

THE PRODUCTION AND TRADE OF BEER AND WHISKY IN UPPER COQUETDALE

Produced for
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While living in Ayrshire, the great Scottish poet Robert Burns worked as an excise man assiduously seeking out illicit whisky stills for the government. This did nothing to diminish his enjoyment of the product of such distilleries, however, as revealed in the poem *John Barleycorn* which muses obliquely upon the uplifting effects of whisky and contains a vivid account of small-scale distilling (see also *Appendix 4*).

*And they hae taen his very heart's blood,
And drank it round and round;
And still the more and more they drank,
Their joy did more abound.*

*John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
Of noble enterprise;
For if you do but taste his blood,
'Twill make your courage rise.*



*Sir Edwin Landseer's "The Highland Whisky Still", painted in the 1820s, captures the atmosphere of a contemporary illegal still (far right of view).
[Picture: V&A Images/
Apsley House]*

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1. Beer & Whisky in Upper Coquetdale

1.1 Introduction

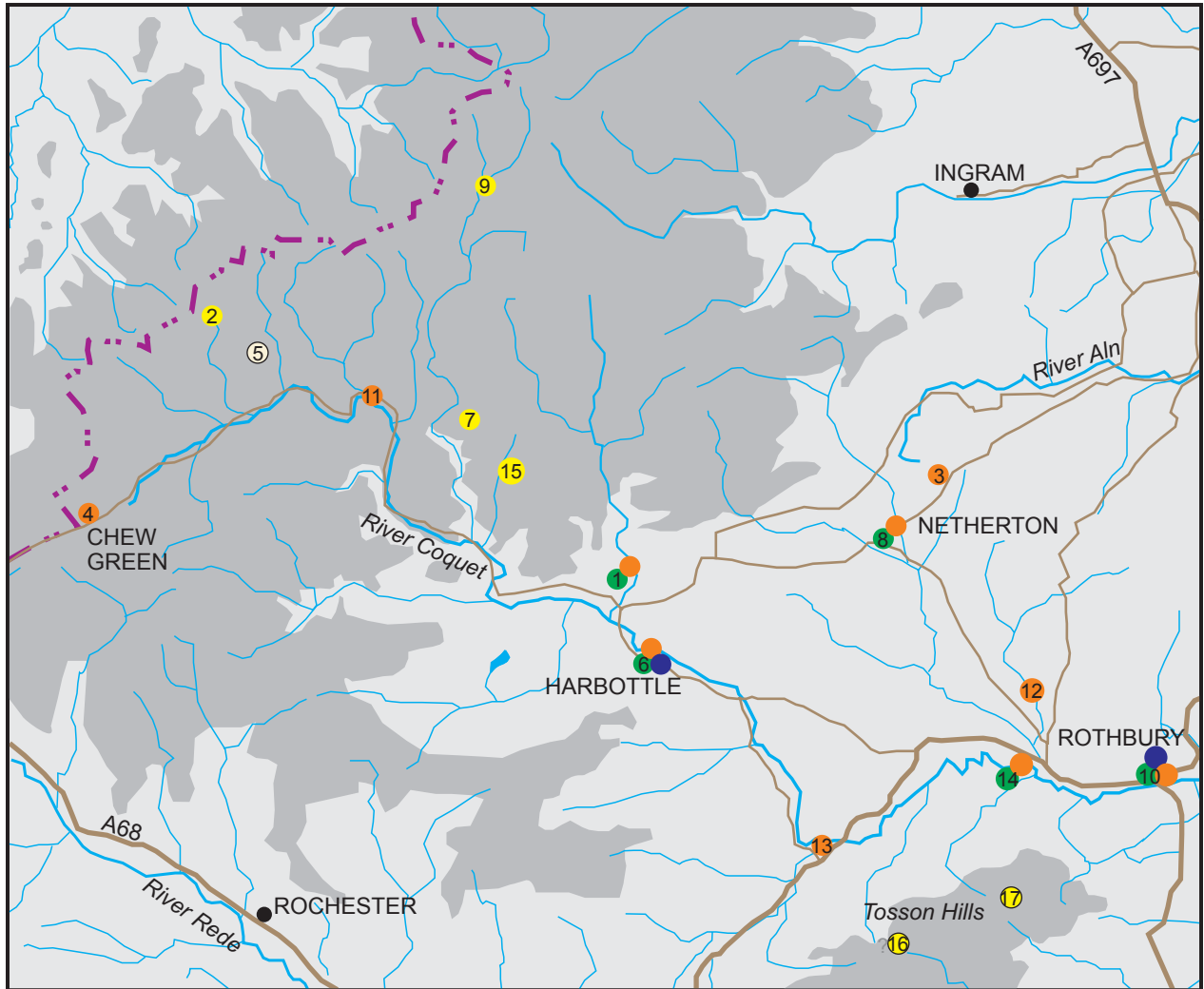
The present document was commissioned by Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA) in order to contribute to the development of a new festival in Coquetdale, The John Barleycorn Festival. The aim of the report is to provide an historical background for the project, and a framework upon which to develop public interpretation in various forms.

The report focuses on the production of whisky and beer in Coquetdale, but also deals in some depth with trade and consumption, all set within the changing social, economic and legislative context for the period concerned. In addition, the processes involved in the brewing of beer and distilling of whisky are also covered, using historic records from Scotland and more recent ethnographic parallels where appropriate. Although the bulk of the research carried out for the present report was desk-based, a number of days were also spent in the field, visiting brewhouse and still sites, gathering oral testimony and recording other data. In addition, an attempt was made to photograph all the known sites of former and present whisky houses, inns and public houses between Rothbury and the head of the valley. Photographs of all the sites visited during the study are included here, along with various historic photographs and a map (*Illus. 01*) showing the location of all the known still sites, breweries and brewhouses, whisky houses and inns and other sites possibly or more tenuously related to any of the above.

The present report aims to provide a solid basis for further work, and for that purpose provides an extensive list of references to works on beer and whisky which were used in compiling the present text or would reward further study. While it is hoped that the present report has indeed provided a background to the subject, it concludes with a number of suggestions for further study, including the study of original documents, examination of census data, an extended programme of oral history recording and archaeological fieldwork.

The physical scope of the present report, and of the John Barleycorn Festival, is the entire catchment area of Upper Coquetdale from the regional centre of Rothbury to the head of the valley near Chew Green. It encompasses the many streams flowing into the upper valley from the south side of Cheviot, some of which travel long distances and sit within substantial valleys, often hidden and deserted, such as those of the Alwin and the Usway burns. All of the tributary valleys and a large part of the upper valley itself were, until well into the 20th century inaccessible to wheeled transport and rarely visited by outsiders, except where crossed by long-distance droveways (*Illus. 02 & 03* give an impression of the remoteness of the upper valley in second half of the 18th century). Also included in the study are the tributaries of the Coquet flowing shorter distances from the Tosson Hills and Simonside within the more restricted area of catchment between the Coquet and the rivers Rede and Wansbeck. This large and sparsely populated area has been examined in the present report primarily using published information and local knowledge, but undoubtedly offers considerable potential for further investigation.

Thanks are due to Kevin Patrick of NNPA who provided the link between the writers and the John Barleycorn Festival organising committee. Also to the many individuals, most of whom are mentioned in the text, who allowed access to personal archives and provided information about and access to the various sites visited during the compilation of the report. The text is by Richard Carlton & Ian Roberts; Illustrations by Richard Carlton unless otherwise specified.



'Southward Edge' Farm - 9km S, 6km E of Rothbury

18

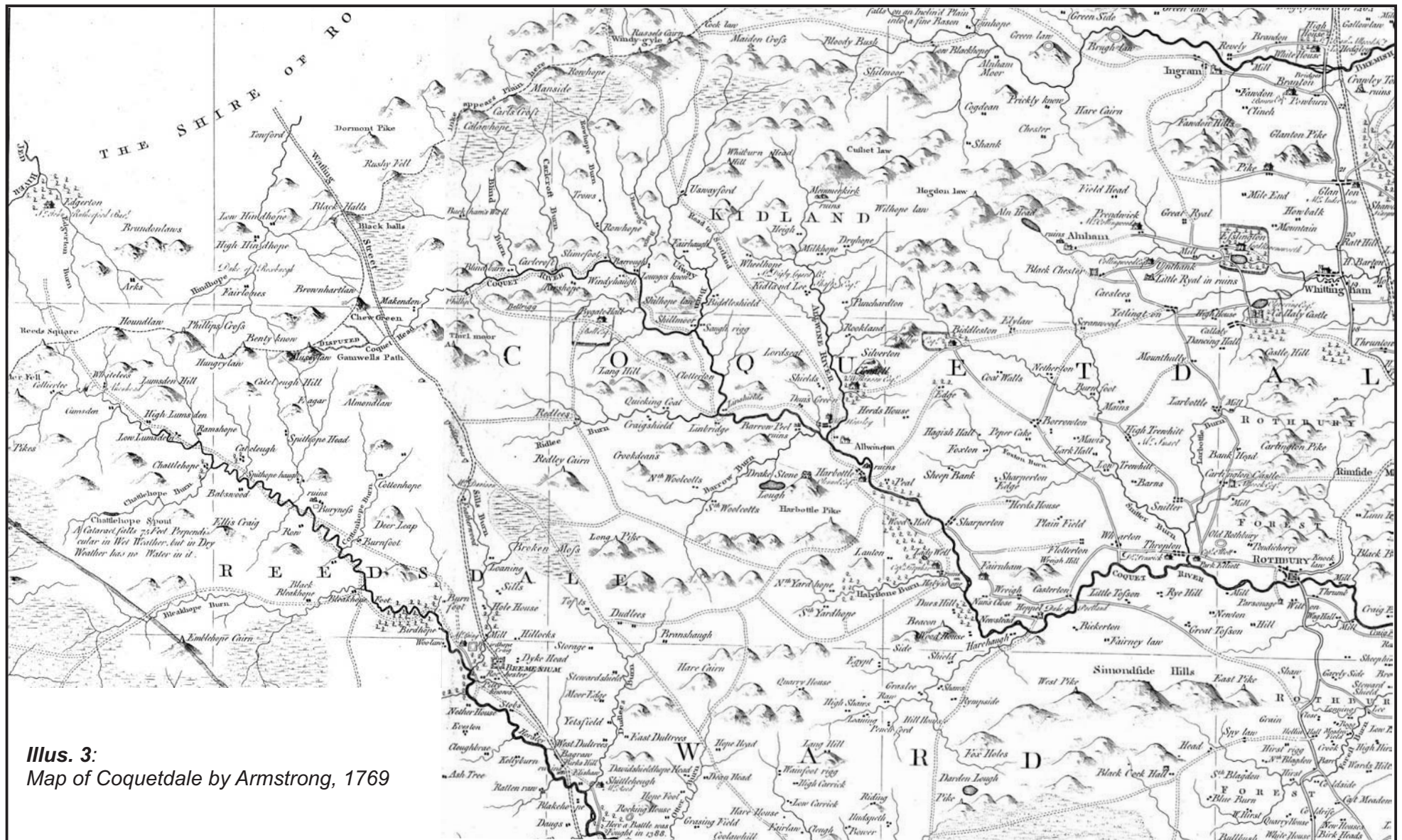
Illus. 01:

The Location of sites mentioned in the text which are known or thought likely to be associated with the production, trade and consumption of beer and whisky in Upper Coquetdale - specifically, known still sites, former breweries & brewhouses, inns, pub and whisky houses (insert shows the study area in relation to Northumberland National Park)

KEY		
● (Yellow)	Still site	10. Rothbury
● (Green)	Extant PH	11. Slyme Foot
● (Orange)	Former inn or whisky house	12. Snitter
● (Blue)	Site of brewhouse or brewery	13. Swindon
○ (White)	Other	14. Thropton
		15. Wholehope Still
		16. Codley Moss
		17. Foot of Simonside
		18. Southward Edge
		1. Alwinton
		2. Blindburn
		3. Caisley
		4. Chew Green
		5. Gowkhope Shank
		6. Harbottle
		7. Midhope Burn Still
		8. Netherton
		9. Rory's Still



Illus. 2: Map of Coquetdale by Kichen, 17



Illus. 3:
Map of Coquetdale by Armstrong, 1769

1.2 Historical background to brewing and distilling.

Alcohol is a product of the natural process of fermentation, a process that takes place in nature when organic material breaks down and begins to be transformed into substances which can nourish the growth of living plants and animals. Alcohol is not always produced when fermentation takes place; it requires the appropriate sugars to be present and for these to come into contact with wild yeast at a suitable temperature for alcohol to be formed. In this natural state the alcohol production continues until its strength is such as to destroy the yeast which has initiated and maintained the process, at which point other micro organisms take over and reduce the alcohol to water and carbon dioxide. Some thousands of years ago humans must have become aware of this process and learned that at the alcohol stage fermentation could be arrested and the liquid product consumed. From this point, it seems likely that techniques were developed to induce fermentation in natural sugar producing substances to create forms of alcohol which were pleasant to drink.

Alcoholic beverages have been prepared and consumed widely since prehistoric times - analysis of organic residues in pottery jars from the Neolithic Northern China have revealed traces of a fermented beverage made from rice, honey, and fruit around 9,000 years ago, approximately the same time that barley beer and grape wine were beginning to be made in the Middle East. The original and, arguably continuing main function of alcohol in its various forms is nutritional, as a regular part of diet, serving as a means of calorie distribution. Beer can be stored longer than grain or bread without fear of pest infestation or rotting, and drinking beer avoided the tooth-destroying grit that was present in hand-ground or early mill-ground flours. Similarly, wine production arguable developed primarily as a method of preserving grape juice, although its sterilising, health-giving and euphoria-inducing qualities added somewhat to its popularity.

In places and eras with poor public sanitation, such as Medieval Britain, consumption of alcoholic beverages, particularly beer, was a way to avoiding water-borne diseases such as cholera. Although the low concentration of beer or wine probably did not entirely kill the offending bacteria, the process of boiling water as part of the brewing process, and the growth of yeast, which suffocates other micro-organisms, effectively had a cumulative sterilising effect. Furthermore, moderate consumption of beer and other forms of alcohol has been shown to have health benefits - all major heart disease studies have produced evidence suggesting that moderate consumers have a reduced total mortality compared with total non-consumers and heavy consumers

Although a wide variety of beers, wines and other, fruit-based alcoholic beverages have been produced in Britain and elsewhere since prehistory, all such products were until relatively recently limited in alcoholic strength to a maximum of about 20 percent alcohol, beyond which yeast is adversely affected and cannot ferment. The invention of the still by Islamic alchemists in the 8th or 9th centuries enabled stronger beverages to be produced.¹ The process rapidly spread to both east and west, appearing first in Europe in the mid 12th century and becoming widespread there in the 14th century. The modern name for alcohol is from an Arabic word meaning "finely divided", a reference to distillation. Distillation produces concentrated alcohol which, although less roundly nutritious than beer or wine, produces a high calorie product which can be stored easily over considerably extended periods.

¹ It is possible that the process of distillation may have been invented earlier: Arrack is said to have been distilled in India around 800BC, and Aristotle is said to have written about distilling in his 4th Century BC "Meteorology".

Concentrated alcoholic beverages produced by distillation are consumed less as foodstuffs – although their energy value is high – than for their sterilizing, mood altering and supposed medicinal qualities, all of which have been commented on frequently in text and verse. An early example of verse in praise of whisky is found in Raphael Holinshed's "Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland" published in 1577, in which the astonishing virtues of *Uisge Beatha* are given as follows :

*"Being moderately taken,
it slows the age,
it cuts phlegm,
it lightens the mind,
it quickens the spirit,
it cures the dropsy,
it heals the strangulation,
it pounces the stone,
its repels gravel,
it pulls away ventositie,
it keeps and preserves the head from whirling,
the eyes from dazzling,
the tongue from lisping,
the mouth from snuffling,
the teeth from chattering,
the throat from rattling,
the weasan from stiffing,
the stomach from womblyng,
the heart from swelling,
the belly from wincing,
the guts from rumbling,
the hands from shivering,
the sinews from shrinking,
the veins from crumpling,
the bones from aching,
the marrow from soaking,
and truly it is a sovereign liquor
if it be orderly taken."*

It is clear that throughout the very long relationship between humans and alcohol geography and climate have strongly influenced the type of alcohol produced, since these factors determine the flora used in the fermentation process. Thus, in warmer climates such as the Mediterranean countries where grapes flourished, wine was produced, while in northern European countries, such as Britain, apples and other available sugar producing crops were used to make alcoholic beverages. In Britain, some of the fermented alcohol was also made from grain. Although grain does not produce sugar directly, exposure to the enzyme diastase converts the starch in grains such as barley to sugar and then permits it to be fermented to form an alcoholic drink. This simple form of brewing produces the basic form of ale – a sweet, dark liquor made from malted barley without any hops added for flavouring. Although, as Burnett explains, the words ale and beer were indiscriminately used for this drink, from the fifteenth century onwards, when hops were added to flavour the brew, the hopped variety was called beer (Burnett 1999, 112-13). The processes have been simply described by numerous writers on home brewing or self-sufficiency such as H W T Tayleur and John Seymour (Tayleur 1976, chapters 8 and 10; Seymour 1979, 153-9). The methods that they describe are similar to those employed by small scale domestic and publican brewers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As the growth of sugar producing plants in most parts of Britain,

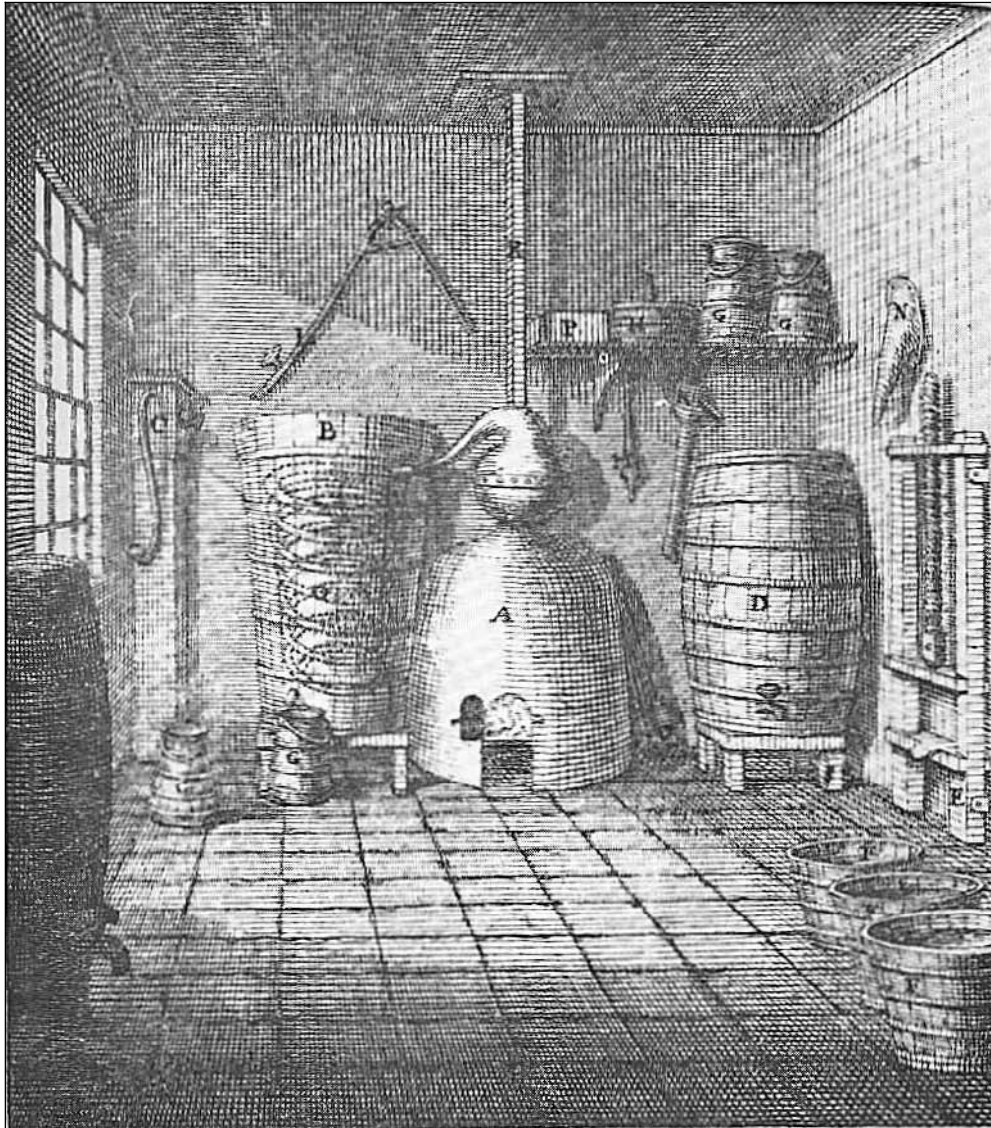
including Coquetdale, is limited by climate and soil, barley and other grains would have been more readily available for alcohol production, which explains why brewing of beer has taken place in all parts of Britain.

While beer is a product of the natural process of fermentation, whisky is not the product of a naturally occurring process and its presence in Upper Coquetdale is more complicated to explain. Whisky, like all spirits, is a product of distillation. Distilling is a process that reduces the amount of water in the alcohol and creates a stronger and more highly flavoured drink than fermented drinks such as wine or beer. Because the process is more scientific than natural, distilling is a more recent form of alcohol production than fermentation. Most writers seem to concur with the notion that it was developed in the Middle or Far East and that it was introduced into Europe some time in the Middle Ages when it was taken up by a number of monastic communities and also by alchemists. These early practitioners used a pot still or alembic. It had been learned that heating the fermented products of grains or fruit had the effect of removing the alcohol, which evaporates more freely than water, particularly when heated. Subsequently, a way was found to trap and condense the alcoholic vapour given off from heated beer or wine using a simple apparatus, the alembic or pot still (Daiches 1969; Moss and Hume 1981).

The simple pot still comprises a pot into which the fermented liquor is poured and heated. Leading from the top of the pot was a long spout, the end of which was curled into a spiralling tube, or *worm*, which is usually submerged in cold water. The vapour from the heated liquid condensed in the worm section of the spout and the resulting liquor was collected at the bottom of the spout. The pot still, in a slightly improved form, continues to be used at the present time in the production of a number of spirits (Morrice 1983, 18-43), notably including whisky. This is because, despite the fact that it is slow, relatively inefficient and requires expertise to operate it, the impurities with which the resultant alcohol is infused are those which give distinctive flavour to the drink, whether malt whisky in Scotland, *grappa* (from pressed grape skins and seeds) in Italy, *calvados* (from apples) in France and *slivovica* (from plums) in the Balkans (see below).



Illus. 04:
Brandy still from Blaznava, Jasenica, Serbia, showing essentially the same apparatus as in Illus. 5 & 6. (Adapted from Radovic 1955, Pl. 36).



- | | |
|--|--|
| A. The Still | L. A Pewter Crane |
| B. The Worm-tub | M. A Pewter Valencia |
| C. The Pump | N. Hippocrateis bag or Flannel
Slieve |
| D. Water-tub | O. Raker Fire-shovel Cote-rake |
| E. A Press | P. A Box of Bungs |
| FFF. Tubs to hold the goods | Q. The Worm within the Worm-tub
mark'd with prick'd lines |
| GGG. Canons of different size | R. A Piece of Wood to keep down
the Head of the Still to
prevent flying of |
| H. A Wood Funnel with a iron-nosel | |
| I. A large Tye to put the Fains
or after-runnings | |
| K. Tin-pump | |

Illus. 05: Representation of an 18th century still, from 'The Compleat Body of Distilling', 1838, reproduced in Philipson 1958, Pl. 11).



Illus. 06: Brandy still photographed between Ivanjica and Gledica, Serbia, in 1933 – note the plum trees and pack-horse just visible the rear of the main group (From Radovic 1955, Pl. 8).

Ethnographic study of the small-scale brandy making in the Western Balkans and elsewhere can provide useful insight with respect to the history of similar enterprises in the British Isles. In 1955 there were a total of about 50,000 registered stills in Serbia, served by some 50 million plum trees. Some stills were owned and operated solely for the use of a single family, but the majority served for several families or an entire village, or are rented on a commercial basis. This system still prevails throughout Serbia as well as Bosnia, Croatia, FYR Macedonia and Slovenia.



Illus. 07: Traditional representation of a 19th century 'moonshiner' (compare with the more recent photograph of small-scale distilling in the Western Balkans, above).

Thus, the methods used in the production of beer and whisky, although linked to each other through the use of barley and malt, are very distinctive from one another. Beer is a low alcohol drink produced in large quantities while whisky, like other spirits, is produced in smaller volumes using a more precise methodology. For this reason, the history of the production and sale of beer and whisky in Upper Coquetdale will be treated as separate topics.

2. Beer – “to have a house and not to brew was a rare thing indeed”.

2.1 Beer & Brewing.

In the twenty first century, the production of beer is most frequently carried out by large scale commercial brewers who dominate the trade. Their products are widely sold in public houses and shops and these are consumed not only in the public houses in which they are sold, but also, increasingly, in the home or other places chosen by the drinkers (Burnett 1999, 138-9). At the same time beer is but one of many alcoholic beverages on the market, all competing with each other, but also challenged by a wide range of non-alcoholic drinks including things that are not usually seen as competitors such as milk, tea and coffee. However, to understand the current place of beer in British society, its place in the past has to be explained.

Up until the later part of the eighteenth century, beer, in one of a number of forms, was the staple drink of the majority of the English population. Beer was considered to be nutritious, was safer to drink than most water and was easily produced in even in the poorest homes. Such home production and consumption was especially widespread during the Middle Ages. A good deal is known of brewing during this period as the practice was regulated by the manor courts according to the provisions of the Assize of Bread and Ale (Dyer 2003, 170-1; Hanawalt 1986, 132). (Its pairing alongside the ‘staff of life’, bread, is an eloquent testimony to the significance of beer in the medieval diet.) These regulated price, quality and measures, with, for example, stipulations that beer at alehouses was to be sold in measured containers, not cups or bowls. Women dominated home brewing, although some men were also involved, whereas alehouses were usually run by men. Some women may have brewed largely for home consumption and only occasionally have sold their produce, perhaps only once or twice a year when they had a surplus. For others however it provided their main income, to the extent that they would buy in malt if their holding did not produce enough, selling the ale from home or on market stalls. There is evidence that richer peasants sometimes invested substantially in brewing, with husbandmen being recorded using the profits from the sale of their agricultural produce to purchase the vats and cauldrons which their wives needed to set up brewing on a larger scale, but it was also a common source of income for poorer households, *cottars* who possessed only smallholdings of a couple of acres.

On a larger scale, doubtless, were two brewhouses recorded in the Umfraville estates in upper Coquetdale and Redesdale in 1245. The Inquisition Post Mortem (IPM) for Gilbert de Umfraville records that the lord held two ‘*bracinagia*’ at Alwinton and Otterburn at the time of his death, which were worth 25s annually:

Also there are in the said villis (of Otterburn and Alwinton) 2 brewhouses (bracinagia) worth yearly 25s...²

The valuation shows these brewhouses were not simply brewing to serve the needs of the manorial households. They must have produced beer for wider public consumption and may well have been leased out to a professional brewer.

² Extract from the Inquisition Post Mortem for Sir Gilbert de Umfraville, Earl of Angus. 30 April 29 Henry III (1245); *Cal IPM* vol I, no. 49; the fuller text in *CalDocScot* i, no.1667 is reproduced here (see also Hodgson 1827, 107-8).

The practice of adding hops to beer, which was introduced from the Low Countries at the end of the fourteenth century, not only gave the drink a distinctive flavour, providing the origins of the pint of 'bitter' but, by acting as a preservative, prompted changes in the brewing industry (Dyer 2003, 323). Because beer could now be stored for longer and transported over greater distances without it deteriorating, the brewer was no longer restricted to producing just a few hundred gallons for a local market. Brewing on a larger scale was possible, especially in towns where the size of the potential market was greater, and ships could be provisioned with beer. Thus what had hitherto been a largely domestic operation began to undergo industrialisation, with brewing vessels worth in excess of £20 being recorded.

Nevertheless, until the latter part of the seventeenth century, when commercial Common Brewers began to dominate the trade in London, most of the beer sold in inns and taverns was produced on the premises and as a proportion of national production was very small (Burnett 1999, 113-5). The production and consumption of ale and beer was also not linked to any one sector of society. Ale was also featured in a number of folk celebrations associated with weddings and funerals (Balfour and Thomas 1904, 97 and 101). Far from being a drink predominantly consumed by members of the working classes, ale and beer were drunk at all levels in society and at all times of the day. As the historian of country house brewing has shown, there were very few country houses without their own brewing facilities and their produce was consumed by everyone in the household (Sambrook 1996, chapter 1). The same author has also traced some of the literature associated with domestic brewing and it is apparent from her research that there was a considerable body of expertise readily available for those who wished to learn about brewing techniques. At the same time, country house brewing tended to retain the same methods with only minimal alteration over a number of centuries. The technological improvements introduced by commercial brewers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were largely ignored by the country house brewers (Sambrook 1996, 153).

The extent to which country house brewing took place in Upper Coquetdale is simply unknown. It has no mention in Dixon's book on the valley and evidence elsewhere is also hard to find. The largest country house in the valley, Biddlestone Hall, was sold by its long time owners, the Selby family, in 1914 and demolished in the 1950s. The sale catalogue contains a description of the room contents of the Hall and, although it lists the presence of wine and beer cellars, it makes no mention of any brewing facilities. Similarly, the 1929 catalogue of the sale of the Holystone Estate includes an inventory of Dueshill (now Holystone) Grange and this also makes no mention of a brew house. Extant country houses such as Clennell Hall (which, incidentally, now incorporates a modern bar – one of only six presently operating in the valley above Rothbury) and Harbottle may repay investigation to ascertain if there is any evidence of brewing by their former owners.

In places other than country houses, beer continued to be drunk at most times of the day by a majority of the population. Domestic brewing was a common feature of life but there were some changes observable during the eighteenth century. Particularly in urban areas, especially after the onset of the Industrial Revolution, beer production became increasingly commercial and in the hands of Common Brewers and Brewing Victuallers. Most working class housing did not contain facilities for brewing and many town dwellers no longer had easy access to the necessary raw materials, so that domestic brewing tended to be strongest in semi-rural and rural areas. It was also the case that in London and parts of South East England, beer ceased to enjoy prominence as a social drink as a result of the cheapness and popularity of gin in the first half of the eighteenth century (George 1925, 43-5) – a phenomenon explored below. Upper Coquetdale and other rural parts of Northumberland would have been an example of an area in which domestic

brewing could well have survived, but there appears to be no available information on the subject. This is not to say that evidence does not exist but that there has been insufficient investigation of the subject. Given the fact that the utensils required for brewing were among the more expensive to be found in many homes, a study of probate returns may yet yield some evidence of brewing practice in rural Northumberland, and archaeological evidence from domestic sites also has the potential to be informative.

Elsewhere in England, particularly in the southern and south eastern counties, rural domestic beer production fell into decline in the last two decades of the eighteenth century. Burnett described this change, noting that contemporaries ascribed it to the higher price of malt resulting from increases in duty and the persistently low level of wages (Burnett 1999, 116-7). He also observed that in the northern parts of the country higher wages and more readily available fuel for domestic heating encouraged the retention of the practice of home brewing both for everyday use and special occasions. However, these were dying practices. The wars against the French between 1793 and 1815 required high levels of taxation and duties on malt and alcoholic beverages were increased to create more revenue. Contemporaries also saw ale houses as potential centres of local unrest and many local magistrates began to restrict the hours during which hostelrys dispensing alcohol could be open. As part of this sense of disquiet, overindulgence in strong drink began to be questioned and the poor were encouraged to refresh themselves with tea rather than the formerly ubiquitous beer. Thus, instead of Cobbett finding it rare to discover a house that did not brew beer, it now became the custom and in place of wholesome beer he found the poor resorting to tea, a brew with "no useful strength in it" (see Cobbett 1822, 12-48). As these circumstances became more widespread in the early years of the nineteenth century, so the place to which most people went to find beer was the public house and this applies as much to Upper Coquetdale as the rest of the country.

2.2 Beer and Public Houses

The sale of alcoholic beverages has been under State control for approximately the last four and a half centuries (see Mathias 1959, Gourvish and Wilson 1994 and Donnachie 1998 for a comprehensive history of British brewing). An Act of 1552 made local Justices of the Peace responsible for the issue of licenses to open and conduct premises in which the sale of alcohol could take place (Milton 1967, 100). The extent to which such a writ ran in Upper Coquetdale in the middle of the sixteenth century when times were turbulent is purely conjectural, but the Act was the basis of the issue of all such licenses until the twenty first century. From time to time additional legislation was created which governed the ways in which the magistrates issued licenses and from 1729 special sessions of the magistrates' courts called *Brewster Sessions* were arranged for the discharge of licensing business (Milton 1967, 101). All surviving records of these activities are to be found in the Quarter Sessions archives which are currently held in the County Record Office. As the Office is currently closed for relocation and reorganisation, its reopening will provide opportunities for further research into the organisation of the drinks trade in the valley.

Nationally, up until 1830, magistrates issued licenses for broadly three types of hostelry, all of which would probably fall under the broad description of the modern term, *public house*. The three types were inns, taverns and alehouses (Hey 1996, 10-11 and 236-7). Of these, the inn was the superior as it was usually the most extensive and well-appointed and provided accommodation and food as well as a range of alcoholic drinks including spirits. Taverns were usually smaller, provided food and drink but lacked the means of accommodating customers overnight. The alehouse was, as the name suggests, the smallest type of hostelry and served only beer, cider and other drinks of this type. Their proprietors were not normally permitted to sell wines and spirits. In 1830,

the passage of the Beer Act created a new form of premises, the beer shop (Gourvish and Wilson 1994, chapter 1). Under the terms of the Act some duties were repealed but the main provision was that any rate payer could apply for a two guinea (£2. 10 pence) license to open a shop to sell beer to be consumed on or off the premises. The terms of the license were similar to those for the other hostelries except that the hours of opening were a little more restricted. The Act has been described as a Free Trade measure designed to open up the sale of beer on a more widespread basis and also to attract the public to drink beer rather than the stronger, and more intoxicating, spirits such as gin and whisky. A large number of these premises were opened, over 24 000 in the first six months, and the consumption of beer increased significantly.

The extent to which this affected Northumberland in general, and Upper Coquetdale in particular, is very difficult to determine. Although there are major studies of the brewing industry in England and in Scotland, the regional picture is less clear, especially for Northumberland (Gourvish and Wilson. 1994, pp 651-663, provide an extensive bibliography of what was available at the time their study was published). At the same time, there have been a number of studies related to drinking habits and the role of public houses, but they contain little mention of Northumberland. Recently, some important pioneering work has been carried out by Brian Bennison, but much of his published work has been concentrated on Newcastle as this is the area in which the largest quantity of beer was consumed and for which we have the most detailed records. Under these circumstances, and incorporating where appropriate information from Bennison, an attempt has been made to survey the distribution of drinking places in Upper Coquetdale.

Undoubtedly access to the Quarter Sessions records would have produced more detailed results, but the use of trade directories supplemented by information from other sources such as the buildings themselves, written materials held by libraries and local people, and oral testimony from current publicans has enabled a preliminary gazetteer to be created. The gazetteer is attached as an appendix to this paper. This shows the distribution of hostelries in the period 1827 to 1929. For almost all of the entries the name of the hostelry has been supplied and, in the case of some, such as the Half Moon Inn at Snitter, it is possible to tell what sort establishment it was. The fact that it was an inn, probably patronised by the coaching trade, was only established on the basis of oral testimony from a member of a family that has lived in the village for some time. In the case of the Sun in Rothbury, it was not possible from the entries that appeared in the two Directories where it was listed to determine what type of hostelry was being conducted. It was only when Mr Davy made his family papers available that it became clear that it was an ale house licensed under the 1825 Act to sell beer, cider and perry.

What seems clear from the list of public houses is that there was no shortage of drinking establishments in the valley at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the wake of the Beer Act of 1830 there was no sudden rush to open beer houses. This would seem to support those who contend that magistrates had been content to supply licenses when requested and were not tempted to restrict drinking locations in order either to profit themselves or in an attempt to increase working class sobriety. The figures would also support many of the points made by Bennison about the beer trade in Northumberland at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Bennison 2000). He has argued that the North-East only produced 3% of the total output of beer in England and Wales in 1830 and that 65% of this liquor was produced by common brewers and only 35% by publicans who produced their own beer. In the rural areas there were likely to be slightly more publican brewers than elsewhere as a consequence of the difficulties of transporting large barrels of beer more than a few miles. It is certainly highly unlikely that there was an illicit trade in beer in the valley comparable with the trade in whisky (see below). There were plenty of opportunities to purchase beer, licenses were not hard to obtain and there were sufficient small breweries, particularly in Newcastle, to keep the price reasonable.

Investigation of the Directories has also revealed that in the 1820s there were two brewers in Rothbury, one of whom, George Storey and Co., was in operation for a considerable part of the century.³

Another important trend that was revealed in the survey of hostelries in the Upper Coquet valley was the opening of a number of hotels in Rothbury by the time that Bulmer's Directory was printed in 1886. In the wake of the construction of Craggside and the opening of a railway line to the town in 1870 (Wells 1998, 70-1), there were many more visitors to the town, some of whom required accommodation for holiday purposes. The County Hotel, a large establishment with a fine view over the valley, was opened as "The Rothbury Hotel" shortly before the railway arrived in readiness for increased visitor trade (Owen 2005, 10). A consequence of this was that some of the smaller public houses, such as the Sun which disappeared into the Newcastle Hotel, listed in the earlier Directories disappeared.

The opening of the hotels may not be the only reason for the disappearance of these businesses. Both at a national and local level there was a marked shift in the ownership of licensed houses. Large-scale brewers were both amalgamating their businesses and buying up licensed properties in order to create chains of tied houses in which only their beer would be sold. No brewery was listed in Rothbury in any Directory after 1886 and Bennison makes clear that in the closing years of the century the North-East brewery scene was markedly similar to the national picture. It was also easier for the products of the larger brewery companies to reach the town after 1870 as the railway provided the necessary transport. Thus, the presence of large brewing concerns in Rothbury and elsewhere in Upper Coquetdale and their effects on the ownership and survival of the public houses of the area needs to be investigated. In addition, it would also be useful to research the effects of the Temperance movement in the area. At a national level, a major study (Harrison 1994) has set out the general background to the activities of the movement but more could be done at a local level. In the early twentieth century, the Red Lion at Alwinton (Owen 2005, 39) and, further down the valley, the Fox & Hounds at Wingates, ceased to sell intoxicating liquor and became Temperance Hotels. This pattern may also have been followed by other establishments.

An indication of the role of pubs and drinking in the social life of the area in the 19th century (and perhaps a reason for the emergence of Temperance hotels!) can be gleaned from anecdotal reports such as the following, provided in *To The Source Of The Coquet (1920)*:

"(Netherton)... was known for its brisk social life, greyhound coursing, cockfights, merry nights, etc., and many stories are told of its characters and their habits. One of them is about the Netherton carrier, a century ago, who had been at Alnwick and had goose for dinner, evidently a very large helping. He tried to "droon her" before leaving Alnwick, made another attempt at the Bridge of Aln Inn, and also at Whittingham, but he declared he never "gat her drooned till he gat to Netherton". The old "Fighting Cocks," the scene of many a main, is gone now. After Waterloo a renowned battle took place here as elsewhere, when the feathered warriors were named after the French and English generals. They fought to the wild hoarse yells of the natives and the visiting team from Bickerton. That particular form of Northumbrian jollity has gone for ever. The old Star Inn is now a hotel and the "Fighting Cocks" is the schoolmaster's house.

In the absence of access to more formal records, two of the longer serving publicans in the Upper Coquet were interviewed and supplied valuable information about the

³ A brewery site is shown adjacent to the Queen's Head on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey plan.

hostelries with which they were connected and the trade in general. These informal interviews suggest that in trying to recover further information about the beer and whisky trades in the Upper Coquet, the members of the John Barleycorn Project should not neglect oral history. Efforts should be made to establish a programme of interviews with those who have experience as suppliers and consumers of the beverages! The two informants were Mrs Anne Dunn of The Star at Harbottle, who has owned and run The Star for 33 years, and Mr Angus Foreman of the Rose and Thistle at Alwinton. Mr Foreman not only ran the house for 31 years but was the third generation of his family to do so. Mr Foreman's grandfather took over the pub in 1907, the family purchased it in Mr Foreman's father's time and the Rose and Thistle is now operated by Mr Foreman's daughter and her husband.

Mrs Dunn stated that she and her husband purchased The Star from Alwinton Breweries which had acquired the public house earlier as part of their tied house chain. She provided the information that the house had previously been called The Unicorn. One very important feature Mrs Dunn revealed was that The Star had a brewhouse attached to it. She explained that the two cottages to the south of The Star used to be called Brewery Cottages and that behind them there is still a brewhouse with a hearth and copper. It was not possible at short notice to do more than make a preliminary examination of this building, but a more detailed survey could be made in the future. Mrs Dunn is not certain when the brewery was last used as it has not functioned during her occupancy of the premises nor has she heard anyone speak of it being used in the recent past. It is apparent that there is much more to be discovered about this brewery, especially in relation to the amount produced, where it was sold and during which period of The Star's life it operated.

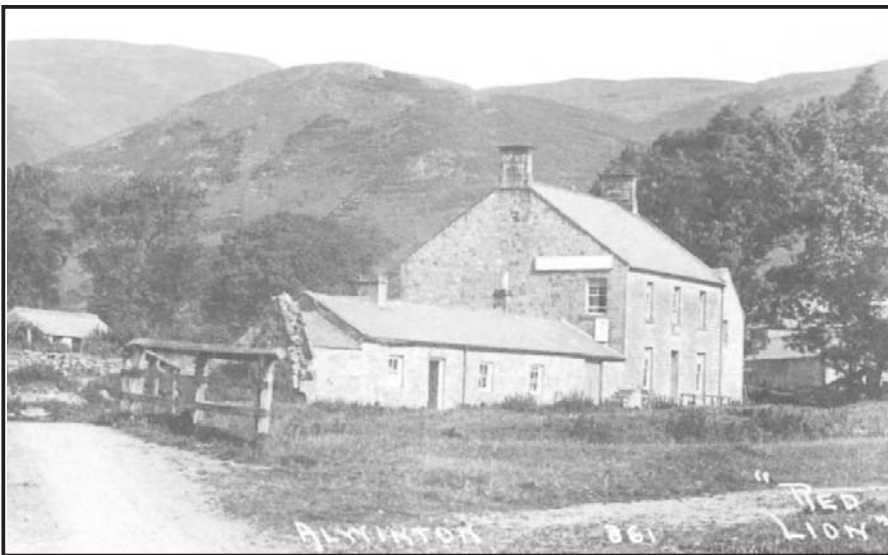
Mr Foreman confirmed that the Rose and Thistle had never produced its own beer - there are no brewing facilities on the premises. Mr Foreman was not certain where beer had come from before his family came to the Rose and Thistle but he recollected that his grandfather had obtained his beer from one of the Newcastle breweries. It was brought to Rothbury by train and then by road to Alwinton. Mr Foreman stated that when his father bought the pub, it was in private hands. The owner at the time lived in Maidenhead and it is not known if he had ever operated the pub. Mr Foreman explained that for much of his family's occupancy of the premises the Rose and Thistle was a very local pub. Custom, especially during the winter, was primarily confined to people from the village and the surrounding farms. Traditionally the busiest time was around the annual show in the autumn. Recently, tourism and an expansion into the provision of food and bed and breakfast has increased the turnover of the pub and made it a centre of busy activity in the village. In his review of past trade, Mr Foreman made it apparent that many of the publicans running the smaller pubs in the valley had been forced to have additional jobs if their businesses were to survive as the level of licensed trade was so low. In Mr Foreman's case, he had followed his father and grandfather in using the land attached to the pub for sheep and cattle farming. Mrs Dunn has opened a newsagent's business at The Star and her husband has run a taxi service in the village. This type of work is not new. Several of the entries in the Directories indicate that publicans in the past were often running dual businesses from their premises. For example, in 1886, the licensee of the Newcastle Hotel in Rothbury was also a builder, while in Thropton the occupant of the Three Wheat Heads was a horse breaker. Meanwhile, at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Bootiman family who operated The Star at Harbottle had, at one time been cobblers, but by this time had gained a national reputation as trainers of coursing greyhounds while one of the family, Tom, was a professional slipper who had slipped the Waterloo Cup on no less than nine occasions. Further research will no doubt provide a clearer picture of the jobs undertaken by publicans in the Upper Coquet valley in addition to running their public houses.

Both interviews indicated that in many ways the recent histories of The Star and the Rose and Thistle are similar to other rural public houses. Patterns of trade have changed so that different types of beverage are now drunk alongside beer and the overall uses of the public house and the consumption of beer have both declined (Burnett 1999, 138-40). As Burnett stated, in 1995 the average male consumption of beer per week, at 10.1 pints was probably little less than the daily consumption of many Victorian heavy drinkers, and while the amount consumed by drinkers in the 1990s reduced as they grew older, a hundred years previously the opposite was the case. Rural publicans thus have to stock a wider range of products in their bars and generally cannot rely on the beer drinker alone as a customer. Most of the surviving country pubs (notably at Alwinton, Clennel and Thropton) now offer food as a large and increasing component of their business, and most also offer overnight accommodation, while Harbottle has developed as a shop, selling newspapers, books and basic groceries in addition to its role as a pub. The only establishment not to have substantially altered its mode of operation or commercial orientation in line with the times is The Star at Netherton, where opening times vary from the norm and beer continues to be poured (not pumped) from the cask and served at a counter rather than a long bar. The Star at Netherton is exceptional in other ways, too. It was a tied pub owned by the Rothbury Brewery Company until 1902 when, apparently due to the liquidation of the latter, it was sold. At the time it was sold it was being rebuilt to serve as the Station for the proposed northwards extension of the Rothbury branch of the North British Railway. The proposed extension did not occur, however, nor was the rebuild ever entirely finished and the Star remained in business as a public house, albeit one based upon the waiting room of a railway station! Over the last quarter of a century or so it has been tidied up without suffering major refurbishment, and has enjoyed continuous recognition as a real ale establishment by CAMRA. The continued survival of The Star in its present form beyond the period of its present ownership may be in doubt, however since the start economic facts of business dictate that any purchaser seeking commercial viability would require a larger income from the business than the present restricted opening hours, limited range of drinks and absence of bar meals allows.

A further factor that has impacted adversely on the country public house is the legislation to reduce alcohol intake by motorists. Visits to the public house for many country folk often require the presence of a driver prepared not to take alcohol and this, for some, spells the end of the trip. Does this also spell the end of the "country pub" or does it mean that in Upper Coquetdale, as elsewhere, proprietors must be inventive and innovative in finding new ways to make their premises attractive and, if so, will beer find its place among these new attractions?



Illus. 12: The Ed Lon, a Photograph by R



Illus. 13: The Ed Lon, a from Den D



Illus. 8: *The Rose and Thistle, 2004*



Illus. 9: *The Rose and Thistle, c. 1890*
(photograph courtesy of Mr Angus Foreman)



Illus. 10: *The Rose and Thistle, c. 1960*
(photograph courtesy of Mr Angus Foreman)



Illus. 11: *The Rose and Thistle interior, c. 1960*
(photograph courtesy of Mr Angus Foreman)



Illus. 14: The Star Inn, 2006.



Illus. 15: The Star Inn and 'brewer's cottages', 2006.



Illus. 16: The Star Inn, 1931



Illus. 17:
Former Brew House in the rear yard of the Star Inn.



Illus. 18:
Stable & cart shed in the rear yard of the Star Inn.



Illus. 19: *Rear view of The Star Inn.*



Illus. 20: The Star Inn Brewhouse.



Illus. 21:
Probable licence number on fireplace lintel in The Star brewhouse.



Illus. 22: Interior of metal cauldron above stove.



Illus. 23: *The former Ship Inn, Arbottle.*



Illus. 24:
The former Forrester's Arms and attached cottages, Arbottle.



Illus. 25: The Salmon Inn, 0



Illus. 26: The Salmon Inn, 0 Collier 0



Illus. 27: Crook Brn, c.0



Illus. 28 *The Star Inn, Netherton (Photograph by IR)*



Illus. 29 *The Star and Fighting Cocks, viewed from the south.*



Illus. 6 *The former Fighting Cocks Inn and a stile giving access to a former cock-fighting pit to the south-west.*



Illus. 3 *Rig and furrow bordering Netherton village, providing evidence for extensive cereal cultivation there in the medieval and/or early post-medieval periods.*



Illus. 32 *The Three Wheat Heads, Thropton.*



Illus. 33:
Collier's 1920s view of the Three Wheat Heads Thropton (from Owen 2005).



Illus. 34: *The Cross Keys, Thropton..*



Illus. 35: *The former Square & Compass, Thropton
(Photograph by IR).*



Illus. 36: The Newcastle Hotel, Rothbury.



Illus. 37: The Railway Hotel, Rothbury.



Illus. 38: The Queen's Head, Rothbury.



Illus. 39: The Turks Head, Rothbury.



Illus. 40: The rear of the Turks Head, with possible former brewhouse to left of view.



*Illus. 41: The former County Hotel, Rothbury
(from Owen 2005)*



Illus. 42: The Half Moon, Sitter, 0

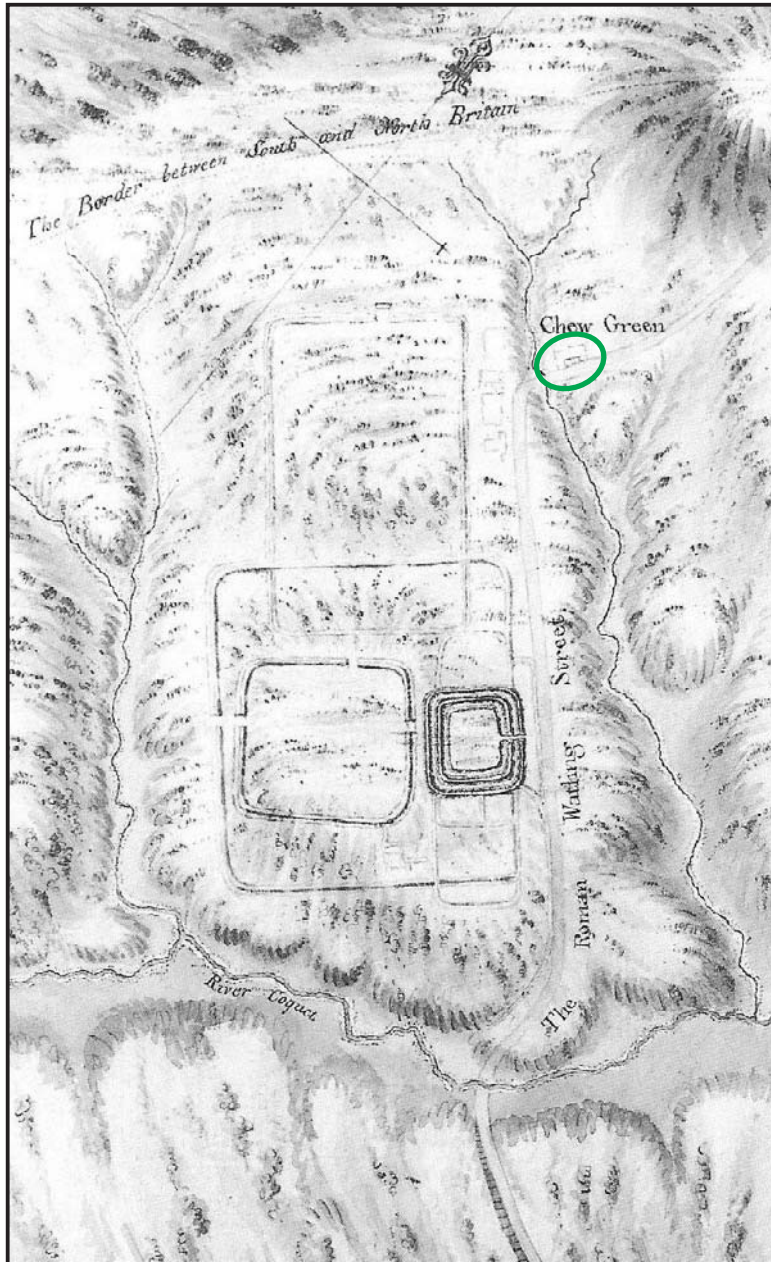


Illus. 43: The Half Moon and Anez, Sitter



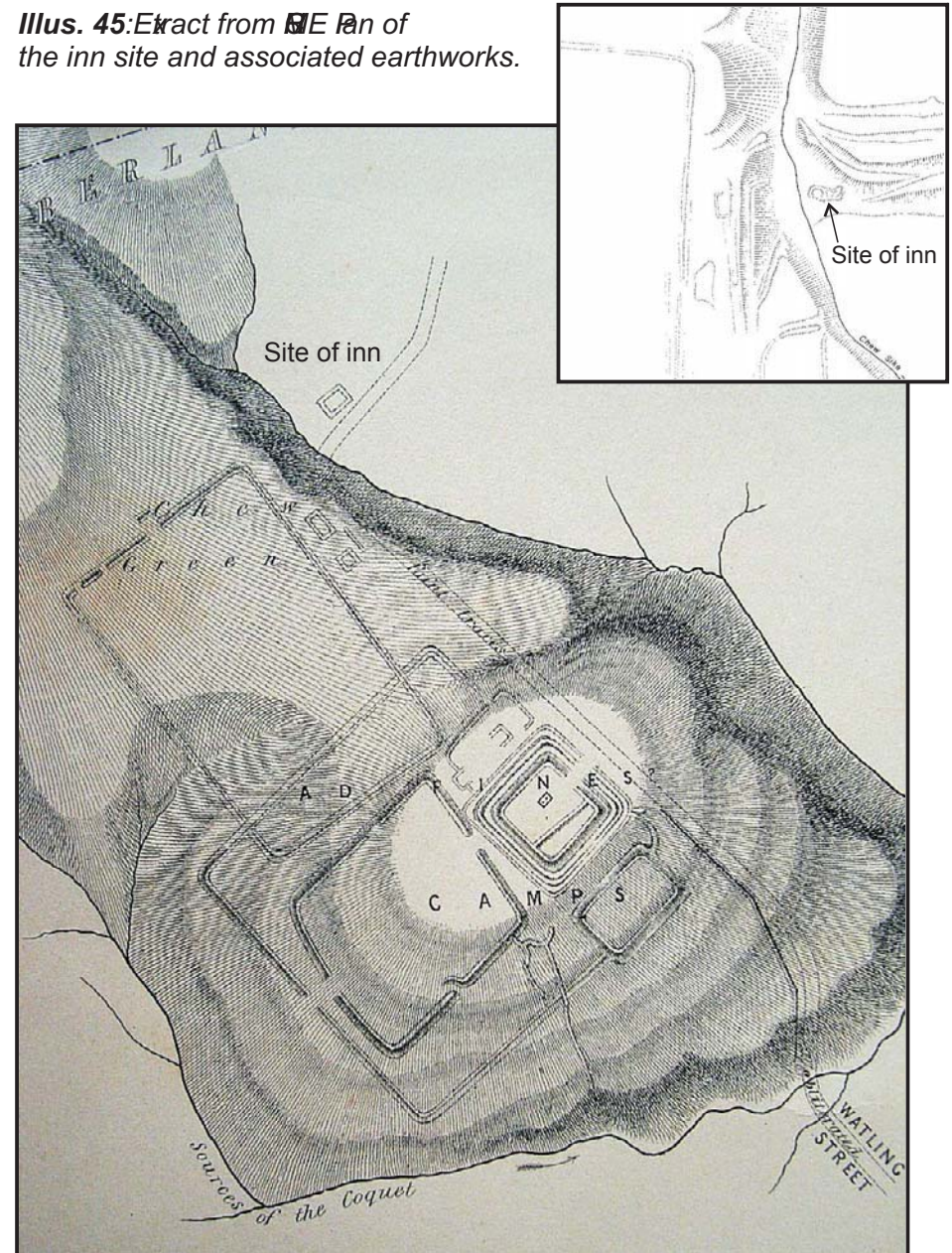
Illus. 44: The Badger, Sinton

(Photographs by R)



Illus. 46: *Wam 53 Plan of New Gen, 7* showing the inn site (circled) NNE of the main Roman earthworks complex

Illus. 45: *Extract from Mac 10 Plan of the inn site and associated earthworks.*



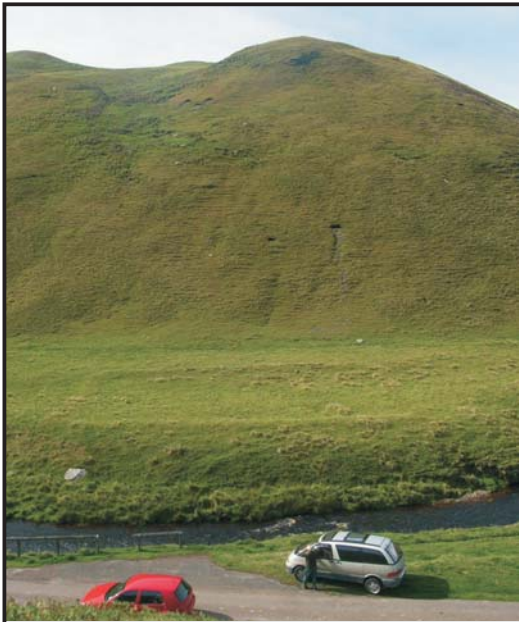
Illus. 47: *Macbuchlan's Plan of New Gen, 10*



Illus. 48: Aerial view of Dew Gen from the south (from Ware Sp. 9) with the inn site circled



Illus. 49: The site of the Dew Gen inn, 0



Illus. 50: View of earthworks on the south bank of the Oget at Bme Bot -possible inn site or related to it.



Illus. 51: View of Bme Bot.



Illus. 52:
Remains of a former inn at Wisley northeast of Netherton.



Illus. 53: *Photograph of a building believed to have been an inn at Wisley*



Illus. 54:
Remains of a roadside wall associated with the inn site at Wisley



Illus. 55: *Photograph of a furrow adjacent to the Wisley inn site.*

3. Whisky

3.1 The Whisky-making Process.

Whisky production begins when the barley is malted, which is achieved by steeping the barley in water, then allowing it to reach the point of germination and even to develop a sprout up to a few millimetres long. Malting releases enzymes that break down starches in the grain and helps convert them into sugars. When the desired point of germination has been reached, the malted barley is dried using smoke - peat can be added to the fire at this stage to give an earthy peaty flavour to the whisky (the 19th century stills in Coquetdale probably used peat as their only fuel).

The dried malt is mixed with hot water, creating a 'mash' which is allowed to 'steep', a process which dissolves the sugars which were produced during malting. The resultant sugary liquid is known as 'wort'. This is transferred to another large vessel where yeast is added, and allowed to ferment. The liquid produced, called 'wash' - similar to a rudimentary beer of about 5-7% alcohol by volume - is ready for distillation.

The pot still, still used for single malts was the only kind of still known to illicit distillers on both sides of the Border. The wash is heated to the boiling point of alcohol (lower than the boiling point of water) allowing the alcohol to evaporate and travel to the top of the still, through a connecting pipe into a condenser, where it is cooled as the coiled condensing pipe, or 'worm' passes through water, and reverts to liquid. This may be distilled a second or third time to increase the concentration of alcohol.

Following distillation, the whisky may be drunk immediately or placed into oak casks for the maturation process, as is the modern custom. Historically, casks previously used for sherry were used, but old bourbon, port, cognac, calvados, beer, and Bordeaux wine casks are now also used.

3.2 Why whisky; why Coquetdale?

Writing in 1903, David Dippie Dixon introduced his account of the production and consumption of whisky in Upper Coquetdale (Dixon 1903, 18) with an abridged account of the visit of Archdeacon Sharp to a "whiskey-house" at "Slyme-foot" in Upper Coquetdale as given by Mackenzie (Mackenzie 1825, Vol. II, 83). The story has been used by other writers, (Philipson 1991, 33; Charlton 1996, 136) in which the hostelry, described by Dixon as a public house, becomes respectively an "inn" and a "pub". Whether the hostelry was any of these things can only be determined by an examination of Quarter Sessions records, if they survive for the period, but the use of the term, "whiskey-house" by Mackenzie, together with the rest of the information in the paragraph is significant. It forms part of a description of the lives of the people inhabiting in the Kidland Lordship in Rothbury parish, beginning on the preceding page of Mackenzie's book, in which he describes the extensive pastoral husbandry followed by these upland sheep farmers. He points out that they lived in a remote part of Northumberland and that they "retained many of the peculiar customs and manners of the Borderers longer, perhaps, than those of any other part of the county." So remote are their dwellings that they only visit Newcastle once each year to pay their rents and to stock up with provisions for the winter, which include a supply of "whiskey". Whisky obviously played an important part in the life of the community of Upper Coquetdale!

The description of the whisky-house is of a place frequented by the sheep farmers where they played cards, gambled and consumed quantities of liquor. Their businesses were

carried on by their servants whilst they caroused, “lost in a whirl of dissipation to all care and recollection.” According to Mackenzie, this state of affairs was only brought to an end by Archdeacon Sharp, who visited the house, admonished the revellers and on pain of some ecclesiastical censure sent them home with an injunction to attend their respective churches on Sundays. This latter is a telling point as the strictures of an Anglican clergyman, if not put in this way, would have carried little weight with those farmers who were Presbyterians.

Assuming that there is some truth in Mackenzie’s account, it tells us a great deal about the habits of these people. The whisky-house is a social meeting place to which sheep farmers travel to meet and to enjoy themselves. The farmers were the social elite of the area as they had servants who were able to run their farms in their employers’ absences. Although communal, it is likely that the house was not licensed as only inns and some taverns had the right to sell spirits. They also drank whisky – a Scottish, not an English drink – which was also obtainable in Newcastle where they were able to purchase it, which may suggest that it was not always possible to obtain smuggled or illicitly distilled whisky in Upper Coquetdale, but confirms that people living in lowland Northumberland were also partial to the Scottish spirit. In fact, the whole operation is closer to the Highland gatherings described by Devine, Gray and Haldane (Devine 1975, 156 and 160; Gray 1956, 52-3; Haldane 1995, 183) in which groups of Highlanders gathered together socially to drink whisky and to the production of which all families represented in the group had contributed. In the Highland situation, such stills, if below 12 gallons in size, were permitted by law for private distillation and were frequently communally owned. Whisky was a necessary part of social life, an antidote to the wet weather and a specific against all human ills! It was also the case that in the second part of the eighteenth century, elite farming groups in Southern Scotland had developed a taste for whisky and it was becoming socially desirable to serve and drink it. (Devine 1975, 156-7).

Mackenzie does not date Dr Sharp’s visit to “Slyme-foot”, but as Sharp was Rector of Rothbury from 1720 to 1758, it would be reasonable to assign it to a date some time in the first half of the eighteenth century. As shown below, whisky drinking in England at this time was not common, but circumstances in the Coquet valley were different from elsewhere in the country and would have assisted in the spread of an appetite for whisky. First, as a result of the troubles on the Anglo-Scottish Border which plagued the region from the end of the thirteenth century to the Union of the Crowns in 1603, the people on both sides of the Border had learned much of each others social customs. After the accession of James I, trade and cross-Border traffic increased and the ties became stronger. Second, Coquetdale was one of the more important routes for the passage of Scottish livestock into England. In the 1670s and ‘80s, official encouragement was given to the cattle trade (Haldane 1971, 18-19) and drovers thereafter brought south through Coquetdale increasingly larger herds of cattle and, later, flocks of sheep for sale in England. Whisky was one of the important staples of the drover’s life (Haldane 1971, 26-7) and he would have needed to replenish supplies as he moved south as well as sharing it with potential customers. The whisky house described by Mackenzie was near Rowhope and immediately adjacent to The Street, one of the most important drove routes through Coquetdale (Rushworth, Roberts and Carlton 2005, 36-48) and would have been an ideal place for drovers and farmers to meet and exchange news and drams of whisky. It may be that the first stills in Coquetdale were established to supply whisky to houses such as the one at “Slyme-foot” or another which Dixon suggests was found close to the drove road and remains of Roman camps at Chew Green (Dixon 1903, 11).

3.3 Whisky and Gin

The history of whisky production is more closely associated with Scotland than any other part of the British Isles. In large parts of England, particularly the south and specifically London, gin was the drink of choice.

Although St. Patrick, a native of Scotland, is reputed to have introduced distilling to Ireland in the 5th Century, secure references to whisky are elusive until the later Middle Ages. The first written reference to Scotch whisky occurs in the Exchequer Rolls of Scotland for the year 1494: ‘...eight bolls of malt to Friar John Cor wherewith to make aqua vitae’. Eight bolls is 1,120lbs or 50kgs—a sufficiently large quantity of malt to suggest that whisky-making was already well-established by this time. The word whisky is derived from the Gaelic translation of ‘aqua vitae’ (‘water of life’), *uisge beatha*. In 1498 there is a further reference in the Lord High Treasurer's Account ‘*To the barbour that brocht aqua vitae to the King in Dundee*’. The association with barbour was significant, reflecting the traditional medicinal role of whisky, and in 1505 the Guild of Surgeon Barbers in Edinburgh was granted a monopoly on the manufacture of whisky.

At the end of the 16th century three types of spirits were known in the Western Isles, graded by the number of times they were distilled: *usquebaugh* (twice distilled), *trestarig* (thrice) and *usquebaugh-baul* (four times); also referred to a century later by Martin Martin in his *A description of the Western Islands of Scotland*:

Their plenty of corn was such, as disposed the natives to brew several sorts of liquors, as common usquebaugh, another called trestarig, id est, aquavitæ, three times distilled, which is strong and hot; a third sort is four times distilled, and this by the natives is called usquebaugh-baul, id est, usquebaugh, which at first taste affects all the members of the body: two spoonfuls of this last liquor is a sufficient dose; and if any man exceed this, it would presently stop his breath, and endanger his life. The trestarig and usquebaugh-baul, are both made of oats.

Several reasons can be put forward for the early and subsequent vigorous development of distilling in Scotland. Although brewing malt ale has a much longer history in the country, it was difficult to keep for extended periods after brewing as the climate is not suitable for growing the hops vital for its preservation. In addition, it was difficult in rural areas to obtain reliable supplies of yeast, with many country brewers resorting to natural yeasts, often with unpalatable results. Under these circumstances, the transformation of weak alcoholic liquor into spirits offered a way to continue using locally available resources and ensure a year-round supply of drink. Whisky had the added advantage of being much easier to transport than bulky beers and ales; an important consideration in a large sparsely populated and mountainous country.

As indicated earlier, the practices in Northumberland, as described by Mackenzie, were very much at variance with those found elsewhere in eighteenth century England. The preference for whisky in Coquetdale as well as other northern communities was unusual, indeed one writer suggests that “*whisky was scarcely known in England in the eighteenth century*” (Burnett 1999, 165). The tastes and customs elsewhere in England centred around the production and consumption of gin. In London in the 1730s, the amount of gin distilled and sold had reached staggering heights – the amount distilled having climbed from 3 500 000 gallons in 1727 to nearly 5 500 000 gallons in 1735. By this latter year, gin was being sold in over 7 000 licensed and unlicensed premises (Rude 1970, 203). The consumption of gin also had a number of other characteristics associated with it that made it different from the drinking of whisky in the North. Cheapness was an essential requirement of the gin drinking public which consisted of all classes of society, especially

the poor. Consequently there was an incentive for the less scrupulous of the distillers to adulterate their product with very cheap ingredients and for the product to be produced as quickly as possible. This could lead to problems arising from lack of maturity which could result in blindness, sickness and death for those who consumed it (George 1966, 42-3). In addition, there is also strong evidence that the consumption of gin was not just for social conviviality but also for total inebriation. The slogan, "*Drunk for a penny. Dead drunk for two pence. Straw for free*", appeared over the door of gin shops and promised that the totally inebriate would be provided with the wherewithal to sleep off their stupor (Dillon 2002, 37).

As a result of a steady supply of reports from various judicial bodies in London, members of the Walpole administration of the 1730s were very much alive to the increasing difficulties created by the gin craze (George 1966, 44-8). However, they saw them as being much more related to the problem of social disorder as a threat to the fabric of society rather than in terms of the health of the population. Consequently, in 1736, they attempted to introduce measures which would regulate the gin trade to the point where it no longer formed a threat to public order. George Rude has traced the course of the efforts made by the government in 1736 and explained why they met with such little success (Rude 1970, 201-221). His account has been extended by Dillon, who has described the continuing struggle against the evils of "Mother Gin" between 1736 and 1751 when effective legislation was finally introduced (Dillon 2002). As much of the legislation was centred around the distilling of spirits, there was a knock-on effect on the production of whisky in the north of England. As duties rose on spirits and malted grain, the principal ingredient of most spirits, demand grew for illicit or smuggled liquor which helped to fuel the clandestine production and movement of cheap, illegal whisky in Northumberland. Production and smuggling in remote upland valleys such as Coquetdale ceased to be solely of a desirable product for local consumption but as a marketable commodity for export elsewhere.

Legislation in England, produced as a method of controlling the supply and consumption of gin, did not eliminate the production of the liquor. Instead, it brought about a concentration of the trade in the hands of a small number of large-scale manufacturers whose wares were not only of a more uniform quality, but whose production could be better measured and taxed by government (Rude 1970, 278). Consequently, when the wars with France at the end of the century created demands for higher spending and concomitant increases in taxation, malt production and distilling proved to be areas of the economy where taxes could be easily raised. Such measures speedily brought about an increase in illicit distilling and smuggling in Northumberland.

At the same time that these events in England acted as a stimulus to clandestine activity among the producers and suppliers of distilled liquor in the Borders, the Scottish whisky producers were also experiencing conditions that added further impetus to those engaged in the trade in illegal whisky. Although the Act of Union of 1707 had theoretically made Scottish liquor production liable to the imposition of the same laws as those enacted in England, in practice there were differences in incidence and enforcement. Apart from the duties on malt, introduced against a background of heavy opposition in the twenty years after the Union (Morrice 1983, 47), the Scottish whisky distiller enjoyed benefits not available to his counterparts in England. Principally, whisky for domestic consumption was not taxed until after 1781 so that the small pot stills north of the Highland line continued to flourish untrammelled by any duties. Further south, in the Lowland region of Scotland, the exemption of duty upon *aqua vitae* under the 1736 legislation, continued in 1751, encouraged a number of firms to begin large scale distilling to the extent that they were producing over one and a half million gallons each year by 1800 (Burnett 1999, 166). The absence of the higher duties charged on liquor production

in England meant that the lower prices at which whisky could be bought in Scotland encouraged a significant smuggling industry to develop between the two countries.

The Wash Act established the Highland Line, a formal distinction between the Highlands and Lowlands, with the Highlands given special treatment partly to encourage illicit distillers to become legal. In the Highlands each distillery was allowed to operate just one still at a much-reduced license fee, but could only use barley grown in the parish. However, illicit distilling and smuggling into the Lowlands continued unabated.

The large-scale distillers in the Lowlands welcomed the Wash Act and immediately increased their output. By 1786 the five distilleries controlled by the Stein and Haig families were exporting to England 881,969 gallons of spirit, and were soon locked in a fierce price war with their London competitors who used their influence in the capital to persuade parliament to increase duty on shipments south of the border. They also secured legislation which effectively barred Scottish distillers from the London market for a year.

The attempts at legislation made by the two governments in the 1780s, both to control the Scottish industry and increase revenue to offset some of the consequences of the American War of Independence, had the effect of increasing rather than diminishing the illicit trade in whisky. When faced with further foreign wars in the 1790s, the government further increased taxation on alcohol, thus encouraging still more illicit whisky production and trading (Weir 1980, 218-9).

During the subsequent 30 years the local market became flooded with cheap whisky produced in the small Highland stills. Many licensed distillers were forced out of business or joined this immense network of illegal Highland distilling and smuggling. Landowners turned a blind eye as illicit distilling and smuggling, involving coppersmiths and farmers as well as the distillers and transporters brought income to their tenants, giving them money to pay their rents. By the end of the eighteenth century smuggling bands, which could contain as many as fifty men and ponies, virtually controlled some parts of Scotland where excisemen and law officers ventured at their peril.

Because of the clandestine nature of the enterprises involved, it is not possible to quantify the extent of illegal whisky production. However, figures cited by other writers such as "eight legal stills to every 400 illegal ones", "14 000 illegal stills at the end of the French Wars" and "6278 prosecutions for illegal distilling in 1822 alone" (Morrice 1983, 48; Burnett 1999, 169; Weir 1980, 219) give some intimation of the possible size of the untaxed industry. Buried within this mass of information is the illicit trade in Upper Copquetdale. Undoubtedly it was only a tiny proportion of the trade as a whole, but, under the circumstances prevailing at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, it must have grown substantially from the still or two operating in Archdeacon Sharp's time. It was also to continue in being for some years to come.

Following the declaration of peace with France in 1815, however, the government became increasingly concerned to suppress this lawlessness, and legislation was passed in 1822 and 1823 which encouraged licensed production and imposed heavy penalties on illicit distillers. The modern Scotch whisky trade can trace its origins to these reforms (Moss 1988).

The reasons for the continued presence of illicit stills in Coquetdale well into the nineteenth century lie in the way in which government in the 1820s attempted to resolve the problems of vast illegal whisky production in Scotland. Following suggestions made by the Duke of Gordon in 1820, the government decided that the whole nature of whisky

taxation in Scotland had to be reviewed. The outcome of this were two Acts, in 1820 and 1823, which, together with earlier legislation in 1816 and 1818, set up a framework for the whisky industry in Scotland that did much to eliminate illicit distilling. The aim of the Acts was to increase the income the state derived from taxation, but to do this by increasing the number of distilleries upon which duties were levied. This aim was effected by introducing regulations which permitted small-scale distillers to enter the industry legally and at low cost, to produce good quality whisky and, at the same time, pay lower duties on their raw materials (see Devine 1975, and Weir 1980, for further details and discussion of this important legislation). In Scotland, the effect of the new regulations was profound. In 1823, there were 14 000 cases of illicit distilling pending before the courts, but as a result of the new rules this fell to 392 in 1830 and 73 in 1854 (Morrice 1983, 51).

South of the Border, however, the situation was more complex. Despite some harmonisation of the legislation controlling distilling in Scotland, Ireland and England, there were still discrepancies that favoured the continuation of smuggling and illicit distilling of whisky. Duties, even after reform in England in 1825, were still significantly less north of the Border than south. Philipson suggests that as late as 1830 the duty on a gallon of whisky in England was seven shillings and sixpence (37.5p) while in Scotland it was less than half at three shillings and four pence (17p) (Philipson 1991, 34). Differences of this magnitude could only encourage illegality. At the same time, although there were 56 excise officers stationed at various places in the Borders, their low rates of pay and the corruption this engendered meant that they were often ineffective in halting illicit whisky trading. As the extracts from Richardsons' *Table Talk* appended to this show, illicit stills continued to be operated not only in Upper Coquetdale but also in other parts of Northumberland during the 1820s and 1830s.

It seems likely that under these circumstances, the illicit production and also the smuggling of whisky did not cease until well after the 1820s. Indeed, as late as 1831 illegal distilling was reported on a large-scale in the industrial north-west of England, reminding us also that illicit stills could equally well be hidden amongst a multitude of smoking chimneys as in the quiet valleys of Coquetdale:

*Such is the extent to which illicit distillation is carried on in Manchester, especially among the lower order of Irish, that it is supposed not less than 100 stills are weekly employed in the manufacture of whisky, notwithstanding the vigilance of the excise, who have destroyed upwards of 200 machines of this description within the last three years.*⁴

The invention of patent whisky stills such as that of Robert Weir in 1825 and, more importantly Aeneas Coffey in 1830, may have speeded up the process of whisky making through continuous distillation, but they did not alter the price differential. Other, more likely, factors that brought about the end of illicit distilling were the harmonisation of duties in England and Scotland by Gladstone in the 1860s and the production of commercial whisky of uniformly high quality (Burnett 1999, 170). This latter was partly achieved by the gradual elimination of cheap adulterating substances being introduced into whisky production and partly by the development of blending whisky. In this process, the bland products of the Lowland patent stills were blended with the peaty liquors from the Highland pot stills in order to produce a smooth, lighter flavoured drink that was particularly suited to English palates (Burnett 1999, 171; Morrice 1983, 54-5). At the same time that this was taking place, the growth of the railway system meant that much of the long distance droving of livestock across the Border diminished the opportunities of

⁴ Bell's Weekly Messenger, No.1838, June 26, 1831.

some smugglers to carry contraband whisky into England (Rushworth, Roberts and Carlton 2005, 51). When coupled with the increasing prosperity of the consumer in Victorian England, the demand for the rough products of the illicit still with its uneven quality of production began to diminish and ultimately disappear.

3.4 Stills and Smuggling

The information and discussion given in the paragraphs above does a great deal to explain why whisky was consumed in Coquetdale. It also depicts the circumstances prevailing between the early part of the eighteenth century and the second half of the nineteenth which favoured the existence of illicit distilling and smuggling particularly in the upper part of the valley. What remains, however, is to attempt to determine some of the details of these clandestine operations.

The most important sources for learning about the trade are the books written by David Dippie Dixon and John Philipson (Dixon 1903 and Philipson 1991). Dixon told several tales of the stills and those connected with them on both sides of the law but, in particular, drew attention to the activities of one notorious still owner, Black Rory. Rory, an eponymous figure referred to in several books (Tomlinson 1885, 484 for example), is stated to have been the operator of 6 stills in the upper Coquet valley but Dixon provides no dates for the period in which he was active. Philipson set out to investigate the activities attributed to Rory and other illicit still owners as well as the smugglers of contraband whisky. He published his findings in a series of three articles which were published in *Archaeologia Aeliana* in the 1950s and later republished together as a small book in 1991.

In the first article, Philipson set out to explain how distilling was carried out on the small scale that applied to the clandestine stills. He described and explained how the pot still worked and drew attention to the ingredients required as well as using Irish and Scottish information to show how local craftsmen could easily have produced the simple equipment needed to run the still. Other writers, who have evidence of the same trades being carried out by Irish peasants, (Evans 1943; Connell 1963) support his conclusions. The distilling operation required concealment, fresh water and peat for fuel as well as the ingredients for the whisky but the equipment itself was not bulky. Consequently within the many steep sided valleys of the upper Coquet and the neighbouring moorlands, it was relatively easy to carry on operations and move speedily if in danger of detection by Excise men. This consideration of the mechanics of distilling led Philipson to consider the places in which Rory and others were supposed to have operated their stills. Philipson and his team found a number of sites and provide a map, plans and photographs of their location. In addition, he drew attention to the work of other historians and archaeologists (Charlton 1996; Ramm, McDowall and Mercer 1970) who have investigated and reported sites at other locations. Details of these sites and their location are given elsewhere in this study. Although none of the sites have been dated, they would appear to belong to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the illicit distilling trade was at its height. These are not the only sites at which distilling was carried out, however, and there are undoubtedly opportunities for further investigation.

In the last of his articles, Philipson touches on the most ephemeral of the illegal activities associated with the illicit whisky trade, that of smuggling. Dixon had already drawn attention to the smuggling trade in the upper Coquet and near Rothbury (Dixon 1903, 18 and 479). However, Philipson extended the inquiry and even gives details of one case in 1830 in which two smugglers were caught by a member of the Trevelyan family and subsequently brought to trial (Philipson 1991, 38-44). In this respect, Philipson is unusual among writers about smuggling. Many other authors relate tales of smuggling (for

example, “Glen Aln” 1903, 49-51; Neville 1909, 121-26, Charlton 1983, 31-39) but details are vague. Although the location of the incident is often given, the perpetrators are rarely named, dates are not usually supplied and details of any authorities involved in the incident are obscured by the use of broad terms such as “gauger” or Excise man. As the examples of accounts of smuggling included in the extracts from authors appended to this paper demonstrate, only the broad associations of whisky smuggling with the drovers and gin smuggling by sea emerge as common themes. There are opportunities for researching the topic of smuggling in greater detail and developing a more detailed picture of the extent of this activity.



Illus. 56: Collier's view of Alwin Hill market, c.1914 (from Owen 1995)

– although this photograph dates from the period after the demise of the illegal whisky trade, it nevertheless provides an indication of the context of that trade, at local gathering places in quiet valleys such as the Alwin.



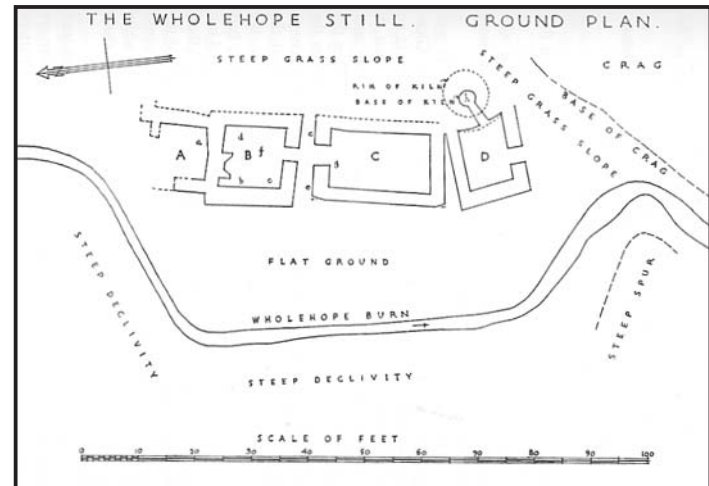
Illus. 57: View of Blindburn (Photograph by R)



Illus. 58: Work in progress on the Wholehope Hill, S (Filipson)



Illus. 59: Hill at Blindburn, (Filipson)



Illus. 60: Wholehope Hill Ground Plan (Filipson)



Illus. 61: The Midhope ~~61~~ site viewed from the north.



Illus. 62: Masonry and rubble remains at the Midhope ~~61~~ site.



Illus. 63: Masonry remains at the Midhope ~~61~~ site.



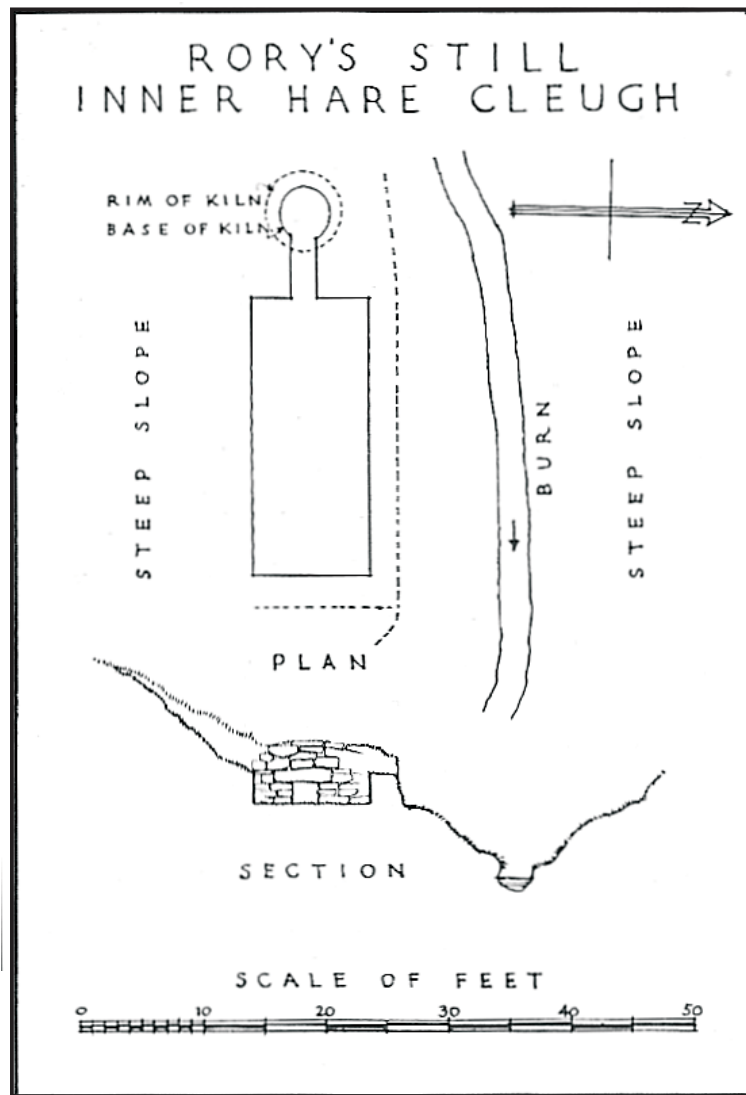
Illus. 64: Masonry remains at the Midhope Burn still site (Rilipson ~~0~~-see Illus. ~~63~~ above.



Illus. 65: The site of a possible, second still on the Midhope Burn.



Illus. 66: View NE (i.e. Towards the known still site) of the remains of a wall at a possible, second still site on the Midhope Burn.



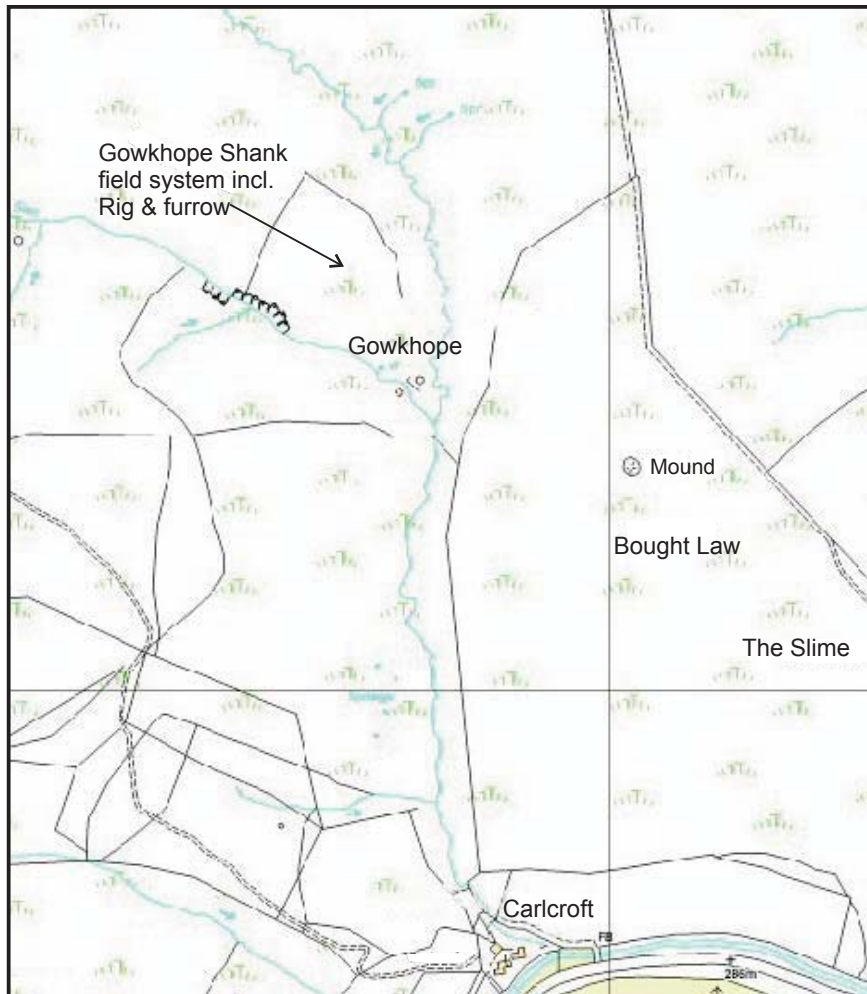
Illus. 67: Plan of Rory's Still by Phillipson (1960).



*Illus. 68: Rory's Still, 1960
(photograph courtesy of Mr Angus Foreman)*



Illus. 69: Rory's Still (Phillipson 1960)



Illus. 70: Map of Gowkhope and wider area
 (map from <http://www.keystothepast>)



Illus. 71: Gowkhope Shank field system - evidence of high altitude cultivation in the post-medieval period.



Illus. 72: Detail of rig & furrow on Gowkhope Shank.
 (Photographs by IR)

4. Material and other signs of Brewing, Distilling and related enterprises.

The principal surviving traces of the manufacture, trade and consumption of beer and whisky are to be found in the remains of distilleries, of which four have with a reasonable degree of certainty been identified in Coquetdale, and of breweries, the sites of three of which are known (two in Rothbury, one in Harbottle) and others suspected. It is highly likely that a large number of other sites of beer and whisky production remain undetected. Indeed, many of them are undetectable due to their transient nature and ephemeral traces they left behind - the portability of small-scale stills is illustrated by *Illus. 71 & 72*, showing tow-able apparatus in Bosnia and Slavonia, northern Croatia. Records of such transient, or small-scale stills are contained in anecdotal accounts, such as those reproduced by Andrews (1899 - see Appendix 2.4, below) who mentions the discovery at Codley Moss in the Tosson Hills of an illicit distillery "*in full operation*", another "*in a kind of cavern at the foot of Simonside*", and yet another at Southward Edge glebe farm, near Wingates, west of Longhorsley. Whether any remains can be found of these or any other sites of whisky-making or storage to add to those identified by Philipson (1991) and Charlton (1996, 137) is uncertain, but some determined exploration in likely locations could well be rewarding.

Archaeological excavation and post-excavation analysis of material remains can also provide evidence of possible whisky- and beer-making, although the nature and weight of such evidence is unlikely to be definitive. Recent excavations at Harbottle (AP 2006) uncovered the remains of a medieval oven base of a sort which could and – given the ubiquitous nature of medieval home-brewing - very likely was used as part of domestic brewing activities. During earlier excavations at Harehaugh hillfort (Carlton 2003) the remains of large, very thick-walled vessels were found in association with iron age hearths which could and, for the same reason as given above, very likely were used in brewing. In both cases residue analysis potentially allows some further comment on the nature of foodstuffs contained in the vessels, but the interpretation of such analyses is fraught with difficulties and it is unlikely that brewing could be proven in either case.

Non-material evidence suggesting locations probably connected to whisky production or trade is provided by place-names. Examples include Barley Sike adjacent to the Midhope burn, Copper Snout on the Wholehope burn, and Whisky Cleugh in Commondale, south-west of Wooler (the latter some 20km north of Coquet).

Material evidence for the consumption of beer & whisky is provided by the sites of whisky houses and inns, some transformed into modern public houses, others surviving as structures, but no longer open for business, and a smaller number detectable only as ruins. Sites of peat excavation and barley growing - some of which, particularly the more remote (such as Gowkhope) may have been linked, at times to beer or whisky production - can be identified from the surviving remains of stack stands and rig & furrow earthworks, and by place-names such as 'Barley Sike', a small tributary of the Usway burn. The clear link between the smuggling of whisky and cross-border droving means that the drove roads, together with the overnight steadings and fairgrounds on their routes (Carlton, Roberts & Rushworth 2005) may also be regarded as part of the broader infrastructure of illicit whisky making and distribution, as may the country smithies which produced components for the stills, and the farms which produced and stored barley, consumed the product and maintained a shroud a secrecy around the entire network of covert operations.



Illus. 73 & 74: Brandy stills from Slavonia, northern Croatia and Bosnia, illustrating the portable nature of the technology involved.



5. Some Conclusions and Recommendations for future research

Devine in his 1975 article on illicit whisky-making in Northern Scotland determined that such activities flourished in the period 1780 to 1840. From the evidence studied during the compilation of this paper it would seem that these dates must be extended for Upper Coquetdale to a longer period of probably 1740 to 1870. It would also be appropriate to suggest that any further study of the brewing industry and consumption of beer and ale should begin about the same date and be carried forward to the present day. The changing nature of the trade in alcohol and the social history of its consumption certainly merit examination over such a long period. Throughout the study a number of areas of possible investigation have been identified which are summarised and outlined below.

- The presence of country house breweries in Upper Coquetdale merits thorough investigation through documentary and oral records, as it has not been reported in any previous literature.
- Wills and probate returns could be examined to reveal evidence of domestic brewing.
- Quarter Sessions records are important sources of evidence for a number of topics considered in this study (but not examined here due to the temporary closure of Northumberland Record Office). These papers could be consulted in order to identify as many licensed hostelries as possible, discover evidence of prosecutions for offences involving public houses, brewing of beer and the production and smuggling of illicit whisky. These papers may also contain references to the impact of the Beer Act in 1830.
- The temperance movement had very important effects on the production and consumption of alcohol throughout the British Isles. Newspapers and other local records will certainly contain records of the extent of the movement in Northumberland, and in Coquetdale in particular, and its effects.
- As shown in this study, oral history has an important part to play in researching the history of the drinks trade in the valley as well as in assessing the current challenges being faced by publicans. A programme of interviews and a scheme for analysing the results would provide additional data to extend and fill gaps in current knowledge.
- Directories and Census returns could be consulted in order to determine the exact status of the publicans and the employment opportunities that their hostelries provided. In particular, the Census returns might assist in determining which of the public houses brewed their own beer and possibly supplied other outlets.
- Philipson in his articles on smuggling refers to some of the Excise papers that he consulted when writing his original study. It is clear that there must be other material in the National Archives and also in the County Record Office which have a bearing on the investigation of both illicit distilling and smuggling in Northumberland. Efforts could be made to identify and examine these sources in order to obtain a more detailed picture of these activities than is available at present.
- Co-ordinated research in archival depositories and through archaeological survey and excavation could fruitfully be carried out to identify and record the sites of former hostelries, sites of illicit stills, cultivation sites for barley and places of concealment used by the smugglers. This would all be of great assistance in permitting later students to appreciate the extent of these fascinating clandestine operations.
- There is clearly also significant potential to extend the themes of the present study into neighbouring areas, particularly the valleys of the upper North Tyne, Rede and Tarsset, which were linked economically to Coquetdale by droving and other forms of trade. Economic benefit is likely to accrue from publicising and generating interest in established links between the present inns & public houses of the upland region and those of the past.

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7. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INNS AND HOSTELRIES IN UPPER 1827-1929

Village	Inn or hostelry	Proprietor	Source & date
Alwinton	Horse Shoes	John Nevison	Parson & White 1828
	Red Lion	Jane Whellans	Whelan 1855
	Red Lion	J Cowans	Bulmer 1886
	Rose & Thistle	Burn & Robinson	Whelan 1855
	Rose & Thistle	Thomas Mather	Bulmer 1886
	Rose & Thistle	William Thompson	Kelly 1894
	Rose & Thistle	George Foreman	Kelly 1914
	Rose & Thistle	George Foreman	Kelly 1925
Harbottle	Rose & Thistle	George Foreman	Kelly 1929
	The Ship	John Common	Parson & White 1828
	The Unicorn	Jane Clark	Parson & White 1828
	Forester's Arms	Robert Blacklock	Whelan 1855
	Forster's Arms	William Thompson	Bulmer 1886
	The Star Inn	Gideon Pitloh	Whelan 1855
	The Star Inn	John Pilloth	Bulmer 1886
	The Star Inn	Miss Jane Pitloh	Kelly 1894
	The Star Inn	John Bootiman	Kelly 1914
The Star Inn	John Bootiman	Kelly 1925	
The Star Inn	Mrs Jane Bootiman	Kelly 1929	
Holystone	Victualer	Joseph Byatt	Parson & White 1828
	The Salmon	Margaret Beight	Whelan 1855
	The Salmon	Eleanor Crozier	Bulmer 1886
	The Salmon	Mrs Eleanor Hall	Kelly 1894
	The Salmon	James Seaton	Kelly 1914
	The Salmon	Robert Wade	Kelly 1925
	The Salmon	Robert John Wade	Kelly 1929
Netherton(N)	The Star	Thomas Thorburn	Parson & White 1828
	The Star	Rhoda Nicholson	Bulmer 1886
	The Star	Mrs Mary F Sproat	Kelly 1894
	The Star	Andrew Tully	Kelly 1914
	The Star	William Morton	Kelly 1925
	The Star	William Morton	Kelly 1929
Netherton(S)	The Fighting Cocks	Mary Bell	Parson & White 1828
	The Phoenix	James Turnbull	Whelan 1855
	The Phoenix	Mrs I Chisholm	Bulmer 1886
	The Phoenix	Mrs I Chisholm	Kelly 1894
Snitter	Blue Bell	John Brown	Whelan 1855
	The Half Moon Inn	James Menuum	Whelan 1855
	The Half Moon Inn	James Amory	Bulmer 1886
	The Half Moon Inn	James Amory	Kelly 1894
	The Half Moon Inn	James Amory	Kelly 1914
	The Half Moon Inn	George Amory	Kelly 1925

Thropton	The Wheat Heads	Francis Trewick	Parson & White 1828
	Three Wheat Sheafs	William Riddell	Whelan 1855
	Three Wheat Heads	Peter Jeffrey	Bulmer 1886
	Three Wheat Heads	William Wood	Kelly 1894
	Three Wheat Heads	Robert Johnson	Kelly 1914
	Three Wheat Heads	Robert Johnson	Kelly 1925
	Three Wheat Heads	Robert Johnson	Kelly 1929
	The Fox and Hounds	John Forster	Parson & White 1828
	The Cross Keys	John Hook	Bulmer 1886
	The Cross Keys	John Hood	Kelly 1894
	The Cross Keys	Robert Rutherford	Kelly 1914
	The Cross Keys	Wm. W W Morton	Kelly 1925
	The Cross Keys	Robert T Murray	Kelly 1929

Rothbury	The County Hotel	Mrs Cassels	Bulmer 1886
	The County Hotel	William Heydon	Kelly 1894
	The County Hotel	Mrs Ellie Garvis	Kelly 1914
	The County Hotel		Kelly 1925
	The County Hotel		Kelly 1929
	Turk's Head	Robert Hall	Parson & White 1828
	Turk's Head	Hannah Mitchison	Whelan 1855
	Turk's Head	Mrs Mary Robson	Bulmer 1886
	Turk's Head	Mrs Mary Robson	Kelly 1894
	Turk's Head	Mrs M A Littlefar	Kelly 1914
	Turk's Head	Frederick Laidlaw	Kelly 1925
	Turk's Head	Frederick Laidlaw	Kelly 1929
	Rothbury Brewery Co.		Kelly 1925*
	Newcastle House	James M Menzies	Bulmer 1886
	Newcastle House	James M Menzies	Kelly 1894
	Newcastle House	William Telford	Kelly 1914
	Newcastle House	William Stafford	Kelly 1925
	Newcastle House	James R Towns	Kelly 1929
	Station Hotel	James Gibson	Bulmer 1886
	Station Hotel	William Hunter	Kelly 1894
	Station Hotel	John Fothergill	Kelly 1914
	Station Hotel	Rowland Watson	Kelly 1925
	Station Hotel	Leslie Siddle	Kelly 1929
	Queen's Head	Thomas Does	Whelan 1855
	Queen's Head	Andrew Lawson	Bulmer 1886
	Queen's Head	Andrew Lawson	Kelly 1894
	Queen's Head	Rowland Watson	Kelly 1914
	Queen's Head	Robert Twibell	Kelly 1925
	Queen's Head	Miss Rachel Temple	Kelly 1929
	Railway Hotel	George Leightley	Bulmer 1886
	Railway Hotel	Alexander Thew	Kelly 1894
	Railway Hotel	Isaac Percival	Kelly 1914
	Railway Hotel	Isaac Percival	Kelly 1925
	Railway Hotel	Isaac Percival	Kelly 1929
	Blue Bell P H	Thomas Shotton	Parson & White 1827
	Blue Bell P H	Isabella Shotton	Whelan 1855
	Blue Bell P H	William Wood	Bulmer 1886
	Blue Bell P H	Miss Isabella Wood	Kelly 1894
	Black Bull	George Coulson	Parson & White 1827
	Black Bull	Matthew Scott	Whelan 1855

Rifleman Inn	Benjamin Perry	Parson & White 1827
Rifleman Inn	James Smith	Whelan 1855
Sun	Edward Riddell	Parson & White 1827
Sun	William Turner	Whelan 1855
Three Half Moons	Rachel Maxwell	Parson & White 1827
Three Half Moons	William Lawson	Whelan 1855
Golden Fleece	Jane Snowdon	Parson & White 1827
Star Inn	William Bolam	Parson & White 1827
Brewer	Joseph Hindhaugh	Parson & White 1827
George Storey & Co		Parson & White 1828+
George Storey & Co		Whelan 1855+
George Storey & Co	J Gallon	Bulmer 1886+

* Not a brewery at this date but a dealer in wines and spirits.

+ Wine, spirit and corn merchants and maltsters.

Notes

1. In addition to the above hostelries, two others not mentioned in Directories have been located in the Upper Coquet valley. These are the Square and Compass at Thropton – cited in an announcement of the venue for a property auction in 1848 – and the Badger at Swindon – located as a result of information provided by Mr Angus Foreman and Mrs Anne Dunn. The property is currently called Selby House and the owners, Mr and Mrs Middleton, state that the deeds indicate it was built in 1728.
2. The Unicorn, in Harbottle, (Parson and White 1828) was the former name of The Star. Information provided by Mrs Dunn.
3. The Sun, in Rothbury, was run by Mr William Davy between 1841 and 1849. Information from licenses in the possession of Mr Michael Davy, a descendant. A copy of one of the licenses is attached. The licensee of the Newcastle Hotel has a number of photographs of the hotel in earlier times and these show that the Hotel occupies the site of the former Sun.
4. The Three Half Moons in Rothbury has been described as a sixteenth or seventeenth century inn that had been connected with the Jacobite rising of 1715. By the late nineteenth century, it was in ruins and the Mission Room, later the Parish Hall, was built on the site in 1908 (Tomlinson 1882, 328; Owen 2005, 9).
5. In addition to the above, other hostelries have been mentioned in the accompanying study, but are not to be found in Directories. These include: Slyme-Foot (Dixon 1903, 18), Chew Green (Dixon 1903, 11), and Summer Walls in Redesdale (Charlton 1996, 103).

APPENDIX 2: HISTORIC ACCOUNTS OF DISTILLING, SMUGGLING AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

App. 2.1 Illicit whisky in North-West Durham, *The Monthly Chronicle of North-Country Lore and Legend*, November 1890: 510-511

“During the time when there was so heavy a duty in England on whisky, large quantities of that intoxicating liquor were smuggled over the Border from Scotland, where the duty was low. The means adopted by the smugglers in getting it safely across, and so evading the excise men and supervisors, and there but the law, were varied and singular. Once across, the contraband article was hawked about the country. Not only Northumberland and Cumberland, but Durham, Yorkshire, and other Northern Counties received a share of the booty. Various modes were adopted in carrying it about. Sometimes it was put in bottles and placed in sacks containing a quantity of bran, meal, or sawdust to hinder them from breaking; sometimes it was placed in small kegs, and at others in large skins and bladders. It was known to those who purchased it under different names, such as “knives and forks”, “new milk” and many other equally peculiar appellations.

In addition to the enormous supplies that were smuggled over from Scotland, large quantities were illicitly manufactured in the quieter and more secluded localities of the Northern Counties. The north-west part of the county of Durham was a favourite one for those persons who followed no legitimate occupation, except that of smuggling, or rather that of the illegitimate manufacturing of whisky. The whereabouts of the law-breakers were seldom known to many; hence they would carry on their calling in some particular spot for many months ere the law officers ousted them out. Their favourite haunts were deep, dark secluded glens, young plantations, the tangled brushwood of older woods, deep gutters, well shaded but thick bushy hedges, and similar localities, where a streamlet or runner of clear, pure, limpid water trickled slowly down. The headwaters of the river Brownie and its numerous affluents were favoured localities, for during the period mentioned most of its now full-grown woodlands were young plantations, where the wide-spreading branches of the growing firs and larches gave abundance of shade, shelter and seclusion. Stanley and Rogpeth Wood on the Deerness, Rowley Gillet on Rowley Burn, Esh Wood on the Sleetburn, other smaller woods in the same locality, Cornsay and Hedley Common or Fell, Butsfield Abbey Woods, Butes’s Plantations, and Lambton, or Lord Durham’s, Woodm the three latter near the headwaters of the Brownie, were all places where [sic] the ‘stillers’ plied this trade. The manufactories in some of these places were carried on for months. Sometimes their whereabouts was betrayed by the curling wreaths of smoke that wended skyward during the day, whilst the glare of the fires at night often showed the “stillers’ home” to the eyes of the police and excise officers as they scanned the country for some higher point, and pierced into the darkness of night in search of “prey”. In the boiling of the fluids timber was generally used, and, as much of it came out of the fences of adjoining farms, it was at times the cause of petty fights between the farmer and the stiller. To make good these breaches of friendship the latter had not unfrequently to quit his location or supply the former as compensation for damage done with what whisky he required. Those who had their haunts near to where the present town of Tow Law stands sometimes used coal, which they obtained in small quantities from the gin-pits then in existence on that part of Cornsay and Hedley Fell; but still there was the smoke to act as a betrayer of their whereabouts. The “smoke nuisance” was eventually remedied when the coke ovens were erected at the above mining village, for coke took the place of coal and wood, but it was not for long.

When the illicit whisky was made and bottled, it was sold at cheap rates- from eighteen pence a bottle. Sometimes the liquor was better than at others, but, at best, it was only less than poisonous. At times it took deadly effect on those who consumed it, for during an inclement night in the winter of 1821, a respectable inhabitant of Corbridge, returning

home from a journey, partook some-what copiously of this kind of liquor at a (then) low house between Satley and Wolsingham, and on reaching the road he lost the use of his limbs, and laid himself down among some rushes, where he was found the next morning a lifeless corpse. The poisonous drink which the unfortunate man had partaken of was some which had been illicitly distilled in Lambton's plantation (now cut down), near Salter's Gate, from stuff composed of aquafortis or vitriol and spirita of wine. Within the previous eight weeks three persons had died from drinking the illicit whisky to excess, whilst another had been driven blind and mad".

App. 2.2 Whisky Jack, *The Monthly Chronicle of North-Country Lore and Legend*, March 1891:125

"Familiar in the mouths of many Tynesiders was the name of "Whisky Jack" some thirty or forty years ago. It was the name that was popularly given to John Kane, an adroit and active smuggler of the time and neighbourhood. Although noted for this character, nothing else was ever really known against him.

John Kane was a native of Norfolk, and the son of a gardener. When he was a boy, a considerable amount of smuggling was practiced on the Norfolk coast and up the estuary of the Wash. Heavy war duties were then levied on imports, and smuggling was a dangerous, but not altogether an unprofitable business. Small vessels containing contraband goods were accustomed to run between that part of the coast and Flushing and other continental ports. Their cargoes were deposited in some cases in the woods and in others in the gardens adjacent to the coast. Kane's father, along with others, was engaged in assisting smugglers in concealing the goods that they had managed to land. In time, however, the revenue authorities made it very hot both for the smugglers and their friends on shore; and, shortly afterwards, the passing of Sir Robert Peel's Act rendered the profits of the business so small as not to warrant the risk.

Whether Kane's father was dismissed, or had to escape, I do not know. But his son certainly left the district, and for several years found occupation, at one time as a gardener, and at another time as a farm hand and forester. In pursuit of his vocation, he travelled, or rather tramped, all through Lancashire and the North of England to the extreme North of Scotland. For some time he lived in Sutherland. Afterwards he returned to the Borders, where, falling in with some illicit distilleries, his early interest in smuggling revived, and he, first an associate with others, subsequently became sole owner of a still. But the Border districts did not appear to be favourable for his enterprise, and so he came to the mining districts of Northumberland and Durham. For some years he carried on his smuggling in different localities between the Coquet and the Tees. He found this neighbourhood favourable to his operations, because the country afforded abundance of convenient nooks for placing his stills, and the contiguity of mines and factories supplied him with a suitable market for his whisky. Jack led a very adventurous but harmless life during his residence in the North of England. But misfortune overtook him in 1855. He had a still at that time along Derwentside, and not very far from where it was placed a cruel murder was committed. A young doctor named Stirling, whilst on his way from the Spennithorne to Burnopfield, was found shot dead on the roadside. There was great mystery attendant upon the occurrence. After some delay, Kane, along with others, was arrested and tried for the crime, but acquitted.

It would serve no good purpose to recall the painful incidents of the outrage and the trial. Suffice it to say that great sympathy was aroused for the unfortunate gentleman who was murdered, and his relatives. And this, along with the mystery attaching to the crime, created a very strong prejudice against the persons who were accused. The fact that Kane was a smuggler was sufficient, it seemed, to justify almost any charge against him".

App. 2.3 **Stories of Smugglers**, *The Monthly Chronicle of North-Country Lore and Legend*, June 1891: 269-271.

“Smuggling is now a very paltry affair- a few pounds of tobacco or perhaps cigars concealed by a poor sailor somewhere about the ship. But within the recollection of many persons still living, it may be said to have ranked among the skilled professions. The higher the duty imposed upon foreign articles, the greater of course in every land is the temptation to smuggle.

All along the Border between England and Scotland preventive men were stationed, in the early part of the present century, to overhaul every carrier's cart and every passenger's luggage to see that they contained nothing contraband. Lamberton, Mordington, and Paxton Tolls (lying on the March boundary) were notorious depots for smuggled goods; and many bladders-full of whisky used to be carried by the sturdy fisherwomen under their ample skirts from these tolls into Berwick town. Spittal was specially notorious for its smuggling. “Many an old cruiser”, says Frederick Sheldon, writing in 1848, “laid up in comfort by his fireside, owed his wealth to his midnight excursions with contraband goods”. The Spittal fishermen were all smugglers, and very expert in landing forbidden cargoes from the Dutch luggers. The houses in the village- as indeed in all the sea coast towns and villages, including Shields and Sunderland- contained secret holes and nooks made to stow away smuggled goods. In some instances, the soil under the kitchen floors had been entirely removed, so as to form places of deposit not likely to be suspected.

Boulmer or Boomer, near Alnmouth, had long a more than local fame as a smuggling centre. Indeed, the staple of its industry, apart from the open honest harvest of the sea, was smuggling. The place was commonly resorted to, as a regular mart, by dare-devil desperadoes from Yetholm, Morebattle, Crailing, Jedburgh, and others towns in Roxburghshire, as well as from all parts of Bamborough, Coquetdale and Glendale Wards. Anecdotes are innumerable of the frays, often bloody, between the doughty smugglers and the stalwart gaungers, as the revenue officers of all denominations were commonly styled. Wull Balmer, Jock Melvin and Ruthor Grahamslaw, of Jedburgh, and Wull Faa, of Kirk Yetholm, the gipsy king, did deeds in this vocation which would have earned them Victoria medals in the legitimate service of their country.

Early in the century it was no unusual circumstance for twenty or thirty smugglers on horseback to sally forth in company to Boomer for gin. Each horse carried its casks, and, the spirit being of first-rate quality, the dealers found a ready sale for it all over the Borders. Once when a party of this description from Yetholm and the vicinity were returning with their complement, they were met at Bewick Bridge by a body of armed soldiers, who took possession of the full casks, but had, however, the liberality to return the horses to their respective owners. A wagon and long cart were first loaded with the booty, and what remained was removed to a barn or granary, in which it was locked up, with the king's seal for security affixed to the entrance. The impoverished smugglers, in the meantime, waited at a respectful distance till the red coats disappeared; and then, getting intelligence from some compassionate witness of what had taken place, they returned all together, broke into the barn, and regained a part of the spoil. An equal division, of course, was afterwards made, when the smugglers found they had recovered about ten ankers of gin out of the quantity they brought that morning from Boomer.

The excise officers were necessitated to hunt in couples, as few of them would hae dared to encounter singly a desperate and athletic smuggler. Jedburgh in those days - that is to say, seventy or eighty years ago- boasted of several habitual violaters of the law, notorious for their doughty deeds. Such a one was Blind Will Balmer, who, as a popular song made in his honour ran:

*Felled half the gaugers o'Jethart,
When coming frae Boulmer wi' gin.*

A family of the name of Gages, or Geggie, resided once in the neighbourhood of Coldstream or Wark, and were noted as daring and determined smugglers. Allan or Alley Geggie was a powerful man, and, when closely pressed, most fruitful in resources. Many are the feats he is said to have performed. Two excise men were pursuing him on one occasion. Having followed him to a ford on the river Tweed near Twizel, where a boat was stationed to convey passengers across, they inquired at the small cottage where the boatman resided if a person agreeing with Allan's description had been seen. The answer returned was that such a man had just been *kented* over the Tweed. The pursuers then requested to be conveyed over the river also. The ferryman, as they supposed him to be, asked them to stop on board. Remaining himself on shore, he pushed the boat forcibly into the stream, down which she flew like an arrow, while the supposed ferryman drew himself up to his full height as he said, "Now, d-n ye, aw'm Alley Geggie!" Nor did the gaugers succeed in gaining the shore till they have been borne downward for several miles.

Not the least famous of the smugglers who distilled their own spirits was one Donald McDonald, who, as his name imports, was not a native of the district, but a genuine Highlander, redolent of peat reek. Donald had made whisky from "the pure mountain dew" in the wilds of Inverness, and, wandering away south, he resolved to do the same among the Cheviots. So he chose a lonely spot, where he rigged up a rough hut over his working materials, with wooden spars and ruses, setting up a small coarse table in the middle, with a seat or two round it; and another, rougher still- consisting of two boards- beside the doorway. Some dried heath, with the tops upward, served for his bed in a corner. Thus equipped, he soon got prosperously to work. Donald's whisky ere long made a stir in the country round, and many visitors taxed his liberality. One afternoon Donald was visited by a man on horseback, who dismounted and entered the hut with little ceremony. There was something suspicious about his appearance, but he was nevertheless shown to the seat at the table in the middle, and treated with bread, cheese, and earthen pot full of water, two glasses, above all, some of Donald's prime "stuff". Filling his own glass from the bottle, the host withdrew to the temporary table beside the door; for he was rather slight in build, and no match, in case of a scuffle, for the strong stranger, who was in the prime of life. After a few distant compliments had been exchanged, the following conversation, according to Mr. White, took place between the pair:-

"What is your name?" asked the stranger.

"Tey ca'ma Tonal" replied the other, drily.

"What more than Donald?" asked the intruder

"No muckle mair", observed the other; "Tonal' McTonal".

"Well Donald," said the stranger, "you distil smuggled whisky; and I am an excise officer. I came hear [sic] to make you a prisoner!"

"Ough! Zat needna pe tune," replied Donald, with seeming indifference; "ye maun pe tak' ta things, she'll warrant; put fat wad ye tu wi' her sell?"

"I must take you, Donald," continued the other; "it becomes me as an officer to do my duty."

"Troth! Put tuty pe no owre muckle mindit now-a-tays," sarcastically observed Donald, grinning and showing an excellent set of teeth in a mouth whose dimensions ranged considerably above the usual standard. "I na pe want to quarrel wi' yer honour; put I', no shust willing to pe ta'em. Only as twa can keepit a secret, fan three canna, let us no rife out ane anither's hearts apout ta piziness, and nough ta petter. We'll shust transackit ta

matter snodly, and kin ye tak'ilka thing tat pe mine, and gie me *leg-bail* for payment-sertainly to gudeness ye get ta pest o'ta pargain!"

"I cannot, sir, reason the business with you" said the excise an, raising his voice as if he intended to overawe the Highlander. "According to my oath, I must detain you a prisoner and take possession of these materials. If I am opposed, I have only to command help where ti may be found."

"Fery sefere! Fery hard indeed!" obdurately contained the smuggler: "put Tonal' winna pe triven like a cow or sheep py efer a shentleman l' Ningland! If help pe gotten, she maun shust help her nain sell. She has frien's nane sae far awa' as ye may trow; and hen't they o' siccan a feesitor peing here, they wad sune pe at Tonal's side. Tid onypody saw ye come in?"

"Not a soul," observed the officer, rising fro his sear as if determined to perform his duty, and waive all further conversation.

"*Then tan'd a one sall sce ye go out!*" thundered Donald, with a rapidity of expression that instantly arrested the pregressive movement of the officer. "A man's house pe hm's castle, an' if ye gie tinger eyther ta swort or pistol, by C-d, she'll tak' ta first shance; saw ye're plod pe on ye're nain head!"

So saying, Donald took a brace of horse pistols from behind the door, and cocked the, laying one on the board beside him and holding the other in his right hand, while with his left he unsheathed his dirk. The unarmed officer could only collapse into his old seat the table, leaving the unlicensed whisky-maker master of the situation. Being seated again, the excise man went on eating and drinking. Donald was only too glad to allow this, and was still happier when, at sunset, his guest rolled off to sleep on the bed in the corner. In the night, Donald stowed away all his goods in a place of safety, using his enemy's horse to help him through the hob. The excise man rose after a sound sleep, and, finding his horse gone, went home as best he could. Before the morning was out, however, he brought a stout force to the smuggler's hut. He found his those this time, weary and bereft of its bridle; but Donald had vanished with all his valuables, and on the detached end of a cask set up in the deserted brewery near the door were written the words, "LABOUR IN VAIN" "

App. 2.4 **Extract from *Bygone Northumberland*, William Andrews (ed), London, 1899.**

"Under the date March 27th, 1830, we find the record that at Rothbury died Tibby Allan, aged one hundred and nine years, widow of James Allan, the duke's piper.

Another walk of life was open to the gipsy in the illicit distillery of whiskey on the moorlands of Northumberland, which would allow scope for all the cunning and contrivance of any tribe. In 1838 the excise officers of Morpeth and Long Framlington in their route across the Tosson Hills discovered an illicit distillery in full operation, very artfully contrived on the side of a great peat moss called Codley Moss. Again two years later in the same district of Rothbury Forest, in a kind of cavern at the foot of Simonside, a distillery capable of producing 100 gallons of spirit per week was found. This was about the same period as that in which the mystery of Southward Edge (a glebe farm too!) was solved, though this was not a gipsy escapade, when the excise officers' suspicions were aroused by the thickness of a wall, which they on testing found to be hollow, and capable of holding a tremendous amount of whiskey.

But the gipsy habits were more adapted to the smuggling of the period, when the difference of English and Scotch duties on spirits made it worth while to smuggle the 'grey hens' across the Border, and this brings us down to railroad times.

The worst days of gipsy-life were now ending, better days were dawning, and the once dreaded name of the Faa-gang gave place to the more honest one of 'mugger'. The covered carts laden with crates of earthenware, still jog along the highways and byeways of Northumberland, and the loads in the fishing season are occasionally exchanged for fresh herrings, for no legitimate trade comes amiss to the descendants of those whose hands were once against every man and every mans hand against them.

But the genuine gipsy encampment must soon be a thing of the past. The battle of Long Horsley moor, four years ago, and their forcible expulsion by the freeholders, mainly because of depredations committed, and their subsequent defeat in the law courts by the freeholders, in the judicial decision forbidding them to use this moor as their camping ground hereafter for ever, was like their last stand for the old, free life.

The gipsy annals of the past, which we have been able to find, seem dark, but that is generally the way with history, especially with the history of a declining race, written by those who are not in sympathetic touch with it.

*'The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interred with their bones'*

There is, after all, a free, fresh, healthy spirit in a gipsy, born of the out-door life and active exercise of centuries, and in the old days no wedding feast, or harvest dance, of a Northumbrian householder was complete without a gipsy and his music upon the merry pipes of the north country".

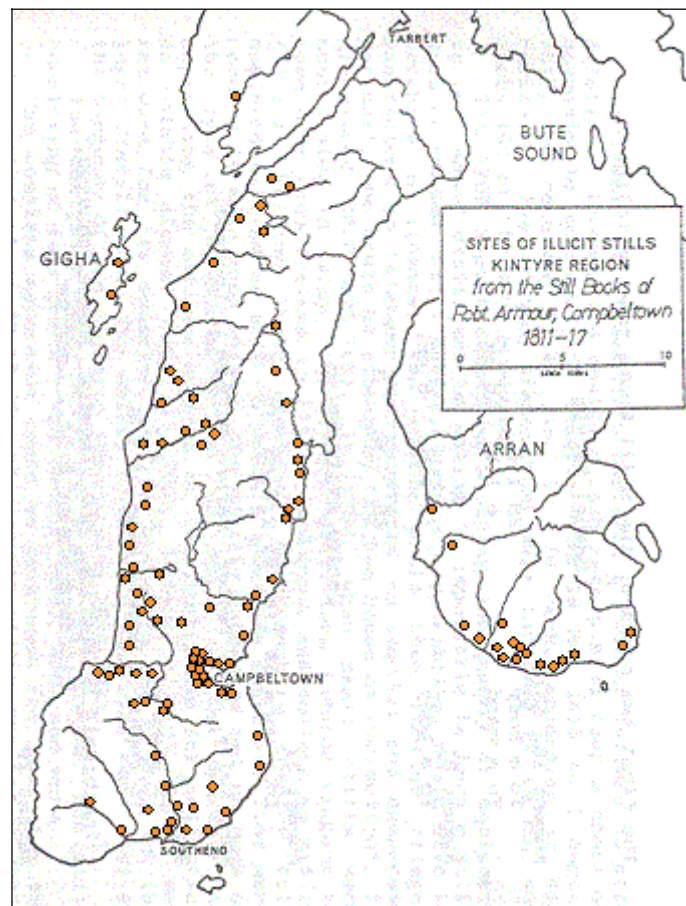
APPENDIX 3: ACCOUNTS OF THE PRODUCTION OF STILLS

The following accounts from Scotland, where the production of both illicit and legal whisky was much greater than in England, provide invaluable information on the technology, cost and social organisation involved, much of which may also reflect the situation on the south side of the border.

3.1 A maker of illicit stills

by *Iseabal Glen*

(edited from a version provided at <http://www.celticmalts.com/journal-a23.htm>)



Little or nothing has been known about the supply of equipment to the illicit distillers, hence the *Still Books* of Robert Armour are not only of considerable value but also of unique interest in this respect. The firm of Robert Armour, Plumber and Coppersmith, was established in Campbeltown, Argyll, in 1811. The *Still Books* were found among family papers, and they cover the period from May 1811 to September 1817.

There are four jotters, now bound together into one volume of manuscripts, entitled *Old Smuggling Stills*, which forms a simple sales record. The coppersmith's business remained in the hands of the Armour family until 1948, and although the ownership changed at that date, the original name was retained. Armour's *Still Books* survived because they had been well concealed in a bureau at the office in Campbeltown. It is disquieting to imagine what effect the discovery of this stock of information, involving over

800 separate transactions, would have had if the *Still Books* had come into the possession of the Excise authorities prior to 1822. There must have been a strong element of collusion, a bond formed of mutual dependence and interest between the coppersmith and the illicit distillers: on occasion the Excise officers may have been implicated.

There was little or no practice of distilling in Kintyre prior to the seventeenth century, but it appears to have become well established by the mid-eighteenth century, although as late as 1772 whisky was described as 'a modern liquor', because in former times spirits had been prepared from herbs, and ale was in common use. The activity experienced fluctuating prosperity depending principally upon changes in Excise legislation, and also on the availability of grain supplies. About 1795, next to herring fishing, the distilling of whisky was the major industry of Campbeltown.

The whisky was disposed of throughout the bordering highland areas, which "brought profit to a few individuals ... but was ruinous to the community". The parish minister advocated a duty so punitive that it would amount to a prohibition, and he commented on the situation: "When a man may get an English pint of potent spirits or, in other words, get completely drunk for 2d. or 3d. many will not be sober".

There were other disadvantages arising from distilling in the Campbeltown area, and elsewhere in Argyll. Recurrent scarcities of grain were troublesome: for example, Pennant (*A Tour of Scotland and the Western Isles*, 1772) noted that despite the quantity of bere raised, there was a dearth, the inhabitants of Kintyre "being mad enough to convert their bread into poison", distilling annually six thousand bolls of grain into whisky. In 1782-3 the harvest failed and acute distress was caused among the poor of the burgh of Campbeltown. The Commissioner of Supply took steps to forbid the making of whisky, at the same time ordering all private stills throughout Argyll to be confiscated. The distilling of whisky was again prohibited from 1795 to 1797 owing to grain shortages occasioned by the Napoleonic Wars. In 1812, there was another dearth of grain in Argyll. At that time, it was estimated that 20,000 bolls were converted annually into whisky in the country, of which over 50 per cent was being made illicitly in Kintyre, and 30 per cent in Campbeltown alone.

Bere, or bear (*Hordeum sativum vulgare*), a four-rowed type of barley, was grown in preference to any other crop for the express purpose of distilling. In 1811, bere was reported to form one half of the Hebridean crop acreage: it was 14 to 21 days earlier in ripening than other cereals, and required a growing season of 10 to 15 weeks. Seaweed was a sufficient manure, and bere was capable of maturing on poor soils in moist conditions. Much of the crop was wasted, however, because of the primitive techniques of illegal malting which led to grain being steeped in ponds and puddles before being spread out on muddy fields, or in bothies or caves, to germinate.

Farmers found a ready market for their harvest, and had quick sales among illicit distillers. Despite the spoiling of the crop during malting, such obvious gains were made in smuggling that the exportation of spirits seems at least to have paid for the import of cereals for food. Whenever legal distilling was brought to a halt, illicit distilling increased, and deficiencies of meal and flour had to be made good by importation.

The 1799 Report advocated stopping the supply of equipment to unlicensed distillers by making it impossible to have a still made or mended. Still makers, such as coppersmiths, would have to purchase a licence; the system would then confine illegal manufacture to "tinkers and people of no capital and desperate fortune", who could be consigned "to the house of correction", if discovered. In 1797, when small stills were confiscated in Islay, the illicit distillers induced tinkers to come over from Ireland to fit up cauldrons and boilers as stills. Failing these utensils, Aberdeenshire country folk employed kettles or pots to

which a head was annealed. They were reputed to make good whisky, the quality depending not so much on the type of apparatus as on the skill of the operator in separating the optimum portion of the distillate for collection as potable alcohol. Indeed, illicit whisky was renowned for its superior quality *vis-à-vis* the product of the legal distilleries. The whisky from Arran was even described as the burgundy of the vintages.

The equipment constructed by Armour was simple, the still consisting of four parts - the vessel, head, arm, and worm. The complete apparatus could be purchased for less than £5, and embodied about 30-40 lb. of copper, giving the pot a cubic capacity of upwards of 10 gallons. The still, head, and worm were the most valuable utensils, and the illicit distiller would use everyday household goods, like casks, creels, and measures which he had to hand. Many of Armour's clients must have owned more than one still, to judge by Samuel Harvie's purchases on the first page of the *Still Books*; there is evidence that the coppersmith provided numerous utensils for the same group of persons at a common address, so that each person must have had a still of his own.

There seem to have been two main sizes of still, some having vessels of 12-14 lb. of copper, and others about 20 lb. It is conceivable that the larger ones would be utilised for distilling wash, and the smaller for distilling low wines in the second, or even third, distillation to yield whisky. Armour was also prepared to construct a tin still at a lower price to oblige a widow. He fashioned the head and worm of copper, and sold the apparatus for £1 15s. Tin stills would corrode rapidly whereas a copper still, if reasonable care was taken, could last for 20 years and more.

The total value of work done, materials used, and goods supplied by Armour between 1811-17 amounts to over £2,000, representing an average turnover of £350 per annum. From 16 May 1816 to 1 August 1817, he received £148 11s. 7d. in cash, according to his reckoning. The average transaction only involved £2 to £3, and about 400 stills were produced.

Besides making new distilling utensils, the coppersmith's business also consisted of trade in secondhand equipment; he valued old copper at 10d. per lb., while new utensils cost 2s. 6d. per lb. He carried out repairs both on his premises, and at the houses of his customers, repairing worms, bottoming stills, 'sothering' (soldering) lugs, and fitting feadans. 'Feadan' is Gaelic for a whistle, and it is the spout or valve fixed to the end of the worm, where the distillate emerges. In addition, Armour made branders, flacks (the cooling vessel in which the worm is immersed), fillers, cans, nails and other hardware, which if orders were frequent and to a large amount, he sometimes gave away for nothing. Entries show that he "gave a filler 1s. 6d." or "gave then a pint can 1s.". He even stocked copper tea kettles both new and second-hand, but these may well have been much less numerous in Kintyre than private stills.

Armour's customers normally operated in groups of 3 to 7 forming a 'company', whose names are carefully recorded in the *Still Books*. Indeed, ownership by parties of tenants was common in Eastern Ross, as well as in other parts of the Highlands. The *Still Books*, however, give a better and more accurate account of the organisation of illicit distilling than has hitherto been available. It may be that the loss of capital equipment owing to detection would be less disadvantageous if it were vested in a group operating together. Writing of Harris and Lewis, MacDonald (*General View of the Agriculture of the Hebrides or Western Isles of Scotland*, 1811) noted that the people frequently joined together to pay the fines exacted by the Excise authorities. When a J. P. court was held at Stornoway in July 1808, the crofters paid "pretty smart fines" before returning to their homes grumbling and discontented. The fines however were divisible in consequence of private compacts agreed among several families, and hence smuggling and distillation were soon resumed.

With a group organisation, the private distillers would be able to move their installation from one hiding place to another with considerable ease, and of course, they would spread the burden of the initial capital cost among themselves. This type of arrangement may have facilitated the raising of capital to enable individuals in a 'company' to purchase their own equipment. As distilling was a protracted process, perhaps taking three to four weeks from malting to the final distillation, there would be sufficient persons to take turns in carrying out the various operations.

Examination of 200 consecutive transactions relating to the acquisition of stills from Armour showed that one hundred of these transactions concerned men only, either as groups or individually. The illicit distillers in Argyll were generally small tenants. These transactions also show that large numbers of women were engaged in making illicit whisky on their own account. Farmers seem to have delegated the task to maid servants and other 'inferior persons', who acted as covers in order that more substantial individuals would escape detection. Illicit distilling may have been regarded as part of general domestic duties, or as a source of pin money, especially for widows or single women, for whom it may have been a ready source of income.

Prior to 1823, when smuggling was a lucrative trade, a substantial number of cottagers and labourers in Kintyre were said to support large families on the profits of the business. A professional private distiller could clear 10s. a week after all his expenses were paid. Early marriages were frequent as a wife was an indispensable part of the enterprise; much of the work was assigned to women who were "fit for, or employed in nothing else".

In the *Still Books*, references to the price of illicit whisky on the black market are very rare; hence it is impossible to construct any meaningful list of price movements. Some smugglers would fill pint casks at 2d. a gill. The whisky was then retailed at dram houses attached to much frequented places, like mills or smithies. In the post-1815 depression, the price of grain fell by 50 per cent in seven years; this brought advantages to the smugglers, giving them a bigger profit margin on their whisky, because its price did not fall by a corresponding amount. In 1822, the price of illicit whisky in Kintyre was 10s. to 12s. per gallon at 20E over proof, and it was worthwhile conveying it to the Ayrshire coast, and even up the Clyde to Glasgow in fishing boats and coasting vessels.

There is much evidence of consumer loyalty, which must indicate satisfied customers. A company, who were regular clients, bought a secondhand still, and head with an old worm, in September 1813, and were back for a new still of 172 lb. in December of the same year, and for another worm in the following January. Armour was obtaining orders from the same groups, or individuals, four to six, or more, times a year throughout the period 1811-17. This fact alone must disclose the profitability of illicit distilling, and the intensity with which the utensils were being used.

Robert Armour must have been typical of many coppersmiths and plumbers in distilling areas. The modest transactions recorded in his *Still Books* reveal the existence of a multitude of illicit enterprises, small in scale, but certainly ubiquitous, which involved people of the most varied social background, women as well as men. It is clear that illicit distillation attained the dimensions of a domestic industry, a fact which has tended to be underestimated in the economic history of the Highlands.

In contrast to the above, an indication of the price of establishing a legitimate, large-scale whisky-making concern is provided in the accounts of Stewart Mackenzie of Seaforth bought the Isle of Lewis.

3.2 Outer Hebridean whisky

by **Alex Kraaijeveld** (edited from a version provided at <http://www.celticmalts.com/journal-a25.htm>)

In 1825, Stewart Mackenzie of Seaforth bought the Isle of Lewis (with the exception of the town of Stornoway) for £160,000. The Excise Act of 1823 had made legal distilling of whisky an interesting opportunity for many lairds and Mackenzie set out collecting information with the aim of erecting a distillery on the island. Interestingly, much of Mackenzie's initial paper work related to his distillery plans has been preserved. He contacted Henry Armstrong, a coppersmith in Leith:

At what price per lib. you will engage to make me two copper stills, containing nearly 600 and 400 gallons complete for putting on board deliverable at Leith by 15th Feb, next, payable at 3 months after delivery. The stills are to be of the same size, quality, and dimensions as those made by you for Prestonpans Distillery, of which you this day showed me the plans and measurements.

In addition to stills, Mackenzie also inquired about copper boilers, cocks and pipes and furnaces. Armstrong undertook the job, charging 1s. 7d. per lb. of copper, with 3d. per lb. extra for the cocks and pipes, all items to be delivered at Leith February 25, 1826; the total bill amounted to £1,934 3s. 6d. Mackenzie obtained estimates for the wood and carpentry work, the water wheel (£157 6s. d.) and the malt barn (£735 12s.) and the necessary instruments (like a saccharometer and a hydrometer). Together with Mr. Bulloch, Mackenzie's representative on the site, the amount and origin of yeast, fuel (Mackenzie was keen on using only peat as fuel) and barley (could Lewis bere be used?) was investigated in detail. Mr. Bulloch assessment of the necessary employees and wages was as follows:

<i>A principal malt man</i>	<i>20/- to 21/- per week</i>
<i>2 assistants</i>	<i>9/- to 10/-</i>
<i>A bollman</i>	<i>18/- to 20/-</i>
<i>1 assistant</i>	<i>10/-</i>
<i>A man for tun & cooler room</i>	<i>16/-</i>
<i>An assistant to do</i>	<i>9/-</i>
<i>A cooper</i>	<i>15/-</i>
<i>A clerk</i>	<i>£30-£35 yearly</i>

Mr. Bulloch was to manage the distillery, which was expected to be operating 10 months of the year (but longer if demand was good). Mackenzie's projection of total annual expenses and anticipated receipts gives a healthy balance: £11,150 in expenses against £14,400 in receipts, based on a yearly production of 54,000 gallons.

In the course of 1827, the first signs of trouble appeared: Mackenzie became involved in a dispute about payment of some of his bills. The next few years made clear that Mackenzie was short of funds, but despite this financial crisis the Stornoway distillery went into operation in 1829 or 1830. Around 1833, the distillery seems to have fully entered the market. There are records of a 'great demand' for the local product with 'considerable quantities of spirits' from the distillery brought into the town of Stornoway and only very little exported from the island. However, in a letter dated March 1835, A. Robertson asked Mackenzie to accept him as his London-based agent and estimated that he could sell 1,000 to 2,000 gallons of whisky a year due to his connections in England and India. Whether Mackenzie accepted this application and whether Stornoway whisky found its way to India is unclear, because records virtually stop. The distillery

seems to have ceased operation around 1840, but the precise date and cause are unknown. Besides Mackenzie's financial problems, distance from the markets, transport problems on the island itself and possibly problems with the water supply may all have played their role. The name of the last distiller in charge, MacNee, was immortalised in local speech: "Tomhais Mhicnee", Gaelic for "MacNee's measure" referred to a generous dram, testament to the way MacNee dispensed of the product of the distillery.

After purchasing the Isle of Lewis in 1844, Sir James Matheson, a complete abstainer and prohibitionist had the distillery demolished.

APPENDIX 4: POEMS ASSOCIATED WITH DISTILLING AND DRINKING

App. 4.1 John Barleycorn

In the poem John Barleycorn Robert Burns obliquely refers to the process of reaping and malting barley, and distilling it to create the Uisge Beatha, or whisky.

*There was three kings into the east,
Three kings both great and high,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.*

*They took a plough and plough'd him down,
Put clods upon his head,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead.*

*But the cheerful Spring came kindly on,
And show'rs began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surpris'd them all.*

*The sultry suns of Summer came,
And he grew thick and strong;
His head weel arm'd wi' pointed spears,
That no one should him wrong.*

*The sober Autumn enter'd mild,
When he grew wan and pale;
His bending joints and drooping head
Show'd he began to fail.*

*His colour sicken'd more and more,
He faded into age;
And then his enemies began
To show their deadly rage.*

*They've taen a weapon, long and sharp,
And cut him by the knee;
Then tied him fast upon a cart,
Like a rogue for forgerie.*

*They laid him down upon his back,
And cudgell'd him full sore;
They hung him up before the storm,
And turned him o'er and o'er.*

*They filled up a darksome pit
With water to the brim;
They heaved in John Barleycorn,
There let him sink or swim.*

*They laid him out upon the floor,
To work him farther woe;
And still, as signs of life appear'd,
They toss'd him to and fro.*

*They wasted, o'er a scorching flame,
The marrow of his bones;
But a miller us'd him worst of all,
For he crush'd him between two stones.*

*And they hae taen his very heart's blood,
And drank it round and round;
And still the more and more they drank,
Their joy did more abound.*

*John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
Of noble enterprise;
For if you do but taste his blood,
'Twill make your courage rise.*

*'Twill make a man forget his woe;
'Twill heighten all his joy;
'Twill make the widow's heart to sing,
Tho' the tear were in her eye.*

*Then let us toast John Barleycorn,
Each man a glass in hand;
And may his great posterity
Ne'er fail in old Scotland!*

App. 4.2 The Moonshiner

The traditional Irish poem, or ballad, The Moonshiner is more direct in its approach:

*I'm a rambler, I'm a gambler, I'm a long way from home
And if you don't like me, well, leave me alone
I'll eat when I'm hungry, I'll drink when I'm dry
And the moonshine don't kill me, I'll live til I die*

*I've been a moonshiner for many a year
I've spent all me money on whiskey and beer
I'll go to some hollow, I'll set up my still
And I'll make you a gallon for a ten shilling bill*

*I'm a rambler, I'm a gambler, I'm a long way from home
And if you don't like me, well, leave me alone
I'll eat when I'm hungry, I'll drink when I'm dry
And the moonshine don't kill me, I'll live til I die*

*I'll go to some hollow in this counterie
Ten gallons of wash I can go on a spree
No women to follow, the world is all mine
I love none so well as I love the moonshine*

*I'm a rambler, I'm a gambler, I'm a long way from home
And if you don't like me, well, leave me alone
I'll eat when I'm hungry, I'll drink when I'm dry
And the moonshine don't kill me, I'll live til I die*

*Oh, moonshine, dear moonshine, oh, how I love thee
You killed me old father, but ah you try me
Now bless all moonshiners and bless all moonshine
Their breath smells as sweet as the dew on the vine*

*I'm a rambler, I'm a gambler, I'm a long way from home
And if you don't like me, well, leave me alone
I'll eat when I'm hungry, I'll drink when I'm dry
And the moonshine don't kill me, I'll live til I die*