



LAST OF THE BALDOCK BREWERIES

Ask most people where the Baldock Brewery was and they will probably reply "In the High Street", but they would be wrong: it was off Whitehorse Street.

Along with malting, brewing was an important industry in Baldock last century. The largest of Baldock's three breweries was Simpson's, formerly owned by the Pryor family, in the High Street. This was demolished, amidst much protest, in 1968. The following year Steed's brewery in Church Street passed away virtually unnoticed. Both sites are still wasteland. 1977 will probably see the demolition of the Baldock Brewery,

situated behind Moss's antique shop, which was the brewer's house, in Whitehorse Street.

Built c.1800 and last used for brewing in 1881, the buildings have remained derelict and forgotten ever since. Occupied as a builder's yard during this century, the buildings were purchased last year by North Herts. District Council who intend demolishing and replacing them with houses.

At risk to life and limb, Julian Herbert and the writer spent several days in the heat of last summer recording the wreckage of what was once a

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BALDOCK BREWERY. Main block from the south.(Photo:Letchworth Museum)
A full account will be published in Hertfordshire Archaeology

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fairly grand small industrial building, for North Herts. Museums. Detailed plans were made, with the assistance of Paul Palmer of the North Herts. Archaeological Society, and numerous photographs taken.

Documentary research has shown that a William Penn was brewing here in the 1790s, and the brewery remained in the hands of the Penn family during the first half of the 19th century, although by 1853 it had passed into the possession of George Oliver. In 1871 it was sold to Parker & Co., 'brewers & wine & spirit merchants & agents for Hy. Brett & Co.'s liquor ginger brandy'. However, Parker's obviously did not find the business profitable, perhaps they were losing trade to Simpson's, and in 1881 the brewery was auctioned and was never again used for brewing.

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