



# **An Oral History of Kent Brewery**

**Historical Research and Oral History**

**By Mary Ann Hamilton and Sue Andersen**

**For Carlton & United Breweries (NSW) Pty Ltd**

**August 2004**



# **Carlton and United Breweries Historical Research and Oral History**

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## **Kent Brewery Historical Report**

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**Kent Brewery Historical Report**

# **Carlton and United Breweries Historical Research and Oral History**

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## **Kent Brewery Historical Report**

### **1.0 Executive Summary**

Kent Brewery of Tooth and Co. Limited was founded in 1835 by John Tooth and Charles Newnham. At that time, brewing in the colony was still in its infancy. Supporting the industry was seen by Governors as potential way to increase the agricultural market in barley while at the same time filling a need for a good, cheap beverage for the growing Colony. Thus, Tooth and Co. prospered and since its beginnings managed to ride out and weather the fluctuating market place and economies until 1981 when it was taken over by Adelaide Steamship Company.

Kent Brewery was again taken over by Carlton and United Breweries in 1983. Since then, the brewery has fought to remain viable in a difficult and competitive market place. Over the last 20 years, it has also become increasingly difficult to keep on the site that, during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, had become part of the burgeoning CBD of Sydney.

The Carlton and United Breweries Historical Research and Oral History project has been undertaken to further the knowledge of the social history of the Kent Brewery. The research and report has a particular focus on the brewery's production area from the 1940s through to the announcement of the closure of the brewery in 2003. The project findings and personal testimony of former and current workers make an important contribution to the history and development of the brewing industry in New South Wales.

Research and interviews with former and current employees contribute information on the following:

- the continuous history of Kent Brewery since it's establishment
- the hard work, commitment and dedication of workers at Kent Brewery
- the changing nature of work practices and technology
- Industrial Relations and reform
- changes and developments to the fabric of the site

Drawing out information on the material listed above has also provided a clear picture of the usage of different elements of the fabric of the Kent Brewery and has contributed to the documentation of the Brewery from it's inception to the present time.

# **Carlton and United Breweries Historical Research and Oral History**

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## **Kent Brewery Historical Report**

### **2.0 Introduction**

#### **2.1 The Client**

Carlton and United Breweries commissioned the Oral History Project

#### **2.2 Liaison**

The Project Manager was Jackie Mullins, Operations Support,  
Kent Brewery

#### **2.3 Focus of Project**

The history of Kent Brewery and the people who worked at the site, with a particular focus on Production between 1940s and 2003

#### **2.4 Project Team**

Sue Andersen  
Researcher / Oral Historian

Mary Ann Hamilton  
Researcher / Oral Historian

George Evatt  
Cameraman

#### **2.5 Authorship**

The Historical Report has been written by Mary Ann Hamilton and Sue Andersen

#### **2.6 Acknowledgements**

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following in completing the Carlton and United Breweries Oral History.

Carlton and United Breweries

- Jackie Mullins, Operations Support
- Jamie Griffith, Training and Maintenance, Operations
- David Grant, General Manager of Operations, NSW & ACT
- Tim McKinnon, HSE Manager, Operations

We would particularly like to thank the people interviewed for their valuable contribution to this historical research and oral history:

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### **Audio Interviews:**

John Balzan (former employee)  
John Barnes (former employee)  
John Collier (current employee)  
Gary Cook (former employee)  
Bill Ford (Consultant)  
David Grant (current General Manager Operations)  
Stuart Green (current employee)  
Len Hanbridge (former employee)  
Vicky Muscat (current employee)  
Gary Prior (current employee)  
Ron Reid (former employee)  
Peter Sams (former Labor Council Officer)  
Austin Sellars (current employee)  
Barry Schurr (current employee)  
Linc Tiley (current employee)

### **Video Interviews:**

John Barrowman (current employee)  
Martine Briers (current employee)  
Ted Kunkel (former CEO)  
Tim McKinnon (current employee)  
John Murray (current employee)  
Jack Rutledge (former employee)  
Bernadette Williams (former employee)

We would also like to thank Charles Pickett from the Powerhouse Museum for his assistance with gaining access to historical information at the Museum.

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## **Kent Brewery Historical Report**

### **3.0 The Project**

#### **3.1 Aim**

The Carlton and United Breweries Oral History project has taken place on the eve of closing down operations at the brewery site in Ultimo, Sydney.

The aim of the historical research and oral history was to extend the historical knowledge of the Kent Brewery site and record the reminiscences of former and current workers associated the brewery.

The Carlton and United Breweries site (formerly Kent Brewery owned by Tooth and Co.) is an integral part of the historical growth of the Greater Metropolitan area and the State. As such, the oral history and interpretive outcomes will make an important contribution to the development of knowledge of broader State Historic themes such as historical advances in technology, developments in private and public life and the economic history of NSW.

In addition to this, by recording and valuing the personal reminiscences of workers and others associated with the site, the oral history is a powerful acknowledgement of the workers contribution to the history of the brewery and consequently to the history of Sydney and the State.

The interviews and interpretive documents (tape logs, written report, audio CD highlights) promote the insights gained through the oral history project. These documents, incorporating workers personal reminiscence and knowledge, give an entertaining, evocative and lively story of the history of the brewery for both the research community and a broad, general audience.

The methodology developed during the project could provide a valuable framework for ongoing collection of oral history material.

#### **3.2 Methodology**

The Project was conducted in five stages.

During Stage One of the project meetings with Jackie Mullins, David Grant and potential interviewees were conducted to become familiar with Kent Brewery and its operations. These meetings informed the overall direction of the Oral History. A tour of the site was also conducted.

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A review of books, journals, videos, photographs and relevant newspaper articles was conducted at Kent Brewery and the Powerhouse Museum before commencing the interviews. This provided important background information to the history of Tooth and Co's Kent Brewery.

The questions reflected the agreed themes and other topics arising from background research.

The aim of the questioning strategy was to uncover memories and perceptions of the interviewees during their time working at Kent Brewery. They were also designed to draw out specific information relating to the site and to encourage discussion of the cultural and technological developments and of particular features within the site.

Interviewees were contacted during this stage and a preliminary interview with each of the interviewees was conducted. Formal interview dates and times were arranged.

Priority for interviews were chosen to reflect the many work areas at Kent Brewery with a particular focus on production. It was important to encourage a cross section of older former employees of Tooth's and current CUB employees to be part of the Oral History.

During Stage Two of the project, broadcast-quality audio and video interviews were conducted with former and current workers associated with Kent Brewery.

The oral history interviews were intended to evoke memory and experience rather than pursuing a set and determined line of questioning. A balance between quite specific information and allowing interviewees to tell their story as they remember it in their own words was effectively achieved.

A detailed log of all the audio recordings and video footage was developed in Stage Three of the project. As well, copies of audio recordings and video footage were produced from the master tapes.

Stage Four of the project involved the preparation of a draft Historical Report for review by the Project Manager, Jackie Mullins. A bound final Historical Report was then prepared incorporating comments by the Project Manager.

A compilation CD of highlights of the audio and video interviews was produced in Stage Five of the project. Excerpts from each interview are woven together with evocative location sound and a lively script.

# **Carlton and United Breweries Historical Research and Oral History**

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## **Kent Brewery Historical Report**

### **3.3 Abbreviations**

The following abbreviations are used in the Kent Brewery Historical Report:

CUB	Carlton and United Breweries
Tooth's	Tooth and Co.
NSW	New South Wales

# Carlton and United Breweries

## Historical Research and Oral History

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### Kent Brewery Historical Report

#### 4.0 Historical Overview

##### 4.1 The First Years of Kent Brewery

John Tooth and his brother-in-law and Brewer, Charles Newnham established Kent Brewery on its current site in 1835. The site was well located on a main thoroughfare, Parramatta Road, and in good proximity to the town of Sydney. In addition water, an essential feature for a brewery, was in good supply as the Black Wattle creek ran through the centre of the property and a reliable reserve of water was located nearby at Prince Alfred Park.

The purchase of land for the brewery and the establishment of buildings, equipment and materials were financed substantially by John's brother Robert Tooth who lived in Kent, England.<sup>1</sup> By October 1835, Kent Brewery was ready for business and began taking orders for Ale of three strengths; X ale for one shilling per gallon, the stronger XX for one shilling and six pence and the strongest brew, XXX ale, for two shillings and six pence.<sup>2</sup>

When Kent Brewery opened there were seven other Sydney breweries vying for the local market in beer. Many of these breweries were short lived and did not survive the severe economic depression of the 1840s. Kent Brewery managed to weather those difficult times. Between 1835 and 1844, the brewery continued to expand with the addition of a granary and malt kilns to the original brewery building, as well the purchase of plant and equipment.<sup>3</sup>

By 1843, John Tooth's precarious financial position, a debt that had grown to 24,000 pounds to his brother Robert, forced him to take action. At this time, John dissolved the partnership with Newnham and leased the brewery to his nephews, Robert Tooth's sons, Robert Jr and Edwin Tooth. Over the next couple of years, John continued to struggle to repay his debt to Robert Sr, and in 1848, with a debt now reaching 28,000 pound to Robert Sr., John Tooth was declared bankrupt.<sup>4</sup> He retired from the business leaving it in the hands of Robert Jr and Edwin who were later joined in partnership by their third brother Frederick.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rosemary Annable in Conybeare Morrison and Partners et al, *Kent Brewery Conservation Plan*, 1991 p 33

<sup>2</sup> Kent and Waverly Breweries, Sydney, 1953, *Over A century of Brewing Tradition. The Story of Tooth and Co Ltd.*

p 10

<sup>3</sup> Rosemary Annable in Conybeare et al, 1991.op cit., p 36

<sup>4</sup> Rosemary Annable in Conybeare, et al, 1991. ibid., p 38

<sup>5</sup> Kent and Waverly Breweries, Sydney, 1953. op cit., p 12

# Carlton and United Breweries

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Among other things, the brother's prudent management skills combined with the end of the Depression and the growing prosperity in the colony with the discovery of gold meant that Kent Brewery prospered over the next few years.

"During the forties and fifties Kent Brewery Ales and Porter would seem to have established themselves strongly in the public esteem and 'Tooth's Entire', having won the hearts of the beer drinkers of the period, the business prospered accordingly."<sup>6</sup>

#### 4.1.1 1853 - Fire and Redevelopment

The business underwent a serious set back in 1853 when the brewery was largely destroyed by fire. The alarm went out on the afternoon of Sunday 16 January and despite the best efforts of the engines of the "Insurance companies and the corporation"<sup>7</sup>, the fire was not brought under control until assistance arrived from the Victoria Barracks. Another account of the fire indicates its intensity and extent, as the debris continued to smoke for five days and required attention of fire engines for this period of time.<sup>8</sup>

With the insurance payout of 2000 pounds, a major rebuilding of the brewery was commenced in the years between 1853 and 1855, reputedly without significant gaps in beer production or trading.<sup>9</sup> By 1871, the redeveloped brewery attracted the full praise of the Town and Country Journal which described it as,

"...one of the finest establishments of the kind in the whole of the Australias...The brewery, which covers an area of five acres of land, has been established about thirty five years and during that long period every new appliance and improvement in the methods of brewing has been introduced, until it has at length reached the position it now holds as one of the most complete and extensive establishments in the country."<sup>10</sup>

The brewery at this stage boasted a large masonry barley store and malt house equipped with two large steeples, stone constructed kilns, furnaces and malt storage. The new Brew House was described as "massive" in the Town and Country article and incorporated a large stone and iron brew tower. There was adequate accommodation for

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<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p 12

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p 38

<sup>8</sup> The Australian Cordial Maker 1899. Vol XI No 1. p 10 – sourced from ANU Noel Butlin Archives Center

<sup>9</sup> Kent and Waverley Breweries, 1953. *op cit.*, p 15

<sup>10</sup> Town and Country Journal, August 1871, *The Kent Brewery* – sourced from ANU Noel Butlin Archives Centre

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### Kent Brewery Historical Report

the boilers, fermenting tuns and cleansing casks. The beer was stored in the vast cellars which,

“run in every direction and are filled with tens of thousands of gallons of beer.”<sup>11</sup>

The Brewery also had a large hop store, a Bottling Department, a Cask Washing Department, a Cooperage, an Engineer’s Shop and an Administration building.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Still a Family Concern

In 1857, Edwin Tooth was the first of the brothers to withdraw from the partnership. He was replaced by a non-family member, James Sutherland Mitchell in 1860 and in 1968, Edwin’s son Robert Lucas-Tooth became a partner. This was four to five years before the retirement of his uncles, Robert and Frederick in 1872 and 1873. Although the family role in the business lessened over the years, it was not until 1916 that the last of the Tooth family, Arthur Tooth, retired as Brewer from Tooth and Co.

#### 4.2 1870s - 1890s Changes in the Brewing Scene

Up until the late 1860’s, Tooth’s only real competition in the brewing scene was posed by Marshall’s Brewery in Paddington. This situation had dramatically changed by the 1870s with Tooth’s traditional market being encroached upon by numerous small country based breweries and large interstate establishments such as, Castlemaine Brewery, Tooheys Standard Brewery and Waverley Brewery. These last three Breweries were established in Sydney in 1870, 1871 and 1874 respectively and stimulated competition in the New South Wales brewing industry.

The next two decades saw a determined battle for market share where the larger metropolitan breweries, well resourced with their own malt houses, access to cheap raw materials and bottling departments, won out over the country breweries. The introduction of the tied house system also advantaged the large metropolitan breweries, not least Tooth’s Kent Brewery. The tied house was an arrangement whereby a brewery lent capital to publicans to establish their hotel, provided that the hotel was stocked exclusively by the brewery. Such an investment guaranteed beer sales and was one element in attaining large market share.

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6

# **Carlton and United Breweries**

## **Historical Research and Oral History**

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### **Kent Brewery Historical Report**

#### **4.2.1 A Public Company**

In this climate of competition and growth, the Kent Brewery embarked upon a new phase of its corporate history when it became a Public Company in 1888 with a subscribed value of 900,000 pounds in one pound shares.<sup>13</sup> At this time, the brewery was producing 580 barrels of beer each day with a workforce of “206 men and boys”.<sup>14</sup>

During the 1880s, the brewery began to expand its property holdings acquiring residential properties surrounding the brewery – first a number of allotments in Kensington Street and land at the end of Yeends Place. These purchases were followed by more residential blocks on Kensington St in the 1880s.

In 1883, it was decided to diversify the Company’s activities to include making aerated water and cordials. By 1893, a dedicated aerated waters factory had been built on the Kent Brewery site.

#### **4.3 First Decades of a New Century**

Continued growth and expansion remained the central theme at Tooth and Co. for first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This was the case despite the challenge of another fire at the brewery in 1903 and the effects of the 1901 Beer Excise Tax. In its first year of operation, this tax saw the demise of sixteen Sydney Breweries.<sup>15</sup>

The introduction of the 1905 Liquor Act saw the closure of many licenced establishments in NSW. A later amendment to the Act in 1917 instated 6 ’o’clock closing. Yet, these laws did little to dampen the public’s appetite for beer and Tooth’s determination to satisfy the public thirst. The enforced limitation on the availability of bulk beer in hotels was counterbalanced by an increase in the demand for bottled beer that could be consumed at home.

To secure that demand Tooth and Co. had substantially expanded its property holdings around the brewery and embarked upon the construction of a new Brewery on Irving Street and a bottling plant in Carlton Street. These were in place and operating by 1912, serviced by a newly built second Malt Store, a Spirit Store and Sugar Store.<sup>16</sup> To secure

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<sup>13</sup> Extract from Australian Brewers Journal, 1891, - sourced from the ANU Noel Butlin Archives Centre

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Kent and Waverley Breweries 1953, *op cit.*, p25

<sup>16</sup> Conybeare, et al, 1991. p 48-52

# Carlton and United Breweries

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the supply of malt for brewing, Tooth's acquired Mittagong Maltings in 1905 and over the next years upgraded this Maltings to a capacity of six malting floors and six kilns.<sup>17</sup>

Keeping abreast of the public taste in beer necessitated constant attention to advances in brewing technology. In this spirit the Old Kent Brewery building and plant were significantly upgraded in the first decades of the Twentieth Century to accommodate the brewing of lager, a bottom fermenting beer. A new Brew Tower was built and the storage and refrigeration capacity of the brewery had been upgraded substantially by the end of the 1920s when lager became the Tooth and Co's predominant product.<sup>18</sup>

A large complex of stables was established at the southern end of the brewery site. This accommodated the Company owned fleet of horses and wagons that distributed the Tooth's products to hotels and other licensed establishments. A Receiving Office had also been established on the brewery site to facilitate deliveries to the brewery.<sup>19</sup>

The diverse and growing business was administered out of a large Administration building designed by architects, Spain and Cosh and completed in 1911.<sup>20</sup> The subject of alterations and additions over the years, this building remains the administration centre of the enterprise to this day and may well continue to house the Carlton and United Beverages office in Sydney.

In addition to these on site improvements and expansions, Tooth and Co. boosted their competitive edge and stake in the beer trade with an aggressive policy of purchasing country and metropolitan breweries. Most of these were closed down early on, but the purchase of Resch's Waverley Brewery in 1929 was another story.<sup>21</sup> The Resch's Brewery remained an important part of the Tooth's portfolio until 1980, when it was finally closed down.

#### 4.4 1935 - A Hundred years of Trading

The year 1935 marked the Centenary of Tooth and Co's and despite the preceding years of economic struggle during the Depression, the brewery managed to maintain its prosperous position. In fact in 1929, under the new management of the legendary Tom Watson, Tooth and Co. issued new shares on the stock market and the shareholders were said to have possession of 'gilt edged shares'.<sup>22</sup> By 1935, the Company employed

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<sup>17</sup> Kent and Waverly Breweries, Sydney. 1953, op cit., p 26

<sup>18</sup> .ibid., p 51

<sup>19</sup> ibid. p 51

<sup>20</sup> ibid p 51 and p 28

<sup>21</sup> Conybeare et al, op cit., p 51

<sup>22</sup> Kent and Waverly Breweries, Sydney, op cit., p 36

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about 1800 men in the many and various trades that made the brewery an independent and strong competitor in NSW.

The Centenary celebrations of 1935 marked the brewery's establishment as a strong and solid identity. The Christmas edition of the Tooth's KB Chronicle was given over to the celebration and articulated the strong corporate identity felt by employees at the time.

"We are all proud to be associated with our great Company and our pride springs as much from the knowledge that it has built a reputation for business rectitude and fair dealing as from the fact that the brewery completed the first hundred years of its existence on the fifth day of October, 1935...let us always strive to uphold the worthy traditions of the brewery, and build wisely upon the foundations which have been laid down so that Tooth and Co Ltd. will ever continue to progress."<sup>23</sup>

The workplace at this time seems to have been close knit and 'family' oriented with a plethora of social and sporting clubs having sprung into existence in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Chronicle lists an active Athletics Club, a Bridge Club, a Debating Club, a Swimming Club, a Table Tennis Club, a Golf Club, a Dramatic Club and a Chess Club. These were apparently well attended by younger staff members and kept staff busy at lunchtimes, evening and weekends with many of the sporting clubs competing with other local amateur clubs. Clubs such as the Bowling Club and the cricket team, the Resch's Rats operated until the 1990s.

The Tooth's Brewery Recreation Association was the mainstay of these clubs. Besides organising the Christmas parties and the annual Gala Ball for many years, it also published the Tooth's and KB Chronicle, from 1935 until 1953. The Chronicle itself could be seen as an exercise in identity and relationship building in the work place, as it's issues were full of house jokes, gossip, office news and topical articles.

" PLEASE! If anyone

- Elopes
- Gets married
- Has additions to the family
- Gets engaged
- Has a party
- Is ill
- Has an operation
- Has and Accident

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<sup>23</sup> Tooth and Co. Recreation Association. *Tooth's KB Chronicle*, April 1945, Vol 3, No. 6, pg 1

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- Receives and award
  - Wins a prize
  - Or takes part in an unusual event
- THAT'S NEWS AND WE WANT IT  
Sign and address items to  
The Editor KB Chronicle"<sup>24</sup>

#### 4.5 World War II

##### 4.5.1 Pre War times

The prosperity experienced by the company during these years was quickly channeled back into the enterprise and between 1935 and 1937, a new Maltings was erected on the site of the Carlton St Bottling Department. In addition, the aerated waters enterprise had expanded to the extent that new premises were purchased next to the Waverley Brewery in Redfern. A brand new, state of the art, aerated waters and fruit extraction plant, Blue Bow Cordials, were operating there by 1937.<sup>25</sup>

Tooth and Co.'s hotel business also boomed at this time. As well as maintaining their tied houses, Tooth's began to acquire hotels in their own right and during the 1930s embarked upon a program of upgrading existing facilities in their hotels and of planning and constructing well designed new premises intended to "improve hotel standards and elevate the trade in the public regard."<sup>26</sup>

The years of prosperity were interrupted with the outbreak of WWII in 1939. While there were materials shortages to contend with and a drop in public sales, Tooth's viability was sustained when it won lucrative contracts to supply the armed forces with beer, fruit juices and soft drinks.<sup>27</sup> In fact, in 1939, despite the gloom of war, upgrading of the Irving Street Brewery was completed and beer production was doubled on the site.

##### 4.5.2 The War Years

The War did impact on the workforce of the brewery. Between 1939 and 1945, seven hundred and eighty three men from the brewery enlisted in the services<sup>28</sup> – a great many of these enlistees were from senior positions within both production and the

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p 44

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p 44

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p 69

<sup>27</sup> Conybeare et al. *op cit.*, p 55

<sup>28</sup> Kent and Waverly Breweries. *Op cit.*, p 38

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administrative arms of the company.<sup>29</sup> Jack Rutledge, who worked for many years as a Cooper at Kent Brewery, noticed that when he started at the brewery in 1944, most of the workers were men over 40 years old – too old to serve in the armed forces.

Employees at the brewery organized a Staff (AIF) Comfort Fund. Money raising ventures auspiced by the Fund financed the parcels that were regularly sent to the Servicemen on duty overseas.

For the duration of the War, the Tooth's KB Chronicle featured a special section, "In the Forces", containing news of staff who were fighting. The April 1945 edition of the Chronicle featured a "Roll of Honor" with the names of staff and relatives of staff who lost their lives in the hostilities.<sup>30</sup>

Despite some tragic losses, many of those employees who had enlisted and survived the War, returned to their old positions at the brewery. Jack Rutledge commented that these men with their disturbing experience of war were often restless and moved on to other occupations. Consequently, there was a big turn over of staff in the years after the war.

#### 4.5.3 Post WWII

The end of the War saw a marked change in the fortunes of the brewery. During the 1950s and into the 1960s, the Company was dogged by a succession of problems. The Company began to struggle to keep its market share and meet the increasing demand for beer in the post war years. Besides a chronic shortage of raw materials for brewing, the shortage of building materials with which to update and rationalize the operation of the brewery was one of the biggest challenges to facing Tooth's.

By the late 1940s and early 1950s the plant and equipment at both Kent and Reschs Brewery was antiquated to the point of being dangerous.<sup>31</sup> In fact, the state of the equipment may have been the cause of one tragic accident in the late 1960s or early 1970s where an Engine Driver accidentally ignited a lethal mix of oil and ammonia resulting in his death.

Besides outmoded equipment there were other problems hampering the efficiency of the brewery including the;

- uncoordinated layout of functions within the brewery site,
- duplication of brewing in the Kent and Irving Street Breweries

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<sup>29</sup> Tooth and Co Limited. A Company History. Written in the 1980s supplied by Austin Sellars. p4

<sup>30</sup> Tooth's Brewery Recreation Association. op cit., p 18

<sup>31</sup> Jo Palmada. CUB OH V3 - 13.58 & Video and John Murray CUB OH V5 - 9.47

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- awkwardness of packaging and getting beer and kegs in and out of the brewery<sup>32</sup>

In 1955, a Master Plan to rationalize the functioning of the site was submitted to the Tooth's Board for consideration, but was not taken up. During the 1960s, only piecemeal improvements were undertaken to existing buildings and a new cellar and bottling plant were installed.

As noted in the 1991 Conservation Plan, the inefficiencies at Kent and Irving St Breweries resulted in a product that was 'expensive both in terms of power and men'.<sup>33</sup> While not immediately recognized, this became an increasingly burdensome thorn Tooth's side. The Company's market share was challenged by Tooheys, which jumped at the opportunity to monopolise the new licensed club market from the mid 1950s and into the 1960s and 1970s.

Kent Brewery did not immediately feel the effect of production inefficiencies because they had such a large guaranteed market in their tied houses and its own hotels. According to Gary Cook, by the late 1960s, Tooth's held trade ties with around three or four hundred hotels and owned approximately seven hundred hotels in NSW. In 1976, the Trades Practices Commission ruled that tied house arrangements were illegal thus dealing a huge blow to the fortunes of the Company and triggering a significant reassessment of the Company's direction.

#### 4.6 Corporate Management 1928 to 1981

##### 4.6.1 Tom Watson

From 1928, right up to 1970 Tooth and Co. was under the paternal guidance of its renowned General Manager, Tom Watson. Tom had started his working life on the factory floor at Blue Bow and, after attending university, worked his way up the ladder to become General Manager.<sup>34</sup> Tom was known variously as a force to be reckoned with and as a man of fairness and compassion. From the shop floor, Len Hanbridge, who started work at Kent Brewery as an Apprentice Fitter in 1960 recalled Tom as an 'old school' Manager.

"He used to say when dealing with Unions – give them half what they need and not half what they are asking for...he did not give in to the Unions"

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<sup>32</sup> Conybeare et al op cit., P. 57

<sup>33</sup> ibid p. 57

<sup>34</sup> Jack Rutledge CUB OH V2

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Jack Rutledge CUB OH V2 - 9.04

Similarly, John Murray who worked in the Malt House as a Leading Hand for many years, remembered Tom Watson as a tough boss.

“One time we went on strike for 4 or 5 weeks for higher wages and in the end we only got a 5 shilling rise ...But Tom was very respected in the community he made donations to charities and orphanages etc”.

John Murray CUB OH V5 - 20.05

John Barnes started work in the Receiving Office in 1952 and moved to the position of Assistant to the Advertising Officer in 1963. When he worked in the Advertising Department he was in charge of keeping tabs on all the donations made to charitable and community organisations and events. The Red Cross was one recipient of the brewery's largess, as was the Royal Agricultural Show Society.

Keeping the Company's profile in social events was also seen as important in Watson's time and the brewery fulfilled regular commitments to provide decorating services and beverages for the numerous Sydney social scene balls.

John noted that Tom's leadership was unquestioned and his decision making was the final word, even to the extent that his position as General Manager, was the only position in the whole Company with “Manager” in the title. There were no Departmental Managers in Tom's time, everyone besides Tom was an Officer or an Assistant to an Officer. John also noted that Tom was a fair boss who looked out for his employee's welfare.<sup>35</sup>

“It was a good place to work. When you got a few years up the ladder – no one got the sack. You'd have to commit murder to get the sack! Everyone was happy. I used to love going to work...My wife at that stage [early 1970s] was pretty crook – not too good at all, she had been in and out of hospital and I used to come in late – I had a lot of problems. Anyway I was told by the Chief Clerk...that they didn't like the idea of me taking so much time off...anyway I was acting Advertising Officer and had to see Watson each Thursday...one day I went in there and we did the business...then he said ‘By the way Young Jack’ – he always called me “Young Jack”, ‘You've got a bit of trouble haven't you’. He said ‘Listen, has anyone told you you're taking too much time off – tell me now.’ and I said ‘well yes someone did’ and he said ‘Well I'm telling you – you take as much time as you want to and if anyone questions you tell them I said you could do it.’ That's what he was like”. John Barnes CUB OH 17 Side B - 900 and 1117

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<sup>35</sup> John Barnes CUB OH 17 A - 794

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#### 4.6.2 Tom Faulkner

In 1970, Tom Watson retired from his position as General Manager. His place was taken by Tom Faulkner who had been the Head Brewer of Tooth and Co. for a number of years. It fell to Tom to take on the fight to keep Tooth's premier place in the beer market. Since the 1950s, there had been a general trend away from beer consumption and additionally, the excise on beer continued to increase, making it difficult to keep costs down. Despite Faulkner's attempts to improve Tooth's position with the introduction of new product and upgrading of the Irving Street brewing facilities, the slow downward turn in the Company's fortunes continued.

In 1975, on the retirement of Tom Faulkner the Board decided that a new tack should be taken and recruited an 'outsider' to the position of Chief Executive. Harry Alse, the new incumbent, had come from Tooheys and one of his first actions was to commission a review of the brewery's operations. The subsequent restructure of Tooth's reflected its intention to refocus the Company efforts from production, to marketing and finance and to rationalize the production and distribution of beer at the brewery. In real terms, this meant the setting up of a finance and marketing arm, an influx of new middle managers and the development of a corporate plan that looked at

- “- Updating brewing facilities at Kent Brewery
- Rationalising the packaging operations at Kent and Waverley Brewery
- Rationalizing the distribution and delivery functions
- Implementing marketing strategy designed to arrest the loss of market share to its competitors”<sup>36</sup>

In 1977, the work of renewal begun by Alse was taken up by George Haines who went by the title General Manager, Finance. Alse and Haines both advocated a strategy of strong management and diversification of the Tooth's holdings to strengthen the Company. To this end, between 1975 and 1980, Tooth's purchased Penfolds Wines and Wright Heaton Wholesale Food and Stockfeed Produce, a percentage of the Victorian Courage Brewery Ltd, a percentage of Hungry Jacks fast food operation and two Sydney marinas.

Despite these efforts the Company still failed to regain its position in the beer market, due, in no small way, to the ruling of the Trade Practices Commission in 1976 outlawing the tied house system which had provided such a secure market for Tooth's for many years.

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<sup>36</sup> Tooth and Co Limited. A Company History. Written in the 1980s and supplied by Austin Sellars. P6

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“In 1970 Tooth’s share of the beer Market was 70%. By 1980, it was 50%”.<sup>37</sup>

#### 4.6.3 Adelaide Steamship

In 1980 it was decided to turn around the company fortunes by undertaking a complete rebuilding and refitting of the Kent Brewery and closing down the Waverly Brewery operations. At around the same time Tooth and Co was taken over by Adelaide Steamship Company.<sup>38</sup>

“In the late 1970s early 1980s Adelaide Steamship became the beneficial holder of Tooth and Co – they sold more of the hotels. They saw Tooth and Co as an asset rich company and sold a lot of it off”.

Gary Cook CUB OH 5 Side B - 279

The threat of redundancy and job loss were real during the three years the brewery was in the hands of Adelaide Steamship. Len Hanbridge recalled this period in the early 1980s.

“Redundancies on the whole were very badly handled then...There were a number of I cases I heard of where people were just sitting at their desk and then they were told they had 15 minutes and then just walked off. It showed a complete lack of knowledge – if you as any person who has been working for quite a while – to be walked off the premises is the greatest backhander you can give someone because it means you’ve done something wrong and you can’t be trusted to leave the premises by yourself. There was one guy at the brewery who had just got a certificate for 37 years of service...he was told to be off the premises in 15 minutes. He smashed the framed certificate on the floor and told the person that if he walked him off he hit him. He stormed out.”

Len Hanbridge CUB OH 11 Side A - 805

Linc Tiley started work as a Trade Assistant at Tooth and Co. in 1981 and recalls the general atmosphere on the shop floor at the time.

“When I first started working here there had been a strike in relation to redundancies. I started work just after that and there was a lot of anger around the place because they’d been on strike for 8 weeks.”

Linc Tiley CUB OH 19 Side A – 1217

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<sup>37</sup> Conybeare et al op cit., p 66

<sup>38</sup> Conybeare et al op cit., p 60 & 61

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### **4.7 Kent Brewery under Carlton and United Breweries**

Early in 1983, on a Sunday morning, Ted Kunkel and Fred Coulstock, of Carlton and United Breweries, Melbourne, discretely arrived at Kent Brewery. Escorted by the Kent Brewery's Head Brewer, they conducted an inspection of the newly built, fitted and commissioned brewery.

“On the plane that evening on the way back to Melbourne, Mr. Coulstock asked me what I thought of the brewery. I said that I thought it was highly technically advanced and I would like to see it in CUB hands rather than any one elses. Mr. Coulstock just looked at me and said ‘I knew that this morning’.”

Ted Kunkel CUB OH V 13 – 2.12

By August 1983, Carlton and United Breweries had purchased the newly commissioned operation, confident that they could turn the tide in market share.

No time was lost in slotting in CUB personnel into key management positions at Kent Brewery. Fred Coulstock was appointed General Manager and Col Siney was Chairman. Ted Kunkel was Chief of Manufacturing, a role that encompassed the role of Head Brewer, which had been filled by Chuck Hahn prior to the takeover.<sup>39</sup>

CUB took management of the brewing side of the old Tooth's and Co Brewery. The Property Division, responsible for the Tooth's owned hotels, remained a discrete Tooth and Co. enterprise. In 1984, many of the staff from that Division moved out of Kent Brewery premises to take up offices in North Sydney.<sup>40</sup> In 1985, Tooth's decided that they would lease all their hotels to Tooheys and as a consequence many of the staff were under the threat of redundancy. Such a move in the market was not to the advantage of Carlton and United Breweries who moved quickly to take out an injunction against Tooth's action. Gary Cook who worked in the Property Division at the time recalls;

“It was a huge court case – anyway as a consequence I was made redundant in 1985. Just prior to this though I had had some quiet discussions with Carlton who were toying with the idea of buying some pubs in their own right and they wanted me to run them – so soon after leaving I was back at the brewery again.”

Gary Cook CUB OH 5 Side B - 699

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<sup>39</sup> Ted Kunkel CUB OH V13 - 29.40

<sup>40</sup> Barry Schurr CUB OH 3 Side B - 233

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#### 4.7.1 The New Bosses

The takeover of Tooth and Co by Carlton and United Breweries was viewed by long term employees with mixed feelings. For some the takeover offered a new lease of life for the brewery.

“Adelaide Steamship under John Spalvins, was not a brewing organisation, it was a financial company – investments - and because of that in a way the former Tooth’s employees were happy to work for a brewing outfit and Carlton and United Breweries had a good reputation in the industry. Nevertheless there was still a lot of apprehension”.  
Ted Kunkel CUB OH V13 – 5.15

The nervousness was fueled to some extent by a lot of the key management positions being taken over by Carlton people, and the displacement of a number of Tooth’s ‘staff’ people<sup>41</sup>. The university trained CUB managers were a very different kettle of fish to the old style management of Tooth and Co. These people instigated fast paced changes in the way things were done at the brewery and expected that change would happen without question.<sup>42</sup>

Ironing out the bugs in the newly automated plant and getting efficient systems in place was the primary focus of the Carlton team in those early days.

“I guess we would have been seen as pretty ‘crash through’ in those days. When we took over, I guess we may not have had enough compassion for the Tooth’s people – we were probably a bit arrogant. But after a shaky start, the staff did come to respect and trust us. You see, we did not have a lot of time to get the brewery commissioned and operational with all our brands in there. We had to crash through some walls and we expected people to do what we wanted”.

Ted Kunkel CUB OH V13 - 5.15 and 10.01

#### 4.7.2 18 Months to Get Things Right

As Chief of Manufacturing for the first 18 months after the CUB takeover, Ted was responsible for getting the newly automated Brewery working. In 1983, the packaging and kegging lines had just been commissioned and the fermentation complex, with its automated matrix system of pipes and valves was very new.

“The first twelve months were a challenge. There was a SWAT team specially selected. They had all left their families and were living at a place near Sydney University – we worked and played together 24 hours a day. We would often work 15 hour days to get

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<sup>41</sup> Tooth and Co workforce was organized in two levels. Those workers who were paid wages according to industrial awards and management staffers who were paid a monthly salary.

<sup>42</sup> Ted Kunkel CUB OH V13 – 5.15

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things sorted out. I recall one long night – we were in the filter room, which was supposed to be running cold. I put my hand on a tank and it was piping hot – the wort had come through the wrong pipes in the new matrix system and ended up in the filtration tanks. We had to shut everything down and clean it all up”.

Ted Kunkel CUB OH V13 - 12.44

One of the financial rationales for taking over the Tooth and Co. Brewery was to get Victorian based Carlton beers, accepted all over NSW and thus challenge Tooheys market share in the State. So it was Ted’s job to get the flavor profile of the Kent brewed beers to match those of the Melbourne based beers. The first Kent brewed Carlton beers were launched a few months after the takeover, but Ted was not satisfied that these young beers matched the flavor of the Melbourne brewed beers. It was not until high gravity brewing was introduced at Kent Brewery that they got the flavor right.

#### **4.7.3 Taking Back Market Share – mid 1980s**

In 1984, Ted Colestone and Col Siney returned to the CUB head office in Melbourne leaving Ted Kunkel in the role of Manager CUB, NSW. His next big task was to claw back market share that had been lost to Tooheys in the preceding years. In fact, when CUB took over Tooth and Co their market share had dropped to as low as 35%.

A strategy of innovation in marketing, through fresh approaches to product and packaging and a consistent push in selling these products to retailers, all helped to even up market share in the 1980s.

The next big tussle between Carlton and Tooheys in NSW was the ‘Light Beer Wars’ that were spurred by the introduction of legislation limiting blood alcohol level to .08 in 1982 and later to .05. To enter this new product market contest, new equipment was commissioned to brew low alcohol beer.<sup>43</sup>

#### **4.7.4 The Challenges of a CBD Brewery Emerge**

During Ted Kunkel’s two and a half years at Kent Brewery, he worked closely with the whole of the workforce to see the new brewery successfully commissioned and many of the teething problems with the new plant settled down.

“By the end of my time at Kent it was a very different place – I saw the fruits of a close liaison with the whole of the workforce. The technology was settled down and it was a highly efficient internal plant. Getting stuff in and out of the brewery was difficult but it was highly efficient internally”.

Ted Kunkel CUB OH V14 - 5.49

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<sup>43</sup> Conybeare et al, 1991, p 62

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Nevertheless, the challenges of a city bound site continued to be felt at the brewery through the late 1980s and beyond. The main problems were the difficulty of getting transport in and out of the site via busy Parramatta Road. There was also an accelerating trend toward new residential development in the area immediately around the brewery.

“The main issues came from the area behind the keg yard. There were new flats being built closer and closer. People didn’t like the smell and then there was noise and the rest. We were dealing with the community a lot. Technology was used to some extent to deal with things like smell but traffic noise and truck movements are a different sort of issue altogether - you can lessen these problems but not get rid of them”.

Ted Kunkel CUB OH V14 - 10.35

#### **4.7.5 Still an Expensive Product**

In the late 1980s, despite the capabilities and efficiencies of the renewed plant and equipment there were other factors militating against the competitiveness of the Kent Brewery product. The generous wages and conditions won by brewery workers over the years, the restrictive work practices and over manning of production areas, all meant that the beer brewed at Kent was still an expensive commodity.

In 1991, when David Grant was appointed to Kent Brewery as Manager of the Central Engineering Department, there were seven hundred and fifty production employees at the brewery producing the same amount of beer as a production staff of three hundred in 2003. One major factor contributing to this over – manning was the hardline demarcations between tasks.

These inefficiencies were very damaging to the viability of the Company as John McNally, former Brewer commented.

“[By 1991]...any reasonable person could see that the situation was dire...the viability was very low because of the cost structures, the inefficiencies – there had to be change, it couldn’t go on as it was. In fact it came very close to the Company closing the brewery at that stage...it couldn’t be sustained as it was...”

John McNally CUB OH 25 Side B - 620

#### **4.8 1990s - Leading by Learning - Workplace Reform and Cultural Change**

Around 1988, the Industrial Relations Commission wage case, introduced the concept of structural efficiency paving the way for a restructure of the award system beginning in

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1989. This eventually resulted in the enterprise bargaining system that was meant to tie productivity and efficiency of the labour force to wage increases.

In this environment, under the leadership of Mel Miles who was then General Manager, a program of cultural and work organisational change was embarked upon through the Leading by Learning Program and the later change to a work team organisation. The aim of the program was to turn traditional work culture and expectations around; to make the brewery's workforce multiskilled and productive, to make the brewery a workplace characterized by involvement and cooperation between management and workers and, to make Carlton's products more competitive in the market.

In 1991, the first Enterprise Development Agreement between workers and the Company was entered into. The document laid out a structure of new style consultative forums set up to manage and direct workplace reform and nut out how the brewery would restructure.<sup>44</sup>

In spite of the productivity improvements the team structure brought, Kent Brewery consistently remained the highest cost producer within the CUB group of breweries. From the 1980s through the 1990s it has been under continual pressure to reduce costs.

In 1996, a renewed stimulus to productivity was received when the Maintenance area was fully integrated into the team structure. Once again, Kent received a stay of execution as David Grant commented.

Yet despite this beer sales continued on a downward trend, especially in draft beer and more recently in canned beer and by the end of the 1990s Kent was in trouble again. In 2003, the canning line was closed down and those employees not choosing to take a voluntary redundancy were redeployed in other areas of the brewery. Still the improvements resulting from this measure were not enough. Kent's market was not growing and CUB brewing capacity was in excess of market needs on a national level.

The Supply Chain Review was instigated to review and rationalise CUB brewing and distribution operations. In September 2002, Kent Brewery employees were informed of the Review and told that Kent Brewery's operations would be a major focus of the Review because it was CUB's highest cost producer. Big changes were sure to follow the deliberations of the review members.

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<sup>44</sup> David Grant CUB OH 30A Side A -12

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At the beginning of April 2003, the Board had reached its decision and on Monday 14 April at 10am, Mike Brooks announced the findings of the Review, that Kent Brewery would finally close its doors in February 2005.

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#### **5.0 The Site**

The Kent Brewery still incorporates the original Tooth's site that had grown to fifteen acres of inner city land by 1935. It is here that both the production of beer and the administration of the business have been carried out since the brewery's establishment.

From Kent Brewery's early days, a main drive (Kent Street) ran from the main gate off what is now know as Broadway to the back of the site. This drive still divides the brewery into two distinct areas, production on the western side of the site and administration to the east.

#### **5.1 Administration**

The Administration building is where the brewery's business executives, clerical staff, advertising, sales and marketing personnel have looked after the business side of the company since the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

It has been tradition for Company Executives, their Secretaries and other more senior staff to work from the ground level of this building. For many years, the Property Department was housed on this floor and Sales and Marketing still occupy an area on the ground floor of the building.

Vicky Muscat who started work as a Tea Lady for Tooth & Co. in 1979 and became Catering Manager in 1986, delivered tea and biscuits around the building for many years.

"I had the ground floor round and if finished earlier I'd help the tea lady out on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. I looked after Property Managers, Hotels, George Haines, Wayne Gilbert, the Managing Director and other Managers. Harry Alse was General Manager at time...the secretary brought his tea into him...the ground floor was called the untouchable floor, because that was where all the managers were."

Vicky Muscat CUB OH 9 Side A - 708

The first floor of the Administration building was called the General Office. This was where all the accounting, invoicing and general clerical work was carried out, assisted by a typing pool of up to twenty young girls. They spent their day typing up invoices and general correspondence supervised by a more senior woman.

Gary recalled a story about the supervisor.

"There was an older woman who ran the typing pool...there was a legendary rumour going around that no one could ever be employed that was better looking than her!"

Gary Cook CUB OH 5 Side A - 1505

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Located on the second floor of the Administration building, in part of the Staff Recreation area, was the Tooth's Museum, which was set up by Alan Hunt. The museum held historical documents and memorabilia dating back to the beginnings of the brewery and Stuart Green pointed out that much of its extensive collection was donated by ex employees and their wives.

"I used to go up there [the Museum] in my lunch time and by no means did I get to see all that I wanted to see...there were just common things, old pay packets, leaflets and written information, old bottles, old photographs of the plant. It was just such a great sense of history, they were proud of who they were. Unfortunately when CUB took over the conditions of sale were such that I don't think they were willing to maintaining the Museum – so the outcome was that the contents of the Museum were donated to the Powerhouse Museum..."

Stuart Green CUB OH 2 Side B - 156

The old Museum has taken on various new functions, one of them to accommodate large meetings between management and staff. Len Hanbridge noted that during the 1980s, a number of redundancy meetings were held there. The most recent of these museum meetings has figured in prominently in the memories of current staff. On The 14th April 2003, staff were gathered together in the old museum to hear the results of the CUB Supply Chain Review; that the brewery would be closing in February 2005.

The impressive wood panelled Boardroom and adjoining dining room are also situated on level two of the Administration building. These rooms are decorated with portraits of the Tooth family, past Directors and old prints promoting Tooth's products. This was where weekly board meetings were held. Barry Schurr recalls taking up the board books in preparation for these meetings.

"I used to take the books up to this beautiful old Boardroom and in the middle of the table was a huge big bowl of fruit and I used to knock off the big beautiful red apples. Anyway one of the old Directors put in a complaint that his red apples weren't there, I got found out... but I got away with that one. In the end the catering lady Miss Jenkins would give me some fruit."

Barry Schurr CUB OH 3 Side A - 653

The Boardroom and adjacent kitchen and dining facilities were integral to the business of Kent Brewery. They were the site of official lunches, functions and other meetings. Vicki Muscat commented on the grandness of the rooms and recalled an incident that threatened the fabric of such historically important areas.

"A disaster that happened here was when we had the big hail storm a few years ago. Some tiles got broken from the storm and the next day I walked in the dining room and it look as though it was raining in the Boardroom – the water and the damage...I was in tears. I rang Security – we had to get the paintings off the wall and all the rooms had to be painted and a couple of pieces [artwork] had to be restored.

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I've never been so upset - I look after this place as much as I do my own home."  
Vicky Muscat CUB OH 9 Side A - 925

Located on the first floor at the eastern side of the Administration building was a more recently established recreation room. In its peak, these rooms were filled with table tennis and pool tables, and other games areas. A gymnasium was set up later adjacent to this area.

Most levels of the Administration building showcase beautifully restored bars, including the Staging Post, which is now on the second floor and the Show Bar, on the first floor. These bars have played an important function in the operation of the Company. They were where Managers entertained and talked business with clients; they accommodated farewells, birthdays and other regular social gatherings.

"The tea run finished in 1986 and then what happened was Carlton decided to grow the relationship with customers, so what they started doing was brewery tours. They started with the licensees, then we did two Brewery tours because we brought the cellarmen in...then we gave them lunch – that was on Tuesdays and Wednesday in Staging Post."

Vicky Muscat CUB OH 9 Side A – 1251

It should be remembered that in general terms, these bars were the domain of Managers and administration staff.

Over the years, the Administration building has undergone a number of internal refurbishments and some external extensions.

#### **5.2 Production**

Kent Brewery was a workplace alive with activity. Prior to the 1980, one thousand personnel worked at their daily routines. Regular deliveries of malt, hops and other raw materials for the production process came into the site and there was a constant flow of outward traffic, trucks loaded with kegs and cartons of bottled and canned beer headed for the market.

The workforce was made up of skilled and unskilled people from Brewers, Laboratory staff and Engineers to tradesman, Electricians, Plumbers and Fitters and Turners. There were also many craftsmen working on site, such as Coppersmiths, Blacksmiths and Coopers. Trades Assistants, Storemen, Drivers and Security personnel were integral to the production and distribution of beer. Very little work had to be outsourced and most could be done in the well-equipped trade shops on site.

"It was overwhelming at first...it was my first, close hand experience of industry and felt like I was in the thick of it. I thought wow, this is going to be work for me...when I first started they took me for a walk around the plant and that really accentuated the fact that it was like a city within a city. You walked past all the workshops...each one was like a shop in a town. Because it was an old plant that had been developed

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progressively, there were a lot of stairwells up and down and nooks and crannies and tunnels.”

Stuart Green CUB OH 1 Side A - 426

Since 1912, two Breweries have operated within the Broadway site. The Irving Street Brewery produced top fermenting ales and Kent Brewery brewed bottom-fermenting beers. The Maltings and the Fermentation and Filtration plant were later located on Irving Street.

Up until the late 1970s, Irving Street Brewery was separated from Kent Brewery by public roads and security gates. Irving Street ran between the new Brew House and filtration areas and Balfour Street ran between the two Breweries.

Because brewing occurred over the two sites and maintenance and trade workshops were spread across the two Breweries, it wasn't always a straightforward task for workers to go from one area to the other to carry out their work.

“When I first started here all the roads around the plant were open and at night they closed the gates [to the two Breweries]. If you had to work late and the gates were closed, you had to call Security to open the gates on this side [Kent Brewery] and wait again for him to open up on the Irving Street side. There was so much lost time going back and forward – it was terrible...Later I realized that there was a tunnel so rather than calling Security to open the gates, I went down the tunnel, under the street and came up the cellars on the other side to save time.”

John Barrowman CUB OH V11 4.50

This situation changed to some extent when in 1980 Tooth and Co. embarked on the massive refurbishment of the brewery. Around this time Balfour and Irving Street were closed to the public and became just one of the many roadways or lanes that traversed the brewery. Balfour Street is now the entrance to CUB's Car Park.

Located within Kent Brewery away from the Broadway end of the site near the Administration building was the Spirit Store. From the early Twentieth Century through to mid 1970s, Tooth's dispatched almost every type of wine and spirit from this Store. Next to the Spirit Store was the Bond Store where all dutiable liquors were cleared by customs before being sent to the Spirit Store for sale. <sup>1</sup>

Set back from what is now known as Broadway was the Cordial Factory (Water Board plans show this as the “mineral water factories”), this had operated from 1893 to 1937 when the operation was moved to Blue Bow Cordials attached to the Waverley Brewery in Redfern.

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<sup>1</sup> Kent and Waverley Breweries, Sydney, 1935, *The First 100 Years*. pg 79)

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During the 1980s upgrade, the physical structure of production side of the brewery underwent significant changes. Virtually all the old Kent Brewery buildings between Main Avenue and Balfour Street were knocked down and modern facilities were built. Len Hanbridge recalled that it took almost three years to demolish around two thirds of the buildings on site, including the old sandstone Brew House, the Delivery Office and the buildings towards the back of the site that were originally stables. The redevelopment was staged to maintain an operating facility.

The demolition of the old Kent Brewery, which was carried out by contractors, was a huge task, made bigger by disputes with Unions that would not allow cranes on site. Austin Sellars, who worked in Security, was often entertained watching the demolition work progress.

“When they were knocking this place down we used to have a hell of a job with the contractor – he used to set fire to it every night – you see if it burned out he could get rid of it. When you were on shift work you’d sit there...you could see them on the different floors...and you’d see a whiff of smoke go out. The number of times we put fires out it was unreal.”

Austin Sellars CUB OH 23 Side B - 1459

The Brew House and its tower were considered to be of particular iconic importance by many of the brewery workers. It had a particular charm and most were disappointed to witness it being demolished.

Another structure that was demolished during the upgrading was the old canteen. Stuart Green thought that this building might have been one of the original buildings of the old brewery from 1835. He pointed out that bricks from that building had broad arrows on them, markings of convict made bricks.

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#### **6.0 Work Place Culture**

##### **6.1 A Family Style Company**

Tooth and Co. had a long tradition of being a family style company that looked after its employees. Kent Brewery was seen as a secure place to work. To a certain extent, since the takeover by Carlton and United Breweries in 1983, this management style continued.

Many young people grew into adulthood at Kent Brewery.

“I was 21 years when I left home and I have been here [Kent Brewery] for 25 years – so you sort of relate growing up to being here – its a big part of your life. Its been longer here than with my parents growing up at home.”

Stuart Green CUB OH 2 Side B - 112

Boys as young as 15 years started working in all fields of work, from production and maintenance, to the clerical and administration. Young girls also found employment at Kent Brewery, mainly in administration areas, although others like Bernadette Williams, who started at the brewery in 1959, worked in the Laboratory.

A good percentage of the Tooth ‘family’, especially in production, were migrants. Len Hanbridge recalled that in the 1970s, people from over nineteen different nationalities worked at the brewery. Despite some cultural differences it seems that working relations between nationalities were reasonably harmonious.

“There were many different nationalities working at the brewery. The B3 Bottling Line next to the racking area had one team there that was called the ‘Ski’ team. They were all Macedonians and their names ended with ‘ski’ – we’ve got Portuguese, Maltese, Greek, a lot of Italians – I haven’t seen any cultural clashes. We all have a joke, people cope with it – no one is being nasty.”

Gary Prior CUB OH 15 Side B - 1082

Several generations of the same family often worked for Tooth and Co. When John Barnes started work at Tooth’s in 1952, his father had been working in Accounts for many years. Between John and his father, they worked at the brewery for a total of a hundred years. Similarly, Jack Rutledge’s father had worked for the Company since 1922 as a driver when Jack got his apprenticeship in 1944. Three generations of John Balzan’s family has worked at Kent Brewery, his father as well as his son.

Although it wasn’t termed mentoring in the early years, the nature of relationships between older and younger personnel at Kent Brewery has always been distinctly paternal.

“It became a big family - everyone treated it as family. Fred Whiddon, Bill Earth and Merv Ivash, Len Balzari they were guys a lot older than I was but they all kept an eye

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on me. I used to play up a lot – try and tell you not to drink as much...”  
Barry Schurr CUB OH 3 Side A -1205

#### 6.2 Recreation, Play and Pranks at Kent Brewery

It seems that production and administration employees rarely mixed. Nevertheless, a culture of socializing, fun and cohesion typical of old school, family style organizations permeated the workplace.

Barry Schurr, who started out in the administration side of the business as a ‘Box Boy’ in the 1960s, fondly recalled the impromptu parties enjoyed by staff in the Ledger Room while working back one Thursday night each month to balance the ledgers. Similarly, Jack Rutledge recalled the spontaneous cricket games played in the brewery driveway and John Barrowman enjoyed the ‘pommies’ vs ‘ozzies’ soccer matches held at lunch breaks.

Jack was also involved in more organized cricket games played between the Coopers and the Fitters held at the Cooks River in the 1950s.

“About 10 years after I started I went to the cricket matches they had on the weekend when the Coopers played the Fitters the matches used to be at the Cooks River...and it always ended up in a brawl – because the wrong team won!. The brewery used to always send a keg of beer and in those days you couldn’t have a keg in the open ...so they put up a big marquis and put the beer under that and the police would leave you alone. But they always ended up in a blue.”

Jack Rutledge CUB OH V1 – 16.47

##### 6.2.1 Christmas Parties

For many years, the Tooth’s annual Christmas party was always a memorable event and was well attended by administrative employees and management. These affairs were held in the Museum on Christmas Eve.

“There was no air conditioning in those days and you’d sit up there and it was sweltering. Quaintly, they had all the young men and boys around outside and in the middle in some sort of configuration seated at tables were all the woman and never the twain shall meet of course, because all sorts of dreadful things could happen...it was all very stilted. They had a bit of entertainment in the form of an elderly man who came every year, an elocution teacher and he came and read poetry, pretty daring stuff it was. There was a speech from the chairman of the board, his name was Mr Jim Victors [from Victors Woolen Mills] – every year he would say ‘pay tribute to the lovely ladies all looking splendid in their Victors Woolen Mill fabrics’...the beer was never really cold – in long necks – you couldn’t get another beer until you produced the empty...but there were ways and means of getting more – someone smuggled empty bottles into function and hid them under table...when that was over around 2pm we disappeared.”

Gary Cook CUB OH 5 Side A - 1312

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The Laboratory Christmas party was a much more informal event, renowned for its good food, lively and well lubricated atmosphere. Unlike the official Company Christmas party, everyone was welcome to attend the Lab party.

“My brother in law and I got in early 4.30am - we quickly fixed up the things that we had to do and shot off to the fish markets and get a thumping big fish and a load of prawns and other bits and pieces. Then we'd come back - I'd set up a gas ring out the back and set up my wok and cook some food up on that. Meanwhile the girls would be there with the hams cutting that up – some of the guys would be tapping a keg of beer and getting a cooler on in the corner and getting the glasses out. Once all the food was cooked and on display they'd all come at lunch time – it was people from plant, from offices – you met everybody on that day...on the second party we had the General Manager of the plant come over and Jo the cleaner he was there – there were no class distinctions on that day – Jo said would you like a whiskey – so they went over to the corner and proceeded to polished off the bottle– when the bottle was empty he [the GM] went and got another from his office.”

John Collier CUB OH 13 Side A – 1514

Festive cheer was spread even by the Forklift drivers who organised their Christmas barbeque in the driveway of Kent Brewery. They stopped every truck making a delivery to the brewery and demanded a donation in exchange for a can of beer and a steak sandwich which the 'truckies' ate as they waited for their truck to be unloaded.

These on site Christmas celebrations were very much a part of earlier days at the Brewery. In more recent times, Christmas parties have taken place at different venues around Sydney.

#### **6.2.2 Picnics and Parties**

A Tooth's tradition was also to observe the Brewer's Picnic Day held every year in February. These were generally at popular picnic sites around Sydney and were attended by production and administration workers and their families.

John Balzan, whose father worked at Kent Brewery attended many of these picnic days with his other siblings.

“Every year Tooth's had a family picnic day and we always looked forward to that. They had the sack races and running races and if you won you'd get a dollar and that was a lot in those days – we also got free ice cream, chips and drinks. At that time they were often held in Bondi.”

John Balzan CUB OH 30 Side A - 1108

These official picnic days do not occur any longer. During the 1980s and 1990s, CUB organized family days where workers and their families were invited into the brewery and taken on tours, given a barbeque and a chance to meet the people from other work areas.

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Birthdays and going away parties were other causes for celebration.

John Collier, the Laboratory's resident chef, recalled cooking up a feast to celebrate Bernadette William's 21<sup>st</sup> year at the brewery.

"We brought a whole swag of fish and other seafood for Bernadette for her 21<sup>st</sup> year there [the brewery]– we made cakes in the drying ovens – put some burners on out the back and some big pots and cooked some yabbies up – before we cooked them up - one of the girls went in the cool room and we forgot to tell her that they were there. Anyway one of the buckets got knocked over and the yabbies were crawling all over – she ran out of the place screaming."

John Collier CUB OH 13 Side A- 1694

In more recent years John McNally recalled that he felt it important to reward his work team by regularly taking them out to all sorts of places for a meal.

"It was a good chance to sit and chat over a few beers and some prawns outside of the work area – put on some clothes other than the uniform...in the early days there was a restaurant just up the road here called the Little Snail. It was quite popular with the brewery people. And for better or for worse we would go there - prices were reasonable, the food was OK, the beer was seldom cold enough which we had a bit of a problem with! I got the trick of warning them that we were coming and to make sure they had plenty of cold VB and Crownies because the guys, when someone else was buying always went straight for the Crownies – nothing but the best!"

John McNally CUB OH 26 Side B – 253

#### 6.2.3 Social and Sporting Clubs

Over the history of Kent Brewery there have been many long lived sporting clubs. One with a long pedigree is the Resch's Rats Cricket Club. Established in the Tooth's era, the Rats are still playing competitive cricket. The team is mostly made up of management who play any number of corporate organisations. A couple of times a year they tour outside Sydney.

"I toured twice, both times to Coffs Harbour to play against the Maulers from Yatala, but I've never played the Mexicans as we call the team from Melbourne. Social games in Sydney were on the weekend and we would provide the beer and the other team would supply the barbeque and our families would come along. It was a good day – we had some fun."

John McNally CUB OH 26 Side B – 15

The Tooth and Co. Bowling Club ran for more than 40 years. The Club folded about 8 or 9 years ago and Austin Sellars was President of the Club for its last seven years.

"Originally the Company, when it was Tooth's, used to provide a chauffeur and drove four people as far out as Hay each year. And then Hay [Bowling Club] would send people into Sydney...We used to get prizes from the Company – beach towels,

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whatever – What we were really doing was representing the Company, Tooth's and Fosters – they loved it...We would take a bus trip up the coast. It would cost \$20.00. You'd take the bus there, you'd get the game of bowls, your lunch, the whole thing for \$20.00...we had some fabulous trips up there...All the members came here [Company Offices] once a year for a big dinner which the Company paid for. They used to love it. I invited the Royal NSW Bowling Club one year and they sent about 12 or 14 people and they toured the brewery..."

Austin Sellars CUB OH 24 Side B – 666

Another active social club was the Mickey Mouse Club, which was for Foremen and Under Foremen.

"They used to collect a shilling a week and hire a bus or a boat, buy loads of prawns and lobsters. It was a good turn out."

Jack Rutledge CUB OH V1 - 18.07

Set up in 1990, The Quarter Century Club continues to cater for current and ex employees who have seen twenty-five years or over of service with the Company. Vicky Muscat who is soon able to join the Club, caters for the various Quarter Century Club functions that the brewery hosts throughout the year.

#### 6.2.4 Pranks & Playing Up

Pranks and practical jokes, particularly played out on the younger men, were common practice. Barry Schurr recalls one prank played on him.

"I was sent down to the Time Keepers Office which is where all the wages were done and times kept for the office and the factory. I was sent there one day when I was in the Boys Box and I was told to ask for the Long Wait. I was about 16 years old at the time. I went up to the counter and asked for it and the guy said 'Well just sit down there for a minute.' I was there for about an hour and I went back to the counter and said 'I'm still waiting for that Long Wait.' And the guy said 'Well you can go back to the Boys Box now – you've had a long enough wait!' They were the things that used to go on. I was a bit naïve."

Barry Schurr CUB OH 3 Side A - 653

Stuart Green and John Barrowman who both work in production also recalled the pranks and initiations played on many of the young boys and the paternal attitude of the older men.

"When I was at Reschs Brewery there was always the initiation of the apprentices...the whole thing was set up for my benefit [a lifting competition]...they asked me to sit down and lock in and wrap my legs around this fellow's waist...we're locked up together...a big cheer went up and I thought 'he hasn't done anything yet, what's happening'...then this fellow came over undid my pants, pulled my pants down and a shoved a big handful of grease around my genitals, thighs - everyone is cheering and I thought 'oh what a sucker'...a lot of that sort of thing went on. It wasn't uncommon to be tied up by a couple of tradesman and hit [by water] by a fire hose. It

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was embarrassing but harmless...when the shouting and screaming was done there'd be someone who came and checked on you and said, 'are you all right son'." Stuart Green SUB OH 1 Side A - 1302

"It [jokes] was the life and soul of the workshop – Stuart Green he is into every thing that goes on – a practical joker and an artist. If something happens in the workshop, next thing there's a caricature of what's happened on the notice board...The favourite stunt was to get the apprentices – put him in the grist bin and tell him to check something, then hit the grist bin and knock all the flour down onto him. It was all safe fun - much of this stopped when the brewery became dry."

John Barrowman CUB OH V12 – 11.09

### 6.3 From a Wet Brewery to a Dry Brewery

Up until the late 1970s, Tooth and Co. ran a 'wet' brewery. Each employee was entitled to at least three schooners of beers per day, one at each of their breaks – morning and afternoon 'beero' and at lunch. The beer was issued in exchange for a token or ticket issued to employees weekly.

There were several bars over the site where employees could take their 'official' daily allowance of beer. Three bars were set up for production and maintenance employees; in Irving Street, in the canteen and another nearby for the Foremen. Administration employees were able to have their beer in the canteen.

"Drinking was certainly the culture of the place. Another thing that I noticed when I started here was all the guys were big guys, they had big beer bellies. In those days they wore grey overalls usually unbuttoned to the waist because they couldn't pull them up any further...all the guys used to seem to walk backwards, leaning backwards rather than straight...lot of guys would get a beer at one bar and knock that back and then walk to another bar and then the other, so it wasn't infrequent that the guys would be drinking three schooner sized glasses of beer in a meal break. It was only two or two and a half hours and they would be back again and into it again. In hindsight its amazing that not more people injured or killed..."

Stuart Green CUB OH 2 Side A - 547

While adult employees were issued beer tokens, apprentices were not 'officially' allowed to drink alcohol, at least in the early days, as Jack Rutledge recalled.

"An apprentice was never allowed to drink until he was 18...any man caught giving an apprentice beer was out. We got a lemonade – because Tooth's owned Blue Bow and there was Blue Bow lemonade or Juico brought over and the Storeman issued that at 10am."

Jack Rutledge CUB OH V1 - 23.20

John Collier pointed out that there used to be a good trade in trafficking beer tickets. Anyone that didn't want their beer ration could sell it on or give it to one of their thirstier comrades.

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In the 1970s, Security personnel were required to play 'barman' on Saturday and Sundays at the Irving Street bar. Austin Sellars recalled his first Sunday experience pulling beers.

"My very first day I went over and opened the bar and there was a foreman, a supervisor and two Cellarmen there – and I'm pulling beers for the first time ever...they kept asking for more beer and until one bloke sitting at the bar fell off his stool, that was how drunk he was. I thought, 'Oh no, that's me gone', I thought I'd be in trouble with the supervisor for serving too much beer, but the supervisor turned around and said to the foreman, 'I think you should take him and give him a shower don't you' – that was the only comment made about anyone being drunk."

Austin Sellars CUB OH 23 Side A - 967

Needless to say, there was a lot 'unofficial' drinking going on at the brewery. As well as drinking more than the daily ration, kegs were regularly rolled off the line and tapped. The 'honey pots' as they were affectionately known, were dotted around the whole site and workers helped themselves to a glass as often as they pleased.

"My first day here was an interesting day...people disappeared out of the workshop all the time and I didn't know where they went. At knock off time I went into change – there was a front row of showers – I jumped in and could hear this commotion in the back showers and I thought 'what the hell is going on there' – so I'm soaping myself up and the next thing is this guy says, 'hey mate, want a beer' – and he's sticking a schooner in my hand in the shower – I said 'no, no, I'll be alright'. I dried and walked around the back and there's a party going on – they had an eighteen gallon keg- there must have been about twenty people there. It was like that everyday, everyday! – you'd be working away in the workshop and next thing you'd hear was rumble, rumble, rumble – it was a keg going across the top floor at the old pitching room at the back of the locker room...There was some pressure to participate in drinking and if you didn't drink there was pressure to be with drinkers just in case they got caught you were there too."

John Barrowman CUB OH V11 – 39.14

From the early days this unofficial drinking was notionally done under the threat of sacking or severe reprimand. Yet in practice the existence of 'honey pots' was met with a blind eye by many supervisors, Foremen and management.

"And of course there was the honey pot down in the cellar – The Cooper working in the cellar was home and hosed all day. That Cooper's job, first thing in the morning was to set aside four 18 gallon kegs for the honey pot – fresh beer for the honey pot was the priority...[but] when the Head Brewer came around, Mr Wyndham, [the keg] was pushed aside – no one drank when he came around at 10.30 every day."

Jack Rutledge CUB OH V1 - 23.20

"Guys would drink beer here by the bucketful. You would see guys who would carry a bucket of beer with a splash of caramel in so it would look dirty - so if the boss

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walked past they could explain 'its caustic boss be careful' – the boss would step back and think nothing more of it. The culture was such that a lot of bosses had come from the workshop floor and knew the routine, but as long as the work was done nothing much was said about it."

Stuart Green CUB OH 1 Side A - 730

Administration personnel were also given an issue of beer tokens. Gary Cook noted that office workers were entitled to a beer at lunch time and another after work. He perceived that many of the administration workers saved their drinking until after work hours. Nevertheless, some of them did take advantage of the generous entitlement. Barry Schurr recalled having a 'tiddle' during his time working in the Pay Master's Office.

"I used to take the pays on a Thursday morning over to Irving Street and paid the men out of the back of a car...they'd been doing it for a hundred years. I said that for security reasons they should pay them from the bar they had there because the men all had their drink break there at 3 o'clock. I said I could do that and pay them from the bar window. So they thought that was a good idea...a Security Officer drove me to Irving Street Brewery but he was half drunk by the end of the afternoon. The pays were made up and I'd hand them out and then we'd have a beer because there was a keg under the counter and the Irish guy behind the bar would say 'Barry do you want another beer.' It was Tooth's Old – beautiful and by the end of the afternoon it was very difficult to leave! I had to balance the tea money the next morning!"

Barry Schurr CUB OH 3 Side A– 1205 and 1327

The extent of drinking on the job meant that many workers developed a tolerance to the amount of alcohol they could consume while continuing to work.

Another worker, a forklift driver named 'Pickles' was given a wide berth by workers before his first drink of the day – he was dangerous to be around before he had calmed his nerves with four or five beers. After this early morning dose he was known as one of the best drivers at Tooth's.

Even though many of the workers felt that they handled their drinking at work and accident rates supported this, drinking did effect the nature of some interactions in the workplace. Len Hanbridge recalled that there were regular 'stouches' between colleagues and undercurrents of aggression. Peter Sams, a Labor Council Officer for the Brewing Industry in the 1980s, noted that some of the aggression and confrontation was due to Kent Brewery being a 'wet' workplace at the time.

"I recall when I first took over the breweries I would have meetings in the afternoons and it was apparent to me that a number of the delegates had imbibed in their usual capacity to have a drink on the job and would come to the meetings in a less than fit state. These meetings were very heated – there was a lot of shouting and aggression between different Unions and Union delegates. I thought I'd change that and started having meetings early in the mornings but it didn't make much difference because

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the guys – the delegates who came off the night shift were in much the same state as those on the day shift.”

Peter Sams CUB OH 20 Side A - 165

While drinking was an accepted part of the work culture at Tooth and Co., by the early 1980s it became obvious that drinking on the job had many far reaching effects both on the company's operation and the health and safety of their workers. As well as putting themselves in danger at work, their drinking also affected their personal lives and their families.

In 1981, Kent Brewery became a 'dry' workplace. Bars were closed and a zero alcohol tolerance was instituted.

The decision to make the brewery dry was not uniformly popular amongst the workers and some fought it vigorously. Many of the older workers saw their beer allowance as paramount to an award condition – they felt that the more they drank the more money they made.

As a compromise, instead of making beer available for workers to drink on site, the Unions negotiated with management that workers would be given an allowance of a carton of beer fortnightly with their pay.

By the time Gary Prior had started work at Kent Brewery in 1981, it was a 'dry' site, but the drinking culture of the place was slow to change.

“There were so many characters its unbelievable...ratbags...we had these guys called the Becker brothers...I remember one of them, he got pure alcohol from the lab and mixed it with coke – wild – we had some really wild boys – some would scare you – some were influenced by others and fell into the trap.”

Gary Prior CUB OH 15 Side A - 1577

The problem of drinking was far deeper seated than simply putting into place a 'dry' brewery policy. The underlying issue of alcoholism in the workforce needed to be addressed. Jo Palmada, Site Union Convener, recalled that the Shop Committee spent a long time convincing management that their policy of sacking workers found drinking on the job needed to be replaced with a rehabilitation and education approach. During the 1990s, within the Occupational Health & Safety initiatives, a much greater emphasis has been placed on health and wellbeing programs for workers.

#### **6.4 A Changing Workplace Culture**

The early 1980s is seen as the beginning of a marked changed in the culture of the workplace at Kent Brewery. Over these years the brewery became 'dry', CUB bought the brewery and instituted many changes to work practice such as the move to twenty four hour operations, twelve hour shift and later team work organisation. Although workers still have a strong loyalty to the Company, the workplace culture is

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now characterized as being more business like with stringent occupational health and safety practices in place.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the emphasis on retraining, multiskilling and flexible work practices, has meant that workers no longer expected to have a job at the brewery for life. John Collier pointed out that when he first started employees who had worked at the brewery for twenty odd years were still considered 'youngsters'. These days three years is a long time to work in the same job in the brewery.

#### **6.5 Unions At Kent Brewery**

The industrial scene at Kent Brewery was 'a hot bed of industrial activity', where strict work demarcations were in place right up until the 1990s, particularly the production area.<sup>2</sup> At its peak, over ten Unions represented the various trades, production workers, administration workers and later, laboratory personnel. Each Union varied in their level of militancy.

All tradesmen, assistants and operators were required to be a member of the union that covered them. Over the years, the unions had secured very good conditions and wages for workers in the whole brewing industry.

It was not compulsory for administration to belong to the Federated Clerks Union until around the mid 1980s. John Barnes pointed out that the Clerks Union was not keen on going on strike. Apparently, it was an unwritten rule that white-collar workers did not go out with the blue-collar unions. When clerical employees were promoted to 'staff', they were required to resign from the union.

By the mid 1980s, there was a functioning Shop Committee on site that presented a unified voice for workers in relation to industrial issues. This assisted a gradual change from a highly confrontational industrial environment to one that was more based in consultation and discussion. In the 1990s, a huge program of workplace cultural change, the Leading By Learning Program, saw a shift in industrial relations and demarcation at Kent Brewery.

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Sams CUB OH 20 Side A - 165

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#### 7.0 Working at the Brewery

##### 7.1 Administration

Many of the young boys to join Tooth and Co. in the administration area started in what was known as the 'Boys Box'. Here they got to know the extent of Kent Brewery as they delivered mail and ran messages to all the different departments and work areas.

The 'Boys Box' was a small wood paneled room near the staircase in the foyer of the Administration building. There was a counter and pigeon holes for the mail and a row of bells on the wall. These were connected by cables to one or other of the manager's offices. When the manager wanted assistance, he rang the bell and one of the Clerks would attend to him. Barry Schurr pointed out that the young boys had to wear a tie and coat when they went to the manager's room and had to address the manager as 'Sir'.

The Boys Box boys also had responsibility for collecting waste paper and stacking it in the basement as well as doing the lunch run.

"I took a little cart around the brewery and took orders and went to the sandwich shop down the road – we had no canteen or anything at that stage...you used to get free morning tea and lunch from the shopkeeper for bringing him so much business...When I finished up as lunch boy I had to hand in my lunch boys license. This was a \$2.00 cash advance that they gave you in case you were short when buying the lunches at the shop. So I had to pay back the \$2.00 that I'd already spent the first week I'd got it. I had to save up to pay it back!"

Barry Schurr CUB OH 3 Side A - 372 & 945

It was usual for the boys to spend a period of around six months in the 'Boys Box' before progressing to the Ledger Room, Receiving Office or other departments in Administration. From here, they were then promoted to more senior positions in various departments including Accounts, Advertising and to the Property Division.

Gary Cook started working at the brewery as 15 year old in 1959. He, like many others interviewed, still has vivid recollections of his first day on the job.

"It was rather daunting. Here I am heading off for my first job in this big place – the smells were quite unusual - all the hops, the malt, and all the other smells associated with the brewery. There I was all starry eyed and wondering what I was going to do. There were probably another six other boys of the same age starting on the day in the same job."

Garry Cook CUB OH 5 Side A - 293

Work was labour intensive in administration before computers were introduced. Entering the huge volume of incoming goods and outgoing beer and other products was all recorded and balanced by hand in the Ledger Room.

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“The ledgers were great big books on high sloping desks - we sat on a four foot tall stool and wrote in the ledger with pen and ink. Still being used in 1964 in that office was a stool, padded with horse hair which was once used by Lucas Tooth.”

Gary Cook CUB OH 5 Side A - 1569

Tooth and Co. was slow in moving to new technology. Up until 1973, when Tooth's purchased its first computer, Copperplate Writers wrote all statements sent to customers. When the large CPU computer was introduced, all the data was entered into the computer that then produced the invoices, statements, and handled all the ledger and business administration. During the 1980s, the Company moved to having individual computer terminals at desks. Barry Schurr worked in the Accounts Department and was one of many who were relieved when accounting became computerized.

“The manual processing was gone and obviously less people were needed to input data. That's sad, but it's progress. We lost a lot of people we knew but it was good to move on. They actually got people here to go to computer schools to see if they had the skills to go into that area. We all went and had tests and what have you and fortunately I showed a bit of skill and was kept on. [In the pre computer days] it was all manual, you got information off a ledger card and they were kept in a ledger pack, which was locked away in a safe each night...There were cards going back to about 1910, thousands of them.”

Barry Schurr CUB OH 3 Side B - 551

Up until the mid 1970s Tooth and Co. owned a small fleet of 'old and battered' cars, usually Zephyrs and Consuls. Only the General Manager had a company vehicle and if senior people needed to go out on business they had to get a car from the car pool.

“Sid Payne asked me if I would go to Mascot Airport – it was getting near Christmas and hoteliers would ring up and say they were sending a parcel down like, turkeys, pigs, fruit, Murray Cods or boxes of cherries. I got this car out of the pool...it was raining quite heavily and by the time I got to the airport there was a swimming pool around my feet, water was just leaking in. Then there was another occasion when Sid wanted to go to the city and have a Christmas drink – [he said] ‘would you drive me down town please’...we're on the corner of Martin Place and Pitt Street, I'm driving and he is the passenger and the car conks out. Here he is pushing me around the corner. They kept these cars until they were just about falling to pieces – and they were inevitably cream in colour.”

Gary Cook CUB OH 6 Side A - 1727 & Side B - 27

In the mid 1970s, as well as the upgrading technology and office facilities, Tooth and Co. purchased a new fleet of vehicles. Senior staff received one of the new Company cars as part of their salary package.

The Receiving Office was another destination for young Tooth employees. This office was located just inside the main gate where the Security Office now stands. It had a weighbridge attached to it and all the incoming malt and other commodities were

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weighed, recorded in journals by the young clerks and then transferred into ledgers by hand.

Ron Reid worked in the Receiving Office for a year or two and recalled having to tireless job of reconciling the books after a fire had destroyed almost all of the records. One crucial piece of paper remained elusive for quite a while.

“The place was practically gutted. We had to sort through all the bits and pieces that were left from the fire...we had to try and put it together. We wrote to all the companies that we dealt with and ask to send us invoices that hadn't been paid – it took us months and months to get to the bottom of it. One day I was going through some charred papers and found the amount that we were looking for and we balanced!”

Ron Reid CUB OH 7 Side A – 320

On the strength of his great reconciliation skills, Ron was promoted to an accounts position in the lucrative Tooth's Wine and Spirits Store. While he was there, the far-reaching effects of the 1979 Trade Practices Act came in preventing Tooth's from having a supply monopoly on wines and spirits to hotels. The resultant loss of income from this ruling, meant that the Wine and Spirit Store was eventually closed.

Like Ron, John Barnes also started his career at Tooth and Co. in the Receiving Office in 1952. Here he worked under the stern and patriarchal Jack Bourke and enjoyed the camaraderie of the other young Clerks. By 1963, John had moved on to the Advertising Department to work as Assistant to the Advertising Officer, Jack Quigley. Here among other things John kept records of all the hotel signs, painted mirrors and other promotional prints. Tooth's at the time commissioned the services of a number of well-regarded artists to produce the Company's artwork and promotional material. Tom Woodman and Alan Baker were two of the artists who painted themes decided upon by the Advertising Officer.

An important role for the Advertising Office was to organize the Tooth and Co. decorated float for the annual Waratah Procession through the streets of Sydney. Models and children sat on the back of trucks decorated with flowers and a huge Tooth and Co. banner hung from the side of the truck.

To keep a competitive edge, Tooth and Co. advertised widely in Journals, newspapers, on radio and later on television. The racing broadcasts on radio were a regular promoter of Tooth's product.

“We pushed KB in periodicals, the Pacific Island monthly - and newspapers, the Daily Telegraph, the Sunday Sun, the Daily Sun and the Mirror. They all took our ads....we did some television advertising...and of course radio. We had Ken Howard, who was the race caller for 2UE...Ken Howard used to push KB for us and we used to make sure that Mr Howard got his beer regularly. I can remember taking beer out to his place. I was there a couple of times – that was the racing scene...”

John Barnes CUB OH 17 Side A - 1339

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An important part of Tooth's Administration was the Property Division that looked after the Company's valuable property assets. By the time Gary Cook went to work there in the mid 1970s, Tooth's owned approximately seven hundred hotels a number of which had been designed and built or at least stylishly refurbished by architects working in the Property Division. In addition to these, Tooth's had trade ties on a further three to four hundred hotels that were also administered by the Property Division. When CUB took over, Gary stayed working for Tooth's in this division at their new North Sydney office until 1985 when he took up a role with CUB's Leisure and Hospitality Division developing and selling surplus property.

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### **8.0 Working at the Brewery**

#### **8.1 Production Overview**

Until the early 1980s, Kent and Irving Street Breweries had similar plant and equipment. Each plant had its own engine room, CO2 plant, fitting room, filter room, cellar blocks, yeast rooms, keg washing machines and racking cellars.

The production and dispatch of beer from both Kent and Irving Street Breweries was supported by a vast number of skilled and unskilled workers. Up until the mid 1970's around eight hundred people, made up of many different nationalities, worked across the two sites.

Each brewery had its own maintenance groups; electrical, instrument, fitting and machining. Men from centralised trade and craft workshops carried out work in all areas of the site.

The nature and organisation of work at the brewery stayed relatively fixed until Tooth and Co. embarked on a massive redevelopment and upgrade of buildings and plant in 1981. Work was completed by 1983 and the redevelopment resulted in an integrated production process between Irving Street and Kent Brewery. All the brewing tanks were replaced, the packaging lines became automated and a sophisticated system of loading and unloading streamlined delivery and dispatch.

Since this original refit, plant and equipment has steadily been upgraded to keep abreast of technological changes.

#### **8.2 A Working Day in Production**

For most of its history, the brewery operated on a regular day shift roster. Depending on the trade, work started at sometime between 6am and 8am and finished between 4pm and 5pm. If their work was not finished they went onto overtime until the work was completed.

Their day was punctuated by regular breaks, announced by the unique sound of a steam whistle. This old steam whistle, located in the Kent Brew House, ruled the lives of the workers.

"The place was full of whistles. At 7.30am the whistle went and we started work. At 10 a whistle went – you had your morning tea. 10 past 10 the whistle went again - start up again. There was a 12 o'clock whistle that was for certain trades to knock off [for lunch] and at quarter past 12 knocked off and we started again at 1. That was ritual. At knock off time – there was a big iron hoop outside the Foreman's office and he took a steel bar and went clang, clang, clang - that was knock off time."

Jack Rutledge CUB OH V1 - 22.14

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“Oh the steam whistle...someone in their wisdom in the redevelopment said that the steam whistle had to go, it was archaic, so the lunch breaks and smokos went from ten minutes to half an hour to an hour and an hour and a half – they just lost track of time. So the steam whistle was good and bad.”

John Barrowman CUB OH V11 – 25.37

According to Gary Prior, in 1987 the brewery started operating on a twenty four hour production cycle, which meant that three, twelve hour crews were need to cover operations. While many enjoyed working three days off and three days on, alternating between night and day shift, some found this roster very trying.

“I didn’t mind the day shift but I didn’t like night shift. I’m not really a night person - I can stay up for one night, but that’s it – to do it for a week is too hard...I ran off the road going home on three times – found myself in the car straddling the median strip. Especially when I was a foreman and not on the tools – I had 3 or 4 men on night shift and I couldn’t just stand over them all night so I used to try to do paper work and sometimes I’d go home and my forehead would be bleeding and it was from my head hitting the biro on my desk when I dropped off to sleep.”

Len Hanbridge CUB OH 12 Side B - 222

### 8.3 The Brewing Process - Making A Good Brew

The consistency and quality of beer depends on using consistently high standard raw ingredients.

“Malt is the biggest raw material we use and it needs to come within a specification. We have stringent specifications that we put on suppliers and they have to meet them. Different parameters – simple things like the colour and moisture in the malt, the amount of extract or sugars in the malt down to the size of the grain are all specified. There are different malts – in the main, we use pale...but differentiation of beers comes down to different recipes, different hops used, different alcohol contents, different yeast strains used to ferment the beer...”

Mike Stoneman CUB OH 21 Side A - 863

Consistency in materials is so important to the brewing of beer that even the mains water used in brewing beer is treated. This is done through a process of ‘burtonising’ that involves, balancing the PH and levels of salts in the water and removing the chlorine before the water is deionised. The treated water, known as ‘brewing liquor’, is of a similar composition to the water at Abbotsford Brewery in Melbourne, the original home to Carlton United Breweries.

### 8.4 The Maltings

From the mid 1850 to the early 1980s, Tooth and Co. had its own Malting facilities at its Broadway site. Prior to 1853, the Maltings was located in an additional area to the east of the original brewery building. In 1883, the malting process was carried out in

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a long building in the northern part of the original Kent Brewery site. In 1936, a new Maltings was built on Carlton Street. It operated until the late 1970s.

It was in the Maltings that the brewing process began. The Malt House or Maltings had several floors housing germinating rooms and drying rooms as well as water tanks.

The barley was stored on the west side of the Carlton Street Maltings and the malting was done on the east side. Handling the barley was a dusty process with augers, elevators and vacuum pumps moving the barley through the process.

According to John Murray who started working in Maltings in 1965, the brewery brought in about sixteen thousand tons of malting barley per year. For many years, the barley came in huge hessian bags, but later in the mid 1970s, it was brought in bulk from the silos at Darling Harbour.

The malting barley was cleaned and held in large silos at Kent Brewery before it was put into steepers where the barley was soaked for about eighteen hours in order to start the germination process. The barley then went down to the germinating room on the second floor of the Malt House and continued to germinate at a slow pace in large boxes. The germinating rooms were wet and musty places, a suitable environment to germinate the barley. Here, screw auger machines regularly turned and aerated the barley.

One of John Barrowman's least favourite duties while in the maintenance area was carrying out repairs to the germinating boxes in Maltings.

"It was a nightmare, I used to hate it...I can't stand spiders – anytime I had to change the bolts that dropped off the boxes, I tied the bottom of my overalls, tie my sleeves, get a hat, scarf and face mask and crawl in under the boxes with a torch in my mouth...there were two things that you had to take with you – a hammer to get rid of the rats and a tin of Mortine for the red backs. You'd hit the side of the germinating boxes so the rats would disappear and you'd pour about two cans of spray in to get rid of the red backs – the Maltings was a classic place."

John Barrowman CUB OH V12 – 17.49

At the end of the germinating process, the barley was sucked up to the kilns by vacuum pumps to begin the drying process, one day on the top level of the kiln and another four to six hours on the bottom level. Drying effectively stopped the growing process. Drying the green malt under different temperatures produces different styles of malt, thus different styles of beer.

"There are different types of malt – pale malt, crystal malt. Crystal malt is very nice, if you can get a hold of it, its yummy...we have to convert the starch [in barley] to sugars and you do that by germinating it and the natural enzymes in it converts the starches into simple sugars that we utilize in the brew. So, depending on the temperature back in the kilns, you get pale malt or if the temperatures are higher or

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longer [in the kiln] the sugary substance inside crystallises, it caramelises and tastes a lot better. The malt that we use in beer can be ground up and put in milkshakes.”  
John Collier CUB OH 13 Side A – 664

After the drying, the malted barley was put in silos and then sent to the grist mill and made ready for the Brew House.

Even though the malt was moved around from one level to the other using machinery, there was a great deal of manual labour involved in the malting process.

“We had a lot of itinerant people there because of the serious nature of the work there and because of the physical aspect of it...it wasn't such a healthy job because of the dust – the malt dust used to get in your eyes and throat ...they were heavy drinkers. They'd start at 6.30 in the morning and as soon as they'd done a few little jobs - loading the kilns – at 7 o'clock they'd be up at the bar. They were only allowed one beer but that one beer probably became three or four beers. At 9 o'clock they'd be up there again...it was a continuous drinking session for quite a few of them.”  
John Murray CUB OH V 5 - 17.49

Working in Maltings was not only hot and hard, but also a potentially dangerous area to work. One of several incidents that John recalled involved of the hard drinking old Scotsman Jock Henderson, who lost his arm in one of the open conveyors in Maltings.

“Jock Hendersen lost his arm in one of the open conveyors. I was on that morning and I saw Jock walking down the stairs and I saw some blood on his right arm and I say, 'What's the matter Jock'. 'I've lost my arm.' So I pranced a bit and shouted to the foreman , Wally 'Wally, Wally , Jock's lost his arm', and of course Wally collapsed on the ground. Eventually we get the ambulance to take away Jock....15 minutes later we got a phone call from the hospital saying they'd forgotten to take Jock's arm with them and they wanted to sew it back on. They asked me if I'd go up and retrieve it... they told me to put it in dry ice... a real no-no. It was tremendous agony going up to get the severed arm – it was not nice. [The surgery] was not successful but...he[had] a great constitution. He was back at work 8 weeks later...still drinking his 32 pots a day.”  
John Murray CUB OH V6 - 20.12

John Barrowman recollected that even though Jock could not return to his usual duties, Tooth's, being a Company that looked after their workers, made sure that they found other work for Jock to do in the area.

Another incident involved a Fijian Indian worker who fell into the barley storage silo and suffocated. After his death a colleague insisted that he kept seeing his friend's ghost.

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Despite the tragedy of this situation, the Foreman turned these sightings to the full advantage of his laconic Australian sense of humour, commenting 'when you see him again, ask him what happened.'<sup>3</sup>

There were two fires in the Maltings during John Murray's time there. He noted that fires in barley are serious business, because the only way to put it out is to rake it out. If water is used to put the fire out the grain explodes.

"The pyramids went up – that's where they dry the malt in the kilns. It was a dry woody area – terrible time putting it out...the firemen were here at the plant for about 3 days and they loved it because we had bars here at the time. We had all these drunk firemen drinking beer and not wanting to go home."

John Murray CUB OH V 5 - 12.20

It was essential that once the barley was steeped, the whole germination and drying process must continue uninterrupted. So in the event of industrial disputes and strikes, the unions on site had agreed that the work of the Maltings crew could be taken on by managers, other staff and laboratory personnel until that batch of barley was processed.

John Collier, who worked in the Laboratory enjoyed his several stints in the Maltings. He felt it gave him the opportunity to have a first hand involvement in the making of beer. The physicality of the job and the camaraderie were welcome changes from Laboratory work.

#### 8.5 The Brew House - Fermentation and Filtration

Brewing started in the brew house where the malt was crushed into grist and 'mashed in' with hot water. The resulting solution of sugars was separated from the grain husks in the lauter run and boiled in kettles. This solution known as 'wort', was then cooled down to 10 to 12 degrees, injected with yeast and transferred to a fermentation tank. For between three and six days, depending on the style of beer, the yeast fed on the sugars and produced carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and alcohol. The CO<sub>2</sub> was collected and used later in the process. After storage, or lagering, and filtration the 'bright beer' was ready for packaging or racking into kegs.

John McNally described the beginning of the brewing process in the Brew House.

"This is the part that really attracted me to brewing when I started - it's a bit like cooking...like making a big porridge – you pour the ground malt which is called grist into a large vessel and at the same time you add hot water and stir it and there is this beautiful porridge like smell comes off. What is happening there is that the starches in the malt are being [made soluble] into the mash – it's called mashing in where you make a mash in a mash vessel or mash-tun. It then is allowed to stand for an amount of time - time is important at this stage...the recipe involves the components plus the

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<sup>3</sup> John Murray CUB OH V -5 9.47

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specific times and temperatures - the conditions under which things happen. All these are crucial for the end product - a consistent beer. This is what big breweries are all about the ability to produce the same beer every time.”

John McNally CUB OH 25 Side A - 876

The mash is transferred to a lauter tun and the liquid from the mash, known as wort, is drained off and transferred to a large kettle where it is boiled to flash off the volatiles and sterilize the wort. The wort is next put into fermentation vessels and as it is transferred into the tank, it is cooled down to 10 to 12 degrees and the yeast is injected. For about three to six days depending on the style of beer being brewed, the yeast feeds on the sugars, producing carbon dioxide and alcohol as waste products. The CO<sub>2</sub> is collected and reused later in the process.

Once again, the standard quality of the yeast used in the fermentation process is of paramount importance. As John McNally explained, the purity of the yeast strain is essential to producing different styles of beer. Yeasts are part of a brewery's tradition for they have often originated in Britain or Europe. They have been handed down over generations and contribute to the distinctive taste profile and palate of a brewery's beer. Tooth's beers, such as Kent Old Brown and Sheaf Stout, use an 'O' strain yeast while Reschs beers use the 'J' strain. CUB purchased these yeasts when they took over Kent Brewery in 1983. Carlton beers utilize 'A' strain yeasts and Kent Brewery now brews with all three yeast strains. Bernadette Williams noted that on occasions the brewery purchased other strains of yeast from Carlsberg in Denmark.

It is a complex task to brew with yeast, for there is always a risk of contamination, particularly when working with more than one strain of yeast. One of the main tasks of the Laboratory in the fermentation process is to test for wild yeasts in the brew.

When the yeast has done its work and the wort has become beer it is extracted from the brew. Depending on the type of beer being brewed the spent yeast will either fall to the bottom tank or rise to the top where it is extracted. The beer is then left to stand for a number of days during which the brew stabilises and develops more a complex flavour.

At this stage, the beer is cloudy and has a high alcohol content. To prepare it for packaging and ultimately public consumption, the beer is diluted and filtered through diatomaceous earth filters and becomes bright beer and is stored in bright beer tanks.

“It's called bright beer because in the old days you tested to see that filtration had been completed by inspecting the beer through a double sided sight glass with a light at the opposite side. When you could see through the beer and see the light the beer was filtered properly.”

John McNally CUB OH 25 Side A - 1458

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John Collier worked for some time in Fermentation and Filtration at the time when the ale brews were fermented in huge open stainless steel tanks with cooling coils at the bottom.

“We were filtering the product that went into the kegs and also had to look after fermentation. We knew a type of beer was coming over to us...so we knew how big the brew was to be and the brewing program for the day...we blended two brews together in these big open swimming pools...we were doing ‘ales’, top fermenting beers...the yeast used to grow up the top and would eventually overflow...we skimmed the yeast with a funnel into trolleys to be used again. Being open vessels we did get birds that dropped into brew – it gets pasteurised so anything that is there is not going to hurt you.”

John Collier CUB OH 13 Side B - 504

The 1981 upgrade was the beginning of the automation and computerisation of brewing.

As a Fitter, Stuart Green experienced working on systems prior to the refit and has seen enormous changes in brewing technology over the years.

“When I did the initial tour of the place when I first started, what struck me was that the place seemed so old, the processes had not caught up with time. Tooth and Co. were slow to change in the face of technology...the beer was still fermented in open timber fermenters...the cellars were cold, dark, moldy, dingy places. Because they were in period of adjustment between the old technology and going to a very high tech plant...I saw a lot of dramatic changes in a short amount of time. Went from labour intensive...to a push of a button in fully sealed sanitary conditions.”

Stuart Green CUB OH 1 Side B – 952

Besides the installation of a new fermenter farm in Abercrombie Street and the replacement of storage tanks, one of the most significant changes was in the way beer was moved around the site.

In the old days, the batches of wort, beer and the waste products from all the brewing processes were transferred from one area to another via a complex series of pipes managed manually. It could take the efforts of two men or more to maneuver these huge pipes and swing bends from one valve to another.

“The old manual operations – you might have seen pictures of men carrying around great big hoses and connecting them to points with hand valves on them and using spanners to tighten the connections on them...it was quite cumbersome and there were quite a few health and safety issues around the use of hoses and the tightening and removal of swing bends – they were basically a metal tube that would connect from one point to another. You would have huge swing bend panels with either hoses or swing bends to connect from point A to Point B – from this tank to this heat exchanger and from that heat exchanger to that tank for example...Doing it the old

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way with swing bends and hoses led to a lot of mistakes and also was quite risky – a diabolical way of doing it.”

John McNally CUB 25 Side B – 20

“With the old fillers, we were meant to be running Fosters, but instead ran a whole twelve hour shift and realized it was VB – so the cartons and labels were Fosters, but it was VB in the bottles, the QC [Quality Control] didn’t do his job properly...the whole lot was destroyed. When they put in the new technology you couldn’t make this mistake.”

John Balzan CUB OH 29 Side B - 928

A double block and bleed valve matrix system replaced these manual operations. These days the new system is completely automated allowing operators to direct the passage of beer from one place to the other from behind a computer screen in a control room.

#### **8.6 Getting the Brew Ready for the Public - Packaging**

Beer is pumped from the bright beer tanks to the Packaging Halls where it is bottled or canned or to Racking where the draft beer is put into kegs.

##### **8.6.1 Bottling Lines**

For many years, Kent Brewery dealt only with bottled and draft beer. Up until the early 1980s two bottling lines operated, conveying bottles through the cleaning, sterilizing, filling, capping, labeling and boxing or palletizing processes. Operators were given the task of facilitating each process and ensuring that the beer was bottled properly.

A combination of recycled and new bottles were used all of which had to be washed and sterilized before they were filled. In his early years at the brewery, Austin Sellars worked as a ‘sighter’ in the bottle washing area.

“The Sighter on the empty bottle line sat there with a diffuse screen in front of you watching to see if there was any thing in the bottle - dirt or dust inside the bottles – and that was very boring! The first day I did it, I went on this job and suddenly somebody screamed – I can’t use the adjectives he used – ‘Who’s that bloke sighting’ . So I said ‘I am’ and he said ‘Well take the Toohey’s bottles off you stupid thing.’ I felt like a bit of a fool.”

Austin Sellars CUB OH 23 Side A - 358

Len Hanbridge noted that the prior to the 1981 upgrading of the brewery, Packaging was located across a couple of buildings and on different floor levels. During the redevelopment, the whole of the packaging area was demolished and redesign to be more efficient. Long straight conveying lines replaced the old conveyors that twisted and turned to fit into the old buildings.

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All the lines were automated as was the control and operation of the machinery. Another huge improvement in production in the Bottling Hall was the reduction in the noise rating of the lines. This was achieved by using plastic chain on the conveyors, baffling technology and speed modulated lines that could slowdown and speed up at different times, thus stopping bottles crashing into one another.

In addition to two new bottling lines, a new canning line had been installed by the mid 1980s. John Balzan who worked in canning area from 1988, had a number of roles in canning including one as the 'can man'.

"The 'can man' was cleaning up all the cans that fell on the floor. It wasn't uncommon for three or four thousand cans to be rejected onto the floor - they were empty or half full or damaged...some days we might even end up with 12,000 cans on the floor...once everything was upgraded it got a lot better."

John Balzan CUB OH 29 Side A - 1026

Another of John's jobs was on the canning line filler where he operated the capping of cans ready for the pasteuriser.

"It was a great job. I used to load caps in by hand...it was all automatic. The cans came from downstairs from depaletiser, up along the line into the filler - we used to load caps into shute...the cans were filled with beer cans then went into the seamer to have tops put on... and seamed at 1800 cans per minute."

John Balzan CUB OH 29 Side A - 1154

Once the cans were filled, sealed and pasteurised, they went down the conveyor to the packer. Here machines separated the cans into lots of 24, cartons were fed into the packer and the cans were packed, glued and then sent to the palletiser.

John also worked on the B2 bottling line in several different capacities, including filling, quality control and later as part of the 'Cold' team responsible for the micro filters on the line. Up until the mid 1990s, the B2 bottling line only ran on certain days, however with the trend moving away from cans to bottles at this time, B2 Bottling line began to run regularly. In addition, to meet demand, by 1996 a brand new bottling line was installed, the B3 Bottling Line.

While there were improvements in productivity in plant and equipment over the years, these gains were undermined by unchanged ways of working which included a lack of scheduled maintenance of equipment. This meant that the lines just kept going until they broke down and had to be repaired. Preventative maintenance programs were introduced in the early 1990s, when the whole workplace structure and operation changed with the introduction of 'Leading by Learning' and the work team structure.

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There have been a number of upgrades over the years and these days the lines are able to handle filling 900 bottles or 2000 cans per minute using high speed rotating fillers.<sup>4</sup>

#### 8.6.2 Racking

From the early days, the brewery made their own kegs on site from New Zealand, and later Queensland Kauri or Pacific Maple. During the 1960s, the Brewery experimented with molded plywood kegs before changing to stainless steel kegs in the late 1960s.<sup>5</sup>

"[The changeover] was a costly and slow process but worth it. They found you could leave [the steel kegs] out in a paddock for two years, bring them back, wash it, fill it and put it back [into circulation]. With a wooden keg you couldn't do that – they had to be kept under cover."

Jack Rutledge CUB OH V2 - 3.47

In the early days work in the racking area was manual and labour intensive. A team of men was given the task of meeting the constant stream of trucks delivering empty kegs. They rolled the kegs off the trucks, stacked them on the floor three high. More men loaded the kegs onto a conveyor where they traveled along to be washed and sterilized.

As well as working as a 'Sighter' in Bottling, Austin Sellars spent many hours in that role in the keg washing operation.

"The Sighter had a light with a bulb on the end and for every keg that came off the conveyor, the Sighter had to put the light inside the keg and see if the bung had gone into the keg...if the bung was still in there, the Sighter had two bits of steel which he had to use to get the bung out by hand – that was a shocking job...You just sat there and you'd get 50 or 100 kegs and there was nothing and then you'd get one and then three and you'd end up with all these kegs around you trying to sight them and take the bungs out."

Austin Sellars CUB OH 23 Side A - 358

Up until the upgrade of the brewery, the washing operations were located at Kent Brewery. After the kegs were washed and sterilised they were once again loaded onto truck and driven over to the Irving Street Brewery to await filling. After the kegs were filled the bung was fix into the opening and they traveled to the dispatch area where the men manhandled the kegs off the conveyor and onto trucks ready to go to storage or commercial outlets.

The brewery upgrade facilitated the integration of all the racking area processes and greatly increased efficiency. Gary Prior who works in the racking area described that in peak time they were able to process 17500 – 18,000 per day. These days they are

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<sup>4</sup> John McNally CUB OH 26 Side A - 49

<sup>5</sup> Jack Rutledge CUB OH V2 - 39

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not processing as many kegs due to falling demand for draught beer. Kegs are also now a bit of a liability to the Company as Gary described.

“The big problem we have now is that they run out of kegs...a lot of them end up as scrap metal – drivers get a \$1 per keg if they return them – for scrap metal they can get \$15 per keg. Many go missing – it stuffs up efficiency – problem is that kegs cost \$250 to buy.”

Gary Prior CUB OH 15 Side B - 704

Gary who is now Maintenance Co-ordinator of Racking, reflected that the area was running at around 80% efficiency in 1984 when he first started there. Once the Racking work area team was set up in 1991 and within eight months the team was running at 90% efficiency. Gary proudly noted that they now average about 95% efficiency rate and attributes this to the sense of ownership of the work encouraged by the team structure.

### **8.7 Getting Beer Out the Gate**

The upgrade of the brewery in 1981 took special consideration of the efficiencies of loading and unloading pallets of bottled and canned beer. An award winning system was introduced which accommodated loading pallets directly from the conveyors to the trucks.

Contract drivers, rather than dedicated brewery trucks were at the time being used for distribution, so the system needed to accommodate trucks of varying sizes and heights. The new loading system incorporated conveyors that could be elevated up or down to meet the height of each truck.

The new loading system effectively designed the forklift drivers, who traditionally loaded up the trucks, out of this crucial part of the brewery's business.

“A lot of the roll on roll off equipment in operation out there today was absolutely designed in those early days to make sure we weren't dependent on forklifts. Because the Fork Lift Drivers in this brewery pre our time were the most militant group you'd meet anywhere, anytime.”

Ted Kunkel CUB OH V13 - 16.27

The loading and unloading of kegs remained a highly manual task right up until 1997 as Gary Prior recalled.

“All the semis used to back up and load their trucks by hand. The semis would hold three hundred kegs - it took them hours to load. In 1997, we had a big change and now they all use forklifts and they grab eighteen kegs at a time.”

Gary Prior CUB OH 15 Side B - 623

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#### 8.8 The Laboratory

All stages of the processes of beer making are tested, from the raw materials to the finished product. Laboratory employees test for foreign compounds, for the specific gravity and alcohol ratio and once the beer is filtered to test that it is carbonated correctly. Once the beer is packaged in kegs or bottles, further samples are tested to confirm the correct beer and alcohol content. Laboratory employees also checked that the correct quantity of beer is present in each keg, bottle or can. This part of the mandatory excise requirement. Any mistake could mean that the Company had to pay more excise.

John Collier, who started out working in the Laboratory described the role of the Chemists and other workers there in the early days.

“Brewers supervise the manufacture of product and Lab people tell them whether they are succeeding or not. A certain beer has to fall between certain specifications whether it be colour, carbonation, alcohol, bitterness and we just tested the product as they came through to see if it fell into specifications and if it didn't we had to tell them [the Brewers]. It was literally 'bucket' chemistry...it used to be much more hands – not like today with the stainless steel vessels, you can't see anything. Back in those days the vessels used to be open to the air – you could see, smell and taste it and it was an experience – that was the joy of going around and seeing it happening in front of your eyes rather than the very sterile atmosphere of today.”

John Collier CUB OH 13 Side A – 1308 & 1383

Bernadette Williams started working in the Biology Section of the Laboratory in 1958. Until around the 1970s, Bernadette was the only woman of ten employees working in the Laboratory.

The Laboratory was a unique place to work and working relations were always close and very friendly. Up until the mid 1980s, The Laboratory was the only non-union area at Kent Brewery. This had a huge impact on what the Laboratory staff could or could not do. During periods of industrial action, when all other production personnel were on strike, it was common practice for the men in the Laboratory to be asked to work in Maltings.

The Laboratory was split into two sections, Biology and Chemistry and by the early 1960s lab staff rotated every three months in both of the sections. Bernadette who was always keen to get to work in the Chemistry section commented that they were given well rounded experience of Lab work.

“We sampled beers looking for bacteria. The bottles incubated for a couple of weeks and then were tested. We made slides and recorded the findings in books – the samples were brought to the Lab for testing by people in cellars - then some time later the Lab staff took samples themselves – we also took samples of yeast to test its age and the boiler water samples as well.”

Bernadette Williams CUB OH V7 – 3.40

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The Laboratory staff also conducted all the analysis for Maltings. They ground up the sample malt, mashed it and made cultures to start the brew from control yeast.

There were many changes in technology over Bernadette's 40 years in the Laboratory.

"There weren't so many changes in microbiology, but Chemistry changed a lot. When we first tested the beer and alcohol content we used to distil samples. Then we went from distillation to refractometre where we tested the gravity of the bottle. Distillation was all manual mathematical calculations – the refractometre read from a graph on a sheet – then the next stage of change was the introduction of basic computers – a calculator worked out the readings – then we progressed to computers which did all the calculations. Most people now wouldn't know how to do the calculations. It was the same testing the hops. We went from manual to instrumentation to sophisticated computers."

Bernadette Williams CUB OH V8 – 18.58

Most of the raw material testing moved to CUB's Melbourne outfit when CUB took over operations at Kent Brewery in 1981. At that time Laboratory work routines moved to one of Quality Control. As well, along with other workers in the production area, Laboratory workers moved from working from 8am to 5pm to working a shift hours.

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#### 9.0 Production Support

Up until the 1980s when a number of services and trades were sourced from outside, all brewery operations were serviced by a plethora of craft, trade and centralised plant maintenance workshops.

These services meant that right up until the 1980s the brewery was a truly self sufficient operation.

#### 9.1 The Cooperage

The Cooperage was where Jack Rutledge began his working life as an Apprentice Cooper in 1944. At that time, it was located in a building on the corner of Balfour and Wellington Streets where thirty or forty Coopers spent their days making the kegs and large timber fermentation and storage vats.

“It was a very noisy place [if you stood underneath where the Coopers worked] all there was, was the thud, thud, thud – there were about 20 of us up there hammering all the time on a concrete floor. You worked in a berth – you had a rack of knives and there were two [timber] blocks in the berth where you could lean the keg up to work on it...It was noisy, dirty and smoky. We had a labourer – Alf Mortimer – who came around every Friday ...with a dust pan and brush he would dust all the rust up and put it in a bag. He used to take it home for his roses.”

Jack Rutledge CUB OH V1 - 14.24

As an Apprentice, Jack was assigned to a Journeyman. For the first three months of his apprenticeship, Jack's task was to beat out the steel hoops and rivets that were fitted around the outside of the keg to keep it tight. It was hard, physical work. Jack started as a nine stone fifteen year old boy and by eighteen had become a muscular, eighteen stone young man.

During the five years of his Apprenticeship, Jack became an expert at making kegs from well seasoned timber.

“The timber for the kegs was American Oak – mainly used for spirits. Tasmanian Blackwood and West Australian Oak were used for beer kegs. That came in bundles of 5 [slats] wired together ...When we got'em we'd stack them to dry out and then we used to back 'em and hollow 'em to the shape of the stave and then they'd go through the lister...then they wee steamed and bent and held [ in that shape] for 24 hours.”

Jack Rutledge CUB OH V1 – 3.12

The groove and the tops were shaped using an adze and an end, a quarter and a bilge hoop held the keg together.

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Although the Coopers tools of trade included band saws, circular saws and jointers, an Apprentice was not trained to use these until he was 18 years old and legally able to use such tools.

“I can remember the Machinist – he told me how he’d got smacked in the head with a knife. A cover broke on the big jointer. It just took the top off his head and laid the scalp back and Jack’s hair was white after that...it was dangerous.”

Jack Rutledge CUB OH V1 - 9.19

Aside from making kegs the Coopers were responsible for maintaining the large brewing vats. The main vats in the old beer room, were seventeen feet across and were open at the top so the stiff, bitter froth, that gathered at the top of the brew could be scraped off. Periodically these vats were emptied for maintenance.

“Sometimes we were sent up to the vats in a team – 3 men and an apprentice...we used to have to scrape them out and then recoat them with paraffin wax – the painters used to wax them. We’d get all the beer stain off , clean them up and fix up any rot..”

Jack Rutledge CUB OH V1 - 36.22

By the late 1960s, timber vats and kegs had been phased out of production at Kent Brewery and by the early 1970s, the Cooperage was closed. Jack at this stage was sent to the Cooperage at Reschs Brewery, returning to the Carpentry workshop at Kent in 1981 when Reschs Brewery closed.

#### 9.2 The Central Maintenance Workshops

Electricians, Fitters and Turners and Plumbers looked after plant maintenance in most areas of the brewery from a centralised workshop. Packaging had it’s own maintenance workforce up until the 1990.

Len Hanbridge began his working life as an Apprentice Fitter at Kent Brewery in 1960. The first year of his apprenticeship was spent doing stints on many of the routine jobs and learning the basics of the trade.

“I was in the Engineering Workshop on the ground floor...Because there were a lot of copper pipes which constantly needed replacing, there was a constant supply of flanges that needed to be drilled or bored out. They carried a great deal of spare parts that needed to be made up so you were constantly doing something like that...in the first year you got simple things, like marking out and drilling and the basics like that. In the second year it got a bit more interesting because we went out on breakdowns and worked on building and commissioning machines.”

Len Hanbridge CUB OH 11 Side A - 756

In his final years of apprenticeship Len specialized in dealing with packaging, first at Reschs Brewery then at the Irving Street Brewery and finally at Kent Brewery. It was

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here in the Kent Brewery Packaging department that Len started as a Tradesman in 1965.

This pattern of training and familiarization was the way in which most young apprentices learned their trade and where they fitted into the scheme of things at the brewery.

Stuart Green noted that the work hierarchy and custom was well established when he went to work at Kent Brewery in 1979. The work of a particular area, say the Bottle Washing Line, was organised and supervised by a foreman. Under him were the Leading Hands who directed teams of tradesmen to perform their duties. When Stuart started at Kent Brewery there were around fifteen other Fitter and Turners working in the Fitting and Machining Workshop. Each Tradesman was assigned a Trade Assistant who worked with him on a regular basis.

“Many of the TAs [the Trade Assistants] were older and had been at Kent Brewery for a long time, and had worked alongside Tradesmen themselves and had probably done the same job a hundred times themselves, so they could help you. From the time I was a Tradesman in the KB Workshops my leading hand was John Barrowman...he was my mentor in a sense...we have been working together for years - he's a great man...there was a strong sense of brotherhood amongst the men.”

Stuart Green CUB OH 1 Side A – 1612 & Side B 435

John Barrowman pointed out that a Tradesman could not do any maintenance or other work without his 'offsider', the Trades Assistant. This made the maintenance area expensive and by the early 1990s management decided to offer redundancies to many of the Trade Assistants.

Many people at Kent Brewery chose to improve their qualifications and move through the ranks from Tradesman to Leading Hand and then to the position of Foreman, which was a middle management position.

Gary Prior started as an Apprentice Boilermaker and rose through the ranks becoming Leading Hand by age 23 years. He is now Maintenance Co-ordinator. Similarly, Len Hanbridge rose through the roles as Foreman and Supervising Foreman to become an engineer after 19 years of work and study.

Aside from the promotional benefits, the transition from Tradesman to management had many new responsibilities. Len Hanbridge became a Supervising Foreman in 1981. In this position, he was responsible for plant maintenance program and budgeting. As well, it fell to the Foreman and Supervising Foreman to deal with disputes between workers and walk the fine line between keeping people happy and the brewery in production or coming down hard and facing strike action.

“At that time Kent Brewery wasn't a good place to work. There were groups of people who had got out of control. In Packaging for example if some people wanted to talk to

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me they would kick the door open and they'd come in and be screaming and carrying on. The exercise was to get the Foreman to say the wrong thing or do the wrong thing. It was a very unpleasant place to work."

Len Hanbridge CUB OH 11 Side A - 1408

Right up until the early 1990s, when scheduled preventative maintenance became the norm, the daily workload for Maintenance crews and Tradesmen seemed to be a constant round of troubleshooting.

John Barrowman recalls a particularly tricky repair job.

"I had only been here a month or so and was asked to help a Coppersmith – all the vessels, lines and pipes were all copper at one stage – anyway there was a hole in the beer pipe in one of the tunnels – the tunnels were probably twenty foot down and seven foot across – we're carrying this oxy gear and I got to the top of the ladder and looked down and its [the tunnel] full of beer. The Coppersmith climbs down and I said 'where are you going' – he said 'we're going to fix the pipe' and I said 'what in the beer' - he said 'yes! Come down, don't be a whooze'. I was up to my waist in beer and bloody frozen. By the time we found the leak and he soldered it, my teeth were chattering. You look back at it now and the safety implications...you wouldn't do it now, but back then it was just get the work done and get out!"

John Barrowman CUB OH V11 - 6.05

By the late 1990s there was a shift away from centralised maintenance to work area teams and maintenance workshops were closed down. Tradesmen were organized into different groups; brewing and services. Instead of reporting to a Foreman, they now reported to the Brewers.

"Accountants wanted to keep pruning maintenance back - Initially people didn't like it – took a lot of organising with GM. At the time John was one of five or six Foremen in Brewing – the others, five Maintenance Foremen handed in their notice and took a redundancy...I guessed this was going to be hard and couldn't see it working, but here we are 15 years later and it is working – it saved the company a lot on money."

John Barrowman CUB OH V11 – 22.50

As John has indicated, the traditional hierarchical work structure between Tradesmen and Foreman was broken down at this time. CUB decided to institute a flatter work hierarchy and offered Foremen the chance to join the teams or take a redundancy package.

"The cost of having that layer of supervision [Foremen] in there was huge and also it was like a seal between everything that was happening on the shop floor and the people who were supposed to be managing the performance of the business. It was a layer that was impenetrable in many ways both for those above and for those beneath... Those positions needed to be transitioned. ...I think a lot of the Foremen felt as if they were being squeezed out from both sides. They wouldn't want to go back into a hands-on role in this brewery where they'd already worked as Foremen

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with some authority...and equally I don't think most of them would have seen themselves as aspiring to go to the next level – to be management. Also on this site there would have been a significant financial penalty to them if they did that..."

David Grant CUB OH 30A Side B - 393

Bill Ford was a consultant who developed the program of workplace change at Kent Brewery, the Leading by Learning Program. He recalled a meeting with Foremen early in the process.

"I felt very nervous about having to front twenty two Yard Shift Foremen. They didn't like the changes and I had to go through the proposals and explain to them that if they didn't go along with the new Learning Program there was a redundancy package available to them. Twenty one of the twenty two of these Foremen took the package. I think they all left feeling OK about the situation."

Bill Ford CUB OH 27 Side A - 739

The new work teams were set up to carry out and take responsibility for each of the discrete functions of the brewing process. While there are still certified maintenance and trades people, they are attached to particular teams. Operators have undertaken courses in areas such as the safe use of hand tools and maintenance of valves and are now able to carry out simple repair work. They are also able to communicate with maintenance staff more effectively in the event of serious plant problems.

John Barrowman was one of the Foremen who decided to stay on at the brewery where he moved to Engineering and eventually took on project management work.

"I've been told I'll be here until 2006...and then I'll find myself a job somewhere. I am happy to stay here until the end. Will miss the people – I've been here 30 years and others have been here 15 – 25 years – we've all grown up with each other – we're like a family - it's always been a pleasure to come to work. It was difficult for the first four months I did absolutely nothing...the GM convinced me to stay and weather it out. There were twenty six maintenance guys and apprentices and ironworkers and we lost all of these overnight – it used to be a buzz – it was always busy then I went to nothing but over the last 15 years picked up so much extra work."

John Barrowman CUB OH V11 - 22.50 & V12 - 35.24

### **9.3 Apprentice Training School**

In 1979, Tooth and Co established an Apprentice Training School on site. Six mechanical trade apprentices and six electrical trade apprentices were taken on each year and placed under the guidance of Cess McKeon who was the Master of Apprentices.

"He was an Engineer and trained on the tools himself as a Fitter. As well as knowledgeable he was very fatherly, a father figure to a lot of us. From him we develop skills that we wouldn't have developed if we went straight to the plant. He concentrated a lot on our training and as Fitter and Machinist started us on our hand

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skills before he thought about putting us on machinery...we also went to different work areas...it was a diverse system of training. Not only did we have to fit the parts but to make them – we worked with steam, high pressures & low pressures, different gasses, there were boiler houses and cellars – a wide variety of machinery – its fortunate in many senses – others at Tech stayed on one sort of machinery.”

Stuart Green CUB OH 1 Side A - 834

After twelve months, the apprentices were attached to the different workshops in both Kent and Reschs Breweries and began their time as apprentice tradesmen. Night classes at Technical College augmented their daily practical training.

A traditional welcome to new apprentices was organized within a short while of joining the Apprentice School. Gary Prior recalled his 'welcome'.

“They were a great bunch of blokes. The older guys used to give you hell, which you used to pass on to the younger ones as well. You don't hear about initiations now. Some guys used to cop it – one of the funniest were they lifted a young guy hooked up on crane – I was hosed down by fire hoses – it was all in fun though.”

Gary Prior CUB OH 15 Side A - 1026

At the end of their four year, apprenticeship they became indentured Tradesmen, but not all of the twelve apprentices found work at Kent Brewery.

“At the end of our apprenticeships there were only vacancies for two Fitters and two Electricians – I was fortunate to be chosen – they able to pick the best of the crop at the end of the apprenticeships...we had to do well at Tech and also fit the bill in here [at the brewery] – very pleased – I was told I would have job for life.”

Stuart Green CUB OH 1 Side A - 1174

The Kent Brewery Apprentice Training School was scaled down in the early 1980s when it was taken over by CUB. Three or four mechanical and electrical apprentices were taken on each year, however not all undertook their training within the brewery. With the Leading By Learning Program, a system of dual apprenticeships was started and was wound down by the late 1990s.

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#### **10.0 From Keeping Watch to Keeping Secure**

Another area of work in the brewery that has undergone huge changes over the years is Security department. In the early days brewery Gate Keepers provided security. These were generally men who had worked for many years in other areas of the brewery and spent their 'sunset years' sitting in the Gatekeepers Office watching the comings and goings at the brewery.

"Most of the guys on Security – 14 or 15 guys then – there were only 3 or 4 reasonable young men. Old Alfie Duke who left the brewery at 83 and Frankie Price who was 70 odd. When I started the Security guy just sat there and stopped people from off the street coming in."

Austin Sellars CUB OH 23 Side B - 1041

By the 1980s when John Murray joined Security a younger type of man was being employed there and the role of Security was becoming more integral to the business of the brewery.

"We had a chappie by the name of John Adams – he came into security and he changed things completely for us – Closed Circuit TVs and reporting – it was a fairly big change for the Security Department ...Beer is a product that people like to acquire without having to pay for it - ...there was a bit of thieving going around then."

John Murray CUB OH V5 - 35.12

John Adams had fought hard to transfer responsibility for the weighbridge system from the Tally Clerks to Security. This system documented the loads going in and out of the brewery and was a final check of outgoing stock.

Austin Sellars recalled that before the 1980s and the Security upgrade, Tooth's was particularly vulnerable to theft and pilfering. At one time shortly before he joined the brewery a scam where by some drivers diverted a considerable amount of beer to a place in Glebe was uncovered. John Adams targeted such lax systems in his overhaul of Kent Brewery Security in the mid 1980s.

In more recent years, further improvements have been made including a swipe card system which not only keeps track of who comes and goes from the brewery, but also ensures safety, by way of a reliable headcount in times of emergency.

The role of Security has also further diversified and Security Officers are now involved in a huge number of additional tasks; community relations, emergency response and Occupational Health and Safety activities. Security Officers are certified to work with dangerous chemicals and in confined spaces. They are also expected to trouble shoot around the brewery and have their Forklift licenses.

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#### **11.0 A Safer and Healthier Place to Work**

For many years, safety issues at Kent Brewery had been dealt with by a Safety Committee which met monthly. The Committee was always extremely well attended, but according to Tim McKinnon, it was more a forum for complaints rather than a place where constructive solutions were worked out. Stuart Green recalled that fifteen years ago meetings were characterized by standoffs between management and Shop Committee with management and workers equally intransigent.

“The Safety Committee meetings were interesting...I remember a debate about an old guy dying on the B1 Bottling Line at the back of the pasteuriser - of natural causes while he was asleep – not a bad way to go. The issue at the meeting was not about the status of worker’s health at the brewery, but more a worry of putting a phone into the area. I don’t know how a phone would help him – that’s how the meetings went – more a forum for complaint.”

Tim McKinnon CUB OH V9 - 22.21

When Tim took on the position as Occupational Health and Safety Manager, in 1997, his first task was to bring the site into line with legislated O.H. & S. requirements, identifying hazards and eliminating them. At this stage, a lot of money spent on the site, demonstrating that management was committed to safety.

Through developing risk assessments and examining the resultant statistics, Tim began to think that many of the issues on site were ones of personal health and wellness. From this time, he saw his task as very much one of educating the workforce on issues of health and wellbeing.

“I employed an O.H. & S. nurse, Martine to work with me - we introduced programs for workers that were focused on prevention rather than reactive programs.”

Tim McKinnon CUB OH V9 - 27.30

Up until 1998 when Martine Briers started at CUB, there had been nurses on site who dealt with any accidents that happened. The nurses would do first aid and if necessary sent the worker off to their own doctor. There was very little follow up and people were often off work for significant lengths of time – which was an issue for both the Company and for the worker’s rehabilitation.

“It was a lot to take on in the beginning - I started to change injury management and got a local doctor on board who was from the local area. The idea as to guide the employee through the whole process and bringing them back to work as soon as we can organise this. So I work with the doctor right from the beginning of the process [the accident].”

Martine Briers CUB OH V9 - 35.40

To win over the worker’s trust and cooperation in future O. H. & S. initiatives, Martine spent much of her time when she first started at Kent Brewery visiting Departments and the Lines. This surprised workers, but her efforts were successful. Now, workers

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not only visit the Health Centre in time of emergency, but also come to monitor their ongoing health with regular blood pressure checks, fitness checks and cholesterol tests. As well, the quit smoking and weight loss programs are popular.

“The biggest health issues now are the long twelve hour days. There’s not the heavy manual handling any more – they sit more now. So I am trying to encourage people to get more fit and get them to use the gym more and the facilities there.”

Martine Briers CUB OH V10 - 5.45

“If you go back and look at the work done on this site...it was all very heavy work – now it’s a sedentary work style. Out in the control rooms an operator now, in a lot of cases, his whole view of the brewery is via an operator interface screen - it induces fatigue. The biggest risk now is type II diabetes and heart disease.”

Tim McKinnon CUB OH V10 - 7.02

A large part of the Health and Wellbeing Program run by Tim and Martine are the Health Fairs promoting and providing education of a number on health issues. These fairs include information stands on alternative medicines, mental health, diabetes, cancer, physiotherapy, yoga and meditation.

“People like to come to the health fairs – they like the hands on stall the best where they can participate in activities or get a diagnosis. It encourages the men to start thinking about their health. I had to push people to get to the mental health stand.”

Martine Briers CUBOH V10 - 21.20

Mental health issues have recently been brought to the fore as three employees committed suicide over the past three years. Tim and Martine have organized a specialist to address those touched by the tragedies.

As well, bi monthly mental health program has been initiated to deal with issues that arise, including those relating to the closure of the brewery.

“If you go back and look at the work done on this site...it was all very heavy work – now it’s a sedentary work style. Out in the control rooms an operator now, in a lot of cases, his whole view of the brewery is via an operator interface screen - it induces fatigue. The biggest risk now is type II diabetes and heart disease.”

Tim McKinnon CUB OH V10 - 7.02

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#### 12.0 A Changing Workplace

##### 12.1 A Highly Unionised Site

“The first [strike] I went on was before I’d done my time [as an apprentice] - 1949,..The Coopers withdrew the apprentices. Now normally the apprentices weren’t involved in a strike . But the Coopers withdrew the apprentices...[because] we could have kept the brewery going doing cellar work and that...once the Coopers were out – production stopped... The Coopers had a strike fund...and we were given one pound 10 shillings a week strike pay. When all that money ran out, a levy was put on the outside Shops...That’s how we survived..”

Jack Rutledge CUB OH V2 – 9.04 & 12.04

Industrial disputation and unrest was a feature of work at the brewery until the late 1980s.

Strike action was taken in response to anything from demarcation disputes, to campaigns to better award conditions or sometimes more petty issues. A number of strikes over the years, lasting long periods such as the thirteen week strike in 1949 and the eight week strike in 1980 over redundancies. Needless to say, these long periods of industrial action took their toll on the financial security of workers and their families.

Until the early 1990s, no one on site was allowed perform tasks outside of their trade. As well, operators could not carry out any maintenance task or use tools. Similarly, there were strict demarcations between other trades. Jack Rutledge recalled discovering early on in his career that Coopers were restricted to dealing with round, timber objects – kegs and casks where as Carpenters dealt with square timber items!<sup>6</sup> These rigid demarcations resulted in a fragmented and inefficient work practice and a workplace was overtime driven.

“I sat around for the first two weeks and waited for a boilermaker to cut bolts off. I wanted to do it but couldn’t. Back in the workshop days I would send a guy out and say have a look at that this job – he’d come back and say to me ‘it needs an Electrician’ – I’d call the Electrical Foreman who’d send an Electrician out – he’d report back to the Foreman and the Electrical Foreman would call me and say ‘no, that’s a Fitter’s job’ – Now what happens is one of the team goes out, maybe with an Electrician and between them they look at the job. Back in the 1970s if I had to do some work on a valve that had a proximity switch and all you had to do was pull the switch out – I couldn’t do it!”

John Barrowman CUB OH V12 – 27.40

“No one wanted to come to the Maltings – the Fitters, the Electricians, all the trades hated coming to the Maltings because the work was hard, heavy and hot for them. We used to do a lot of our own little repairs. One time the brewery went on strike

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<sup>6</sup> Jack Rutledge CUB OH V -2 12.04

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because I did a little job and used tools to get it done. When they came back after the one day strike there was a letter on the notice board from Wayne Gilbert the Managing Director at the time; 'This is to the Phantom Fitter. Some of us appreciate what you do for us and some of us don't – so we'd like you to refrain from fitting.'  
John Murray CUB OH V5 – 7.42

There was a tradition of striking for many weeks over peak production periods, when the Unions thought that they had more leverage over the Company to secure better conditions and wages. Towards the end of the year the catch cry, 'are we going on strike at Christmas', was recalled by many workers.

Austin Sellars noted that during his first six months at Kent Brewery, in 1977, there wasn't a fortnight where he wasn't on strike for at least one or two days. If there was a dispute in any Department of production, most workers went out in support, even over issues that now are regarded as petty.

Tales of past disputes had become legendary by the time Gary Prior started at Tooth's in 1981, when industrial action was on the decline.

"They were on strike when I first started in 1981 and that was the last strike [Christmas strike] - 22 years ago and people still remember them. We did have some petty ones, which were embarrassing, I didn't want to go out, but I had no choice. I think sometimes things were done to get us out on strike. You hear the story that the warehouses are full - they'd put a forklift driver or somebody else off for a stupid reason - we'd go on strike to support them – then the Company would say 'alright they can have their job back', but by then the warehouses are down so – not sure if it's fact, but that's the story you'd hear. We've matured a lot, both the management and workers – we've now got an Enterprise Development Agreement that we renew every three years and we abide by it."  
Gary Prior CUB OH 15 Side A - 686

"The place used to be always on strike...particularly over the peak production time – notoriously over Christmas...they used to strike because there were no steaks in the canteen - so many petty things. It was ridiculous, but at the time it was important to everyone. You had to go along with it."  
Stuart Green CUB OH 1 Side B - 595

Len Hanbridge was a Foreman at the time of the 'steak' dispute and recalled the incident from a middle management perspective. At that time he thought that the Company was willing to comply with workers demands to keep production going.

"One night they rang me up and there were no steaks in the canteen. So they demanded that unless there were steaks in the canteen within the next hour they were going out. This is 12 or 1 on a Sunday night – eventually we found some steaks in a canteen at Matrville and they sent them over in a taxi."  
Len Hanbridge CUB OH 11 Side A – 1529

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One of the big issues of the early 1980s, during the period of corporate takeovers and technological change, was that of redundancies. There was considerable job insecurity and the Unions felt it necessary to fight hard to retain the conditions and wages they had under Tooth and Co.

“The unions got a lot of conditions out of Carlton that they wouldn’t have gotten anywhere else. Carlton must have been very vulnerable buying into the NSW market and all they had was a brewery. Carlton could have done anything when they first took over and missed an opportunity to make the place viable. We were used to the Unions barging in and swearing and we could say ‘come on fellas’ – but Carlton weren’t used to it – It used to get them on the back foot all the time...this was right up until the 1990s – Carlton just didn’t know how to handle them. Carlton paid for things just to have a smooth transition.”

John Barrowman CUB OH V12 20.09

In 1980, when Jo Palmada started working for Kent Brewery, there was no unified forum for discussion between workers and management at the brewery. In addition, Jo saw that there was very little unity between workers and Unions.

“There were dog fights all the time about demarcation. You don’t see much explanation about demarcation...it just appears as if the ironworkers are at loggerheads with the Boilermakers or the Fitters with the Electricians. But what it’s all about fundamentally is workers seeking to preserve their area of work so they have a measure of security in their future....if you can give them a measure of security in their minds then you are 90% along the way to getting rid of all the silly demarcation disputes....there was a lot of friction among the workers. I pondered all this and thought if I am going to be any use in this place I need to get some unity here. The first step was to get all the trades people together...and we drew up a Shop Committee constitution. The constitution was designed to have democracy at the shop floor level...it was designed to establish a mechanism to channel views within a complex organisation.”

Jo Palmada CUB OH V3 – 30.24

The Shop Committee included a representative of every Union on site. These people took issues to the work floor for members to discuss and came back to the Committee with feedback to vote on resolutions. The resolutions were then put to management. Jo Palmada was the first Site Convener to steer the Shop Committee.

Establishing a Shop Committee and having it recognised by all the Unions and management was no easy task. Eventually, management saw that it was easier to negotiate with a single entity, a Shop Committee, rather than dealing with each Union separately, as had been the case in the past. Similarly, even the Liquor Trades Union and the Federated Clerks Union, who initially refused to let members affiliate, saw the advantages of a united body.

While its effects were not immediate, the Shop Committee did go a long way towards leveling the confrontational and often explosive landscape of industrial action at the

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brewery. By 1985, the Shop Committee was functioning well and representing all Unions on site at two hourly weekly committee meetings and a two hour once a month meeting of site members.

“ We eventually got some people into the Unions who were clever people – Jo Palmada was probably the best one, Jo was a very clever man... to me he was a sit down and think man - nothing ruffled him. When something came up everybody would jump up and down bit Jo would just stand there take it in and then sit down and nut it out. He'd come back and say, 'Right this is what you're doing this is what you want, this is where we are.' He wouldn't loose anything for you but do anything stupid either, if he thought you'd got no chance he'd tell you.”

Austin Sellars CUB OH 23 Side B – 642 & 780

Jo was also integral in putting together a succinct log of claims to the annual Industrial Commission award hearing. He was involved in the thirty five hour a week campaign and the brewery was one of the first places to win this important condition. He was also involved in the move to the twelve hour shifts. One of the issues that he felt strongly about was that of alcoholism at the brewery. Even though the brewery was a 'dry' workplace by 1981, it was obvious that many drinkers still had a problem and if they were found drinking on site, they were meant to be sacked. The Union insisted that rather than a policy of sacking people, the Company should assist employees to seek treatment.

By the early 1990s, the industry award restructuring, instigated by the Industrial Relations Commission was being implemented at Kent Brewery through the Leading by Learning Program. The aim of the program was to draw up a new Enterprise Development Agreement that tied ongoing productivity to wages and provided a model for effective grievance procedures. This was the beginning of the development of team based work practices that crossed traditional union demarcations. It revolutionised the way work was done and how management and workers related. At this time Derrick O'Brien, the first full time paid Site Convener at Kent Brewery took over from Jo Palmada when he retired in 1990.

“The Unions were very wary of the change proposals [Leading By Learning]. I gave a presentation to the Labor Council...they gave me approval but said that I better make sure that it didn't go wrong. Derrick O'Brien was the Convener of the Shop Committee...he was a militant person...but he supported me. Bob Adams came on next... Union leadership was central to the change process.”

Bill Ford CUB OH 27 Side A – 876

Peter Sams was an Industrial Officer with the Labor Council at the time of these changes. The effect of the change program is reflected in Peter Sams' recollections.

“The CUB operation was used a model in [the 1991-2] wage case. I actually took the [Industrial] court to the brewery. There was an inspection of the brewery's operations but more particularly, a recognition of the change that had occurred at an industrial level to continually improve efficiency and productivity through what was known then

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as a development agreement. It was mentioned in the 1992 State Wage Case as a classic example of how you can achieve efficiency and productivity improvements with cooperation with the workforce. Who would have thought that the most militant workplace would end up being a model for the capacity to negotiate and cooperate between managers and employees.”

Peter Sams CUB OH 20 Side A – 642

#### **12.2 The Leading By Learning Program**

##### **12.2.1 The Learning Centre**

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, even though industrial relations at Kent Brewery had improved, traditional demarcation and work practice and custom were still hampering efficiency and productivity at the brewery. To address this CUB embarked upon a huge program of workplace reform and restructure, beginning in the early 1990s.

“At this time morale was low, it was the wrong sort of culture for entering the 1990s, industrial conflict was rampant – all the sorts of things you wouldn’t want in production were there – it was overtime driven culture, there was a lot of featherbedding which was that there were more people there than needed to do the job - to change a pump you could only do it on a weekend and quite often given all the sorts of demarcation, you would need up to seventeen people to change the pump.”

Bill Ford CUB OH 27 Side A - 260

It was recognised from early on that teamwork facilitated learning and produced a more efficient and cost effective workforce.

“We realized early on that if we wanted to secure the future for this site we not only needed to downsize – blind Freddy could see that – we had 700 people here producing 3 million hectolitres of beer – we’ve got to downsize and team work is a way to do that ... but that is just a one off improvement. So Bill Ford with his Leading by Learning showed that if everybody sees learning as a natural part of their work they learn and they think about how they can transfer that learning to something else or what process can I improve using what I’ve learned here. If this happens we’ve got sustainable improvement – that process happens faster in teams.”

David Grant CUB OH 30A Side A - 600

In order to turn around the existing work culture and facilitate this new philosophy, a Learning Centre was established. This was a place where workers could meet together and with management in formal and informal forums. It was here that the numerous Committees created to design and implement workplace reform met and also where a large program of learning was instituted. Literacy and communication were seen as central skills to be developed through the Centre’s programs.

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To guide the change program a Leading by Learning Steering Committee was established. Mike Miles GM, Derrick O'Brien Convener of the Shop Committee at Kent Brewery, Mike Christopheson, Head Brewer, Mel Miles and Geoff Sloane, Brewing Administration Manager, joined Professor Bill Ford, a consultant who mentored the process, on this committee. This Steering Committee oversaw the work of several other committees charged with the design and implementation of workplace reform.

The Work Organisation Team included representatives from all areas including management, workforce and Unions and dealt with any decision relating to workplace reform. Management and the Union Shop Committee continued to meet separately but the adversarial atmosphere of earlier shop committee meetings was not replicated as all representatives had a role in making decisions about their work place.

Smaller TOPICS teams, comprising volunteers from all aspects of the workplace, looked after the practicalities of how workplace reform was to be implemented. These teams dealt with reform issues relating to Technology, Organisation, People, Information, Customers and Skills.

One of the first tasks of the TOPICS teams was to address the adversarial division between different sections of the production workforce. These divisions were highlighted by the uniform codes in place at the time.

“When I first walked into Kent Brewery I can recall a lot of people standing around in uniforms – the shop floor guys wore uniforms and different coloured ones depending on which Department they worked in – maintenance wore green, the Liquor Trades wore brown, the Foremen all wore blue, Security wore blue and lab workers or QC wore white coats – there were clear demarcations and Management wore their jacket and ties.”

David Grant CUB OH 29A Side A - 1307

The TOPICS teams came together to design a new logo and uniform for all CUB production personnel and management.

#### **12.2.2 Implementing the Team Structure**

The Work Organisation Team included David Grant, Mike Brooks, Linc Tiley, Stuart Richmond and others and was charged with investigating the workplace and the organisation of teams.

The Change Manual produced by the Organisation team, nominated the work teams that were organized around discrete parts of the operations of the brewery. They laid out the responsibilities of each team. Each work team was to act as a quasi-small business within the company's value system and guidelines. The team looked after all aspects of production in its area; receiving materials, processing the materials, dealing with waste products and sending the area's product onto the next area. The

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team was responsible for doing this on time, cost effectively, to a certain quality and in a safe manner.

John McNally was put in charge of trialing the first work team at Kent Brewery in Racking in 1993.

“It was a fantastic innovation – the whole idea of cultural change and Leading by Learning...was absolutely necessary to make this brewery viable. We talked about securing the future... the brewery’s viability was very low at the time...In fact it was close to the company closing the brewery at that stage I think... To see a program like that come in and be adopted was very exciting and I was proud to be part of it... I was very fortunate to work in the Racking area at that time ... there was a lot of resistance... people had become stuck in their ways ... but I had a good core group of people – operators and maintenance people who wanted to get on with it...There were robust discussions along the way...80% of my time at this stage was spent on people issues – demarcation issues.... Some people really grasped the idea and saw it as the future. And the results spoke for themselves – particularly in Racking where productivity went from around 55% to 80% or even better in a 3 or 4 year period.”

John McNally CUB OH 25 Side B 620

With the successful establishment of the Racking team, CUB moved to establish the Site Services Team and the Packaging Teams, Brewing Team, Filtration Team and Production Support Team. In March 1995, CUB officially announced that the Brewery was moving to a teamwork structure.

By this stage a decision had also been taken to devolve the role of Foreman and to place each team under the direction of a Team Manager. From 1993 onwards, there was an emphasis on workers becoming multiskilled within the work teams. This was facilitated by courses run in the learning centre as well as a move to ensure that new employees had a cross section of skills.

Stuart Green indicated that the implementation of a teamwork structure at the brewery was not accepted at face value.

“Around 1992 divided workforce into small work teams – depending on where you stand in the company, but from a management point of view it was in line with management theories coming from the USA – from employees point of view it seemed like a divide and conquer thing. Divide men up in smaller groups, take away some of their strength and encourage cross over of work. That probably made it easier to make people redundant as there weren’t so strong demarcation lines.”

Stuart Green CUB OH 1 Side B - 750

Despite some skepticism about workplace change, it was generally accepted by all those employed in management, production and administrative roles that the brewery would not survive unless there was some sort of change in productivity. Eventually the team structure came to be seen as the way forward as David Grant commented.

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“[The change to teams] gave people control over their work and as you would know if you can’t control what you are doing it is a very demotivating and demoralizing way to work. It was a huge cultural change in that way and the reaped the benefits of the that because instead of having a workforce which left their brains at the gate ... you now had people thinking about what they were doing and wanting to improve the way the place operated because they could see benefits to themselves in that – not just hip pocket benefits but they got satisfaction out of being involved in that sort of thing...Then on the productivity side of it...we reduced the number of employees on the site significantly – from roughly 700 in 1991 to just prior to shutting the can line we were down to about 310 employees.”

David Grant CUB OH 30A Side B - 1033

Regardless of all the upgrading, changes made to work practice relations and improvements in productivity, Kent Brewery remained the highest cost producer of beer in the CUB group.

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#### **13.0 The End of an Era at Kent Brewery**

On Monday 14 April 2003, Mike Brooks, the Vice President of Operations announced to a mass meeting of Kent Brewery workers in the old Museum, that the brewery was to close.

Mike, who had traveled from Melbourne to deliver the news, revealed to workers the findings of the Supply Chain Review and the subsequent decision by the CUB Board to close the brewery and relocate a large part of its operations to Yatala in Queensland. The Brewery operations would be closed down in stages over two years, finally closing the door to this side of the business at Kent Brewery in February 2005.

The announcement of the closure of Kent Brewery was met with a stunned quiet.

“We got called to a mass meeting in the Museum and Michael Brooks, when he first started talking – how can I describe him – he’s a very strong personality, a very smart man – the nervousness in his voice I’d never heard it before – I thought, ‘this isn’t good’ – he was our plant Engineer for a while and then our GM – he knows me by first name basis – he went through a power point demonstration and told us why...I think a lot knew – they can’t have this place so close to the city forever, but you just wish it would go on – everyone was dumb founded –sadness that many have put so many years in the to brewery and it was all to end...within four weeks forty men had to go – that wasn’t very nice.”

Gary Prior CUB OH 15 Side B - 1439

“I was stunned, I wasn’t expecting it – I thought something would happen, but not a total closure. They stopped production and were all called to a meeting in the old Museum to be addressed by VP – when he announced it there was a stunned silence – VP’s voice – we could hear it in his voice it wasn’t what he wanted to do. I always thought that we would be downsized again – shocked – I think the fact that we had fifteen to eighteen months to get to that point helped – I remember coming out of the meeting with three or four guys and we walked back not saying anything and made a cup of tea – and one block said ‘gee we’re closing’.”

John Barrowman CUB OH V12 – 30.04

David Grant, who is General Manager of Production, was only made aware of the closure the weekend before the Monday announcement. He pointed out that over the past decade the Company had made great efforts to inform employees as to how the Company was faring in the marketplace. Most were aware that productivity and efficiency of the plant were not in good shape and that it was increasingly more difficult to run a large business in the CBD.

After the announcement, the challenge for David was to keep staff moral up despite the need for a staged devolution of the workforce through redundancies.

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“We have continued to treat everybody with dignity and respect...We have deliberately in all communications and messages made it quite clear that the only reason we are shutting down now and not [earlier] is because all the fantastic work that everybody has done in changing the way we operate – reducing numbers increasing productivity and living the Leading by Learning objectives for that period of time.” David Grant CUB OH 31 Side A – 1382

The practicalities of decommissioning the plant while still keeping up beer production are quite a challenge in itself.

“Decommissioning the brewery has been a bit of a challenge...when the announcement of closure occurred I had to plan the staged closing down. A project team was put together and I had to reshuffle some of my Department around to keep enough people around to run the plant – because the biggest challenge was to keep making beer while you were decommissioning plant. We did a lot of preplanning ... there were difficulties we had to remove a certain number of vessels - 62 all up....There are quite a lot of vessels left but we are down to the bare bones of what we need to produce 30,000 hectolitres of beer per week... The biggest challenge has been to keep my team motivated and happy ... It's difficult because they face losing their jobs.”

Mike Stoneman CUB OH 21 Side A – 1375

At the end of the project, 1.5 million hectoliters of production capacity will be moved from Kent Brewery to Yatala Brewery in Queensland. Two of Australia's largest mobile cranes will hoist 28 huge bright beer vessels and 28 fermentation vessels out from where they have stood for over twenty years. As they are too large to travel by road, they will be transported to Walsh Bay, lowered onto barges and towed to Queensland. By September 2004, B3 Bottling line will be operational at Yatala.

To assist in the closure process, Management worked with Unions to develop a redundancy strategy.

“There has been a staged reduction in the workforce since April 2003 when CUB management determined that CUB were going to close Kent Brewery. At the end of May 2003, there were 40 redundancies both voluntary and involuntary and in January 2004, there were another 60. The arrangement is that the rest of the employees to stay on until the end of January 2005...[Since Linc started at Kent Brewery] all the redundancies have been voluntary up until the round in 2003 when it was clear that the brewery was closing.”

Linc Tiley CUB OH 19 – 1058

Bill Ford, who will continue his work on the Leading By Learning Program at CUB until the closure of plant, commented on the focus of his work.

“We want to making it the best plant closure ever seen...We needed to make the process by which redundancies occurred transparent...they occurred in line with the closure of particular parts of the plant...we called for voluntary redundancies and

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then the forced redundancies needed to be transparent. David Grant hosts dinners for workers and spouses to farewell the people being made redundant...this keeps moral high.”

Bill Ford CUB OH 28 Side A - 41

The development of a Transitional Learning Centre and its programs was another focus of work for management and unions. Employees have been able to participate in retraining programs and gain assistance in finding future work through operating at the Centre over the last 18 months. Those who have participated learn how to apply for jobs, how to write a curriculum vitae and perfect their interview techniques. Small business courses and financial counseling and retirement preparation courses are also held at the Learning Centre.

While accepting the inevitability of the closure, and taking full advantage of the retraining provided by CUB, there is a sense of sadness among employees at the closure of such an historic site. As John Murray reflected.

“I’m sad – I’ll probably shed a tear when I go. But I’m retiring age. I feel for the younger guys...it’ll be a sad day when the brewery closes – over 150 years of work in the city – the last big industry in the city.”

John Murray CUB OH V6– 5.50

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### **14.0 Conclusion**

Kent Brewery has a long and rich history. Its history tells the story of a determined and successful corporate past and also the broader story of the Brewing Industry in Australia.

Over Kent Brewery's 170 year history, it has survived World Wars, Depressions, changing marketplaces and technological changes, as well as corporate takeovers.

The oral history and other research for this Project provides an insight into the brewing industry and process, as well as the culture that was alive at the brewery. The interviews articulate the social historical uses of the site and give context to the personalised experience of workers at the brewery.

The Report and research materials gives an insight into what it was like for many young men and women to work and 'grow up' at Kent Brewery. It tells the story of an incredibly dedicated work force that has a sense of pride in the history of the brewery and a strong sense of attachment to the site and the companies which have managed the brewery over the years.

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**APPENDIX A**

**Poem by Stuart Green**

**“Ode to Kent”**

# ODE TO KENT

Long before Ned Kelly strained the rope at Melbourne Gaol  
and well before the steamship took the place of square rigged sail  
An enterprising gentleman arrived on Sydney's shores  
and as he wandered through the streets, past ironed men and whores  
He chose a place to hang his shingle up for all to see  
*"JOHN TOOTH, GENERAL MERCHANT & COMMISSION AGENCY"*.

His business prospered quickly and quite soon his fortune made  
especially when he dabbled in the wine and spirits trade.  
His bank account was fattened as each bottle left the shelf,  
but deep within he had a dream to brew some beer himself.  
So Tooth took on a Brewer who could help him make his beer.  
He chose his site and bought the land in Chippendale that year.  
Blackwattle Creek flowed through the block, right past the Brewhouse door.  
The scene was set, the plant was built, it was 1834.

So when the product went on sale in October the following year  
the public lined Parramatta Street to sample Kent Brewery's beer.  
The porter sold out very quickly and so did the three strengths of ales  
and Newnham and Tooth established their beers as the finest in N.S.W.  
But financial affairs in the Colony were not very healthy at all  
and six Sydney breweries in less than five years would eventually go to the wall  
but Kent Brewery was the survivor, the Invicta trade mark was well known,  
when Newnham and Tooth went their own separate ways with rural pursuits of their own.  
Three nephews would soon run the Brewery as the nation's first gold had been won  
and the Colony's men headed west with their pans, it was 1851.

So Robert, Frederick and Edwin Tooth were the Managing Partners at Kent  
when a fire broke out in 1853 almost razing the establishment  
The malt kilns were lost in the morning and the rollers and engines at night,  
with the damage assessed to be 5,000 pounds the future was not looking bright.  
Without looking back for a moment, the Tooth brothers chose to rebuild.  
With the new brewery running in less than two months they soon had the back orders filled  
The Brewery continued to prosper as the gold rush continued out west  
and the bales of wool were shipped back to "the Dart" where Merino was deemed to be best  
With Kent's value nearing a million pounds, they offered the company in shares  
380,000 for the public, the rest were retained by Tooth's heirs.  
The partners decided that this was the way of making a big company great  
So Tooth and Co. then became Tooth and Co. Ltd. in June of 1888.

At the turn of the twentieth century, when money was generally scant,  
a decision was made in the board room at Kent to double the size of the plant.  
The result was the Irving Street Brewery as well as the Carlton Street Store,  
the buildings were not long completed when the nation was dragged off to war.  
but in typical Tooth and Co. fashion, they supported men's choice to enlist  
and committed to pay, whilst the men were away, the Brewery wages they missed.  
When the Great War was finally over and the men drifted back to our shores  
there was no unemployment for those who'd left Kent, as the Brewery held open it's doors.  
but sadly for twenty-eight families, there were some who would never return  
in respect of these losses, with consent of the bosses, a payment was made by the firm.

The company kept on expanding, it seemed everyone wanted Tooth's brews and the prospects of growing were certainly showing, when a new style of beer hit the news. It was brewed by a different process, and amber in colour and clear  
It was brewed, then fermented, then cellared for months and described as a Lager style beer. It's release was extremely successful and found favour with women and men and with company profits surpassing their dreams, it was time for expansion again. So Tooth's purchased Waverley Brewery to supplement produce from Kent, as demand for their products continued to grow, it would prove to be money well spent. In the midst of the great depression it was seen to be brave at the time. But now Tooth's owned Resch's - "**The beer that refreshes**" it was 1929.

The thirties and forties were difficult years and the world went to war once again and just as before, when the world went to war, the Brewery would lose some good men. As well as producing the beer for our troops, from the Company's kettles and tuns, the machine shops would have extra duties, in machining the barrels of guns  
The produce from Kent was heavily sought, as our soldiers had tastes most specific, so they sent off abroad, all the plant could afford, to the Middle East and the Pacific.

The plants were at capacity at Resch's and at Kent as Tooth and Company's market share had topped eighty percent. In 1956 the Brewery's beer first flowed in clubs and Tooth's could boast the ownership of seven hundred pubs. The clubs proved very popular and drinking trends were shifting  
The Tooheys brewery realised this and found their profits lifting.

Tooth's had failed to gauge the impact clubs would have on sales, which compromised the market share enjoyed in New South Wales. The "Old Boys Club" of management at Kent were slow to act, while Toohey's bought machinery and changed how beer was packed. They also relocated to a new plant out of town which caught the "old boys" back at Kent with all their trousers down. The challenge by Toohey's for market share was aggressive and blatantly clear, yet the bosses on Broadway continued their business as if they had nothing to fear.

In the early seventies accountants made it clear, that management would have to change the way Tooth's made their beer. Embarking on a programme to replace the plant at Kent, a Brewhouse and Fermenter block saw many millions spent. They then rebuilt Filtration with a plant to treat the water and knocked down K.B. tower for the racking lanes on order. The older buildings on the site were levelled with the land and in their place a bottling hall and canning floor would stand. The demolition finished and construction all but done  
The plant was near completion, it was 1981.

So after the refurbishment the plant was looking great, but really all the work they'd done was twenty years too late. Their modern, hi-tech brewery was worth more than they'd spent but tragically their market share was forty-seven percent. Failed merger talks with Hooker left the Company in doubt  
And in June of 1981 Adsteam would buy Tooth's out. In a statement to the media Adsteam made their intentions clear  
They might be experts in business, but they had little knowledge of beer. So the mark of Invicta was still on the label and the contents within were the same  
It was business as usual, just as before  
Brewing beer under Tooth & Co.'s name

In 1982 the papers had a tale to tell,  
The Courage plant which Tooth's had bought  
they now had plans to sell  
Despite four years of trying,  
since they'd purchased the Brewery down South  
They couldn't convince the Victorian folk  
to put N.S.W. beer in their mouth  
So C.U.B. took the Brewery  
from the Adsteam Company's hands  
but sadly for Kent and the N.S.W. drinkers  
this was not the extent of their plans.

So Tooth and Company's market push to sell beer interstate  
had failed to have much impact but had somehow sealed their fate  
The boardroom down in Melbourne had decided the motion be put  
Now they would push into N.S.W. with the boot on the other foot  
C.U.B. were playing hard, buying millions of Tooth and Co. shares  
and by August of 1983 the modern Kent Brewery was theirs.

In every yard and passageway, no matter where you went  
there'd be a group of workers, discussing the future of Kent.  
It wasn't long before the Carlton bosses came to town  
to firmly squash the rumours that we might be closing down.  
In meetings with their employees they stated their intent  
They wanted growth of market share to come through owning Kent.  
Not only had they bought a modern plant to brew their ales,  
They now could market 'Melbourne beer' as 'brewed in N.S.W.'.

The loyal local drinkers would resist the change at first  
they only wanted Tooth's or Resch's beer to quench their thirst  
but over time they dropped their guard and Carlton got their share  
and where a Resch's tap once was a Foster's tap was there  
It wasn't lack of loyalty that saw them lose the fight  
but more the fact that their favourite beers no longer tasted right  
Carlton's new expansion plans were soon to be unfurled  
They'd purchase breweries overseas to 'Fosterise' the world.

Throughout the early nineties it seemed all was going as planned  
but Foster's sales were falling and VB was in demand  
It didn't matter very much how a drinker's money was spent  
provided that the beer they drank was one produced at Kent  
The other change in drinking trends was how the beer was packed,  
the sales of beer in cans were down and beer in glass was back.  
In light of this it seemed absurd when we heard of the Company's planning  
despite the demand for bottled beer they replaced the machinery in Canning.

You can't become an expert in big business overnight  
but when you've been here long enough you know when things aren't right  
Repeatedly they told us that Kent's produce was too dear  
and that the breweries interstate were making cheaper beer  
But when we got our costing down and got the plant on track  
we got congratulations but no brewing volume back.  
Again we heard the rumours that our future was in doubt  
Their billions spent on U.S. wine just wasn't working out  
In order to repay the debt of money poorly spent  
the rumour was they'd cash in on the land value of Kent.

The Company finally showed their cards in August 2002  
declaring they would spend six months deciding what to do  
By now most employees could see the writing on the wall,  
The only news we waited for was when the axe would fall.  
And when the big announcement of Kent's closure came to be  
they didn't have the decency to tell us personally  
Instead they let the newspapers release their plans in print  
By February 2005 no beer would flow from Kent.

So all so very sadly as this poem draws to a close  
so does a Sydney landmark almost everybody knows.  
Shortly after all the amber nectar's squeezed from Kent  
developers will capitalise on money they have spent.  
No longer shall you sense the smell of sweet wort on the boil  
or ponder what's inside Kent's walls or how the workers toil.

My memories of life at Kent are vivid, treasured ones  
of brewing smells, fermenters, boiling kettles and mash tuns  
of happy, smiling faces, lots of laughter, lots of jokes  
of rotund, ruddy brewery workers, - all of them good blokes.  
Of tradesmen who were craftsmen, who maintained a plant so old,  
the heat inside the maltings and the cellars oh so cold  
The stairways, lifts and passageways, the pipes the pumps and such  
my union and my delegates, to whom I owe so much.  
The Foremen and the Leading Hands who'd give your work to you  
and honey pots we'd stop at when there wasn't much to do.  
Of copperwork and stainless steel and bronze and brass that shone.  
The steam leaks, pressure gauges and coal boilers long since gone.  
The countless migrant liquor trades who'd come from overseas,  
I'd never known such accents, drawls and languages as these.  
The dreaded initiations, to be hosed, or greased, or floured,  
"You'll be O.K. son, grab your things, get upstairs and showered".  
In years to come I'll reminisce of memories such as those  
and mourn the day I heard them say that Kent Brewery would close.

To all my fellow workmates, I bid you all adieu,  
May you have success and happiness in everything you do  
I hope with time and planning you'll achieve your dreams and goals.  
To Management, who closed our plant, - may the devil be kind to your souls!

KENT BREWERY 1835 - 2005

The bitter end!

Bags.