WINCHESTER BREWERIES

by

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Introduction

The ancient city of Winchester - or Wintoncester as Thomas Hardy called it – is a fascinating place, full of historical interest. Once the capital of Wessex and England, it boasts a fine cathedral, the longest in England and indeed in Europe, founded in 1079; the Great Hall, the remaining part of a castle founded by William the Conqueror; Westminster College, the oldest English public school established by William of Wykeham in 1382; and the Hospital of St. Cross, an early mediaeval almshouse. Displayed in the Great Hall is the Round Table, of Arthurian legend, believed to date from around 1290, made for a tournament near Winchester, held to celebrate the betrothal of one of the daughters of Edward I.

Winchester also has a remarkable brewing heritage. Although the last extensive brewery to function ceased in 1931, there are three microbreweries trading today to carry on the “ancient art and mystery”. In 1996, I wrote a book called "Hampshire Hogsheads - The Lost Breweries of the County - Volume One – North Hampshire". I intended to publish two more volumes – on Central Hampshire and South Hampshire. I made a start and have, over the years, continued the research, so the framework for the history of Winchester breweries was already established. In the last week or so, more extensive research has been undertaken to provide a comprehensive account covering, I believe, all the breweries that have operated in the City in the last 200 years.

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