

MONA BREWERY, LLANFACHRAETH, ANGLESEY: A 2015 VISIT

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Stimulated initially by references to the brewery in Keith Jagers's comprehensive review of *Industrial Archaeology in North Wales* published in 1978, and subsequently by Gordon Stone's interesting article on it in *Brewery History* Number 142 (Summer 2011), I finally managed to pay a visit to the Mona Brewery in early March 2015 to make a photographic record of what remained. The brewery is located on the north side of a narrow lane which runs west, off the A5025 Holyhead to Amlwch road, from the village of Llanfachraeth. It occupies a site on the east bank of a tributary of the River Alaw at OS 311828.

Keith Jagers noted, in 1978, that the brewery complex 'serves now merely as outbuildings and stores, the former brewer's house still being in occupation', and makes reference to 'the buildings of the Mona Brewery including a sizeable kiln chimneystack'. Unfortunately no photographs or other illustrative material of the brewery buildings at that time were included in the review, so it is unclear what the 'kiln' mentioned referred to, or where it was. There is now no evidence of a kiln on the site. In a 2012 update to the 1978 review Keith Jagers notes that 'the former Mona Brewery premises at Llanfachraeth remain derelict on a well-wooded site adjacent to the access lane, and the kiln chimney has been taken down'.

Gordon Stone's 2011 article in the journal includes some photographs of the brewery buildings as they were in 2009 and a remarkable, undated photograph of it in more or less operational condition. This shows the three storey brewery tower; a two storey range of buildings between the tower and the lane, which may include a malt house; and a substantial, ivy covered chimney stack and other outbuildings between the tower and the river. The photograph is taken from the bridge over the

river which enables it to be dated to sometime after 1896. It shows a plaque on the bridge which commemorates its construction or rebuilding in 1896. The plaque survives and was reinstated on one of the piers when the bridge was reconstructed in recent times. It is not now possible to see the whole range of surviving buildings from this point because of the dense woodland which has grown up between the river and the buildings.

Those photographs set the context for the ones taken of the remains of the brewery in 2015 which are reproduced below. The 2009 photographs show that, at that time, at least part of the two storey range was still roofed. Also shown is a single storey building described as 'office with hop store above'. This building survives in the courtyard of the brewery and has been re-roofed. It is located to the east of the two storey range (Fig. 5).

By early March 2015 both the two storey range and the brewery tower were roofless ruins. The chimney stack, however, survives, and appears to be in a robust condition. Although the buildings are delapidated some lettering survives which may reveal their past use. On the left of the gateway to the courtyard the gable end wall of the building retains a raised doorway, and the letters M & B R No 3. (Fig. 7). The interior of the building at Figure 1 suggests it may have been a malt house (Fig. 8). To the right of the first floor doorway shown in Figure 8 are what appear to be the letters S R N I in black (Fig. 9). Elsewhere in the interior is more lettering including what may be a W in red (Fig. 10), and an E or F in black (Fig. 11). In each case the lettering is too indistinct to be certain. Perhaps those members of the Society with a better knowledge of brewery terms and the functions of brewery and malting buildings than I possess may be able to shed some light on the matter.



Figure 1. Remaining buildings adjacent to the lane, looking east from the bridge.



Figure 2. Remaining buildings on the lane looking west.



Figure 3. Building at entrance to courtyard showing old gate and raised doorway to store.



Figure 4. Chimney stack.



Figure 5. Office and hop store seen from gateway to courtyard.



Figure 6. Brewing tower remains.



Figure 7.



Figure 8.



Figure 9.



Figure 10.



Figure 11.