation suggests that he occupied a respected position – almost above trade; he is subsequently noted as a merchant. In the 1790s, Robert Hamilton, Thomas Bryson, William Low, Mr James Dow, George Broadfoot, John Fowler and James Cunningham are extant in the records with the designation brewer. However, excluding Dow and Laird Fowler the remaining five might represent the practising brewers – there is no doubt, for example, that fifty years later James Cunningham (at the age of 75) was Fowler's head brewer (*Census, 1841*, Prestonpans Parish). In the 1790s, George Broadfoot is the likeliest candidate for a similar position (John Fowler stood witness to the christening of one of his children), but any one of the five might have been employed in a similar capacity.

The location of these breweries is just as problematic. One lay in the Prestoungrange barony in 1794 but was probably non-working, being used as a bakery (No 976, *Register of Seisins*, Haddington First Series, 1781–1820). It was formerly worked by one Adam Robertson (related to Thomas Robertson of the 1720s) and comprised 'a piece of yard with tenement or mansion house consisting of halls, chambers, malt kiln, corn barn, malt barn, bake house and oven with dwelling house adjacent and houses gardens at the Saltworks of Prestongrange'.

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The notice of Robertson is therefore additional to those brewers noted above for the end of the eighteenth century but, as he is described as 'farmer and brewer', it may be that the works was leased or worked by an employee at that time. His relative Thomas was also doubly described, first as brewer and then as 'merchant'. In 1825 Robert Burnet purchased another defunct site close by Morrison's Haven: 'land with brew-houses, and salt girnel, and lofts over against the harbour' (404, *Register of Seisins*, Haddington First Series, 1821–30).

The Gordons, one of the Prestonpans pottery families also later owned a property by the harbour that once contained 'brewhouses' They had it from Mary Henderson, daughter of a shipmaster (Nos 1420 and 1438, *Register of Seisins*, Haddington First Series, 1781–1820). In 1798 and 1800 transactions also record another defunct brewery nearby, passing through the hands of the Allen family, candlemakers (Nos 931 and 1080, *Register of Seisins*, Haddington First Series, 1781–1820) to William Anderson, potter. In 1802 a tenement called the Bankhill was sold which also included a maltings. Another was at Preston, near Northfield House and the remainder probably lay along either side of the High Street. The four main Fowler sites, each with their ancient malt barns are good candidates. That lying on the North side of the High Street opposite Harlaw Hill certainly was once a brewery. The records show 'brewery, maltings, granaries, store' disposed by J Fowler and R Hislop to the Prestonpans Distillery Company in May 1825 (368, *Register of Seisins*, Haddington First Series, 1821–30).

In 1784 the brewer James Dow inherited a piece of ground through his wife's family. But this and several other property transactions of the Dow family shed little light on the location of their brewery. Similarly, Robert Fowler's purchase of the Old Brewery (entry 214 251, *Index to the Particular Register of Sasines*, Edinburgh, Haddington, Linlithgow and Bathgate, 1771–1780) on 2 August 1774 is also couched in extremely general terms. Without subsequent knowledge it would be very difficult to assign a location to the record, which reads 'All and hail the houses, small barn and brewery presently possessed by the said Robert Fowler himself by tack let by the said Mr David Dalrymple the 11th June 1771, with a piece of ground lying to the west of said house bordered on the south by the garden of the said David Dalrymple lately purchased from Alexander Dalziel, bordered on the west by the subjects belonging to John Warroch on the east by a piece of ground or

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yard presently let by the said tack possessed by the said Robert Fowler and on the north by the High Street of Prestonpans. With permission to make an opening on the yard in the east for opening or shutting the cock on his malt steep'.

Dalrymple, an advocate, owned several properties in Prestonpans and he had been Fowler's landlord for at least part of Fowler's tenure of the tack or lease of the brewery (Fowler being described as 'farmer' in the document, and his son John as 'gardiner'). Peter McNeill (*Prestonpans and Vicinity*, 1902) suggested that this site had been utilised as a brewery for a considerable period. 'What is known as the old brewery, situated to west of Dovecot Gardens, is known to have been built about 1720. Buildings were not erected long ago to last a century and a half only, but many centuries, and this, judging by appearances, may safely be set down as being built a couple of centuries previous to that date'. Quite when Fowler began brewing is only ever mentioned in passing – but 1745 is consistently given as the year.

The purchase of the brewery gave the Fowlers their first step on the property ladder. The brewery was of a scale that might be compared to the arrangement still in use at Traquair House today (<http://www.traquair.co.uk/beer.html>). There, only two men are required to produce 600 barrels annually although Fowler would have needed additional hands to make his own malt.

During Robert Fowler's time and that of his son, local competition diminished as other breweries nearby ceased production. Poor harvests giving rise to fluctuating grain prices and narrow margins (a danger if a succession of brews spoiled) were all perils to the small brewer (Donnachie, 1979) but, from the 1790s, records show a steadily increasing output on the national scale. Those that had weathered bad spells could look forward to expanding markets, and would prosper with good business sense which included perhaps a touch of sharp practice. Excise duties were also a variable burden and evidence has survived that John Fowler could be quite unscrupulous in 'cheating the gauger'.

### 3. THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

#### Laird Fowler's Progress

John Fowler must have given up his market garden at an early stage to take an active part in the brewery. He is always mentioned as a brewer in the Parish Records. After inheriting the brewery from his father, he seems to have increased the reputation of its ales and consequently was soon looking to extend the installed capacity. This was achieved around 1820 by enlarging the brewhouse through raising the height of the roof, repositioning vessels to maintain the advantage of gravity, and adding new ones. Barnard notes that a 'peculiarly shaped ten-barrel brewing copper, and a quaint-looking old pump' lingered in the Old Brewery seventy years later (Alfred Barnard, *Noted Breweries of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1889–91 – see Appendix 1). The profit from Laird Fowler's operations enabled him shortly thereafter (1828) to build a new brewery on the north side of the High Street, absorbing a site that had once been used as a distillery. In the 1880s the smallest brewing copper on the new site was of 35 barrel capacity, one of a sequence of increasing size, as noted by Barnard (see Appendix 1). It may have been installed originally in the Old Brewery and then been transferred to the new in 1828. The scale would be about right for the period and contrasts strongly with the 10 gallon copper, which was probably the installed plant John Fowler inherited.

At this period, apart from Brown's Brewery in Haddington and the growing Fowler's, all other East Lothian's breweries were small-scale affairs. They seldom had a fixed plant worth more than a few hundred pounds and a comparable amount of stock. Most could be operated by a few hands and many were still adjuncts to the proprietor's main business, usually farming (Donnachie, 1979). Fowler also followed this pattern by purchasing Hallydown, an estate near Eyemouth – from which he gained his sobriquet 'Laird'. All the stories about this character mention that he took an active hand in the brewing process, so his interests appear to have reversed the usual trend. In his case his land was an adjunct to his brewery, and not the other way around.

Laird Fowler's business sense is revealed by his progressive

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purchases of parcels of land around Prestonpans. Sometimes he acquired these when a bond, or loan, he had issued was not redeemed. In this way property of the Drysdale Brothers, grocers in Tranent, passed to Fowler (362, *Register of Seisins*, Haddington First Series, 1821–30). At other times, often in partnership with his nephew and successor Robert Hislop, the purchases were made outright. In 1824 they purchased land at Nethershot which stayed in the Company's hands until 1960. In 1830 Fowler also purchased property in Tranent from a spirit dealer.

Fowler also snapped up property that could be rented to his workers. On 8 April 1801 he registered seisin of houses and gardens 'near the east end of Prestonpans' on the south side of the road, purchased from one Margaret Marshall. This property was still in Company's hands when the buildings were condemned and the Town Council built new houses on the site (1054, *Register of Seisins*, Haddington First Series, 1781–1820).

John Fowler and Robert Hislop also diversified into supporting other business ventures. Prestonpans' original pottery, that set up by the Cadell family at Kirk Wynd, was refloated in 1796 under the leadership of David Thomson. Fowler and Hislop provided much of the finance necessary for the new company. Thomson died in 1819 and his manager, Hamilton Watson, took over until the business failed in 1838 (Jane Bonnar, *Decorative Pottery at Prestongrange*, 2000). Reference has already been made to Prestonpans Distillery Company. This firm was formed around the middle 1820s. Its principal site was on the south side of the High Street, around where the Tesco store stands today. But distilling needs maltings as much as brewing and Fowler and Hislop transferred their site on the north side of the street to the Distillery. At a later stage (1841) the company's distiller lodged with Robert Hislop and his family.

The distillery was founded at a period when an Excise Act harmonising duty between Scotland and England had come into force (1814, see H. Charles Craig, *The Scottish Whisky Industry Record*, 1994). This presented great opportunities for enterprising Scots, as Scottish duty declined. An annual fee of £10 was required. After that duty of 2s per proof gallon was levied. Before 1823 there were 303 licensed stills, many small. After 1824 there were 337 and much of the new had a capacity of over 500 gallons.

The Prestonpans Distillery Company underwent a succession on name changes: HF Cadell & Company, HF and W Cadell,

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and just before it closed, Hislop & Company. The connections between the Cadells and the Fowler clan went deeper than potteries and distilleries. In August 1841 Martha Hislop, Robert's daughter, married Henry Cadell.

Finally, there is one piece of evidence that for much of his tenure, Laird Fowler had local competition. A document dated 15 February 1821 found in a time capsule unearthed in a local building under demolition apparently stated 'there is at present in town two breweries' ("Buried Treasure" in *Tales of the Pans*, Prestonpans Local History Society, 2000).

### Growth and development

Robert Hislop inherited his uncle's business on his death. By 1839 Hislop had been the brewery manager for some considerable time, but it is unlikely given what is known of Laird Fowler's character, that his uncle in any way took a back seat in the day-to-day running and direction of the brewery when he was alive. Recorded dispositions indicate that the two men had entered into a formal partnership since at least 1820. Fowler registered his inheritance in terms of a disposition made on 15 March 1820 ( 168, *Register of Seisins*, Haddington First Series, 1841–50). In 1839, the Rev. W Bruce Cunningham, compiler of the New Statistical Account of Prestonpans Parish, was moved to remark that 'the brewery of Mr Fowler has long been signalized by the high character of its ales. There is perhaps no similar manufactory in Scotland that has for so long a period sustained its well-earned celebrity. Nor is it probable that in Mr Hislop's management it will be less famous in the future than it has been in the past'.

And it is clear than Hislop was successful in his management. The brewery now had no local competition and was able to reabsorb the property belonging to the Distillery Company. After an obscure period in the middle 1840s, that firm re-emerges as Hislop & Company. By 1851 the Distillery's property was counted as an integral part of the Brewery, the suite of maltings on the north side of the High Street remaining an integral part of the facility until the end, and the Harlaw Hill site provided room to develop new facilities as some of the older ones were condemned.

At the time when Robert Hislop's tenure of the Brewery drew to an end, it is possible to venture to estimate the scale of his facility. In the period October 1862 – December 1863, the 22 brewers then licensed in the county of Haddingtonshire

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produced 44,070 barrels (1.59 million gallons) of ales and paid an average duty of £648 (*Haddingtonshire Courier*, 24 April 1863). On average, then, each brewer still produced only around 1000 barrels. Even as a generation before, there was great variability in the size of the county's breweries. Statistics tabulated by Ian Donnachie (Appendix II, Donnachie, 1979) give an indication of the variability. Burnett's Dunbar Brewery was valued at £800; Brown's of Haddington at £3300. Unfortunately, Donnachie gives no analogous figure for Fowler's. In view of the valuation when the Hislops sold in 1865 for around £20,000, it was likely to be nearer Brown's than Burnett's in size.

Shortly after brewing statistics above were published, the Dunbar Brewery was advertised for roup (auction) (*Haddingtonshire Courier*, 17 March 1865). Its stock of barrels was 5 butts, 15 hogsheads, 600 half hogsheads, 150 quarter hogsheads, one copper and a mash tun. The plant had 4 fermenting tuns but there is no evidence of conditioning vessels. That process we must assume likely took place in cask. The site this brewery and its maltings occupied was about half the extent of Fowler's Old Brewery in Prestonpans. The Dunbar Brewery was one of the smaller in East Lothian and the *Courier* notice was in fact a signal of its permanent closure. Only the very largest – Brown's of Haddington and Fowler's of Prestonpans – or those with virtually no local competition – such as Dudgeon's of Belhaven – were able to survive a round of closures in the first half of the century. Those that did survive were well placed to cater to an increasing population in the county, and in Prestonpans.

### **The last Proprietor with Temperance Scruples**

John Fowler Hislop inherited responsibility for Fowler's Brewery from his father in 1865, on the latter's retirement from active business. The new proprietor had started in the brewery trade at a young age, being already recorded as 'brewer' in the Census of 1841. But in later life he became a staunch follower of the temperance movement and found that his beliefs were not compatible with this part of the family's interests. These may also have been the reason behind the family's closure of the Prestonpans Distillery around 1850. Certainly, local opinion thought so. McNeill relates: 'It was a highly prosperous concern all the time it lasted, and did not go down through want of funds to keep the concern moving,

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but rather, it is understood, was allowed to die out through conscientious scruples on the part of new successors'. The distillery buildings were thrown down and the site afterwards secured for a flour mill. This was a short-lived venture. A shortage of water-power blighted the works and it was never a paying concern. It was eventually destroyed by fire.

Temperance scruples were probably the prime motivation for the family's sale of the brewery just as John Fowler Hislop came into his inheritance. Whatever the reason, the result was that the brewery was sold to a new limited company trading as John Fowler and Company Limited.

### 4. COMMERCE AND CAPITAL FROM 1865–1969

The Brewery's sale by the family proprietors to a new company under the freshly introduced legislation ushered in a new chapter in Prestonpans' brewing history. From 1865 the sequence of formal changes necessarily recorded under the Act afford a window upon the concerns of its leaders. As a Limited Liability Company, annual returns were performed registered along with Special Resolutions presented for the approval of the shareholders. The increasing professionalism of the Board can be seen in its concerns to develop the company by regenerating the brewery fabric and plant. There was a distinct emphasis on producing high quality bottled ales brewed from malt made by the company from mostly local grain. As time passed the increasing distribution reach of the company was demonstrated by it branching out to support retailers through loans and by its purchase of an estate of tied houses. The Board was helped in its aims by stability. It was seldom more than four members strong and only ten individual directors served between 1902 and 1957. The focus of the company was helped by its choice of leaders. Three successive Managing Directors, namely RH White, JD Ross, and JB Laing were promoted from the position of Head Brewer.

#### **The New Beginning**

John Fowler and Company was incorporated under the Companies Act of 1862 as a limited company on 14 October 1865. From that time to the voluntary liquidation of the

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company in 1969 annual returns and other documents were registered and these have been preserved in the *National Archives of Scotland*. They are kept in West Register House in Edinburgh. Other papers have survived to be deposited in the *Scottish Brewing Archive* in Glasgow.

The documents reveal that the incoming directors who had purchased the brewery in 1865 as a going concern from the Hislop family were mostly Edinburgh based. They were Alexander Wood (25 shares), John MacKay (10), Walter Reid (20), Thomas Sprot WS (10), Alexander Murray WS (12), Andrew Paterson (5), and John Forman (10). Only Reid had an East Lothian address. Paterson acted as Company Secretary, recording 'the Brewery, High Street, Prestonpans' as the official company address. The company's *Memorandum of Association* states that its main purpose was to carry out brewing and other processes at the Brewery in Prestonpans and to progress the business of the company by purchase and construction as necessary.

The company was established with a nominal capital of £30,000, comprising 300 shares of £100 each. By the time of the first Annual General Meeting on 21 March 1866 a call of £60 on each share had been issued and all 300 had been subscribed: the company thus raised £18,000. The founders held 92 shares and most of the other shareholders (again with mainly Edinburgh addresses) had holdings of between 3 and 25, costing £180 – £1500. John Fowler Hislop held 25 shares and was still being noted as 'brewer'. His son, Robert Hislop, farmer, held 10.

At the first AGM the company's directors were listed as Alexander Wood (Chairman), Walter Reid, John MacKay, Thomas Sprot, John Nairn Forman, Andrew Wood and George Wood. The company's head brewer, William B Neilson, also held 5 shares. Shortly after that first AGM the company registered a Special Resolution with the intent of raising the firm's nominal capital from £30,000 to £100,000 by creating 700 new shares and offering them to the existing shareholders or to the public. Only 20 were seemingly issued. Over the next few years no more shares were issued and such transactions that took place simply traded on the 320 that had been issued. The sale and purchase of shares was recorded annually and a subsequent register of shareholders reveals that Robert Hislop sold his holding on 25 April 1867, followed by his father on 10 September 1867. Thus, the Fowler/ Hislop family interest in the company they had founded came to an end. The same

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register shows that the company's brewer was at that time Joseph Robertson, holding 1 share.

The company was by that time a major landholder in Prestonpans, the terms of the sale having included all the Brewery's five discrete sites along Prestonpans High Street, as well as land at Burnrigg and Nethershot. Shortly after it was formed, in December 1866, a set of plans was drawn up by R Thornton Shiells, an architectural practice in Edinburgh which are now in West Register House, *RHP* 23482/3. They were based on surveys made by James Hay in 1851 for Robert Hislop.

The main brewery complex was at the north side and east end of Prestonpans High Street, on a narrowing wedge of land. It was constructed around a series of three courtyards, perhaps a product of the sequential incorporation of adjacent properties by Laird Fowler and Hislop. The easternmost, or 'cattle yard' was dominated on the seaward side by a range of 'vaults' or conditioning cellars and on the landward by a large stable. One of the brewery's wells was located in this yard. Next came a heterogeneous mixture of buildings housing bottling and storage facilities with, on the seaward side Laird Fowler's old counting house, once the company office. Dominated by a tall chimney to the west of this complex was the engine house: it housed the brewery's power plant. The engine house was integrally linked to the main brewery which surrounded it, extended west along the High Street and terminated in a block running down to the sea. Within the courtyard thus formed were maintained a cistern and reservoir, fed from the well to the east and another (the original source) on the other side of the road at the 'Old Brewery'. This facility was set back from the High Street, on the south side. It was flanked to east and west by two wings. Further to the east was a dwelling (also once another office site) and behind it a series of workshops. The original brewery well lay behind the south-east corner of the Old Brewery building with a redundant cistern behind it. This part was, in John Fowler's time, actually outwith the family's property.

To the east of the Old Brewery, also on the south side of the High Street, the company owned a number of dwelling houses and gardens which were rented to workers. They were mainly coopers and draymen from the evidence of the decennial censuses.

At Harlaw Hill to the west of the Old Brewery, the Company possessed the site of the town's old Vitriol Works.

## FOWLER'S BREWERY

This concern had continued to produce sulphuric acid and other chemicals into the early nineteenth century. The Works ceased to produce chemicals around 1820–1825, by which time Laird Fowler was certainly in control of part of the site. In Fowler's time this site was the home of Prestonpans Distillery. After that ceased trading in the middle 1840s it will be recalled that there was a short-lived attempt to mill flour. On the plan the largest building on this site is named 'Old Mill'. The remaining facilities in 1851 comprised dwelling houses, stables, the brewery's carpentry shop (at the extreme east end) and, adjacent to the Old Mill, Maltings No1. A well on this site provided water for the maltings and up the hill the Brewery owned a substantial dwelling house and garden which was often occupied by the Head Brewer and once the Hislops' own home. On the opposite, north side of the road lay the Brewery's main malting complex. At least three individual malthouses are noted on the plan, together with a bottling house and more company dwellings.

This, then, was the extent of the Brewery's working plant. Except for minor changes in the boundaries the actual Brewery property was unchanged when the Company was wound up in the mid-twentieth century. Over the course of time much of the old accommodation was altered to keep pace with new methods and standards. Similarly, many of the dwelling houses were condemned and subsequently replaced with Council housing.

The property of the company could of course be utilised as a tangible asset. On 16 May 1870, the Scottish Fire Insurance Company disburdened itself of a bond which had been taken out on 2 August 1866 by the new directors. By mortgaging the Brewery they had raised £5000 (62, *Index to the Register of Seisins*, Haddingtonshire, 1869–70) for investment. Their next act was to raise £8000 on the same day from the same property, this time from the Heritable Securities Investment Association Limited (63, as above), which probably paid off the £5000 and left £3000 to invest further.

### A Change of Leadership

Apart from minor changes in the structure of the share capital and occasional changes amongst the shareholders, the next significant event for the company was the death in service of Alexander Wood, the Company's Chairman, in May 1884. In the official returns of this period there is no record of the

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composition of the Board of Directors, but William Cumming, with 40 shares was the largest shareholder. An Edinburgh based engraver, Robert White had, since 1870, been assiduously increasing his holding by small increments and was certainly by now prominent in the company's affairs. The compiler of the Prestonpans entry in *'Noted Breweries of Great Britain and Ireland'* considered that White had been the direct successor of Hislop, but this is clearly wrong as shown above although the White family were quick to build their shareholding. Robert White was the father of Robert Hunt White, who first appears as a shareholder in his own right in 1887. In 1890 the latter is recorded in the Register as brewer and by 1892 his address was being given as 'Preston House, Prestonpans'.

These share transactions mark the rise to dominance of the White family in the affairs of the company. When White senior died in 1887, his estate was administered for several years by James Pringle, an Edinburgh brewer, and Robert Hunt White himself, who may have replaced his father on the Board. A balance sheet for the year to 25 December 1890 survives in the *Scottish Brewing Archive* (JF 4/1/1). The company had gross sales worth £54,240 and a gross profit of £13,717 was recorded. £3840 was distributed to shareholders, a 15% dividend.

A sign of the changing strategy of the directors over this period was a Special Resolution registered on 8 July 1899. Its essence was an extension of the company's allowed business practice by new clauses inserted into the Memorandum of Association. One alteration was to allow the company to purchase property and advance money by loan. It may be significant that a number of small shareholdings appear at the same period. These were owned by a number of innkeepers and spirit merchants in Prestonpans, Edinburgh and further afield. The Resolution further indicated that the company intended 'to carry on its business more economically or more efficiently to attain its major purposes by new or improved means, to enlarge its area of operation, and to carry on other business'. Its principal objects were then considered to be malting and brewing with authority to acquire, enlarge and extend the brewery and other premises in Prestonpans occupied by the company. Barnard assessed the effects of these changes as a doubling of the brewery's output but unfortunately there is no detailed financial information to confirm this (see Appendix 1).

In 1902, a list of directors was appended to the company's returns for the first time since the Company's incorporation.

## FOWLER'S BREWERY

They were Alfred Bryson (10 shares, solicitor, Edinburgh), James F Mackay (10, WS, Edinburgh), George Henry Carphin (10, chartered accountant, Edinburgh, who was also a director of Edinburgh's United Breweries Limited amongst others) and Robert Hunt White (10, brewer, Preston House, Prestonpans). However, White and Pringle continued to administer the 71 shares registered to White's deceased father. Robert White thus had control of twenty five percent of the company's issued shares, a situation that lasted to 1904 when the register shows that the estate had been settled. Three equal portions of the 71 went to other members of the White family and Robert inherited 20 in his own name.

At this period no indication was given of the directors' roles. Peter McNeill, writing in 1902, gave the following assessment of the company around that year: 'at the present time there are forty men and boys connected with the brewery. There are ten travellers employed daily pushing the trade throughout the country, and a staff of six clerks continually in the office. There are also two agencies connected with the business, one established at Glasgow, the other at Leith. In order to show what gives employment to all these hands, it may be added there are no less than 6,000 quarters of malt used annually, turning out from 24,000 to 25,000 barrels of thirty-six gallons each, representing a money value of from £60,000 to £65,000'.

From 1909 considerable financial detail was added to the annual returns although the form notes that the company was not required to supply such detail. In that year, the Company had book assets of £39,455. These comprised the brewery itself, valued at £9200, and a 'new maltings' valued at £1200. Land holdings at Burnrigg and Nethershot came to £3,840, around £1,500 was set aside for a new water supply, stock and moveable property was valued at around £9,500 and the company had debtors of over £16,000 – as a consequence of regular trading. Its liabilities included a special reserve fund of £5,000, a small bank loan of £734 and accounts due to creditors of around £2,000. The year's balance at the credit of the profit and loss account was the sum of £3467. 8s. 6d.

The company returned remarkably steady figures until 1919 during which period the Board was unchanged. In the year after the Great War ended, the Company's book assets jumped by around £20,000, accounted for by increases in the value of stock, moveable property, utensils and debts due. This was all reflecting post-war inflationary pressures. The company continued to trade profitably in what was an uncertain

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market, and the returns begin to show that George Carphin was Company Chairman and Robert H White Managing Director. White was at this period resident at Magdala Crescent, Edinburgh, although he had occupied Castlepark in Prestonpans before the Great War. In the return of 1924 the company's prosperity is noted by the appearance of two brewers, JD Ross of Prestonpans and James Davidson residing in the company's Harlaw Hill property, both of whom had a single share.

### Succession and Investment

In 1924 the Company's reserve fund having been built up to £6400, a Special Resolution was registered to capitalise that fund and consequently the shareholders received £20 for each share they held on 29 March 1926 i.e. as JD Ross's shareholding was then 5 shares he received £100. Ross also benefited from the first change in the Board since at least 1902 when he replaced Alfred Bryson when he retired at the end of 1927. Under new Articles of Association adopted in 1930, the company began to distribute an annual dividend that was set initially at 15% (or the sum of £3,840 after tax. An additional director, James Philip Logie Robertson, an Edinburgh chartered accountant, joined the Board in preparation for the retirement of George Carphin and Robert White in March 1931. He died during August the same year. JD Ross succeeded as Managing Director and by 1933 was also Chairman of the Board. In June 1933 John Knox Morrison replaced James Mackay, who had died in March of that year after serving as a director for 39 years. Ross took an active part in the future direction of the brewery operation. He visited suppliers such as William Rankin and Sons of Glasgow to review their crown corking machines for which Fowler's was testing a new design. He established agencies for the Company's bottled ales. Devon was supplied with 12 guinea Crown Ale (wee Heavy) at 5/3d per boxed dozen splits and he also set up a Scottish network of travellers. WJ McAinsh was appointed on 29/6/1931 on a salary of £300 with commission of 5% on bulk sales, 1d per dozen splits and 1/2d per dozen pints of Pale Ale and Prestonpans Beer. ( JF 8/1/1/1, SBA).

From 1935, the reports provide an insight into developments within Prestonpans at the brewery. First, the directors issued a warning that some of the company's buildings had been scheduled for demolition and that consequently provision for extensive renewal was foreseen. Such eventualities did not



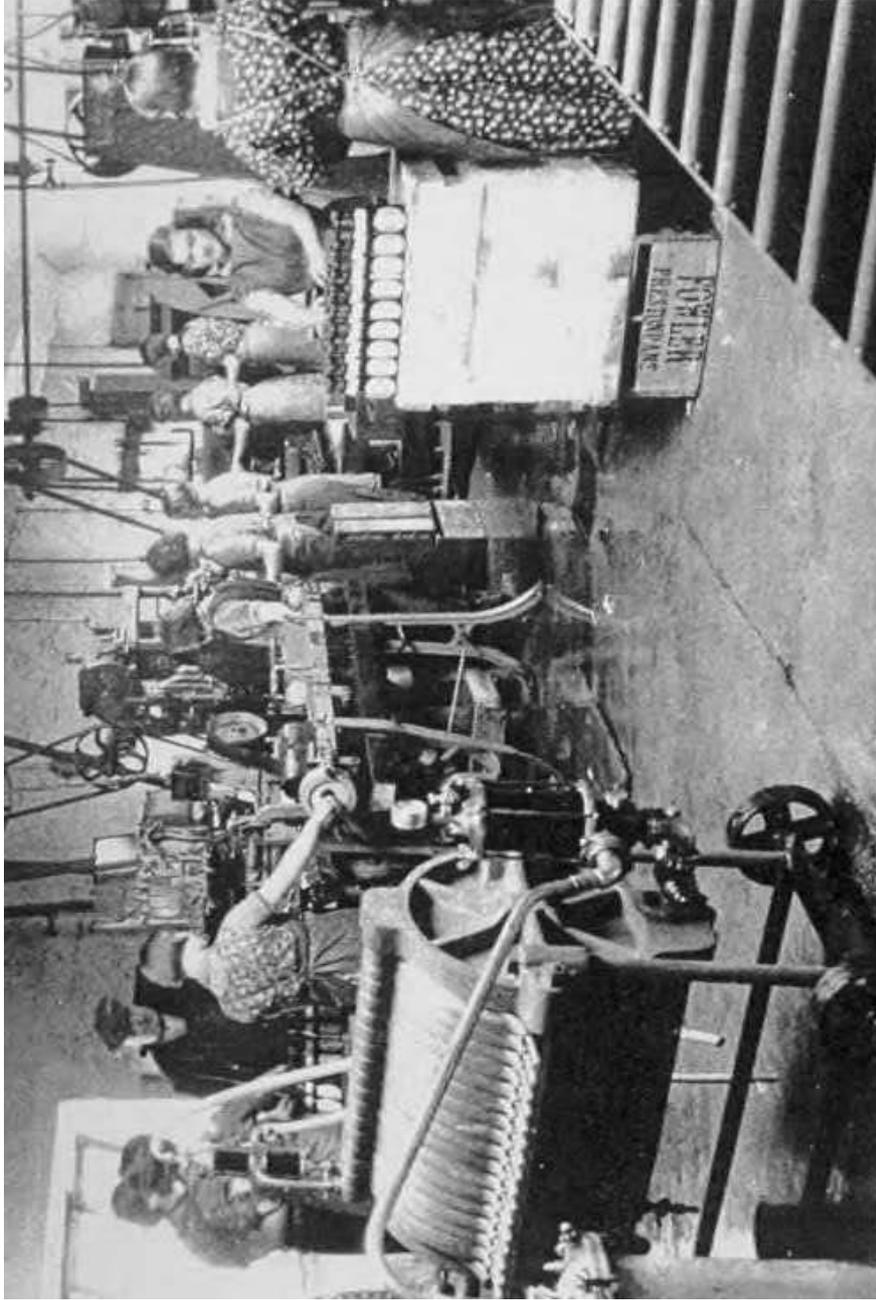
*Prestonpans Beer with trademark Preston Cross*



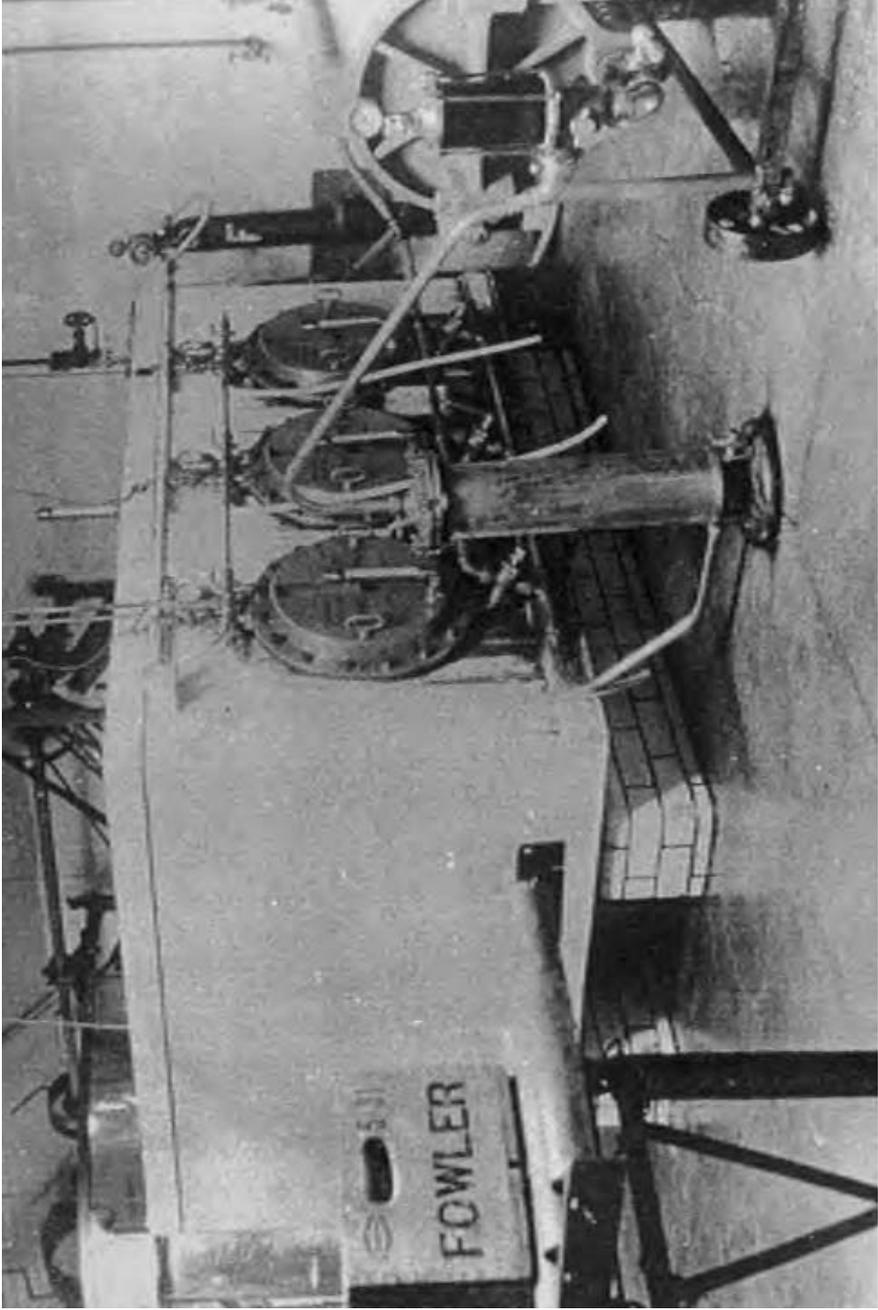
*The Fowler's Brewhouse on the north side of the main street in Prestonpans. The louvred windows allowed the air to cool the malt liquor before fermentation*



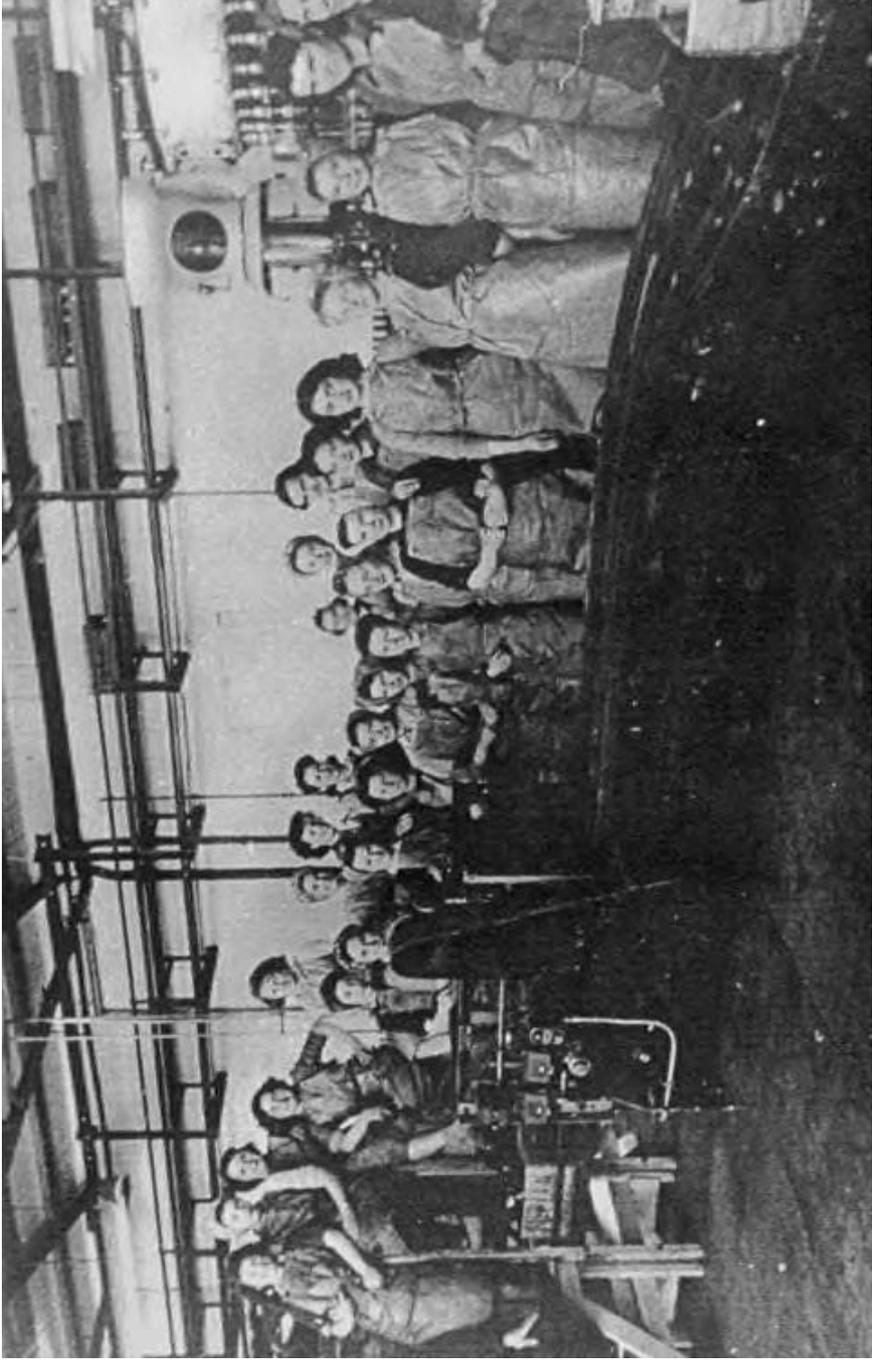
*The main Fowler's Brewery from the south west with three storey maltings and the kiln beyond*



*Bottling, labelling and capping bottles at Fowler's Brewery*



*Feeder tank and filter – a result of major investment in the 1920s*



*Bottling hall workers standing behind a crate conveyor*



*Staff portrait at the Brewery in 1929*



*Fowler's Twelve Guinea Prestonpans Ale*

## FOWLER'S BREWERY

prevent the annual dividend rising to 17.5% announced February 1936 and then to 20% in February 1937. The 1938 report indicated that the renewal of plant was well underway and that there was a probability of further compulsory demolition and reconstruction. The directors intimated that they were following a strategy of conserving liquid resources to cover these eventualities. Consequently, the dividend was maintained at 20% although the scale of profit on trading would have borne an increase. An idea of the scale of reconstruction was indicated. £5536 had been spent on the brewery buildings and the book asset value was increased proportionately.

During 1938 the directors invested heavily in plant and technology. A new process for naturally maturing and conditioning beer was adopted. The directors considered that this innovation would bring the preparation of beer for bottling 'as near perfection as it is ever likely to be' – no mean boast. This new plant was at that time the first of its type to be installed in Scotland. It was in operation by November 1938 and the directors were glad to report in February 1939 'a marked improvement in the appearance and quality of the company's bottled ales'. A complementary renewal of the bottling plant was reported to be well in hand and it was anticipated that that department 'will be the most efficient and thoroughly up to date' when completed.

The next year a new problem was reported. Another of the old maltings had been condemned as unsafe and the directors had found it necessary to provide for the extension of one of the more modern maltings to maintain capacity. Despite the outbreak of war, the arrangements to carry out the work had been underway before that event and consequently permits for building materials had been secured. It may be assumed that if the building's problems had been noticed a few months later, the permits would have been much harder to come by. The war further affected the operational side of the company because, despite increasing output, increased taxation ate into profit. The increased output was secured in difficult circumstances as materials were harder to come by. Provision also had to be made for an accumulated backlog of repairs, anticipating likely heavy expenditure when restrictions were relaxed. During the war, the death of John Morrison saw the Company Secretary, Alaister Henry Crerar WS, join the Board. He was the first of the company's Secretaries ever to attain Board status.

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Despite the difficult war years and their aftermath, Fowler's programme of investment in the 1930s stood it in good stead. When emergency taxation was reduced, 1946–1947 brought in a phenomenal profit on trading of over one hundred thousand pounds. Contrast this with 1938–1939 when the equivalent sum was £13,455. However, account has to be taken for inflation over the same period. The company's assets increased in book value from around £80,000 to £252,000. Underlying the inflationary boost was very real growth and the Board increased the annual dividend to 60%. In February 1950 they were able to report that 'in view of the very satisfactory results which have been more than maintained over the past few years despite the general depression in the brewery trade and of the decreased value of the pound, the Directors feel themselves justified in proposing the larger dividend suggested' – a dividend of 100%. The shareholders divided a total of £17,600. One reason for the success of the company in this period may well have been the war itself. During that period there was a marked decline in distilling (*Scientific Survey of South-eastern Scotland*, BAAS, 1951), a situation that continued after the war. Fowler's concentration on bottled ales, and its excellent distribution network probably benefited from this decline by supplying an alternative product where other breweries were at a disadvantage.

### The Final Decade

The 1950s opened with the Board embarked upon a plan to adjust the company's share structure. A Special Resolution registered on 26 April 1951 proposed that the existing 1000 shares of £100 be each divided into two shares of £50. This meant there were 640 existing shares. The Resolution further proposed that the General Reserve Fund of £48,000 be capitalised as 960 shares of £50 to be distributed amongst the shareholders on the basis of three new for every two held. This meant that 1,600 of the nominal 2,000 shares were in circulation. The Board recommended a dividend of 45% equivalent to 112.5% of the previous capital of £32,000.

In March the following year a second Special Resolution proposed a further change in the company's share structure. The share capital was to be increased to £300,000 (6,000 shares at £50) and £160,000 was to be capitalised as 3,200 ordinary shares of £50 that were distributed pro rata two for every existing one. Now 4,800 shares would circulate. Fowler's

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sought and received special permission required from the Treasury for this distribution and in March 1953 reported that the required £160,000 was found from the General Reserve Fund (around £122,000), an excess profits tax post-war refund of around £30,000 and £9,000 from a Future Taxation Reserve. As issued capital was now £240,000, the dividend became 15%, exactly equivalent to the previous year's figure of 45%. In 1954 the three directors capitalised the General Reserve once more, distributing one new share for every five held and bringing the total in circulation to 5,760.

JP Logie Robertson retired from the Board on 21 March 1957 prompting the promotion of James Barclay Laing, head brewer at Prestonpans, and Alexander Darroch, JD Ross's long standing secretary or personal assistant, to the Board. Laing and Darroch became Joint Managing Directors, Ross deciding that he was overextended by holding both that position and the Chair. He was then around 66 years old and had been with the company at least 33 years. Laing was resident in the company's Harlaw Hill House. Darroch lived in Gosford Road, Longniddry close to Ross, who resided at 'Sorgenfri', Kings Road there. The appointments of Laing and Darroch were only the ninth and tenth to the Board in the 56 years since the returns of 1902. However, on 21 July 1960 Captain James Paton Younger CBE was most significantly appointed as an additional director of the company. A senior member of a long-standing Scottish brewing family, Younger was a director of the Northern Breweries of Great Britain Limited as well as holding four other brewery company directorships.

Younger's appointment was a consequence of great changes in the company. Within months, JD Ross had also gone. He resigned on 1 October 1960. Before then, at the 95th Annual General Meeting on 9 March 1960, he was able to report that the company's net book assets had exceeded £1 million for the first time. The profit on trading came in that year at £123,640 and £29,400 was distributed to shareholders in the annual dividend. The company sold bulk ale worth around £150,000 and bottled ale worth £261,000, an indication of the company's traditional strengths (JF 4/1/2, SBA). At that time the bottled range included Strong Ale (wee Heavy) splits; Sweet Stout, Export Ale, India Pale Ale, Pale Ale, and Prestonpans Beer in small bottles and the last two were also offered in large bottles. The company paid out somewhere between £40–50,000 in salaries, wages and commissions.

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It was this very strong position which made the company a target for takeover. The brewing industry at that time was going through further technological and marketing transformations making larger scale operations a commercial necessity. None of the shareholders truly identified with Prestonpan's per se. So in May 1960 all the issued share capital of the company was acquired by Northern Breweries Limited with promises to keep the brewery going. The only public notification had been a single paragraph article in the *Haddington Courier* 15 April 1960:

'Messrs Fowler ... announced last week that Northern Breweries had made (an offer) to acquire the whole of the share capital. The Board regard the offer as fair and recommend acceptance'.

The actual share transfer was recorded on 19 August 1960, on which day the independent existence of John Fowler and Company Limited came formally to an end.

This was the reason why Captain Younger appeared on the Board. The new owners were placing their own men. It was the reason for Ross' retirement. Younger was immediately appointed Chairman. Ross' departure was followed by those of Laing on 30 September 1961 and Crerar on 24 January 1962. A manager and director of United Caledonian Breweries to which Northern belonged, William RC Elliot, joined the Board on 27 February 1962. Alexander Darroch, the last of the original directors, soon followed his colleagues to be replaced by The Honourable GHK Younger who joined the Board on 23 October 1962.

### Closure and Liquidation

The reasons why the Board agreed to the takeover offer from Northern Breweries are not recorded in the official returns. They would clearly have been given a good price and have received the promises they wanted to hear about the brewery staying open. But the eventual outcome was not that.

From a commercial perspective their timing was probably right. With hindsight we can see that to have survived the following two decades as a small brewery on the national scene would have been very difficult. Some of course did and still flourish forty five years later. But most sold out in the brewery merger mania of that time.

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It may be that, having most successfully weathered the difficult post-war years in a strong position, it was believed that the company's assets – strong, popular brands and a chain of tied houses – would benefit from being part of a larger concern. However, given the prevailing climate it is hard to believe that closure had not been considered a very likely consequence of the directors' recommendation to sell. And so it was. To Northern Breweries/ United Caledonian, John Fowler was small beer. The Chief Accountant of Fowler's was able to report, two years after the share offer was accepted in October 1962, that 'production at the brewery in Prestonpans ceased in May this year and the machinery and plant has been and is at present being transferred' (JF 1/4/1, SBA).

The 98th AGM on 18 April 1963 showed the result of these momentous changes. The dividend, after providing for depreciation and taxation, came in at £8,690 despite this being accrued over 15 months as the reporting year was brought into line with other group companies. The company's assets were marked down by around £100,000. Licensed premises were sold and the company's assets were transferred as at 1 January 1963 to United Caledonian Brewers. The company's estate was valued at £493,395 (JF 1/4/1, SBA). It comprised a suite of around forty public houses scattered across the central belt of Scotland and a two small '7 day' hotels. Only a few were near the brewery. These included the *Fa'side Inn*, Wallyford; *Robin's Neuk*, Macmerry; the *Johnnie Cope*, *Queens Arms* and *Railway Tavern* in Prestonpans; and the *Dolphin* in Whitecraig. To keep these and the thousands of individual accounts supplied the company had at the end maintained a fleet of 25 varied lorries.

The in-house publication '*United News*' of Autumn 1961 stated the new owner's policy:

'to be successful the Group aims to develop its local business and its national brands side by side. Neither is complete without the other'. But 'there have already been changes in our regional product ranges, and doubtless there will be more in the future'. Any changes would be made 'with full consideration of all the relevant factors' in the 'general interests of the group as a whole'. Although 'regional drafts and bottled beers will remain the backbone for a long time and their rationalisation and improvement is a continuous activity' (UCB 12/4/1, SBA).

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The figures for the financial year to the end of 1962 shows the profit on trading had declined to £46,000, a third of the level to which JD Ross had brought them and representing the last few months of trading. The 99th AGM baldly makes this clear. 'There was no trading by the company during the year'. The Company existed as a shell for a few more years its only purpose being to secure loans raised on its property. The fixed plant, including the bottling plant installed with such pride before the war, was stripped out of the brewery buildings to be utilised elsewhere. Most went to Alloa. The valuation recorded on 30/9/1961 showed the assets of the Brewery valued at £890,540 – counting everything down to the office typewriters and the gardener's tools. The inventory is preserved at the Scottish Brewing Archive (UCB 10/2/3) – a fully detailed snapshot. The estate of tied houses, brands, trademarks, goodwill and other intangible assets were rationalised or applied in a small way elsewhere.

The last acts of the Board were to enter voluntary winding up. A Declaration of Solvency was registered on 5 March 1969 and Robert Campbell Ward, CA, of Glasgow, was appointed Liquidator a week later. Finally, at a General Meeting of John Fowler and Company Limited at 110 Bath Street, Glasgow on 14 October 1969 an Extraordinary Resolution was passed: 'that the books and papers of the Company be handed over by the Liquidator to Tennant Caledonian Brewers Limited and that they be retained by them for a period of two years and thereafter be destroyed'. Fowler's was no more.

## 5. FAMOUS SINCE THE '45

The closure of the brewery came at a period when the town's pits were also marked down to be shut, the last saltworks had ceased to produce and survived on packing, and the pottery and soapworks had also gone. This latest blow was a great shock to the community. Since the days of Robert Fowler and his son 'the Laird' the brewery had been a fixture in the town. Many Prestonpans families could boast of several generations of brewery workers and were able to draw on a pride and a tradition built over nearly two centuries. The brewery had accreted a wealth of stories and tales, some of which had surely grown in the telling. The best are well worth repeating here.

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Some of the following has been drawn from Peter McNeill's history, *Prestonpans and Vicinity*, a wonderful evocation of old Prestonpans and its characters, first published during 1902. The detail and feeling that McNeill realises is of times long gone. Consequently, it has been felt justified to let his words speak for themselves where appropriate and the material has been simply lightly edited with explanatory pieces inserted. Many of the additions were sourced at East Lothian Council Library Service's Local History Centre, particularly material that originally appeared in other publications and newspapers. McNeill quotes extensively from a descriptive volume 'Barnard's Noted Breweries of Great Britain and Ireland'. The description of the late Victorian brewery plant and its means of operation afforded by this work has been appended in its entirety as Appendix 1.

### Robert Fowler

Very little is known of Robert Fowler. There were Fowlers in Prestonpans at the start of the eighteenth century. Robert was the son of a wright, John Fowler, and Margaret Miller. From his marriage to Martha Neil there were several children, at least four girls and one boy, John. In the Parish records, where any appellation is given to Robert, it is 'brewer', after a single mention as 'farmer'. It is not clear if he owned any farmland. As he does not appear in the 1770 *Directory of Land Ownership*, which measured plots down to 4 acres, such land as he had was probably leased see LR Timpeley (ed.), *Directory of Landownership c1770*, 1976. Both John and Robert were well respected in Prestonpans, appearing in the Parish records many times as witnesses to others' families christenings and marriages – including the potter, Antony Hilcote.

### Laird Fowler

John Fowler was born on July 9th 1756 and died at the advanced age of eighty-three in 1839. In early documents he is recorded as a market gardener. There were many such in Prestonpans, and many small but economic gardens lying between Salt-Preston and Preston village around the cross. Most of them were operated on a lease-hold basis but John Fowler was able later to become a landowner in his own right.

Fifty years after Laird John Fowler had died there were still stories told about him. One is given in Bernard's account: 'Laird Fowler brewed entirely by rule of thumb. It was,

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therefore, his custom to test the gravity of the mash by tasting it. On one occasion he was going his rounds and, as usual, dipped his finger in the mash-tub. Calling out to his man, he said, "Jamie, put in anither bag o' maut". To which Jamie curtly replied, "There's owre muckle in't a'ready". The Laird frowned, and silenced him with the remark, "The maut's nane o' yours, Jamie, but mine". Bernard concluded from this tale that the Laird believed in giving good value, and this was probably the cause of his wonderful success.

Peter McNeill provides two more tales. 'Laird Fowler was a hearty old man. He seemed not only to know, and be known, by everybody but hailed every one in passing in his own familiar way. One day, it is told of him, when Lords Wemyss and Blantyre were passing the brewery he hailed their lordships very familiarly, got them to dismount, enter, and have a horn of his new brewed beer'.

'Old Laird Fowler was no prophet, but he always knew when the gauger was coming and as sure as he arrived a good dinner awaited him. While the dinner was being discussed all hands were called at once to the store rooms. These were speedily cleared out, the full barrels being all run up into the old back garden and hid beneath the wide-spreading currant bushes. So as a rule when the gauger entered the store-rooms he found nothing but empty barrels, but no sooner was his back turned than the empties were turned out and the full barrels returned to the store rooms'.

Barnard's tale was repeated in slightly different terms by John Martine of Haddington in his *'Reminiscences of the Parishes of Haddington'* writing in the 1880s. Martine had also been a brewer so the tale had probably entered the mythology of the local profession. He adds with an interesting observation on innovation: 'Laird Fowler was a well-known man in town and country in his day. The best kinds of ale he made were very strong, quite different from the weak, mild ales of the present day. There was no bitter ale in his time except his extra hopped table beer'. Martine also observes that 'Mr Fowler acquired a deal of land and property in Tranent and Prestonpans Parishes, and was Laird of Hallydown, a fine estate near Eyemouth'.

### Robert Hislop

Hislop's public activities had no less effect on Prestonpans than his commercial concerns. He, together with James Mellis

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(soapmaker), Henry Wakelin (Inland Revenue), Charles Kerr (merchant), James Petticrew (merchant), and James Bellfield (potter), and twenty-three other householders in Prestonpans made an application to the Sheriff of Haddington in February 1862 (*Haddingtonshire Courier*, 07 February 1862). Their purpose was to secure agreement that, in terms of a Parliamentary Act for Regulating Police (and other matters), that Prestonpans was a 'Populous Place' as defined by the Act. The result was the formation of the Burgh of Prestonpans.

However, even after the formation of the Burgh, the clout of the Brewery and its ex-proprietors in public affairs was of some interest locally. The formation of the Police Board and Burgh meant that local rates were implemented by the elected Commissioners. This soon led to local dissent, an early rate-payers protest. At the election of 1868 (*Haddingtonshire Courier*, 06 May 1868, 24 July 1868, 7 August 1868) the cry was 'No Commissioners' and 'No Taxes'. The popular perception was that the old Board had been dominated by a clique of 'Brewery Party' candidates. At the stormy meeting arranged to elect a new board, James Bellfield commented "I would be willing to serve the community; but I am not disposed to be a servant of the Brewery Company". Mr Ferguson Joseph, manager of the company; John Edgar, a company clerk, and James Sheils, brewer, were also nominees; others were seen to be in the company's interest. The discontented party won the day eventually and a new leet of Commissioners was elected to serve the Burgh and proposed by 'limiting the expenditure ... they would secure the health and comfort of the lieges and ... save their pockets'.

A few months later the *Haddington Courier* reported on the outcome of the day when a group of local men appeared before the Bar charged as part of a 'riotous assembly' outside the Queens Arms (Grant's) Inn, which 'wickedly and feloniously' disrupted election proceedings. The jury decided that the men had suffered enough in paying for their defence and by appearing in court and, taking into account the excitement in Prestonpans, found them all not guilty.

Behind the affair would seem to be a general public discontent about the new Burgh administration. As the brewery had recently changed hands a certain high-handedness was attributed to the employees of the brewery who, being resident in Prestonpans, had ventured to place their skills at the disposal of the community.

Robert Hislop died in January 1872 during his 83rd year.

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The notice of his death in the Haddingtonshire Courier noted his passing 'would be lamented by those who once owned him as master' and the community lost 'one who was wont to be looked up to with respectful regard' (*Haddingtonshire Courier*, January 19 1872).

### John Fowler Hislop

John Fowler Hislop was a man of many interests. A firm believer in the merits of temperance, his principles probably led to the sale of the brewery. Like his father and great-uncle, he took an active part in Prestonpans' community life, serving several terms on the Parochial Board (*Haddingtonshire Courier*, 17 June 1865; 22 June 1866), for many years as Chairman. The Board administered the district's poor-roll and schools amongst other statutory duties. Fowler and his daughter, Miss Annie Fowler, later served on the School Board representing the Free Church interest. In 1873 this led to an unprecedented competitive election against a leet of Established Church candidates when John Fowler lost his seat.

Fowler and his family philanthropically organised lectures, musical evenings and concerts for the community. Some of the themes presented were wide-ranging for example when the Rev. Gillespie of Edinburgh gave an account of China in January 1861. After the sale of the Brewery he moved to Castlepark and devoted much of his time to antiquarian pursuits, becoming expert on aspects of the history of Prestonpans and district. His newspaper clippings books are still a source of information and contain many items of scarce ephemera produced in Prestonpans and recording the activities of the nineteenth century (*Local History Centre*, Haddington).

### Reminiscences

- One of the last notices of the Company as a functioning concern was a Farewell Dance, organised by the firm's Caledonian Social Club, a short lived innovation of the new owners. It was held in the Johnnie Cope and the last of the old directors, Mr Alexander Darroch, took the opportunity to say a few words. He implied that things had certainly not gone according to plan but can he really have been so naive. He observed, "it was rather disturbing that after so many years together they now had to take leave of one another. Despite strenuous efforts to keep the

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brewery functioning on a 100 per cent basis they had failed". Rather disturbing? It was a body blow to the town. A large percentage of the employees knew already that they were losing their jobs or being transferred with only around 30 staying on at Prestonpans. Yet despite the nature of the occasion, the night seems to have been a successful one with presentations, prizes and dancing competitions (*Haddingtonshire Courier*, 9 March 1962).

- During the twenties, AM Smith began work in the brewery in the cooperage. His account of his first working days appears in *Prestonpans Remembered*, East Lothian District Council, 1986. This was his second job. He had spent 8 months at Bankton Colliery – and he was still only 14, starting work at 6.15 and continuing, with breaks until 5.00 pm. He remembered that JD Ross was a 'real go-ahead person, very strict, but very fair' who recognised that there was a good market in pushing bottled ales, particularly strong ale. Mr Smith reckoned it was through Ross's influence that the first girls (a dozen) were taken on in the bottling plant that had been installed. This pilot scheme was so successful that Ross convinced the Board to invest in the plant that has been noticed here earlier. A national campaign promoted the ale as '*Fit for a thoroughbred*' or '*Makes weak men stronger*', and of course '*Famous since the '45*'.

Back in the cooperage, Mr Smith was put through a rigorous apprenticeship, receiving training on the job and at night-school in Edinburgh. Success in the latter brought a bonus of £2. His training stood him in good stead as he spent 37 years in the cooperage, observing that 'not one modern machine was installed; every job was done by hand, brute strength and muscle'.

- Others also had memories of the brewery. Janet Naysmith in a memoir (*As I Remember*, <http://www.maths.strath.ac.uk/~caas66/homepage/preston.html>) recalled that the First World War was a time of change. 'Like most companies, the brewery relied heavily on women doing work which would never before have been attempted by them. These tasks were malting, handling kegs at the loading bay and scrubbing tuns with long handled brushes after the beer had been fermenting for several days. When the men returned the women left the heavier work. However as the brewery was a thriving complex many of the girls retained

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their employment. Modernisation of the bottling plant meant the streets would clatter with the sound of the girl's clogs as they went to and from work. Alas now all is quiet'.

- Then again, working in a pub like the Queens Arms, one of Fowler's, could give certain advantage. One of the bar-men there organised an annual Sunday jaunt. A bus was hired from Wiles, a local company. It was loaded with 'crates of Wee Heavies, no restrictions, and off they went'. Wiles ensured that a teetotal driver was on duty (Annette Gilroy, Wiles Buses in *Tales of the Pans*, 2000).
- Another ex-worker, Margaret Black, has also published an account of her time at John Fowler & Co Brewers in *Tales of the Pans*, 2000. This gives an insight into many of the brewery operations. Margaret worked in the office, from where she was able to gain an insight into many aspects of the operation and, over the course of time, the traditions of the firm, such as the annual trip to the Lammermuirs to gather heather to make up into brooms. She concludes with a fitting assessment: "Fowler's has been described as being 'a lovely wee Brewery'. As far as cleanliness and hygiene are concerned it was second to none. There was always a good rapport between the Brewing Room and the Excise Officer, and merchants and travellers who called. I think it is true to say that it was a happy environment.

At the time of the takeover we were informed on Mr Taylor's authority that 'there will be no changes'. But we only remained open for two years. Some employees were made redundant, others were given jobs in the new head office in Eglinton Crescent or in Murray's which was still open, but that is another story!"

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would have been impossible without the resources of several institutions. Both the National Archives of Scotland and The Scottish Brewing Archive have deposits of material relating to Fowler's Brewery. Reference is made in the text to material obtained at these places. The Local History Department of East Lothian Council's Library Service has comprehensive and detailed resources on East Lothian, including Prestonpans, comprising microfilmed editions of the local press, parish and census records, indexes of sasines and much more, again cited in the text where appropriate. The Local History Centre also collects unpublished work and publishes contemporary material. Panners' interest in history has resulted in a number of publications over the years, such as *'The 'Pans Remembered'* and the recent *'Tales of the 'Pans'*. Those, and other similar sources, often provide a detailed insight into old Prestonpans unavailable elsewhere. Individual works are referenced throughout the text.

While all proper care has been taken to ensure these references are comprehensive, any omissions are the error of the author, for which apologies are tendered.

## APPENDIX 1.

### Fowler's Brewery, a Victorian Description

The following extract came from Volume 4 of Alfred Barnard's '*Noted Breweries of Great Britain and Ireland (1889–91)*' and has been extracted from Peter McNeill's '*Prestonpans and Vicinity*'. It affords a comprehensive description of the Prestonpans Brewery operation in the late Victorian period at a time when Robert Hunt White was leading its development. Some notes have been appended to the end. See also the Introduction to Brewing, Appendix 3 here.

After a preamble describing the foundation and development of the brewery in the hands of the Fowlers and their successors the Hislops, Barnard compliments the White family, confirming the managing role of Robert Hunt White in passing, and then describes the brewery.

'The ales of Prestonpans have become a household word in Scotland, and their reputation dates back more than a century. J. Parker Lawson, in his work, speaks of Prestonpans ale as a celebrated beverage, and the brewery extensive. But we must now hasten to make our readers acquainted with this venerable brewery and its fine business.

On the east side of the ancient town of Prestonpans stands Laird Fowler's brewery, and, in close proximity, its numerous subsidiary maltings. The walls, and one or two outlying buildings of the original brewery, are still standing, and contain, among other things, a peculiarly shaped ten-barrel brewing copper, and a quaint-looking old pump, which formed a portion of the ancient plant. Equally interesting is the laird's dwelling-house, a roomy low-pitched building, which has been altered into a counting-house and offices, joined on to which is a new structure, containing a board room, managing partner's office, a sample room, and lavatories.<sup>1</sup>

The new brewery, built by Laird Fowler, is opposite the old one, covers upwards of an acre of ground, and is situated close to the margin of the sea on the north side. The premises consist of a number of massive stone

buildings, grouped around a courtyard, the most important of which comprise the brewhouse, fermenting rooms, and *above-ground* cellars. So close are these buildings to the sea, that in rough weather the waves dash up against their walls, in magnificent style, as they did during the time of our visit.

Some of the malthouses are even more ancient than the old brewery, having been erected in the seventeenth century. Beneath the ground floor of one of them, now used for storing ales, are subterranean caverns called the 'Catacombs', which are curiously constructed and of great extent.<sup>2</sup> Another of the maltings formed part of an extensive distillery, which, in the days of James II, was famous for its whisky.<sup>3</sup>

On entering the offices of Mr R. H. White, the managing director, we were entertained by that gentleman with a brief history of the brewery. Afterwards we were introduced to the head brewer, Mr Armstrong, who directed us through the brewery, and finally took us to the maltings. We commenced our observations at the malthouse, a two-storied building to the left of the entrance, and adjoining the brewhouse. It is used for receiving and storing malt from the various malthouses and contains, on the ground floor, the mill chamber. The room is paved with stone, and contains one of Milne's malt mills, enclosing a pair of pressed rollers capable of crushing thirty-five quarters of malt per hour. Before reaching the rolls the malt is most effectually screened in the following manner. The malt hopper is situated about 18 feet from the rolls, and the malt is conveyed thither by a propeller 11 feet long inside a cylinder.<sup>4</sup> This propeller is fashioned to act as conveyor and polisher and delivers into the malt screen. We do not remember having seen anything like it before. It was designed by Messrs Milne & Son to meet the special requirements here and has been found to work admirably. When the malt has been crushed between the rolls it is carried by an elevator to the top of the building, and thence, by an Archimedean screw to the gristcase depending over the tuns. The remainder of this floor is used for storing cumins in sacks and for a fitter's shop.

Pursuing our way upstairs to the top floor we passed an enormous flywheel connected with the shafting of the main engine which is for driving the mill machinery and working the pumps.

The whole extent of the large room above is used for storing malt and, fixed in the floor, is a hopper into which the sacks are tipped, when the malt disappears as fast as it is put in.<sup>5</sup>

Before following the crushed malt to its destination we have something to say about the water used which plays such an important part in a brewery. The brewing liquor is drawn from a well 80 feet deep situated in the old brewhouse<sup>6</sup> which has supplied the brewery for two centuries, and is of the finest quality. It is particularly free from objectionable matter which, along with the first-class material always used, accounts for the excellent keeping qualities of even the lightest ale made.

Through an opening in the wall we passed into the brewhouse, a square structure with an open roof and a paved floor. On the north side reached by a staircase in the centre, is a broad gallery, on which the coppers are erected and over them, at a slight elevation, a special copper tank for heating brewing water which holds 100 barrels. On the floor of the house, which measures 50 feet square, are three cast-iron mash-tuns having a total capacity of forty quarters – viz., eight, twelve, and twenty quarters. The difference in the capacity of these vessels indicates the successive and proportionate increase of the trade during the last half century. These tuns, all of which are fitted with covers, telescopic spargers<sup>7</sup>, and slotted iron draining plates, are commanded by an extra size portable Steel's mashing machine which possesses a 5 feet gun-metal cylinder and runs on wheels.

In the basement of the building is a very capacious under-back for receiving the contents of all the mash-tuns, and from whence the wort is pumped direct to the coppers.

Following our guide, we ascended to the copper-stage to take a peep at the insides of the three coppers which hold respectively thirty-five, seventy, and eighty barrels. They are all supplied with boiling fountains and are heated by fire. As we approached them the copper-man, as he is called, was emptying the hops from the bags into the boiling wort and their fragrance soon filled the air with appetising odour. The hop-store, afterwards visited, occupies the upper floor of the beer-bottling house and is capable of holding 300 pockets.

Leaving the coppers behind us, we descended to the mashing floor to inspect the hopback built into a recess

on that level. It is a square vessel, holding ninety barrels and beneath it, sunk into the floor, is a receiver 10 feet deep into which the strained wort runs. From there it is pumped to the coolers by a powerful three-throw pump. We next bent our steps to the top of the adjoining building where the cooling department is situated. On our way thither a capacious tank was pointed out to us, holding 200 barrels which receives the waste water from the refrigerator. It commands a large oval heating tank heated by exhaust steam and its contents are used for flushing down the tun-rooms, for cask-washing, and other purposes.

The cooling room is a spacious and lofty chamber some 50 feet in length with louvred walls. How the wind from over the sea whistled through those louvres and how glad we were to turn our backs on this chilly place! Nearly the whole of the floor is covered by an open cooler in the centre of which is a fan driven round by steam-power. At the east end of the room is fixed a large refrigerator of the Morton type cooling wort at the rate of forty barrels per hour. From this level a few steps lead down into the fermenting house, 110 feet in length, which contains a range of fermenting rooms extending its whole distance. They are well lighted, most effectively ventilated, and kept beautifully sweet and clean. The fermenting process conducted in this brewery is that known to brewers as the cleansing system.

In the No. 1 room, first entered we were shown three copper-lined fermenting vessels fitted with modern attenuators and each holding seventy barrels. The tops of these vessels, as well as those afterwards visited, are reached by a latticed staging through which we could see the busy workmen in the racking and other rooms below.

The second chamber contains five fermenting squares constructed of massive blocks of slate each vessel holding about sixty barrels and weighing many tons. Passing through a lofty doorway we came to the No. 3 fermenting room, the last of the series, which contains five more of these ponderous slate vessels lined with copper, two of which hold forty-five and three sixty barrels.

Bearing round to the left we reached the yeast room where the barm is stored either for pitching purposes or for sale to the distillers, beyond which is the finings

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factory where we saw heaps of the finest quality of isinglass being manipulated for fining the beers. Ascending some steps we reached two settling-back rooms situated over a portion of the cellars, one of which contains six settling squares lined with copper and having attemperators, and the other the same number of settling-backs but constructed of slate. There is also a capacious vat for finishing stout and porter.

Our next visit was to the cellars which are situated on the ground level and have a frontage to the sea of 260 feet. They are four in number all laid with cement. Together, these cellars will store upwards of 5,000 barrels. At the time of our visit they contained more than half that number spread out on the floor. In order, however, to make room for the increasing trade it has been found necessary to add considerably to the cellarage accommodation. The space where the old stabling stood has been utilised for this purpose and a handsome addition made to the cellars with a loading-stage, etc., for wagons, the floor being arranged at a convenient height for this purpose.

From the No. 4 cellar we made our way into the beer-bottling store, situated in a fine building over which is the hop store. Here the famous Prestonpans specially brewed ale, as well as the twelve-guinea Crown Ale, is bottled. The operations are conducted in the same manner as at other large breweries. Adjoining is an empty-bottle store and beyond the sampling cellar, where a sample cask of every brew is staged for reference, etc.'

### Notes

1. The Old Brewery on the south side of the High Street
2. The 'Catacombs' are further elaborated on by Peter McNeill in *Prestonpans and Vicinity*. Much of the oldest parts of the seaside settlements of Prestonpans, Cuthill and Morrison's Haven had extensive, ancient cellarage.
3. This is not the distillery floated by the Cadells, John Fowler and Robert Hislop in the 1820s–40s. That was at Harlaw Hill on the opposite side of the street and further west. Prior to that function the distillery building had formed part of the Vitriol Works (perhaps the main manufactory lying as it did in the centre of the site). However, the observation is an indication of the antiquity of some of the buildings lying within the 'new' brewery complex and of the variety of uses to which they were once applied. It might also mean that this site could be added to the list

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of Prestonpans Breweries explored in the first discussion – an eighteenth century brewery differed in little respect from a distillery once the equipment was stripped out.

4. A variant on the Archimedean screw subsequently mentioned adapted so that tumbled malt would be efficiently stripped of husks and presumably with walls fretted to separate waste.
5. The complexities and capacities of much of the Brewery equipment afforded many opportunities for accident to the unwary worker. This account appeared in the *Haddingtonshire Courier* on 14 August 1863: 'on Thursday last a sad accident occurred in the malting premises of Messrs Fowler & Co. Malt is usually stored in large separate compartments of wood, which reach to a height of several storeys, and have their outlet below in various funnel shaped openings by which malt is removed in bags as required. While drawing off bags, the content of one of these compartments, getting coved out beneath and ceasing to run freely, a young lad who was employed about the works went up into one of the upper divisions and either leaping down on the malt or falling through the open joisting was immediately engulfed. A person ran to the boy's assistance but life was quite extinct. He was about 15 years of age and the principal support of his widowed mother'.
6. RHP 23482, surveyed in 1851 by James Hay, shows this well clearly. It lay behind the south-east corner of the old brewery itself set back on the south side of the High Street. It is one of two wells marked on the plan at this site but is the only one connected to the new brewery by water pipes. The brewery also drew water from a second well at the east end of the new brewery site between the stables and the 'vaults', the above-ground cellars alluded to above. The old wells were often the source of tales in their own right: see Appendix 2.
7. Brewing terms are explained in Appendix 3.

## APPENDIX 2.

### A Tale of the Old Brewery Well

(from Peter McNeill, *Prestonpans and Vicinity*, 1902)

'About the beginning of last century (1827) the proprietor of those gardens towards the east end of the village in which the old draw-well, known as the brewery well, is situate, sent three of his workmen to have the well thoroughly cleaned out. No one knew when this well had been sunk, and no one knew that it had ever been thoroughly cleansed before. Down went two of the men, and the third, Bill Baxter, well known previously as an artful dodger, elected to stay above ground the first day and row the rubbish up. "About mid-day they struck oil"

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in the form of stone jars all apparently choke-full with mud, and seeing that they were not home made, the men at the bottom took great care in sending them up entire. All had been sent up but one, and when searching for more, one of the men at the bottom of the well accidentally struck the jar with his spade and broke it, when out tumbled quite a number of foreign silver coins.

'The men at the bottom, not wishing to raise any suspicion of what they had discovered, cried up to Bill Baxter to rest himself for an hour or so, "because they had broken a jar and wished to fish its contents out of the water". "All right", replied Bill, "and I will take care that nobody gets here to disturb you while engaged in fishing". An hour passed. Two hours passed, and only when about another half hour had gone the two men were 'rowed' to the top. But there was no Bill Baxter there to welcome them. Bill had learned what the jars contained long before his fellows at the bottom of the well, and engaged a man to make sure that they would not get up till he had time to be out of the way. He hired, and drove into Leith with the jars and contents, and disposed of all of them. He was never again heard of but once, from America, but he never returned.

'The proprietor and the two workmen divided the contents of the broken jar amongst them. They were Dutch silver coins, and all about the size of crown pieces. These coins are well remembered yet in the village, and some as curiosities may still be in keeping of the natives. They were of the 14th or 15th century. But how the jars and contents came to be deposited there is a mystery. The general opinion is that some piratical gang had to do with the business, and had forgotten all about them. This may be so, but perhaps the people in Prestonpans had to do with the piratical gang, otherwise they might not have known there was a brewery well in the garden. Subsequently there was another jar got in the well, filled with coins relating to the Stuart dynasty. Several of them are yet in possession of the proprietors of these grounds. It is quite possible that they were all deposited there for security during the '45 Rebellion'.

*N.B.* This tale, if accurate, may represent the finding of a local merchant's hidden reserves. It is unlikely in the extreme that the events of the '45 could cause such a deposit. However, the

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local disruption of the Cromwellian period around 1650 and the association of Morrison's Haven with that General may provide a more authentic cause.

### APPENDIX 3.

#### Brewing Beer – an Outline

The brewing trade has a language all of its own. To illustrate some of the terms this note will follow the process from grain to ale. Although the equipment might have altered over the years both Robert Fowler of the eighteenth century and JB Laing of the later twentieth would have been each at home in the other's facility.

East Lothian's breweries relied upon local barley, a prime resource much in demand as well by Edinburgh's trade. It was soaked in a tank (steep, steep-stone, malt steep, stoup) and allowed to germinate on a covered floor. This procedure activates (and maximises) enzymes in the grain. Germination was halted by transferring the malt into a kiln (distinctive square buildings with tapering, conical roofs topped with a vent) for drying. Care was taken to ensure complete drying by hand turning, the work of a 'maltman' under the direction of a 'maltster'. Even in the Victorian period, powered automated dryers were available but to produce the best malt many works continued to use open floors. The degree of roasting produced different (coloured) grades of malt. Pale malt, produced at low temperature and with all of its enzymes intact, was usually made. Crystal and Chocolate malts were made by longer roasting and tended to be used for 'colour' and texture in the finished product.

A quantity of malt, crushed, rolled or cracked before use, often measured as 'quarters' (1 quarter = 8 bushels; 1 bushel = 8 gallons), was placed in the mash-tun, a squat vessel usually made of copper. (It must be noted here that Fowler's retained their own, archaic scale of measurement and details are given by Margaret Black in her memoir in *Tales of the Pans*.) Frequently other grains and grain derivatives were used to augment the malt. The malt sat on a horizontal partition in the mash tun, which was fretted with drain-holes. Hot water from a tank was sprinkled over the malt via a 'sparger', any of numerous forms of sprinkler or agitation device. The water activates the enzymes present in the malt, which then convert

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starch to soluble sugars forming a solution termed 'wort'. Wort was collected in an 'under-back' or receiving tank before being pumped to the copper. The copper generally took the form of a deep, circular open-topped vessel made or sheathed in that metal. The capacity was measured in barrels (1 barrel = 36 gallons), and they were heated directly (an under furnace) by steam pipes or by boiling fountains. At this stage hops or other bittering agent were added and as required 'colour' or a caramel solution. The use of hops is of comparatively recent origin in British brewing. We have already seen that one observer believed Fowler's were the first to use them in East Lothian. Their preservative effect afforded a distinct advantage to both the keeping and transporting properties of the finished product. Prior to the use of hops a wide variety of agents was used to provide flavour. One recipe for porter which was popular in East Lothian and a staple of nineteenth century breweries recommends the use of treacle and 'colour' (caramel solution) with liquorice root, salt of tartar (sodium tartrate), and capsicum to taste!

The wort was strained via a hop-back and receiver and cooled before being made up to volume with water. At this stage its specific gravity was measured for the purposes of calculating duty. The duty was once expressed as a value per barrel and, having been at a stable rate for many years, the duty rate was extrapolated to the name of the ale itself – thus 60/-, 70/-, 80/-.

From the cooler the wort passed to fermenting vessels where 'barm' (fresh yeast solution skimmed from the top of an earlier fermentation) was 'pitched'. The vessels were either copper or stone lined and were open-topped. Attemperators regulated the temperature of the liquor, which after fermentation passed to settling tanks (settling-backs) from where it was filtered, fined and finished by a conditioning stage usually in cask (barrel) in the establishment's cellars. Some breweries might hold conditioned beer in a conditioning tun if it were to be bottled. Others would bottle from the cask for smaller amounts. 'Fining' was the final process of clarifying the beer. Finings were prepared from gelatin, originally derived from the air bladders of freshwater fish such as sturgeon but subsequently prepared from animal hide or hoof and some seaweeds. Fowler's had their own finings factory. The effect of fining was to sequester the last remaining particulate matter in the beer and deposit it as a sticky precipitate at the bottom of the cask or bottle.

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As many of these stages were conducted in open vessels and as the process required the use of a whole sequence of vessels, scrupulous attention had to be paid to cleanliness. The fermenting houses in particular were often tiled throughout and copious amounts of water were used to wash down building interiors and vessels. At one stage, the Fowlers in particular would have had a distinct advantage in this regard as the Prestonpans' chemical (and soap) industry would have been well placed to provide bleaches and detergents that other brewers would have had more difficulty in securing.

## THE BARON COURTS OF PRESTOUNGRANGE & DOLPHINSTOUN

*Feudal barons traditionally exercised their authority through Baron Courts until 1948, of which the main Officers were the Baron Bailie and the Baron Sergeand. Financial matters were attended to by the Baron's Procurator Fiscal, viz: "The Baron's Court" (1994) and "The Insignia of the Baronage of Scotland and of their Courts" (1989), Convention of the Baronage of Scotland.*

*The Courts with these designated Officers were formally re-established as a Company Limited by Guarantee in Scotland in 1998 but with powers only (i) to advance the interests of the baronies in the new millennium and (ii) to work with the Industrial Heritage Museum at Prestongrange to facilitate its work in the community. Myriad activities have been initiated with the Museum and the Insignia and Regalia of the Baronies and the Courts have been invoked. In particular Lyon Court has granted Arms to the incumbent Barons and those of Prestoungrange are shown on the front cover; the Scottish Tartans Society has approved the Prestoungrange and Dolphinstoun tartan as shown on the rear cover; and craftsmen have fashioned the Courts' Horns, the Bailie's Badge and Chain and the Sergeand's Ellwand.*





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