

The Leamington Brewery

The Leamington Brewery was founded in 1839 after, London textile merchant, Stephen Lewis purchased a block of land in Lillington Avenue from Thomas George Skipwith, Glynne Welby and Christopher Wise; the brewery was built by John Tone of Stoneleigh.

NB: There is an entry in the 1848 Becks directory that lists a conflicting date of origin, albeit incorrect: -

“So long a desideratum to the Town of Leamington, originated in the year 1836, in the public spirit and liberality of a London gentlemen, whose name stands at the head of the firm, viz; Lewis, Haddon, and Allenby. It is situated to the North of Clarendon and Beauchamp Squares, and presents a bold and somewhat elegant architectural frontage to the road leading from Warwick to Lillington. The complete success of an undertaking attended with so much risk, and requiring so immense an outlay of capital, shows in striking colours the growing wealth and prosperity of the Spa. The concern has only been in existence the short space of five years, yet has already become one of the largest establishments of the kind out of the Metropolis, it being capable of brewing, at least, 40,000 bushels of malt annually. Its business transactions extend far and wide, both in this and the neighbouring counties; Mr. R. Walton, of 58, Regent Street, is the Leamington agent, and at his large office a large supply of their bottled ales and porter are constantly kept.”

Stephen Lewis’ original partners were Everitt Allenby and a Mr. Sandeman, and on 28th December, 1839, the Leamington Spa Courier published the following to mark the brewery’s opening: -

LEWIS’S NEW BREWERY, LEAMINGTON

LEWIS, EVERITT AND CO.

“Beg to announce the opening of their new establishment, and that they have now ready for delivery a first-rate beverage at the following prices: -

Superior Table Ale, at 1s. per gallon.

Ditto Pale XX Ale, at 1s. 6d. per gallon.

Ditto Mild Porter, at 1s. 2d. per gallon.

Brown Stout, at 1s 6d. per gallon.

[In quantities of not less than nine gallons]

Orders received at the Brewery, or at 65, Regent Street.”

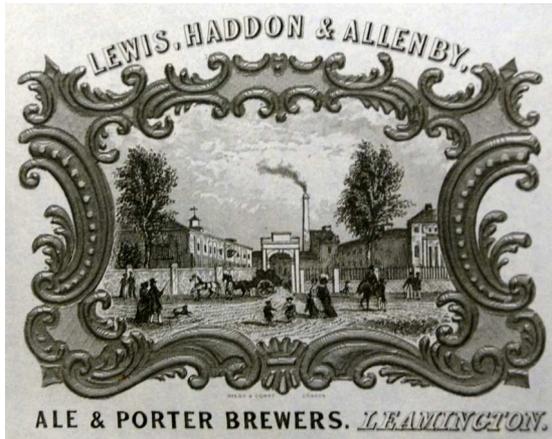
In July 1840 an advertisement was placed in the ‘Courier’ for, “An active respectable man, of good address, to collect orders and attend out of doors to the convenience of customers and other interests of the Brewery. Liberal encouragement will be given to one whose character for integrity and sobriety will bear the strictest investigation. Apply to Mr. Sandeman at the Brewery”. Robert Walton was subsequently appointed as the company agent and an office was opened at 20, Bedford Street.

By 1841 the company was directory listed as *Lewis, Everitt & Sandeman [Ale & Porter Brewery]* and on 13th March the ‘Courier’ ran the following expansive advertisement: -

LEAMINGTON BREWERY - LEWIS, EVERITT AND SANDEMAN

“Having now completed their extensive brewery and malting premises upon the most approved principle, and with the adoption of every late and scientific improvement which capital could command, venture to hope that their exertions will continue to meet with an increasing share of the public patronage. The entire construction of the machinery and apparatus, together with all the other arrangements, have been made under the immediate direction of Mr. Sandeman, who will continue personally to superintend the business, and who, after 14 years practical experience in some of the most celebrated establishments of the kind in Edinburgh and Dublin, feels confident that, with the aid of every other possible advantage, he will be enabled at all seasons of the year to produce articles of first-rate description, and which cannot be surpassed in the kingdom. They have now ready for delivery a large stock of ale and porter of the finest quality, and of peculiar mildness and flavour, brewed from malt of their own manufacture, and East Kent and Worcester hops of the choicest description; also from spring water of remarkable purity and softness, and which has been analysed with great care by the Professor of Chemistry to the Middlesex Hospital, and reported by him to contain the most pure and healthy properties,

and possessing considerable less of organic matter than the usual run of spring waters. Orders received, as formerly, at the brewery, or from Mr. Walton at 20, Bedford Street, Leamington. 10th March, 1841.”



Following Sandeman's departure in 1842 the company briefly reverted to *Lewis, Everitt & Co* – pending the appointment of John Haddon who took over the running of the business as *Lewis, Haddon & Allenby* in 1843 – until his death in 1875.

In January 1866 the brewery advertised as *Lewis, Haddon & Co* indicating that Everitt Allenby had already retired [he died in 1871]. In 1868 William Wells Ridley joined the company with £5,000 capital lent to him by Haddon, a new partnership was formed and the Leamington Brewery was listed as *Lewis, Haddon & Ridley*. When Stephen Lewis also died in 1871 his two sons inherited his share of the business and one of them, Arthur James Lewis, took his father's place in the partnership. John Haddon died of a

heart attack at his home in Radford Road on 26th September 1875 and is buried at Offchurch, the village in which he was born.

Following Haddon's death his solicitors valued the brewery at approximately £52,000. At that point it reportedly owned just 7 pubs with two being in Leamington: - Masons Arms [Rugby Road] and Rob Roy [Brook Street]. *Lewis & Ridley* would continue to run the business until the partnership was dissolved in 1885.

On 27th December, 1884, the Leamington Spa Courier announced the forthcoming sale of the brewery: -

THE LEAMINGTON BREWERY

“A finely constructed property, with adjoining excellent malt-houses, stores and premises, occupying a large surface in an important position at Leamington; also about 70 inns, public houses and other property connected therewith, forming as an entirety one of the most attractive trading investments ever offered to public competition.

MESSRS. ALFRED THOMAS PEYER AND MILES have been directed, in consequence of the dissolution of partnership, to sell by auction in one lot early in the ensuing year [should no acceptable offer be made a fortnight previously to the day of sale]: -

THE LEAMINGTON BREWERY which from its choice residential and central trading position, as well as its being the only brewery in a very populous town, affords a most attractive business. The home premises and plant are constructed in a superior manner and the most approved form, and possess a site available for considerable extension. The high character of the beers and consequent steady increase of trade, attest the fine quality of the water derived from a never-failing well. The trading properties comprise some of the best business houses in Leamington, Warwick, Banbury, Nuneaton, Rugby, Coventry and surrounding districts; and in addition to the brewery business, a large wine and spirit trade is conducted both at Leamington and Coventry.”

On 25th June 1885, the brewery was purchased by Morton Peto Lucas, Frederick Murray Lucas, Arthur Herbert Blackwell and Herbert Robert Arkwright for £75,000 – of which £48,041 was allocated to pay-off the mortgages on the tied-estate and the balance split between Lewis and Ridley; the new partnership was listed as *Lucas, Blackwell & Arkwright*. According to 'A History of Brewing in Warwickshire' [Ken Flint], there was a tied-estate of 35 pubs** with Leamington's representation comprising: - Mason's Arms [Rugby Road] which included stables and a brew house; Golden Lion [Regent Street] which included a brew house and butchers shop; Rob Roy [Brook Street] including brew house and other outbuildings and Somerville Arms [Campion Terrace]. By 1891 the brewery was producing 15 different brews, including East India Pale Ale, India Pale Ale [IPA], 'Gem' Light, Sparkling Dinner Ale, 'Stingo' Strong Ale, five Mild Ales, two Brown Stouts and a Porter.



**The tied-estate of 35 pubs is at odds with the “also about 70 inns, public houses and other property” quoted in the sale notice, indicating that the figure of “70” includes beer retailers [off-licences], wine & spirit merchants and wine vaults.

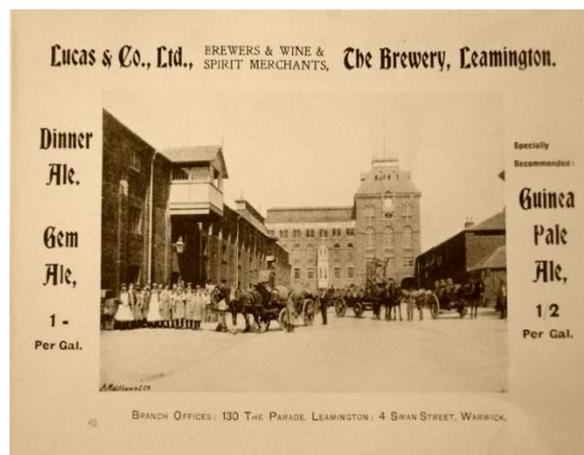
In 1896 the brewery was re-configured and a new four storey high, 60 quarter plant – designed by London Brewing architects Scamell & Colyer – was built and installed by Wilson & Co [of Frome, Somerset]. Also in 1896, the company acquired Dutton & Hudson’s Warwick Brewery, Wallace Street, Saltisford, along with its 12 pubs that included two in Leamington Spa: - Alexandra Tavern [corner, Abbots Street & Bath Place] and Lansdowne Tavern [corner, Lansdowne Street & Swan Street], now Builders Arms.

This metal sign was discovered two foot deep at Leamington’s St. Mary’s Allotments in March 2015 by ESH Works, a non-profit service helping people recovering from alcohol and drugs dependency, and also their families. [Photo courtesy: Allan Jennings]

Around this time, the Royal Leamington Spa Pictorial published the following article: -

“The Leamington Spa Brewery of Messrs. Lucas, Blackwell & Arkwright is a prosperous and model brewery. Under the able management Mr. A. E. Wyllie, and since it came into the hands of its present proprietors, the brewery has attained a high state of efficiency and notoriety for its [ales and porters], and also for its wines and spirits. The water supply of the brewery is obtained from a 50-feet artesian well, with a bore of 200 feet, and comes direct from a bed of rock. An inspection of the brewery would interest and astonish any person not acquainted with the brewing process. The mash room of this brewery contains tuns holding 50 quarters. The hop room is of considerable extent, and usually contains a valuable stock of hops. The copper room is the place in which the ‘liquor’ is mixed with the hops and is boiled by steam. The hop backs receive the ‘liquor’ from the copper room, whence it is pumped up again to the top of the brewery, and passes from thence to refrigerators [at a temperature of 150 degrees] and into the fermenting tuns. From these fermenting tuns the ‘liquor’ passes to ‘yeast backs’ in the floor beneath, whence it again passes into ‘racking backs’, or tanks, and from these latter into ‘settling’ tanks. After leaving the ‘settling’ tanks it is conveyed to another part of the brewery, where it is put into casks or bottles and then stored away in the extensive cellars underground. The engine house, the boiler house, the pump room, the cooperage, the malt house and the barley stores are all on an extensive scale, as are also the wine and spirit stores, and clearly demonstrate the whole concern is methodically and admirably managed.”

Although directory listed in 1897 as ‘The Leamington Brewery / Lucas, Blackwell & Arkwright’, the business name was most likely changed to Lucas & Co during the third quarter of 1896 – as it was Lucas & Co. that advertised the pending closure of its Warwick Brewery on 15th October, 1896 [effective 2nd November]. On 17th July 1897, Lucas & Co Ltd was registered to acquire the company’s properties and assets, valued by Messrs Alfred Thomas, Peyer & Miles at £243,224; to this the vendors added £56,776 for goodwill making it a total purchase price of £300,000. According to an article by the proprietor of the financial paper ‘The Rialto’ [Leamington Spa Courier, 3rd July 1908], the properties and assets included the freehold breweries at Leamington and Warwick [the latter’s production already transferred to Leamington] and 124 licensed houses [88 freehold and 36 leasehold].



Circa 1900

The directors held their first meeting in London on 20th July 1897, when Morton Peto Lucas took the chair alongside Percy Allen Leaf and Gordon Lyon Bland [there is no mention of Blackwell or Arkwright either then or thereafter].

While the reported figure of 124 ‘licensed houses’ would have included beer retailers [off-licences], wine and spirit merchants and wine vaults, it still represents a business expansion of 77% during the 12 years elapsed since 1885, when the tied-estate numbered approximately 70. This is significant growth considering that changes to the Licensing Acts had already stemmed the issue of pub licences nationally – Leamington’s pub count remained stable during this period – therefore this growth must have come from ‘captured’ market share derived from pre-existing ‘licensed houses’. Notwithstanding, the figure of ‘124’ is to be re-examined and verified.



As an aside, in 1897 [for one edition only] *Lucas & Co* are directory listed as House, Land & Estate Agents and also Insurance Agents, based at Elsloy House, 9 Church Street, Leamington Spa – in 1898 this address is listed as vacant.

Lucas & Co Brewery draymen and horses, circa 1900 [By kind permission of Mr. E. Harris and Heart of England Newspapers]



In August 1889 *Lucas, Blackwell & Arkwright* had purchased premises at 130, Parade for £2,100 and commenced using them as their registered office. Originally addressed 16a, Lower Parade, there is anecdotal evidence indicating that these premises date back to 1834 and were first occupied by a wine merchant. Irrespective, they had definitely been occupied by wine and spirit merchants since at least 1842 and prior to their purchase by *Lucas & Co Ltd* were occupied by *White & Hollingworth* [the premises were readdressed 130, Parade circa 1878].

The name listed on the licence from circa 1851 was Haunch of Venison, although – for those familiar with the name – the premises wouldn’t become fully licensed until circa 1895. This undated photo was taken after *Lucas & Co Ltd* acquired the Leamington Brewery, its properties and its assets in 1897 [the company name is just visible in the window]. *Lucas & Co Ltd* would continue to use these premises as their registered office until the Leamington Brewery was acquired by *Ansells Brewery Ltd* in 1928. In 1936 Ansells converted the building into a public house and changed the frontage to ‘mock’ Tudor.

[Photo courtesy of Lyndon Cave]

Following their exit from the brewery business, *Lucas & Co Ltd* retained the freehold of the Haunch of Venison until selling it on to Christopher Albert Rookes, a Stratford based wine merchant, in

December 1941. Despite periodic closures [incl.1972-77 and 1985-90], the Haunch of Venison retained its name until October 1999 when it closed for a major refurbishment, reopening as the Lounge in December 1999.

During the period 1897-1923, *Lucas & Co Ltd* purchased the freehold on the following Leamington pubs: - Woodman Inn, Bedford Street [1898: £2,500], Bedford Inn, Bedford Street [1898: £2,000], Wheatsheaf, Tachbrook Road [1905: £3,200], Hope & Anchor, Hill Street [1907: £2,200], Oak Inn, Radford Road [1910:

£3,400] and Clarendon Tavern, Russell Street [1923: £1,900]; the brewery had also purchased the freehold on the Angel Hotel for £6,500 in 1898.



Leamington Brewery workers, circa 1906 [By kind permission of Graham Baskerville] – Graham's Great Grandfather, William Bugg, is seated left]

On 14th June, 1916, it was reported that *Lucas & Co Ltd* had 153 staff at the start of the war and that 44 had since joined up, including director J. C. Lucas who was engaged in Red Cross work. On 24th August, 1921, John Claude Lucas became the managing director of *Lucas & Co Ltd* for a term of five years at an annual salary of £2,000. In July 1948 he was living at the Desmond Hotel in Kenilworth Road – born in 1884, he died in 1952. It is also noteworthy that when Morton Peto Lucas died in 1921 he had been the company chairman for 24 years – and a partner in the business for 12 years prior to it becoming a limited company.



This photo, with the Lucas & Co advertising in the background, was taken circa 1914 at the Bull Inn at Weston-under-Wetherley; the landlord at the time was Frederick Gibbs [By kind permission of June Gibson, Wyken, Coventry]

By 1928, the directors of *Messrs Lucas & Co Ltd* had been treating their employees to annual excursions to popular resorts for almost 40 years. In July 1925 it had been to Weston-Super-Mare and in July 1928 the destination was to be Blackpool. On this occasion all employees of the company were issued with a free train ticket and some money to spend. The *Leamington Spa Courier* wrote on 6th July, 1928, "The opinion of all participants was that it was the best day's outing they had ever had and sets a rather difficult standard for achievement on future annual outings". Although the brewery was purchased by *Ansell's Brewery Ltd* only three months later, the annual outings continued in 1929 [Margate] and 1930 [Brighton].

On the 12th October, 1928, the Leamington Spa Courier reported that: -

“Ansell’s Brewery Ltd, Birmingham, have purchased Messrs Lucas & Co Ltd, Leamington” [and that] “although the purchase has been agreed to, negotiations are still in progress as to details and, until their completion, it is impossible to say anything regarding the purchase price or as to the future conduct of the Leamington Brewery.”

In the book ‘A History of Brewing in Warwickshire’ Ken Flint describes the brewery thus, “a 60 quarter brewery of several communicating buildings of brick and slate construction varying from one to four storeys with a clock tower. The malt house consisted of two kilns and was 266 feet long. The brewery well was 93 feet deep and a flow of greater than 100,000 gallons a day was possible. There was also a cooperage, stables, blacksmith’s shop, bottling plant and garage”.

The sale – inclusive of 124 licensed houses – was finalised in November 1928 and the registered office moved to Aston Brewery, Park Road, Aston, Birmingham.

Assuming that the figure of ‘124’ is correct, it coincidentally equals the number of ‘licensed houses’ included in the 1897 sale. This figure is surprisingly high considering that the 1902 and 1904 Licensing Acts made it easier for the local licensing justices, and/or county licensing committee – when dealing with pubs – to refuse licence renewal or impose licence cancellation. The grounds for such action included ‘redundancy’ and ‘structurally deficient or unsuitable premises’ and the outcome was a significant reduction in the number of pubs nationwide. During the period 1897-1928, the overall reduction in Leamington’s pubs was 20 [22%] – at least 6 of those owned by *Lucas & Co Ltd* – and this trend would have been echoed to varying degrees throughout their operating region, which included Warwick, Banbury, Nuneaton, Rugby, Coventry and surrounding districts. Therefore, to maintain the status quo [of 124 licensed houses] during the period 1897-1928, the company must have countered any pub closures by increasing their market share of what was already a shrinking market. Notwithstanding, the 1928 figure of ‘124’ is also to be re-examined and verified.

According to the company’s rental records, the tied-estate at the time of the ‘sale’ would have included the following Leamington pubs: -

Angel Hotel	Regent Street	Masons Arms	Rugby Road
Avenue Hotel	Spencer Street	Oak Inn	Radford Road
Bedford Inn	Bedford Street	Plough & Harrow	Whitnash Road
Bell Inn	Rugby Road	Priory Tavern	Priory Street
Binswood Tavern	Binswood Street	Queens Head	Brunswick Street
Britannia	Chandos Street	Railway Inn	Clemens Street
Carpenters Arms	Chandos Street	Rob Roy	Brook Street
Clarendon Tavern	Russell Street	Somerville Arms	Campion Terrace
Coventry Arms	Guys Cliffe Road	Stoneleigh Arms	Clemens Street
Globe Inn	Park Street	Talbot Inn	Rushmore Street
Gold Cup	Tavistock Street	Warwick Arms	Regent Street
Golden Lion	Regent Street	Warwick Hotel	Regent Street
Guards Inn	High Street	Wheatsheaf	Tachbrook Road
Hope & Anchor	Hill Street	Woodland Tavern	Regent Street
Lansdowne Tavern	Lansdowne Street	Woodman Inn	Bedford Street

1934 and was sold by auction on 6th July, 1934 – conditional on the premises not being used to brew beer products or distil spirits. It was purchased by estate agents acting on behalf of the [then] ‘Borough of Royal Leamington Spa’. On 13th July the Leamington Spa Courier reported that: -

“Alderman K. R. England, in buying the Leamington Brewery premises last Friday, was acting on behalf of the Corporation – that the purchase price was £7,400 – and that the substantial character of the buildings [erected in 1896] renders them specially suitable for use as a town depot. The property included the Maltings which Messrs Ansell’s Brewery offered to lease for 21 years.” [Subsequently agreed]



The former Leamington Brewery, March 1985, [Courtesy of Peter Coulls]

On 1st March, 1935, the 'Courier' reported on the February licensed victualler's meeting thus: -

"Alderman C.H. Southorn, of Leamington, referred to the fact that although the closing of the Leamington Brewery was a loss to the town, they had benefited by reason of the fact that the town had acquired thereby an additional source of water in the well from which the brewery had formerly drawn its supplies."



In January 1985 Leamington's town planners decided that the brewery – which was still being used as a Warwick District Council depot – would be redeveloped residential, and its buildings were subsequently converted into apartments; the development is now known as 'The Maltings'.



The Maltings, February 2011 ©Allan Jennings

Martin Ellis – May, 2016 [updated: July, 2017]

Acknowledgements:

Leamington Spa Courier [1839-2015]

Morning News [1896-1985]

'A History of Brewing in Warwickshire' by Ken Flint – edited by Fred Lockett, Ken Flint & Peter Lee – Published by CAMRA, 1983

'Warwickshire Breweries' by Joseph McKenna – Published by History Press Ltd, 2006

Lucas & Co Ltd, Company Records, Warwick Records Office

Annual directories: 1839-1928 [Beck's, Kelly's & Spennell's]

Additional research: Allan Jennings & Tom Lewin