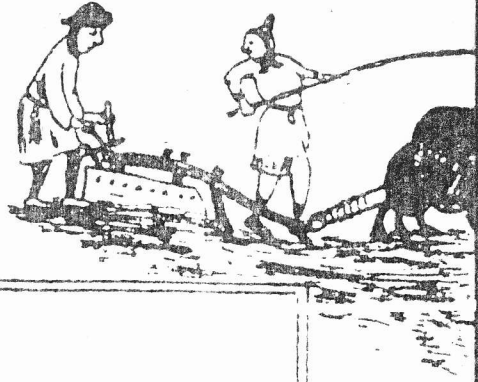
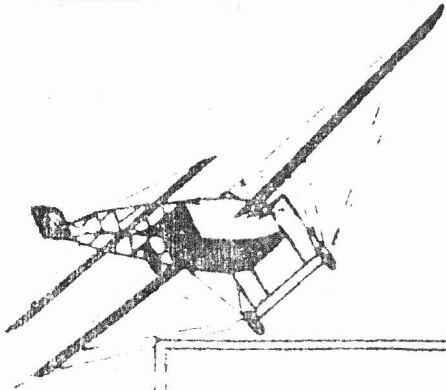


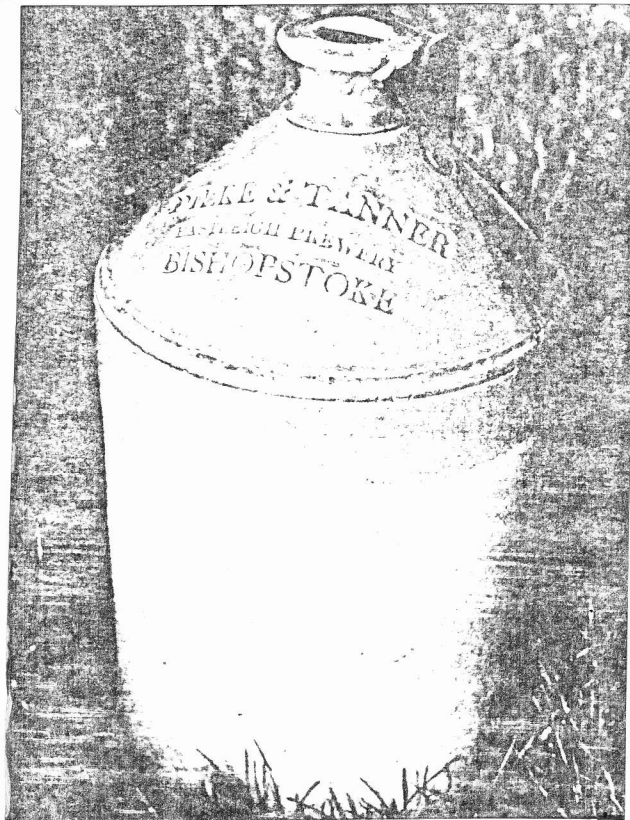
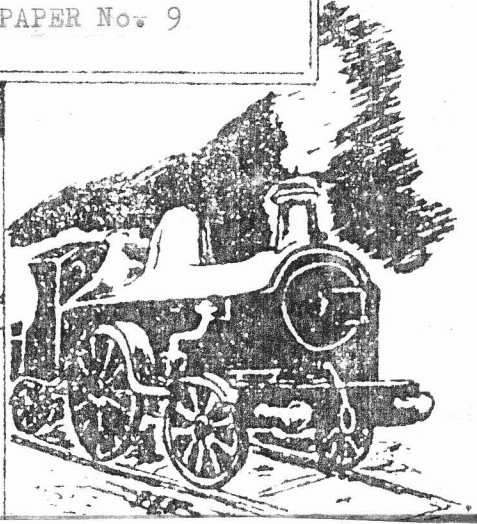
# Bishopstoke Brewery.

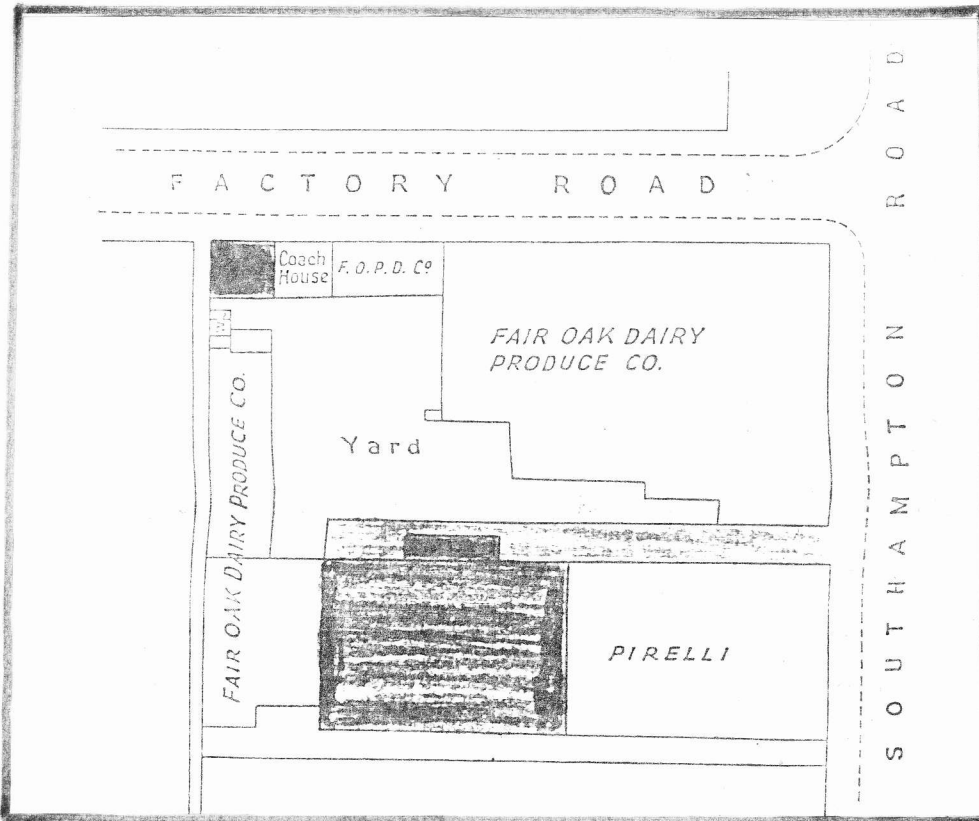
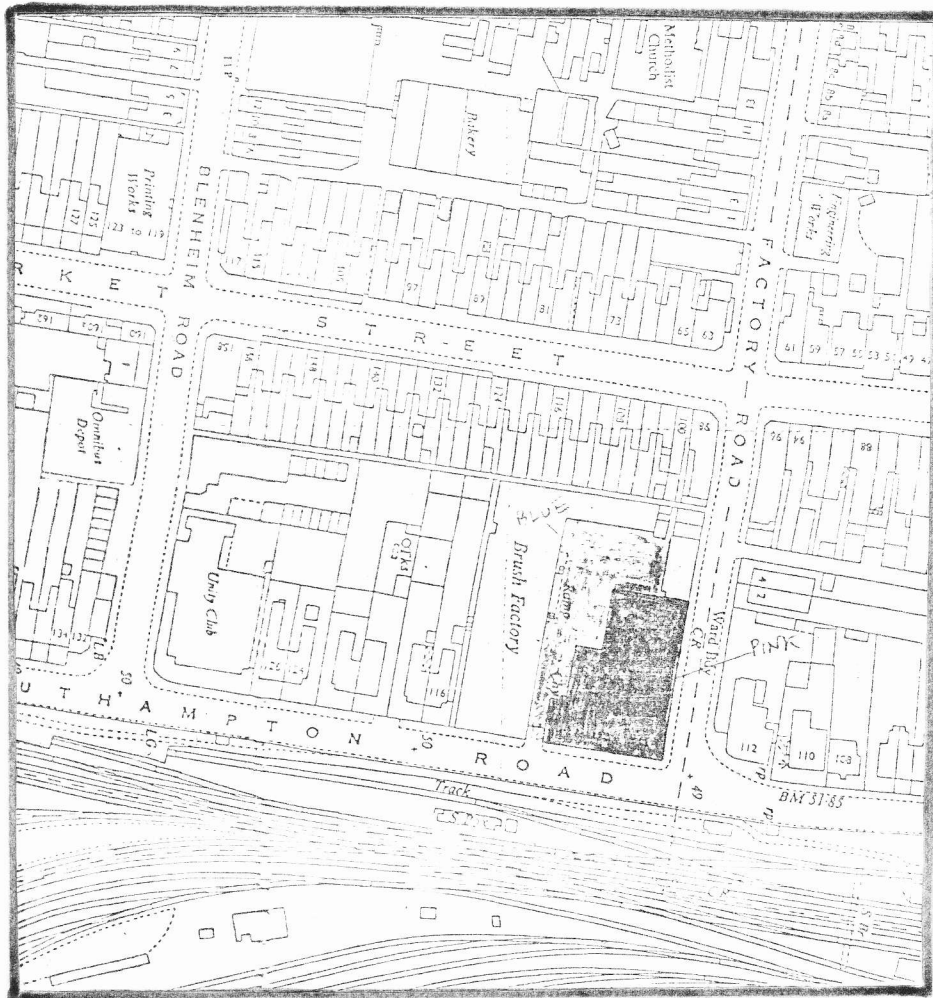


## Castleigh & District Local History Society

OCCASIONAL PAPER No. 9

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## BISHOPSTOKE BREWERY

Early in 1873, John Ross, a brewer of Netley, met with James B. Little, a financier of Winchester, to discuss the prospects of constructing a brewery in Eastleigh. Ross maintained that good profits could be made by supplying beer, wine and spirits to Army camps in the South of England and claimed to have some influence in that quarter. Little was impressed by the idea and it was agreed that they should enter into partnership, Ross to supply the practical requirements and Little to put up the money.

The first essential was the acquisition of a convenient site, and what could be more suitable than a plot of ground opposite an expanding railway junction which could be leased at a reasonable ground rent for a number of years? Therefore, Little approached the Chamberlayne Estate and it was agreed to lease him land having a frontage of 164 feet on the west side of the road leading from Bishopstoke to Southampton (now called Southampton Road) and with a return frontage on the south side of a new road (later named Brewery Road, now Factory Road). The agreement was for a term of 1,000 years to commence on 29th September 1873, at a ground rent of £30 p.a., payable half-yearly.

Having obtained the land, the partners then set about building the brewery. They engaged a Southampton architect and surveyor, W.H. Mitchell, and under his name an advertisement appeared in the local papers on 12th July 1873, inviting tenders for the "erection of a Brewery House and sheds".

Twelve months later, the brewery was well under construction and the partners attempted to obtain a licence for their premises whereby they could not only brew their product but also offer it for consumption on their own premises. The application was heard at the Southampton Licensing Sessions on 4th September 1874. Their solicitor, Mr. H.E. Robins, pointed out that his clients had already invested £3,000 in the project and that the final expenditure would approach £10,000. Further, he added, there was a large volume of traffic passing the premises continually and the last house on the road from Southampton was the Fleming Arms, some 2 miles distant. He then presented a petition signed by several prominent local persons, including the landowner, Mr. Chamberlayne.

The application was opposed by Mr. F. Leigh representing, among others, the Vicar of Eastleigh Rev. W. Longlands, the licence holder of the Home Tavern, Mrs. Cheater, and the Stationmaster at Eastleigh, Mr. E.T. Wilmer. He maintained that Eastleigh consisted of one long row of houses, 90 in number, and for their accommodation they already had three licensed premises (presumably the Home Tavern, the Crown and the Prince of Wales) apart from the railway refreshment rooms. This should be considered sufficient.

After due consideration, the application was dismissed. The construction works continued and once the building was completed, Ross and Little began trading. The venture was short lived. On 19th July 1876, Little filed a bill for the dissolution of the partnership and he carried on the business himself with the aid of Mr. Henry Kemp as the Brewery Manager.

On 13th June, 1876, Little let the whole concern to Mr. Frederick Smythe, who resided at Ivybank in Bishopstoke. Within a year, Mr. Smythe was in financial difficulties and the business was then transferred to Messrs. Dilke and Tanner. The senior partner was Charles Wentworth Dilke, a 21 year old bachelor who, on 1st March 1879, married a local girl, Miss Ellen Smith.

Mr. and Mrs. Dilke left the district in 1882 and control of the company was assumed by Richard Douglas Tanner, together with a new junior partner, Mr. Edward Philip Atkinson. However, within a short time, the brewery reverted to Little who then assigned the lease to Mr. Eadon C. Marshall, a brewer of Farnham. Mr. Marshall bought the Brewery in July 1883, and continued to use the premises until June 1885, when he sold the whole establishment as a going concern to Robert Joseph Rastrick, a financier of Southsea, who already had acquired several other properties in the Eastleigh area.

Rastrick appears also to have had a controlling interest in Dear & Co, a Millbrook firm manufacturing dog food, and he decided to convert the Brewery into a factory for producing biscuits and meal. The new concern commenced business in January 1886, with a grand opening ceremony to which the press were invited. The general consensus of opinion agreed with Rastrick's description of the factory as one of the most modern in the country. Raw material was fed in at ground level and transported by stages to the top of the building and then returned to the ground floor where it finally emerged as the completed product. Rastrick brought his own staff with him and two of them - the Jackson brothers - commissioned an Eastleigh builder to construct for them a pair of houses in Brewery Road. The contractor, Mr. Arthur Charles Blake, had the first brick laid on 1st June 1885, and by the 22nd June the houses were "roofed in".

The dog food business carried on until 25<sup>th</sup> April 1889, when the firm went into liquidation and the premises were put up for sale. No purchaser was forthcoming, however, and the building together with £6,000 worth of machinery lay idle for the next four years. During this period, the large room on the ground floor was used occasionally for meetings. For example, on 15th October 1892, the Eastleigh Weekly News announced in one of its earliest editions:

*"Mr. J..J. Scroggie will conduct special services at Dear's (Rastrick's) Factory in Southampton Road in connection with the Eastleigh Railway Mission each evening from 16th to 27th of October. Sankey's hymns would be sung and all classes (of people) were invited to attend."*

Early in 1893, the premises were purchased by Mrs. Eleanor Wallis, the wife of William Lodge Wallis (builder of the Eagle Buildings in Leigh Road). In May of the same year, she attempted to let the offices of the building to the newly formed Eastleigh Local Board but the offer was rejected, the vice-Chairman saying that members could not sit there for two hours on account of the smells. Shortly afterwards, the Eastleigh Weekly News announced:

*"The large building on Southampton Road, commonly called Dear's Factory, which has been lying idle for some time, has been sold by Mrs. Wallis, who had only purchased it a few weeks ago, to Messrs. Clarke and Son of Limehouse, London, the well known manufacturers of sea and other biscuits. The buildings have been kept in good order since Messrs. Dear gave up business and the large ovens and machinery, being of recent date, very few alterations were required ...."*

The new owners moved in on Monday, 5th June 1893, and very soon the three huge stacks began pouring forth smoke; over a hundred people were employed and special attention was given to the export trade via Southampton.

Not much material is readily available to continue the story of the building in any detail. It is known that Clarke's had relinquished the premises by April 1895. The property was not used again for business purposes until May 1898, but between November 1895 and April 1897, part of it was taken by the Eastleigh School Board - presumably as overflow classrooms. Between May 1898 and October 1900, it was used by the British and Colonial Sterilising Company; in 1901 by the Excel Milk Company; and in 1902 by the Express Rotary Cooler Syndicate.

The following extract comes from the Eastleigh Weekly News issue of 7th April 1900:

*"Eastleigh Dairy. Known as Bishopstoke Dairy, standing on the corner position of Southampton Road at the junction with Factory Road, 200 yards from the railway station. Daily trade 40 gallons. Comprises of a dwelling house, shop, stabling and cottage adjoining. Now in the occupation of Mr. C. Moore. Rent £500 p.a. Leasehold for 1,000 years from 1869. Ground rent £9 p.a. Sale at Junction Hotel 3.30.p.m. Tuesday, 24th April 1900."*

The building appears to have been unoccupied from the end of 1902 until about April 1908, when the Humphries Patent Gear Engineering Co. were in possession until about April 1911. An engine from this period still exists and is likely to feature prominently in the Eastleigh Museum. However, the building became vacant again until October 1915, when the Fair Oak Produce Co. began its operations from the site. They were still going strong in 1924 but there is no other information about this period available. The premises were again without occupants in August 1962.

From various sources, it is gleaned that parts of the building have been let to Knight and Son Ltd., Southampton Newsagents Ltd, Pirelli - General, D.G.R. Lighting (Manufacturing) Ltd., G.W. Martin and Co. Ltd., until between 1966 and 1968 the whole building was taken over by Eastsleep, subsequently known as Peter Green's. Now, in March 1985, it is empty again and presumably awaiting demolition.

Betty Cleghorn

20.3.1985

Acknowledgements to:-

Charles E. James for research material

Norman Barber for advice.

Since this article was written, the old brewery has been demolished and the site incorporated in the Swan Centre. Brewery Road, later called Factory Road, became, in part, Wells Place.