

The ale from Matthew Fitt and Son's Ale and Porter Brewery was "neither too strong, nor yet too mild."

THE OLD NEWGATE BREWERY

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Mr. Alma Fitt, a member of a very old Limerick family, who for many generations were prominent in the professional and commercial life of Limerick, has supplied us with interesting information on Matthew Fitt and Sons old ale and porter brewery, which was situated in the old town in the parish of St. Nicholas and St. Mary, and known as the Newgate Brewery. The proprietors were ancestors of Mr. Fitt.

The establishment was known for a long period as the Newgate Brewery. It was one of the first breweries in the South of Ireland, and the founder at his death had reached the advanced age of 81, and was the oldest brewer in Ireland.

The Messrs. Fitt had a large sale for strong beer and pale ale, as well as for porter and stout. Their brewery was one of the largest in Ireland, and afforded great facilities for operation of magnitude, standing upon a large plot of ground adjoining the old cathedral and extending to the banks of the Shannon.

A visitor to the brewery when it was operating in its heyday about a century ago, described it as follows:

"On entering the premises we observed, on the right hand, two large ale and porter cellars — on the left, reached by a short flight of steps, is the

mashing loft where are two mash tuns holding 50 barrels each, and a large hop jack.

"From this room the visitor ascends to the copper loft, containing three large coppers of iron and copper, boiled by steam.

"In the tun room are several tons each holding 100 barrels; there is also another and larger tun room containing four tuns. The cooler department, where the fans are moved by steam, will interest the visitor. In reaching this room we pass the large refrigerator chiefly used in summer.

"In the yard are the pumps busily engaged in lifting water from the sparkling Shannon, and near to the offices are the 30 horse-power boilers, and also the large hot-air apparatus for cask cleansing and drying; the hot air blown through the casks by a fan, moistens, cleanses and dries.

Vaults

"On the left of the principal entrance to the brewery are the scalding coppers, and to the right two long vaults with Saxon arches. These vaults are most interesting, and no one with the slightest love for archaeology should fail to visit them. The Saxon arches, still untouched by the reformer's chisel will be viewed by every lover of native

art as precious relics of antiquity.

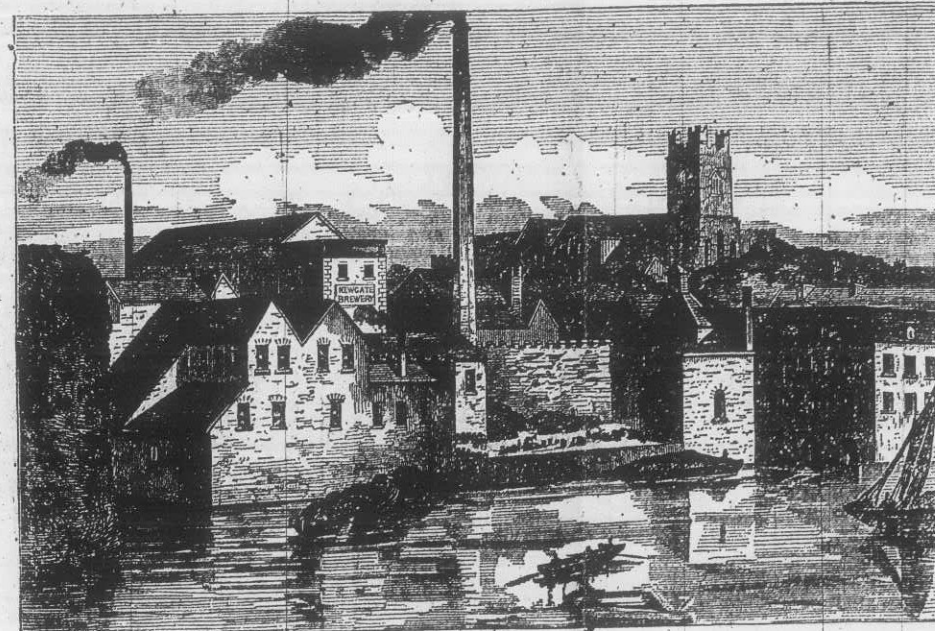
"In Saxon strength that Abbey frowned, With massive arches broad and round, That rose alternate row and row, On pond'rous columns short and low.

"Close by these vaults is the shaft, 90 feet high; and at this spot may be seen the remains of the Old Newgate, and on a wall the City Arms, close to which are the large store cellars. One of them was in days long since the kitchen of the Deanery attached to the Cathedral. The Dean's wine cellar is still discernable.

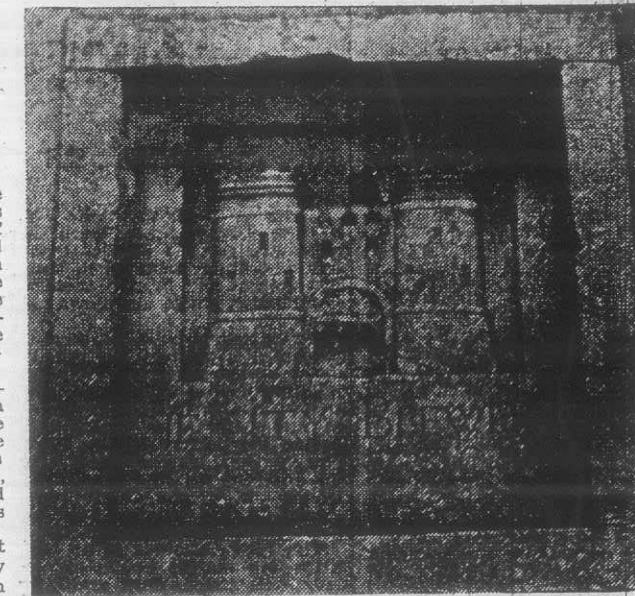
"We now visit the malt-houses near the City Gaol. From them we pass into Newgate Lane and ascend to the fine barley lofts, joined by the oats store and general store rooms, and from it to the grass-covered Abbey Court; tread lightly, this is hallowed ground."

"Adjoining the Abbey Court are the ruins of the Deanery joined by the garden, in which the monks of old often wandered. This garden is directly over the ancient vaults to which we have referred.

"Standing upon the old wall surrounding the garden, we have a pretty view of the beautiful



This interesting print of Newgate Brewery and the busy Shannon Waterfront near the Castle was made in the late 1860's.



This historic stone is set in a wall of the Newgate Brewery near the old city gaol, and bears the inscription, "The Old City Brewery, 1789." In the "Limerick Chronicle" for Saturday, August 14, 1830, the following advertisement appeared—"To be set, and immediate possession given, the Newgate Brewery, together with the dwellinghouse attached thereto. On the improvement of these premises a large sum has been lately expended, and they are now in complete working order, most eligibly situated on the banks of the Shannon, in the centre of the city, with a never-failing supply of water. They would answer admirably well for a brewery."

Shannon and the city of Limerick—including the bridge of Thomond, near to which is the celebrated Treaty Stone, removed here by the Corporation during the Mayoralty of J. R. Tinsley, Esq., in 1865.

"Glancing to the left, we see the Barracks and Wellesley Bridge, and upon it the statue recently erected to the Hon. Fitzgibbon, son of the Earl of Clare, who died at Balacava.

FAMOUS

"We now take leave of the Newgate Brewery, feeling assured that all lovers of the healthful and delicious beverages included under the general term of "beer" will have, during their stay in Limerick, an opportunity for testing to their fullest content, a knowledge of its production by visiting this most respectable,

famous and old established brewery.

"Ale is stout and good, Whether in bottle it be or wood;

'Tis good at morning, 'tis good at night; You should drink while the liquor is bubbling bright; 'Tis good for man, for woman, and child,

Being neither too strong, nor yet too mild."

"Thus sings the poet; and we imagine that few persons would disagree with him on this palatable subject, especially with a bottle of Messrs. Fitt & Sons famous ale before him.

The firm, in addition to its prosperous trade in Ireland, exported to Wales and Manchester, where many a health was drunk in this fine beverage brewed from "water from the sparkling Shannon."

ALMA FITT'S GREAT SPORTING TRADITION

Mr. Alma Fitt, a descendant of Matthew Fitt who owned the old Newgate Brewery, was, in addition to his commercial activities, one of the foremost Limerick sportsmen of his day and excelled particularly in hockey and rowing.

Sixty-six years ago, when an oarsman with Limerick Boat Club, he was a guest of honour with his crew at a special club dinner, where he and his crewmates, were presented by the then club president, J. P. Hall, with gold medals.

At Limerick Regatta in 1906, he had rowed in an underage race for the Cleeve Cup. It was a spirited race in which the LBC crew showed great pluck and determination. Nearing the finishing line, they came from second place with a well sustained effort, got level with the leaders, and in the last few yards, put their boat in front, winning by half a canvas.

To the amazement of everyone, the judge gave his decision in favour of the second crew. Knowing that a mistake had been made, and to compensate the crew for the laurels denied them, they were later awarded gold medals by the club at this special dinner in their honour. Rowing in the four were Alma Fitt (bow), W. H. Jeffares, L. J. R. Hewson, A. L. Earls (stroke), with A. S. Murray (cox). Alma is the only survivor of the crew.

It was his first regatta, and though he won many trophies up to 1911 he never succeeded in a senior race. The reason was a good one: "There was a fellow named Glazer rowing with Shannon and he took a lot of the fun out of it for us."

Sixty years later, in 1965, Alma was made an honorary life member of Limerick Boat Club and the gold medal he was awarded is now displayed in a prominent position in the club.

Alma's ancestors helped in the founding of the Limerick Savings Bank. His father worked in the Savings Bank for 60 years and Alma himself up to his recent retirement carried on this great tradition of service to the citizens of Limerick.

RADIO EIREANN

SATURDAY, AUGUST 28
12.59—News Headlines.
1.00—Sponsored.
1.30—News, followed by Na h-Ír-sí Gaelige.
1.45—Sponsored.
2.00—News Headlines.
3.01—Saturday Sport.
4.00 (approx.)—Nuacht Headlines.
5.00 (approx.)—News Headlines.
5.30—Play On.
5.55—Nuacht

10.30—Nuacht Headlines.
10.31—Mass from the Church of the Assumption, Walkinstown, Dublin.
11.15—Gaspard Mon, Am.
11.30—Service from the Methodist Church, Donegal.
12.15—Take Me to the Seaside.
1.00—This Week.
2.00—Afternoon Concert.
3.00—L'inganno Felice.
4.30—Edge of Catastrophe.
5.25—Twenty Questions.

Papars.
8.25—Weekend Sports Results.
8.30—News Headlines.
9.00—News And It Says In Papers.
9.40—Rogha Ceoil.
10.00—Nuacht.
10.32—The Doctor.
10.58—A Thought For The Day.
11.00—News Headlines.
11.01—Here and Now.
12.00—The Angelus.
12.01—Nuacht Headlines.

7.45—Bavarian Festival.
8.00—Nuacht Headlines.
8.01—The Sound of the Light.
8.30—Idir Shugradh Is Dairire.
9.00—The News.
9.10—Focus.
9.45—Nuacht.
9.55—Sports Final.
10.00—An Mhuinntir S'againne.
10.25—Music Room.
11.00—News Headlines.
11.01—Sponsored.
11.45—Late News Summary.

TELEVISION

SATURDAY, AUGUST 28

5.35—Smokey the Bear.
6.00—The Angelus.
6.01—The News.
6.05—Weekend Sport.
6.15—The Big Top.
6.25—Green Acres.

6.55—Something Else.
7.25—If It's on Your Mind, Say It.
7.55—An Nuacht.
8.00—Marcus Welby, M.D.
9.00—Cops and Robbers.
10.00—The News.
10.15—Cops and Robbers, Part II.