

A Croydon brewery

Herbert Shaw

To Croydon, a market town with numerous inns, brewing was always an important industry. Some innkeepers did their own brewing, while others were served by small local breweries. Many breweries opened with the 19th century expansion of the town, two of the largest being Crowley's and Overton's (later to become Page and Overton). In the southern High Street, however, was a long-established Croydon brewery which had opened in 1586. Brewing on this site was continuous for some 350 years until, in 1936, it ended with the closure of Nalder and Collyer's brewery.

The Homage Jury for 1586¹ records that 'Wylym Chapman Baker sold to John King, brewer, one tenn'te with a backsyde about the mydde of Croydon Town' and for 1616² that John King the Elder, deceased, bequeathed 'one greate ffreehold messuage, called Brewehouse Croydon', to his son Anthony King. In 1631³ Anthony King sold to Watkin Northupp 'one messuage the brewhouse with yards, orchards, and gardens', whilst from the Nalder & Collyer deeds at the Surrey Record Office⁴ that for 23rd May 1631 shows Watkin Northupp in occupation. There were subsequently changes

of ownership until in 1744 John Dewey Parker took over the brewery which had been held in trust for him from 1727, until he reached the age of 21. In 1747 Parker leased the brewery to William Smith; the Smith family were to run the brewery until 1798, followed by Anthony Harman and his family until 1849, and finally by Nalder & Collyer until 1936, although they had been taken over in 1919 by the City of London Brewery. These families were to build the brewery into one of the most prosperous and efficient in the Home Counties.

William Smith and his brother Robert went into partnership; William subsequently withdrew, and Robert's sons were taught the business, Robert Jnr. as brewer, Charles as maltster. It was Robert Jnr. who renewed the lease in 1774, and in 1791, on Parker's bankruptcy, he bought the brewery for £1,420. The partnership of Robert and Charles Smith was then formed.

An attractive addition to the brewery complex was made after 1774 with the blind-arcaded building seen in the Victorian Brewery photograph (Fig. 1); for the plan of the brewery see Fig. 2. This

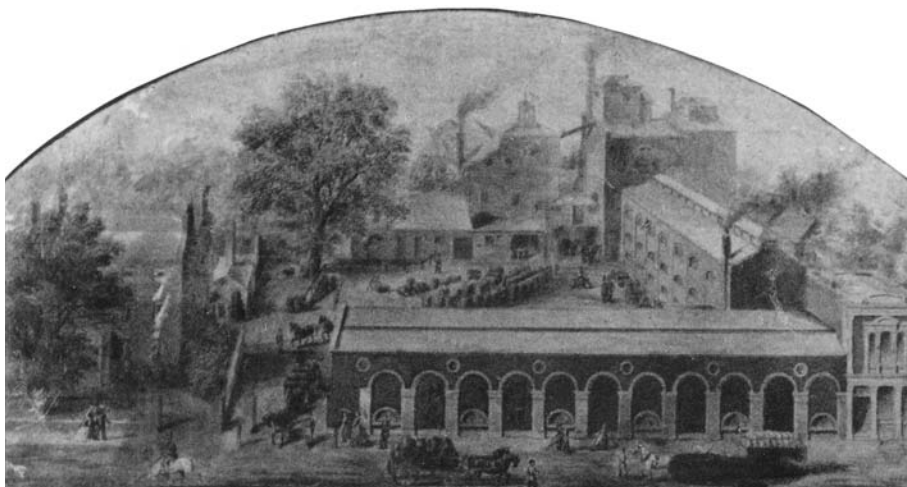


Figure 1. High Street and the brewery in the 1880s. The original hung in the brewery board room. The house is Shrublands, the brewery house. It was the site of the Grand Theatre from 1896.

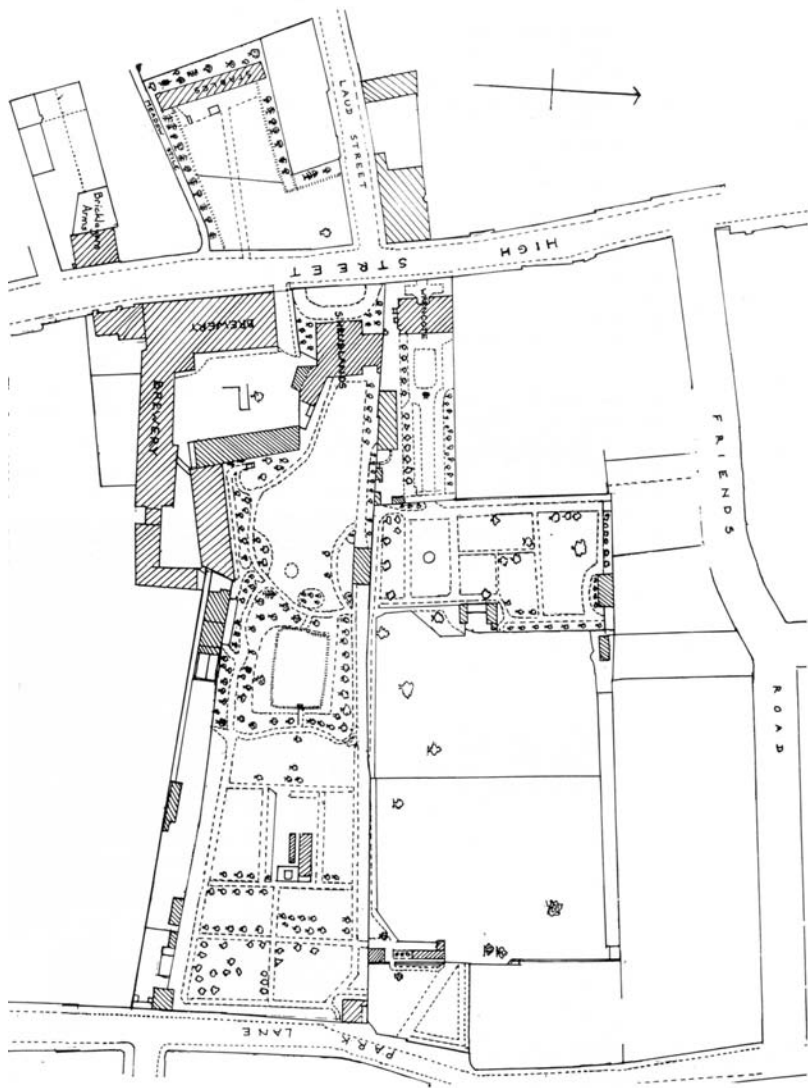
building, replacing others on the site, was 'the newly erected messe or tenement fronting the High Street', when taken over by Anthony Harman in 1798.⁵ In 1945 it was occupied by Marshalls Foods, to be finally demolished in 1964 making way for the Leon House complex.

Another Smith family legacy was the brew, 'Entire', a drink consisting, in brewing terms, of three threads - ale, hopped beer, and tuppenny (2d a quart) - which became very popular. The three threads had to be mixed at the bar, which was time-consuming for the barman and frustrating for its waiting devotees. In 1722 a Shoreditch brewer blended the three threads into one barrel, the 'Entire Butt', and so was created the brew 'Entire'. Mass produced, it was cheap,

and could, unlike ale, be kept in store. Because of its popularity with manual workers 'Entire' became known as 'Porter', whilst the demand for it was so great that brewers needing more outlets, acquired their own public houses, ensuring that their own brews were taken. By 1816, of 48,000 licensed houses in England and Wales, 14,200 were owned by breweries.

When on 24th June 1798 Robert & Charles Smith, described in the Sales Particulars as 'Porter, Ale, and Table Beer Brewers', sold the business to Anthony Harman for £8,500, there were twenty-three licensed houses attached to the brewery; £2,500 bought the brewery and the eight freehold properties, but the fifteen leasehold and copyhold properties,

Figure 2. An 1888 plan of the brewery shown in Fig. 1, before Edridge Road was cut.



it was agreed, were to be bought back in 1803 for £6,000. The brewery had been sold because of bankruptcy, but the houses were bought back as agreed; amongst them was the Gun in Church Street which is still trading, and the Kings Head of Ruskin's nostalgic memory, which was demolished in the market area clearance of the 1890s.

Anthony Harman died in 1845, aged 85, and on 29th September 1849, the partnership of Francis Nalder, his son Howard, and Bristow Collyer, leased the brewery with twenty-seven licensed houses attached from Thomas and Henry Harman. The Nalders were an 18th century Croydon family of Coombe Lane, where Francis Nalder Stir died in 1809. His son, also named Francis, moved to Kilburn in 1817, where Howard was born. In 1849 they had dissolved a partnership as Cheapside glovers, when Francis returned to Croydon with Howard to lease the Croydon Brewery.

The Collyers were a Farnham family, and Bristow Collyer's grandfather, an inn-keeper there, married in 1783, Priestly Bristow of Beddington, of a family long involved with the marketing of hops at the famous Farnham Hop Fair. Before the partnership leased the brewery, Howard Nalder had been allowed to attend the brewery from 6 am to 9 pm to be instructed in the business. Thus Howard's industry in mastering the trade combined with Bristow Collyer's knowledge of that essential ingredient the hop to make this a profitable partnership.

In 1857, after the death of Francis Nalder, they became equal partners until 1870, when Collyer, taken suddenly ill at Brighton, was brought back to his house, 'Riversdale' at Beddington, where he died on 11th July. He was buried in one of the family graves in Beddington churchyard. Howard became the brewery's sole owner in 1872 when he bought Bristow Collyer's half share for £14,006. There were by then 115 public houses attached to the brewery, compared with the 27 taken over in 1849.

Howard's son, Howard Frederick, who had been a brewery clerk at £700 per



Figure 3. Wrencote, High Street. It was a neighbour to Shrublands. (Croydon Public Libraries photo.)

annum, was made a partner by his father in 1878, the year that ended the original twenty-nine year lease. He was to run the business, and he was to live rent free in the house next to the brewery, which the Nalders named 'Wrencote' (Fig. 3) whilst Howard was to continue to live in the brewery house now named 'Shrublands'. Howard Frederick was allowed two horses and beer to his requirements, whilst his father could have as many horses as he pleased, and beer as he required for himself and friends. The assets, £273,420, were stipulated as a debt to Howard.⁶ The partnership lasted until 1888, when a public company was formed.

There were over 9,000 breweries in England at that time, and in 1888 the Stock Exchange published lists of many hundreds which had become public companies. Competition to acquire licensed houses was so fierce that all breweries needed more capital. Nalders' return for their 163 premises has, no doubt, parallels in hundreds of other breweries. 58 of their houses were freeholds, 42 of which had been bought since 1878, when Howard Frederick became the active partner, and 13 of these had been bought in 1887 (6 on the 6th July). Among the shareholders was Nathaniel Page of the Stag Brewery Pimlico, who from 1892 was brewing in Surrey Street in the partnership of Page & Overton. He later became a Mayor and Freeman of Croydon. Page & Overton's Brewery was, in 1954, the last one to close in Croydon.

Howard Frederick, Managing Director, died in 1892, and his father Howard the following year, leaving £305,421. He was buried in the family grave in Sanderstead churchyard. From this time there were great changes to the brewery, for with the 1893 cutting of Edridge Road and Masons Avenue, the brewery was rebuilt, as shown in Fig. 4. Then came the announcement⁷ that Croydon was to have a brand new theatre, to be built on land once occupied by the rather gloomy looking mansion that had been the residence of Mr Nalder. The following year the Grand Theatre opened on the Shrublands site, and where Howard Nalder and his family once lived, Sir Henry Irving and Sarah Bernhardt were playing before enraptured audiences. The theatre was demolished in 1959 to give way to Gresham House. Wrencote survives as an office building, but the trees and railings in front of it have gone.

Fielding Herbert Nalder, Howard's second son, who took over, was to be the last Nalder in the business, which he sold in 1919. Harry Wood, who became the last manager, came to the brewery about 1913, having worked for a few months at Boorne's Brewery Wallington when customers' deliveries were made from a hand cart. It was because of the watchful eye that he kept on the brewery deeds during World War II, that he was able to see them to the Surrey Record Office in 1966, so making their study possible.

Fielding Nalder ran the brewery with Ernesto Charles Hand, a son of Ernesto

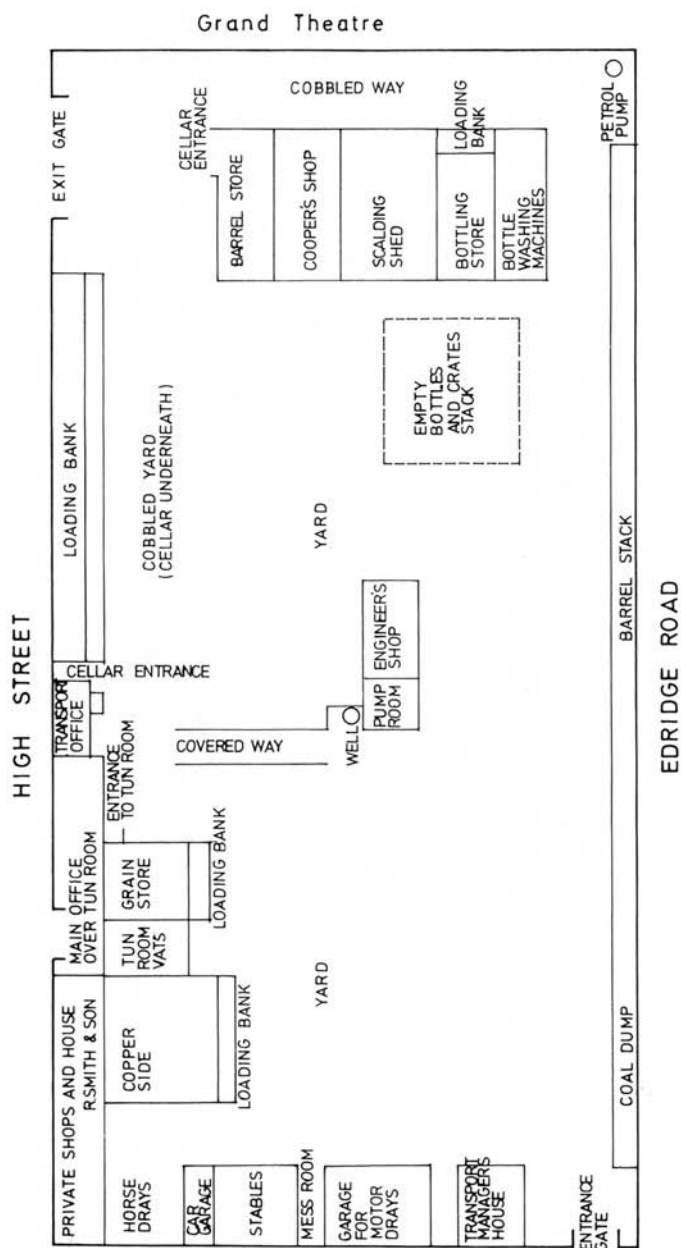


Figure 4. Oliver Taylor's sketch plan of the brewery in the 1920s.

Hand, valuer and broker to Nalder & Collyer and the Shirley Brewery Co.,⁸ and with a board of six. Fielding Nalder was a dapper, if irascible little man, for at least once, when the brew went wrong, he had the offending brewers in his office with their ledgers, and shortly afterward, the doors burst open, and the brewers came running out with the heavy ledgers flying after them. When he visited the brewery from his Jermyn Street hotel, he travelled from East Croydon Station by hansom cab. He carried a gold-headed walking stick which he frequently mislaid. Harry would then be sent to find it, and return it to the waiting hansom cab. Harry would be given half a sovereign to buy a packet of Fielding's de Reske cigarettes and allowed to keep the 2/8d change, a useful addition to his weekly wage of 10/-.

By 1919 plans were being made for a share issue, but in August⁹ came the announcement that the brewery had been sold to the City of London Brewery for about £1 million. Fielding, Harry said, wished to enjoy the remaining years of his life. He died in Como, Italy, on 27th March 1934, leaving his effects in England of £1,352 to his widow Ruby Gertrude Amelia Von Sederholm Nalder. The Head Office for both breweries was 87 Upper Thames Street and both boards were composed of the same City of London personnel, E.C. Hand joining for Nalder board meetings.

'Nalder & Collyer's Entire' was featured in various forms on the Company's public houses. When the board sign on the

Victory (Fig. 5) at the Surrey Street/Bell Hill corner was removed, the legend was incised into the Bell Hill wall. The public house closed by 1933 to become shop premises, but when it was demolished in 1982 under the Bell Hill conservation scheme, Croydon lost its last 'Nalder & Collyer's Entire'.

The brew 'Entire', however, became a World War I casualty, for the government permitted light ales only to be brewed; Nalder's produced the 'Elephant' brew with a Jumbo as a trade mark. In January 1936, a circus Jumbo certainly made his mark at the brewery. His route between South Croydon and the Davis Theatre, where he was appearing, took him and his keeper past the brewery gate. The keeper was given a pint to help him on his way, and once, for a joke, Jumbo was given a bucketful of beer. From that day, when Jumbo reached the brewery gate, he would not budge until he had had his bucket of beer. He too enjoyed the Jumbo jest (Fig. 6).

It was in the early 1920s that a former army lorry driver, William Oliver Taylor, came to the brewery as a driver. He worked there until 1928, and has written the following account of Nalder & Collyer in the 1920s, and from memory has drawn the sketch plan Fig. 4.

The Nalder brewery in the 1920s was powered by steam. Coal for this purpose was drawn from East Croydon Station by a specially built lorry owned by Nalder's. The main gate of the brewery faced the High Street, and



Figure 5. The Victory, on Bell Hill corner. The Britannia is on the extreme right. A Page & Overton van is making for Surrey Street brewery.

this was the exit gate for all lorries and horse drays, which were the open type flat platform body with posts and chains along the side.

From the loading bay to the main office was the wall facing the street, and the upper storey of the main office was partly over the Tun Room and over the Transport Manager's office. Entrances to the slopes down to the cellars were in the main yard as shown on the plan.

The only residence of the brewery was that of the Transport Manager William Withers, and his house was situated at the end of Masons Avenue, just inside the entrance to the left. All transport coming into the brewery came through this entrance, whether loaded or empty.

At this time staff employed at the brewery could often work until nine or ten at night, and starting time was six o'clock each morning.

The Bell in London's Fleet Street always had the first delivery by motor dray. There had to be an early start from the brewery - the vehicle often being loaded overnight - as the speed limit was twelve m.p.h., and vehicles had to leave Fleet Street by nine a.m. in accordance with City Police regulations.

Nalder's motor transport in the 1920s totalled nine petrol-driven lorries. Seven of these were ex-RAF type Leylands of the First World War, one Belsize lorry by then no longer built, and a Tilling Petrol Electric vehicle [driven by Oliver Taylor and sold when he left]. They were all fitted with solid tyres and paraffin side lamps, and later, acetylene head lamps were used. None of these vehicles had wind-

creens, the first were a luxury fitting introduced about 1926/7. It was not a lot of use because windscreen wipers had not been invented; the driver would use a potato cut in half, to rub up and down the glass to make the rain run straight down.

The vehicles were beautifully kept, being varnished and painted frequently throughout, and each bore the slogan on the front of the top of the cab in brilliant lettering THE BREWERY - CROYDON. The lorry and dray painter was George Wood, who was also the maintenance engineer. The signwriting of all the pub signs was done by George Wilson, whose workshop was in the yard behind Nalder's Catherine Wheel, which is still oppo-



Figure 6. The arched wall of the brewery is behind Jumbo, who enjoyed his bucket of beer. The Grand Theatre on the Shrublands site is in the left.

site the site of the former brewery. George Wilson was, when he was sober, a real expert at his job.

When extra transport was needed at peak periods, Christmas, and the holiday trade, etc., lorries were hired from Grimes of Coulsdon and Frank Webb of Kenley. Occasionally steam waggons were hired from the Standard Steel Co. of Waddon Marsh Lane. Wines and spirits could be ordered for delivery with beer. These, obtained from the West India Docks, were kept in a brewery-owned storehouse, situated on the corner of Laud Street, right opposite the brewery.

Nalder's had three pairs of horses and three singles to draw the brewery drays. One particular single dray horse was a two-ton shire named Admiral; the horse drays were expected to deliver as far out as Caterham and districts. The best-known drivers of the horse drays were: Bill Gillham, Billy Fuell, and a six-foot giant, magnificently moustached, named George Graham - a great Croydon character. All draymen, fitted with moleskin coats, had a drink capacity which had to be seen to be believed, and it never seemed to affect them, despite the fact that they were drinking from morning to night.

The total staff at that time was about one hundred and eighty, including twenty or thirty girls in the bottling department. Next to the bottling store was the scalding shed where returned empty barrels were thoroughly washed and steam cleaned. Next to that was the coopers' shed - here Harry Deutch was in charge, a little bent man, who with two or three assistants, made new barrels and repaired old ones.

The drivers employed on the drays earned £3 a week and the draymen £2.5.0d a week, and until 1924 it was a non-union shop. In that year the men joined the Transport and General Workers Union, to be brought out at the General Strike of 1926. The day after Nalder's joined the strike, men and drays from Stansfeld of Fulham (a subsidiary company who did the City of London's brewing) turned up to do the jobs of delivering. The Nalder men were promptly told that they should not have joined the strike at all, as beer was classed as food. Everybody walked back to the brewery with their tails between their legs, to be told by Mr Hand that he no longer had any interest in them, and that all privileges that they may have had were now withdrawn. This included an annual railway outing to the coast and the annual brewery staff dinner.

Discipline at the brewery operated by Mr E.C. Hand as managing director and his son, was as strict as the discipline for all the tied houses the company operated, and they delivered only to their own houses. The tenants, who had to deposit a substantial sum to the brewery, were tied for everything they sold, including cider. The brewery did little to maintain their houses, and tenants had to be very persistent to get repairs done unless they were prepared to pay for the work themselves. If, however, a tenant failed to meet his payment to the brewery for the stock he had, his next delivery was delayed until such time as Mr Ball, the collector for the brewery, had obtained settlement.

The brewery's smallest house was the Organ Inn at Ewell, whose total delivery included



Figure 7. The Rising Sun in North End. It was closed in 1951. Its wall sign can still be seen.

two boxes of bottled beer and one firkin of ale each week. The house has since been completely rebuilt and is now quite a large concern. The largest delivery was always the Mitre at Tooting which, sometimes twice weekly, took four big dray loads at a time.

The heart of the brewery was, of course, the well, of unknown depth. It is believed that it was kept full by spring water; it was so clear that when a filled glass was held up to the light, it was difficult to detect the water.

The brewing was done on Copper Side, where sometimes five hundred barrels were brewed at a time, and later, was allowed to run into cooling vats in the Tun Room. The grain scattered around Copper Side, attracted thousands of pigeons which became absolute pests, filling up gutters and drains etc.

Oliver Taylor was often called on to shoot them down round the brewery, and from the roof of the Grand Theatre next door. This meant that not only brewery workers, but

some of the unemployed who came to the brewery looking for work, stood by with their bags in the evening, hoping to take home something extra for the larder.

The discipline was so strict that some draymen dreaded going down for their pay each day, fearing that a dismissal notice would be enclosed. A man could literally get the sack for absolutely nothing if his face did not fit.

When Oliver Taylor left the brewery in 1928, he started the coach company at Caterham which this Society has often used for its excursions. He died in 1983, and two years after his death, the coaching side of the business was closed.

In 1936, the City of London Brewery closed both their breweries, Stansfeld's Swan Brewery at Fulham, and Nalder & Collyer's at Croydon. Under 'Croydon Brewery Surprise'¹⁰ it was announced that Nalder & Collyer, one of Croydon's two remaining breweries, had agreed to sell the majority of their houses to Ind Coope & Allsop, the changeover to take place from 20th April. The City of London Brewery had bought the whole business in 1919 for about £1 million; they now sold the bulk of their licensed houses (138, it was said by Mr Wood) for £21¼ million and retained the brewery with thirty-one licensed houses.

Nalder's had always paid high dividends: two peak years were 1926 55% and 1928 60%; at closure a final dividend was paid of 45% plus 10% bonus. The bulk of the shares were held by the London Brewery

& Investment Company.¹¹ The newly-formed Nalder Brewery & Investment Company ran the thirty-one houses, which had all been sold or demolished when the Company was dissolved on 22nd April 1962.

Of the houses the Company retained, three were in Croydon, the Green Dragon, Rising Sun, and the Two Brewers. The Green Dragon in the High Street was demolished in 1959 to make way for the Green Dragon House office block; the Rising Sun in North End (Fig. 7) was sold in 1951; the upper storey is little changed, and the sign on the wall in the photograph can still be seen, above the Wimpy Bar; the Two Brewers in Gloucester Road was bought by Shepherd Neame, the Faversham brewers, in 1952, and is still trading, their only public house in Croydon.

Outside Croydon, Nalder's had acquired or built public houses when the railway was opening up the countryside, and many railway houses were theirs. Two of these, the Liverpool Arms at Haywards Heath, and the Wheatsheaf at Redhill, still display 'Nalder & Collyer's Entire'. That on the Liverpool Arms can be seen from Haywards Heath railway station, and the Wheatsheaf lettering is high on its southern wall.

Of particular interest is the Sun at Canterbury, which was sold in the early 1950s. It is now shop premises, and bears the inscription 'Formerly known as the Little Inn. Well known to Charles



Figure 8. The Swan in North End. It was demolished in 1889 and replaced by part of Alder's.

Dickens. Established 1503.' The Sun was the Little Inn associated with Mr Micawber in *David Copperfield*.

A South Croydon landmark disappeared when, with the demolition of the brewery in 1964, the lofty chimney came down. There is no trace of the brewery left on the site, which is now occupied by the massive Leon House and its precincts.

Some reminders, however, survive in the iron boundary plates marked 'N&C' which are sunk into the precincts of some former Nalder houses (see list at the end of this paper). The Croydon Natural History

& Scientific Society has one of these, together with an iron post, three feet high, incised 'Nalder & Collyer'. These once stood in Purley High Street as part of the boundary of the Railway Hotel property,¹² and they were presented to the Society when removed by the developers, Crests of Weybridge.

References

1. Homage Jury Vol I p.14
2. Ibid. vo11 p.7a
3. Ibid. Vol I p.118
4. Surrey Record Office 337/1/1

5. Ibid. 337/1/58-9
6. Ibid. 337/1/89
7. *Croydon Times* 16 Feb 1895
8. Ibid. 25 May 1932
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10. Ibid. 11 Apr 1936
11. Extracted from the *Brewers Guardian*.
12. *Local History Records* Vol. XXVI, 1987
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Former Nalder houses

The following, from the 1888 return, is a listing of the 52 Croydon houses acquired through the three brewery families, and held by Nalder & Collyer, plus two acquired later by the Company. Nalder's put N&C iron boundary plates round some of their freehold houses; these are marked N&C in the listing. The Half Moon has an N&C incised stone at an entrance and a 'Nalder & Collyer' mirror in a bar. Houses in bold type are still trading.

Plate	Name	Address	Earlies date	Closed
Acquired by the Smith family 1747 - 1798				
	Swan (Fig. 8)	North End	1464	1889
N&C	Black Horse	Lower Addiscombe Road	16th C	
	Running Horse	Pump Pail	18th C	1961
	Hare & Hounds	Waddon	1773	

The above houses were not Harman's in 1849, but Nalder's acquired, or leased them later. The following Smith family acquisitions passed from Harman's to Nalder's.

	Three Tuns	Surrey Street	1651	1906
	Rising Sun	North End	1665	1951
	Green Dragon	High Street	1668	1959
	Rose & Crown	Church Street	17th C	
	Black Bear	Market Street	18th C	1893
	(later Prince of Wales)			
N&C	Bricklayers Arms	High Street	1750	
	now Catherine Wheel			
	(Has IC&A-Ind Coope & Allsop on facade.)			

Acquired by Anthony Harman and family 1798 - 1849

N&C	Blue Anchor	South End	1644	
	Horse Shoe - (later American Stores, closed as Cavendish).	High Street	1734	1893
	Half Moon	Broad Green	1751	
N&C	Dukes Head	South End	1761	
	Volunteer - formerly Phoenix and Atmospheric Arms	Pitlake	1810	1971
	Railway Tavern (From 1967, after demolition, a temporary portable building until closure.)	East Croydon	1841	1980

Acquired by Nalder & Collyer from 1849

	New Inn	South End	1843	1929
	Sawyers Arms (late Queen Adelaide)	Mitcham Road	c1850	1906
	Railway Bell (Tamworth Road corner site no longer part of public house.)	West Croydon	1850	
	Cannon	Handcroft Road	1852	1969
	Purley Arms	Brighton/Purley Rds corner	1853	
	Royal Oak (Charrington's since 1903. Now re-sited.)	Brighton/Riddlesdown Rds junction	1882	
	Wellington	Mitcham Road	1860	
	Pitlake Arms	Waddon	1864	
	Sheldon Arms	Whitgift Street	1865	1964
	Croham Arms now Croham	Croham/St Peter's Roads	1865	
	Joiners Arms (Has a decorative Ind Coope & Allsop on its facade.)	Woodside	1866	
	Southbridge Arms	South End	1867	1929
	Victory	Surrey Street	1867	1932/3

Purley houses

	Rose & Crown now Roses*	Riddlesdown	18th C	
	(Was exchange post for coach horses on London/Lewes run, to get them over the slopes of Riddlesdown.)			
	Railway Hotel formerly	Purley	1856	1983/4
	Caterham Junction Hotel			
	Jolly Farmers	Purley	c1870	
N&C	Kenley Hotel	Kenley	1886	

Croydon Enclosure Act - Nalder & Collyer houses

Croydon Common

N&C	Two Brewers	Gloucester Road	1854	
	Bridge	St James's Road	1865	
	Linden Arms	Wilford Road	1866	1906
	Fox-under-the-Hill	St James's Road	1867	1967
	British Queen	Windmill Road	1867	1971
	(An off licence from 1892.)			
	Dairy	St James's Road	1872	1919

Stroud Green

	Cricketers	Shirley Road	1850	
	(Page & Overton's from 1920.)			

Shirley Heath

N&C	Shirley Inn	Wickham Road	1858	
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Norwood Common

	Signal	Portland Road	1852	1984
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Thornton Heath

N&C	Prince of Wales	Woodville Road	1859	
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Break-up of estates

Oakfield Estate

	Oakfield Tavern	St James's Road	1865	
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Russell Estate

	Bedford Arms	Sydenham Road	1860	
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Leslie Estate

	Leslie Arms	Lower Addiscombe Road	1851	
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Beaulah Spa Estate

	Princes Arms	Princess Road	1864	1922
	Lion	Pawsons Road	1864	
	Clifton Arms	Clifton Road	1865	

Addiscombe Military College

N&C

Alma Tavern

Lower Addiscombe/
Grant Rds corner

1864

Acquired by the Nalder & Collyer Brewery Company Ltd.

Waddon Hotel (Arms)

Waddon

-

Castle

Thornton Heath

-

*Rose & Crown became Roses but now (1989) Rose & Crown again.

From this listing it will be seen that all the Nalder & Collyer Partnership's Croydon acquisitions were public houses opened with the rapid Victorian expansion of the town.