Notes on Abingdon's malting industry

Bruce Hedge

Abingdon-on-Thames

Abingdon-on-Thames, the administrative centre of the Vale of White Horse, is seven miles by road south of Oxford. More importantly for this story, it is 102 miles from London by river. To quote the Universal Directory of 1796:

‘There are great quantities of malt made here and sent down the Thames in barges to the London markets.’

Evidence for the wealth created in the 18th century by those barges of malt can be seen in the elegant town houses built by Abingdon’s most successful maltsters, the Tomkins family. In East St. Helen Street, Twickenham House, built for Joseph Tomkins, mid-Georgian, noted for its white Chinese-Chippendale staircase and late 18th century Gothic bookcases; in Bath Street, Stratton House built 1722 by Benjamin Tomkins and the early Georgian Clock House in Ock Street, also built by Benjamin. Pevsner describes it as the grandest house in Abingdon, early Georgian, nine bays, three full storeys, panelled parapet and good interior features. To the left, stables with a deep open courtyard with, in the middle of the end range, an archway, Venetian window and cupola. Remarkably, opinions differ on its status. It has been described as, ‘an office and home for a manager rather than the abode of a Tomkins.’ All these residences were within a stone’s throw of the malt-houses that paid for their creation.

The Vineyard

The Brewers Journal of 15th December 1903 reported on the opening of new maltings at Abingdon for Messrs. Thomas & Co. of Abingdon, Leamington and Wolverhampton.

The new premises consisted of two 100-quarter maltings to the design of Messrs. J.D. Wood of Birmingham, malting and brewing engineers. Since two houses already existed on the site the new ones were referred to as No. 3 and No. 4. The Brewers Journal stated that, ‘The present maltings are connected to the new premises by bridges to facilitate the working arrangements.’

No. 3 had three growing floors, ‘of angular shape arranged specially to suit the site.’ No. 4 with two growing floors had its main front alongside the railway siding. Messrs. Nalder & Nalder Ltd. of Wantage supplied the whole of the machinery for both houses.
Figure 1. Former Thames-side maltings, East St. Helen's Street.
The two new maltings were sited in the Vineyard because of the convenience of the rail connection, but the area had been the location of others in the 18th century and probably much earlier. Two, Abbey Maltings, had belonged by 1790 to John Francis Spenlove of the Abbey Brewery and a third is mentioned in an indenture concerning Elizabeth Stratton, Nee Tomkins, dated 1760.

On the site of Thomas’s maltings, then operated by Samuel Thompson & Sons, Ltd., part of Associated British Maltsters, new premises were opened on the 11th March 1964. These new drum maltings, described as being more nearly automatic than any other plant yet built by the company, replaced the previous floor maltings the main part of which had been destroyed by fire in 1961. Their annual productive capacity was 30,000 quarters and the three-man operating team capable of producing 3½ times as much as the eight-man team in the old floor maltings. The Brewers Journal described the equipment as ‘orthodox Boby maltings modified.’

In the early 1980’s ABM sold their Abingdon and Pontefract maltings to Watney’s enabling Watney’s to shut their own floor maltings. The closure of these facilities in Abingdon in the late 1980’s marked the end of the malting in the town.

The Hordeum Co.

Undated plans produced by Wilson & Co. of Frome for Thomas Skurray, then managing director of Morland & Co., were for a Malt Extract Plan on the site of two malthouses shown on an O.S. map of 1875. The site became known as the Abbey Works and is probably the location of two of John Francis Spenlove’s malt-houses acquired by Morland’s from the executors of his daughter Mary in 1866.

The Hordeum was a malt extract plant; featuring decoction mashing, mash filtration pressure boiling and wort filtration. A fuller understanding of its role in the brewery’s operation is provided in correspondence dating from the 1940s and 1950s.

Britain was subject to as much austerity in the immediate post-war years as during the Second World War itself. Fuel and sugar shortages were two of the many ways maltsters and brewers were troubled. Maltsters were required to dry grain on behalf of the Ministry of Food whilst at the same time the Ministry of Fuel and Power was cutting coal supplies and urging savings on those supplies that were allowed.

Neither Ministry understood the function of the Hordeum and the brewery had strenuous arguments with the Ministry of Fuel and Power over supplies of coal to keep the works operating. The works frequently had to resort to using coke, coal was strictly allocated to industry whilst coke was not rationed but in still in short supply.

Their difficulty with sugar supplies does throw light on the exact role of the...
Figure 3. The one remaining malthouse in the Vineyard, formerly Messrs. Thomas & Co., now occupied by The Vale Housing Association Ltd. Note that the bottom growing floor walls have been pierced to allow parking.
Hordeum. This extract from a letter from Morland & Co. to the Ministry of Food, Sugar Division, is dated 5th November 1948. ‘We appreciate that other Malt Extract manufacturers do not use sugar for this purpose, but in our case the object of the production is unusual. Our extract is produced with the object of enabling us to brew a particular style of bottled beer, for which the sugar is a necessary adjunct to produce this result. Malt Extract is usually manufactured for use in the form of a blend, in small quantities. Our Extract is used in a very large quantity at a later stage in the brewing, and the bottled beer is produced mainly from Malt Extract.’ The immediate outcome to this plea is unknown.

Back in 1948 Hordeum products seem only to have been used in the production of bottled beers but later it was also used in the production of the mild and bitter beers. In 1959 considerable concern was expressed by the Board over the continuing decline in sales of mild ale, due it appears to the dryness and thinness of the beer produced. Messrs. Briant & Harman, Consulting and Analytical Chemists were called in to investigate. Their report of 23rd March 1959 suggested that a good quality No. 2 Invert should be used to improve the palette and fullness of the mild ale.

Extract from the report by Dr J.H. Oliver of Briant & Harman to Morland & Co.: ‘It has been your practice for many years to prepare a malt extract made from your own malt and bring this to the brewery for hopping and fermentation. The writer thinks at the moment that one matter which aggravates your present thinness is the use of C.M.E.

To the best of our knowledge, C.M.E. is merely a coloured starch syrup obtained by hydrolysing maize starch with acid which is subsequently neutralised. It is often suggested that Dextrin gives fullness, but the complete fermentation of C.M.E. by itself only gives a thin, very hard, dry solution, and there is no doubt that it is the nitrogen compounds which come from the malt which are the biggest foundation of the flavour in a beer. The only alternative sugar which has flavour is a well-made invert, which does possess a soft residual character of flavour.’

Nothing remains of the Hordeum today. The site was cleared for redevelopment in the 1970s.

Malthouses on Morland’s Ock Street Brewery Site

When Edward Morland purchased the Eagle Brewery in 1861 it had its own 10-quarter maltings. The location of this is uncertain. An undated map of the area, post 1912 and probably pre-1928 shows behind number 48 Ock Street a, ‘disused malthouse pulled down.’ However, the land it stood upon, although part of the brewery site later, may not have been in 1861.

The Brewers Journal of 5th September 1905 refers to a Morland malthouse dating from 1716 as being still in use. Again
Figure 5. Malt extract plant section BB.
Figure 6. Malt extract plant section CC.
When the No. 2 maltings ceased to be used as such is not known, evidence suggests before 1931. A site plan of November 1960 shows the building in use as a carpenters shop and stores. It was demolished within the following 12 months.

In contrast with the 30 quarter, single-kiln house, the 1905 house is well documented. The original J.D. Wood drawings exist along with others recording various replacements and modifications over the years.

1946 saw the two malt kilns in the 1905 maltings converted to oil firing (the barley kiln continued to be fired by anthracite), and new malt elevating and screening equipment (20 qtr./hr.), again supplied by Nalder & Nalder Ltd. of Wantage.

New silos and barley handling equipment were proposed in 1947, the plans drawn up by Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners with Nalder & Nalder. The Ministry of Food issued a licence for their construction but the proposal was dropped. A letter from the chairman of Morland's to the ministry dated 20th June 1949 explains, 'When we originally considered the question of grain storage in 1946, you will no doubt recollect that the demand for beer was far exceeding the supply. In addition, all barley users were being encouraged by the Ministry of Agriculture to prepare plans to cope with the quick influx of barley which was likely to arise from the introduction of combine harvesters.' It goes on to say that, 'Since the beginning of this year...
Figure 7. 1905 malt house.
In 1948 Robert Boby Ltd. of Bury St. Edmunds, produced drawings for a suggested drum maltings conversion. Two proposals were considered, one for eight 50-quarter drums and two 50-quarter box kilns, the other for four 50-quarter drums and one 50-quarter box kiln. With an eight-day germination period and two day kilning the annual output would be 16,500 quarters and 8,250 quarters respectively. This compares with Morland’s production of 7,166 quarters in 1952 and 5,842 quarters in 1951. Again, that proposal was not proceeded with.

In March 1960 the Board were examining the economics of making their own malt. A report had been produced which suggested that their costs of producing malt were £6/16/0 (£6.80) per quarter, for 5,000 quarters. This compared with the average price of buying over the previous 12 months of £7/15/0 (£7.75). Although some of Morland’s costs had not been included in their calculations, it was a big enough differential for a decision to continue malting.

Despite that decision, a proposal was made to convert the 1905 maltings to a bottling hall. On the advice of Whitbread, who by then had a significant holding of Morland shares, it was rejected at a Board meeting in July 1960. The bottling hall was to be built on former allotments adjacent to the malthouse with the malthouse itself converted to storage.

Obviously no action on converting the malthouse had been taken for at the September 1961 Board meeting it was reported that, ‘following a fire in Abingdon of one of the maltings belonging to Associated British Maltsters, he (Mr. Pudsey-Dawson) had offered them the use of the Company’s Malthouse. Following a meeting with the directors of that Company, it had been agreed that a fair rent to pay was 10/- (50p) per quarter for all barley steeped by them, and 3d (0.0125p) per quarter water charges. They had also agreed to pay the Foreman Maltster’s salary; all electricity charges, and to take over the stocks of coal and fuel oil as from 1st July 1961.’

The arrangement only lasted for three months. The October 1961 Board minutes record, ‘In view of the Foreman Maltster, Mr. J. Macfarlane being made redundant on the closure of the Malthouse premises at 30th September 1961, it was agreed to pay him compensation of £500 for the loss of office. Mr. Macfarlane would also receive a pension of £110 per annum.’

Late in the 1960s the Malthouse became a wine and spirit store on the ground floor, storage on the first and offices and a Boardroom on the second. The offices were refurbished in the 1980s and in the 1990s the ground and first floors also converted to offices. And so they remained until the takeover of Morland’s in 1999 by Greene, King & Co. Ltd. The
Figure 8. The 1850 plan. The 1905 malthouse was built 13 feet to the west, and parallel to, the structure, roughly in the centre, marked, 'cottages' and 'warehouse.' It is this structure that is referred to as 'No.2 House' in 1905.
Figure 9. An extract from the 1886 sale document, the land and buildings purchased are on the shaded area in the centre. The 1905 malthouse was built 13 feet inside the land marked, 'Wrigglesworth's Charity' alongside the left-hand building, the 'No.2 House.'
Figure 10. Sections of one of the drawings prepared in 1902 by Joseph D. Wood showing the bridge between No. 2 House and the barley kiln and store on the first floor of the new house.
Figure 11. Elevation at the north end of the maltings showing the bridge over the cart road and the kiln of the new maltings.
Abingdon brewery was closed, production transferred to Bury St. Edmunds, and the Ock Street site sold for redevelopment.

Political, economic and social background to Spenlove’s Barley Book

For 23 of the 33 years covered by John Spenlove’s Barley Book Britain was at war. The French Revolutionary Wars from 1792 to 1802, and the Napoleonic Wars from 1803 to 1815. Additionally, Britain was at war with the USA from 1812 to 1814.

War presents many challenges and stimuli to the economy and most of these can be observed in the numbers and notes recorded in the Barley Book. The number of Enclosure Acts increased dramatically, higher grain prices encouraged farmers to put more land under the plough, to take up longer leases for higher rents. However, little of the benefit of higher production and prices was passed on to the agricultural labourer and in the post-war years agricultural wage rates actually fell. The domestic production of grain increased at the same rate as the total population, 14% between the years 1793 and 1815.

The government, during the war years, was borrowing heavily and spending abroad leading to a fall in the exchange rate. It also led to the Bank of England being relieved of the obligation of meeting notes in gold. This all lead to interest rates rising; however with no restraint on the increase in money supply, inflation was higher still. Money was cheaper in real terms. It is during this period that cheques, although dating from the 17th century, became a common instrument for the satisfaction of debts.

The end of the series of wars in 1815 saw 300,000 men thrown on to the labour market. A short-lived industrial boom followed as industry turned out the goods that people had been deprived of for so long. However, the 300,000 increase was nothing compared to the overall rise in population. From 1801 to 1831 it increased by 50% meaning more labour available, much of it cheap juvenile. The period following the war saw the opening of one of the grimmest periods in modern British history, years of distress and class hatred, periodic riots and savage repression by the government.

By the 18th century Abingdon was the centre of a network of turnpikes and via those roads the barley could be easily carried to the malt houses in the centre of the town. Spenlove purchased his barley within an area measuring 14 miles north to south and 25 miles east to west with the furthest farms supplying him being 13 miles from Abingdon.

The Universal Directory of 1796 said of Abingdon, ‘There are great quantities of malt made here and sent down the Thames in barges to the London markets.’ The journey was hazardous and lengthy, taking five days downstream and ten for the return. Coinciding with Spenlove starting out in business was the
opening of the Oxford and Coventry canals. The Berks and Wilts canal didn’t reach Abingdon until 1812. The former would have permitted coal from the Midlands to reach the town easily, although with the final stage of the journey via the river, whilst the Berks and Wilts would have made coal from the Somerset coalfield readily available. Neither canal seems to have had any impact on barley supplies to Abingdon; the only mention of barley purchased from outside the locality is the purchase of ‘London barley’ in May and June 1801.

**Mr. Spenlove’s Barley Book**

‘Every maltster shall keep a book, to be delivered to him by the excise officer, for the purpose of entering the several accounts of barley required by this act; and the total quantity shall be entered on the day on which the account is to be given, under a penalty of £50.’ - S.3. 24 Geo 3.

John Francis Spenlove was twenty-one years old in 1790 when he started his Barley Book and, given his age, one can assume he had only recently started out in business as brewer and maltster. The Excise men in Abingdon appear to have been rather lax though, Mr Spenlove’s barley book certainly was not ‘delivered to him’, contains only the ‘debtor account’ - although the creditor side may be in a different volume - and whilst it contains the essentials required by the 1784 act it is not quite in the form designated. The book, quarto in size (33 x 20 cm), and hand ruled in pencil and red ink, is a record of the barley he bought and malted during the next 33 years. Meticulously recorded is the date he bought it, the farmer who sold it to him, the quantity bought in quarters and bushels and the price he paid for it. Later, he added the date he paid the farmer and the total purchase price. The record is ruled off and totalled at the end of the season and often the amount of malt produced by those purchases recorded, sometimes with a note of his thoughts on the efficiency of the malting process with regard to the season’s corn.

The date of the first entry is 12th November 1790 when he bought 10 quarters of barley at £1-4-6d (£1.22) a quarter and the first season’s purchases end on the 3rd June the following year when he purchased 11 quarters at £1-4-8¼d (£1.23). Total purchased in those eight months was 705½ quarters of which 15 quarters he used for other purposes or sold on. The 690½ quarters that he malted had cost him £847-10-6d (£847.53). He notes, ‘The above quantity of barley produced 808? quarters of Malt which is 1 bushel, 1 peck, 3 quarts and 1 pint upon a quarter of Barley increase.’

Spenlove seems to have started out with only one malthouse, then after two seasons a second house is recorded. The first, possibly acquired with the business, was in use for 12 years, whilst the second was in use for 31 of the 33 years covered by the book. Later still, the Abbey Malthouse was used from 21st
<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Barley - Average price per quarter £</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>1790/1</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>Agricultural wages 45p per week. Malt Tax 1s. 7.25d per bushel.</td>
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<td>1791/2</td>
<td>1.48</td>
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<td>1792/3</td>
<td>1.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>1793/4</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1794/5</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1795/6</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>Poor harvest; Speenhamland system introduced.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1796/7</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797/8</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>Bank of England ceases paying in cash</td>
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<tr>
<td>1798/9</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799-1800</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1800/1</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801/2</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>Temporary peace with France. Boom in 1802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803/4</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804/5</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1805/6</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>Trafalgar, 21/10/1805</td>
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<td>1806/7</td>
<td>1.84</td>
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<td>1807/8</td>
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<td>1808/9</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1809/10</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>Poor harvest. Boom years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1810/11</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Poor harvest. Agricultural wages 65p per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>1811/12</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>Poor harvest. Slump 1812. Outbreak of war with USA. Bad winter.</td>
</tr>
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<td>1812/13</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>Poor harvest. First recorded payment by 'check' (cheque) in Barley Book</td>
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<tr>
<td>1813/14</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>Poor harvest. War with USA ends.</td>
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<td>1814/15</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>War with France ended June 1815</td>
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<td>1815/16</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>Government expenditure falls by half. Depression in 1816. Malt Tax 2s. 5d. Per bushel.</td>
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<td>1816/17</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>Bad harvest. Depression, unemployment &amp; riots.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1817/18</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1818/19</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>Peterloo massacre August 1819. Bad harvest. Short-lived boom. Malt Tax 3s. 7.75d. Per bushel.</td>
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<td>1819/20</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>Bad harvest. Depression &amp; unemployment.</td>
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<td>1820/21</td>
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<td>Depression &amp; unemployment. Wet harvest.</td>
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<td>1821/22</td>
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<td>1822/23</td>
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<td>1.91</td>
<td></td>
<td>Average, 1790 to 1823</td>
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Table 1. Spenlove barley book 1790 - 1823: average prices paid
Barley - Average Price Each Year

Year - 1790 to 1823

Price per Quarter - £
September 1798, again until the end of the book in 1823. In all Spenlove appears to have operated nine malthouses in the period, some owned or leased and some only hired for a short period to cope with demand. Two of the latter were operated only for 3 weeks each, one in 1797 and the other in 1803.

At the end of his first season he makes no comment as to efficiency or to any other conditions. On other occasions he merely records a simple one or two word comment like, 'Good' or 'Bad increase.' However, at other times we learn a little more. Thus in 1822 when 434? quarters were malted we are informed that, 'The above Barley was sweated & laid by and not malted till the year after it was bought it having been a wet harvest it was improved by the sweating. Quantity of Malt it produced 447 Qtrs. Increase 4½ bushels on 20 Qtrs. considering the sweating not bad.' In that same year, perhaps because of the wet harvest, John Spenlove tried his hand at malting wheat, it is the only instance he records, and he has the following to say, 'The above quantity of Wheat (46¼ quarters) malted produced 54½ Qtrs. which is an increase of 1 bushel 1 peck 1 gallon in a Quarter - Great Increase but pays a very high duty - it was of the growth of 1821 damaged by a wet harvest & did not turn out particularly well in the Mash Tun - We were of opinion that the best Wheat malted would answer very well.'

Overall the book must give a reliable picture of the prices ruling in North Berkshire during its 33 years coverage. Indeed the prices paid correlate closely with the average prices quoted for those years in Malt and Malting by Henry Stopes, published in 1885 (p 624). The average prices for the first and last years of Spenlove's book give a false picture of price stability showing as they do £1.23 per quarter in 1790/1 and £1.32 per quarter in 1822/3. In reality price swings were quite violent.

The highest price recorded is for purchases from the 1800 harvest and they are double the average for the 33-year period at £3.73 per quarter. Three years later for 1803/4 they were at their lowest, £1.16 per quarter.

Perhaps, not surprisingly, the lowest quantity Spenlove purchased was from the 1800 harvest, the reverse however was not always the case. In 1803/4 and again in 1815/6, years with rock-bottom prices, are also years with some of the lowest volumes purchased.

Factors other than the weather seem to be a determinant of prices. As can be seen from a quote above, the 1821 harvest was damaged by wet, yet the price of a quarter of barley at that time was one of the lowest both locally and nationally, economic depression and unemployment played their part too.

Not all the yields from the malting process are recorded but enough are to be able to say that the overall increase in volume of malt over barley was 14%. This is comparable with the figure for 1884 quoted by...
Stopes of an increase in bulk of 15% for English barley.

Only once in the 33 years does Spenlove record having to buy any malt and that is in 1792/3, shortly after he started out in business. Then he bought 247 quarters at £2.13 per quarter. In that season he was buying barley at £1.67 per quarter, indicating a gross margin of 28% to cover operating costs, rent, depreciation, malt tax and profit.

It appears nothing was wasted. Malt dust was one of the by-products he sold and for the years where sales of that item are recorded he was selling it for 8/- (40p) per quarter.

John Francis Spenlove died in 1841. His wife, Susanna Morland, whom he had married in 1796, had predeceased him, as had their eldest son. In his will he placed the brewery business in the hands of trustees who had full discretionary powers to carry on the business for the benefit of his estate, or to grant a lease or leases on it. His two surviving daughters, Mary the eldest, who was unmarried, and Anne who was married to a Samuel Waite of Gloucester, were the principal beneficiaries. Mary acquired and ran the business until her death in 1862 when it was purchased by her cousin, George Bowes Morland (see the notes on the Spenlove family). From then on the Abbey brewery was run in conjunction with breweries at West Ilsley, where Morland's was founded in 1711, and with the Eagle Brewery in Ock Street, Abingdon. The three together were described as United Breweries, a name that was used for many years after the West Ilsley and Abbey breweries ceased operating.

The Spenlove family

John Francis Spenlove, born 27 March 1769 died Abingdon, 2nd January 1841. Married 6th September 1796, Susanna Morland, born 8th January 1764, died 30 April 1830, daughter of William Morland of West Ilsley, Berks. Children of the marriage:
John Francis - 1802 to 1827
Mary - died 1862
Anne - married Samuel Waite of Gloucester.

John Francis senior was only 21 years when he started in business at Abbey Brewery. He was probably the son of Francis Spenlove of London (memorial tablet in St. Nicholas' church, Abingdon) who had died at the age of 46 in 1776.

Where he served any apprenticeship, if any, is not known and initially he may have been in partnership with an Edward Cheer, a well-known local Abingdon brewer. His last will and testament, together with a codicil, tell us a lot about the man and his success in the malting and brewing trades. The will, dated 7th April 1835 with a codicil of 7th April 1836 left to Mary all his household goods, furniture, plate (except for two silver waiters), books, linen, and china, and also his carriages, carriage horses with the harness and other things belonging to the same, and also all his wines and other
liquor (except the stock of beer as a brewer). In lieu of any of the forgoing, Anne was to receive payment of £500 from Mary. Anne also got the two silver waiters, 'upon which my arms quartered with those of my late wife are engraved.' Of the settlement made upon his marriage, he left £50 to his daughter Anne and £4,950 to Mary. He also left to Anne the interest, dividends, etc. on £4,900 in government securities that were to be held in trust for her. He made other bequests to his appointed trustees and family members. The payments from the marriage settlement, the £4,900 and the other bequests were to be made out of the proceeds of the sale of his properties either whole or in part.

His trustees were John Moses Carter, George Bowes Morland and Edward Tull who were to hold all his messuages, lands, tenements, hereditaments and real estate and the remainder of his personal estate. The trustees had full discretionary power and were not compelled to make immediate sale. As to the running of the brewery, 'I have given them (the trustees) power to carry on the said Brewery for any length of time they may think fit or to grant a lease or leases of the same ... it being my desire that they shall have full discretionary power and shall not be compelled to make immediate sale of the said trusts estates but only when and as from time to time they shall think it advantageous to do so ...' The residue of his estate, after all such sales and bequests, was left to his two daughters equally.

Mary was to be allowed to live in his house after his death for as long as she pleased upon payment of £50 per annum rent for the house and pleasure garden and £10 per annum for the kitchen garden. If Anne chose she could occupy his house in East St. Helens Street on payment of £30 per annum.

Mary bought the brewery business from her father's estate, and the following entries subsequently appear in various directories:

Kelly's, 1847 - Miss Mary Spenlove, brewer, Abbey Brewery
Slater's, 1850 - Spenlove & Carter, brewers, Abbey Brewery
Billing's, 1854 - Spenlove & Carter, brewers, Abbey Brewery

Mary's association with John Moses Carter, whatever form it took, does not appear to have been a happy one. The Brewers Journal in 1866 reported a court case concerning the will of an 'old lady called Morland.' It related to a codicil, which stated, 'That my highly esteemed friend and cousin, George Bowes Morland, do on my decease immediately purchase all my property, brewery, etc., at one fourth less than its value, with the proviso only that from that time John Moses Carter receives no profit from the business, and has nothing more to do with the property in any way or form whatever, for uncivil and ungentlemanly behaviour to me.'

The court case was over whether the public houses were included in the 'etc.'
Initially the court had ruled that not being a necessary part of the business they were not included, but this was overturned in a higher court and George Bowes Morland was allowed to purchase at ¾ of their value.

This is not intended to be a complete history of the malting industry of Abingdon, but a pulling together of information gleaned from documents and plans removed from Morland’s Ock Street brewery after its closure.

For clarification, the information gathered has been supplemented by further research in the National Brewing Library at Oxford Brookes University, particularly in volumes of the Brewers Journal.

References

1. Brewers Journal 15 April 1964
3. Sometimes later, the date ‘1910’ has been pencilled on the drawing.