

## **MR W B THOMPSON'S BLACKFORD BREWERY**

This establishment having now been completed and work started, we have pleasure this week in presenting to our readers an illustration of the place, along with a brief description, not only of the brewery, but also of the extensive aerated water and whisky business which the firm carries on.

Blackford Brewery is erected on the site of the late Mr Eadie's old establishment. The buildings are large enough for a 30-quarter plant, but at present a 15-quarter plant has been fitted up, thus leaving ample room for extension. A siding is to be brought from Blackford Station into the brewery, thereby doing away with all cartage to the station. The malt and hop store combined is a building 50 feet long by 30 feet wide, and four storeys high, and is fitted with elevators and all the necessary machinery for lifting grain from the railway to the respective floors above. The ground floor of this building is used as a cooperage, millhouse, and engine-room. The brewing house adjoins this building, and is 30 feet long by 20 feet wide by five storeys high, and contains the whole of the brewing vessels, comprising a large cold-water tank, brewing tank, mash tun, masher, grist elevator, and grist bin. The copper house adjoins the brewing house, and is 30 feet long by 20 feet wide and three storeys high, and contains two brewing coppers, also coal hoist and steam boiler on ground floor. The cooler house stretches west from this building. It is 70 feet long by 28 feet wide and two storeys high, and it contains a large hop-back at one end, with coolers stretching to the refrigerator at the far end. A reservoir tank for cooling water for refrigerator acts as a roof for this end of the building. The ground floor is used as a cellar and pump room. The tun room at the west end of the cooler house is a building 72 feet long by 42 feet wide, and two storeys high, in which the wooden fermenting tuns are erected. Large maltings are to be erected to the north of the present buildings, and will adjoin the malt store. To the east of the brewery has been erected one of the largest aerated water manufactories in Scotland. The building is 104 feet long by 60 feet wide, and two storeys high, and is being fitted with all the latest and most-improved machinery.

Commodious new stabling, with cart and lorry sheds, and having hayloft above, have been fitted up for the use of the establishment. To obtain water suitable for brewing purposes, boring operations were undertaken and, at a depth of nearly 200 feet, a copious supply of excellent quality was procured. A well 30 feet deep was sunk, and out of it four sets of piping are carried into the works. A two-inch pipe goes down to a depth of about 160 feet, and by the smaller pipe inside, the water is forced by air pressure right up to the top of the brewery, the highest part of which is between 80 and 90 feet above the ground. A very favourable analysis of the water

was got. Mr Lawrence Briant, consulting and analytical chemist, London, writes:

*'I have already analysed and reported upon your brewing water supply, which is of good quality. I see no reason why you should not be able to produce beers of high character, satisfactory soundness, and uniform quality.'*

By Gillespie's patent pump the water can be pumped to the top of the building at the rate of 18 gallons a minute. The engine by which the machinery is driven is 15 horse power, and was made by Cochrane, Barrhead. It runs smoothly, and does its work efficiently. On the top flat the grain is taken in by a hoist made by Gorrie, Perth. Downstairs is the hop room, from which the malt bins - a storey lower - are fed by means of apertures in the floor. There is also a sugar store here. In the first floor is the malt-room. The malt is in bins, from which it is shot into the malt hopper, which commands the mill downstairs. From there it is taken up in elevators to malt hopper No. 2, which commands the mashing machine.

Returning to the top storey, there are the grist case and the hot and cold water tanks. On the flat below the hot water and the grist run into the mashing machine, which makes 300 revolutions a minute. The wort then passes along and enters the mash tun about the thickness of porridge. In a corner of this room the brewer's office is situated. From the mash tun the wort runs into a receiver, and is carried into the copper, which is of the capacity of 100 barrels. Two sugar dissolvers occupy part of this room. Below is the furnace for the copper, and there the draff is deposited after everything is extracted.

The next process is the straining off of the hops and the running of the liquor on to the cooler, where it settles. It goes through a horizontal refrigerator, put in by Willison, Alloa. The ironwork of the plant was erected by Davie, Stirling. From the refrigerator the beer is taken below to the fermenting vats. There are nine vessels, and at this part of the process an experiment is being made with a patent for straining off the froth. On the ground floor the beer is racked off into barrels and run along to the cellar, which is of ample proportions. The casks are of the best Burton make, and Mr Thomson is the first in Scotland to employ a patent by which an extra cork is sent out along with each barrel. The whole of the machinery is of the best and most modern description, and in laying down the plant no money has been spared to turn out a good article. In addition to the brewery, the firm have also built a large factory for the manufacture of aerated waters.

This is supplementary to their factory in Perth. Both of these, in all their branches,

are under the management of Mr John Craik, who has been over twenty years with the firm. It is a two storey building in three divisions, and is chiefly intended to supply that district of the county, Crieff, and Stirling.

There are three bottling machines, capable of turning out 140 dozen per hour. The output at present is about 3000 dozen week at Blackford, and between 10,000 and 12,000 dozen at Perth. Smith, of Belfast, is the maker of the aerating machines which with the others, are the best of their kind. Nineteen or twenty different kinds of aerated water are manufactured. In a large store upstairs is the cutting and bruising machinery for the horses' food. There is also large syrup room. All the water is filtered through tanks before being used. Five women are employed steadily washing bottles. Adjoining the aerated water manufactory is a room in which different kinds of beer, etc, in addition to that made by the firm, are bottled. A striking feature, both in the brewery and in the aerated water factory, was the cleanliness and tidiness which characterised every part of buildings. The whole of the buildings, it may be noted, will be lighted with electricity on the newest system. The firm are erecting a house for the brewer, and two double cottages which will accommodate the families of four of the men employed at the works.

With regard to the North British Mineral Water Works at Perth belonging to the firm, and incidentally mentioned above, it may be noted that sixty hands are employed, which will give a fairly good idea of the size of the place. The machinery is driven by a 10 h.p. engine, built by Cochrane, Barrhead. Mr Craik has some machines of his own design, and locally constructed, in the establishment. These include an admirable gas-making appliance and three of the soda-water pumps. Another of the pumps is by Smith, Belfast. One of the steam fillers is Codd's patent, and a second is Riley's. There is also a Riley screw stopper. Most of the remaining machinery has to be credited to Messrs. Hayward, Taylor & Co., London. The output of the works has already been indicated, and to distribute the waters throughout the countryside, no less than 19 horses with 18 vans and lorries are required. Behind the aerated water works there is a four storey duty free bond, and alongside of it a bond one storey in height. In addition to brewing beer and manufacturing aerated water, the firm are large bottlers, extensive blenders, and do a considerable retail trade. They are possibly the largest beer and stout bottlers in Scotland north of the Tay. As blenders they are well known, their "Old Simon" and "Old Burntisland" whiskies having a wide reputation, while the retail premises in Perth - under Mr J W S Stewart - though slightly old-fashioned, are extremely popular.

The business of the late Mr W B Thomson is conducted by trustees on behalf of his family, the management being in the capable hands of Mr A Douglas Lawrie, whose

portrait adorns a corner of our supplement. Mr Lawrie is a native of Bradford, Yorkshire, where he was born thirty-one years ago. His father was a doctor in large practice, but he died a comparatively young man, and the family thereafter removed to Edinburgh, where - in George Watson's college - Mr Lawrie was educated. He afterwards entered the office of Messrs A & A Crawford, the Scotch agents of Messrs Combe & Co., the celebrated porter brewers of London, and remained on the indoor staff for five years. Then he was appointed traveller, and remained 'on the road' for a full decade. Both his indoor and outside training with Messrs A & A Crawford was of the most thorough character, and when he was appointed, early in the present year, manager to the trustees of W B Thomson, it was emphatically agreed that he was the right man in the right place. Mr Lawrie is a good all-round athlete, being an excellent exponent of golf, tennis, and swimming. He was for three years captain of the Waverley Tennis Club, Edinburgh, and for five years was a member of the Q E R V B. The new manager has commenced to extend the business in earnest, and has appointed the following representatives :- Mr T M'Andie, for Inverness and the North, and Elgin and the East, down to Kingussie; Mr D Lees, for Dundee and Fifeshire inland; Mr I Laidlaw, for Perthshire; Mr George Downie, for Fifeshire coast; Mr D Wilson, merchant, Arbroath, for Forfarshire; Mr W Lothian, for Edinburgh and the South of Scotland; while negotiations are in progress for Glasgow, Aberdeen, Newcastle, and English representatives.

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