

THE BREW 'US BUGLE & BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE HERALD

BRINGING OUR PAST UPTO DATE Issue 58 January 2024

LADYWOOD
HISTORY
GROUP



Remembering chocolate and cake maker Christian Kunzle: THE MAN WHO HAD A CHATEAU WITH A GATEAU



Kunzle's factory on the immediate left looking towards Five Ways in 1957. Now the site off Park Regis Hotel.

This month sees the 70th anniversary of the death of a man who held a place in the heart and minds of many Brummies, both children and adults alike, for he ran the highly successful Kunzle chocolate empire from a large factory on Broad Street at Five Ways, and enabled children from his adopted city to go to his chateau, in his home town at Davos in Switzerland, where it was hoped the fresh air would alleviate the breathing problems associated with inner city living in Birmingham. For his business acumen and philanthropic nature, the man who had a chateau with a gateau, deserves recognition.

Use the QR code for a story on our website about Kunzle. It was filmed a few years ago in Switzerland.



Kunzle moved to England as a teenager and eventually joined his uncle as a pastrycook in Oxford, before progressing to the kitchens of the House of Commons where he earned seven shillings a week. It said he acquired the art of making creamy rice puddings which became the favourite dish of the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury. It is not known why Kunzle wanted to move to Birmingham, but many people were to become glad he did. He was once quoted as saying that he was warned against moving to Brum as 'rates and taxes are so high.' He replied: 'If people can afford to pay such high taxes, they can afford to buy fancy cakes.'

Kunzle subsequently opened a small bake house at Snow Hill and a shop in the Midland Arcade, later expanding to Five Ways. By the 1920s Kunzle was attracting praise for the quality of his chocolate and for the way they were advertised and packed in attractive boxes and wrappings.

To go with this the company produced elaborate magazine adverts. Not for nothing was his advertising slogan:

'Kunzle Quality is Your Guarantee.'

HELLO AND WELCOME ...

Welcome issue 58 and the first issue of 2024 so Happy New Year and happy new format from us! This is the first of a new monthly four page issue of The Brew Us Bugle which will enable us to be more topical and update as we celebrate the rich history of Ladywood, and Birmingham in general, through the pages of this publication.

Sadly, our postal base, and home of our extensive memorabilia and photo collection, is out of bounds at the moment as the city council continues to be unable or unwilling to repair the heating system at Spring Hill Library which has now been closed for a year.

You can meet us to share your Ladywood memories at the excellent 'The Prince of Wales' pub behind Symphony Hall. We hold fortnightly fund raising quizzes there. The next quiz is Tuesday 30 January 2024. 7.30pm. See you there.

Best wishes for a peaceful and successful 2024!

Albert Trapp Ladywood History Group chairman
Norman Bartlam Brew 'Us Bugle editor

Ways to contact us:

email: brewusbugle@hotmail.co.uk

twitter: @ladywoodnorm

website: www.tntnews.co.uk

Drop off letters/memorabilia etc anytime at The Prince of Wales pub, Cambridge Street.

THE WAY WE WERE January 1904

The Jewellery Quarter clock on a postcard produced to commemorate its unveiling by Mrs Chamberlain 120 years ago.

It is a memorial to Joseph Chamberlain, although unusually for a memorial, Joe was still alive at the time of the unveiling.



The Steam Clock
Morville St at
Sherborne St



January 1954

MONUMENT TO THE MAN WHO LIKED TO LET OFF STEAM!

The much rebuilt Steam Clock pub on Morville Street was an engineering marvel. Its original proprietor John Inshaw created numerous pieces of steam powered machinery which helped revolutionise transport on roads and canals. One his engines amazed onlookers as canal tugs moved at a speed never seen before and his motor vehicle, powered by one his steam creations, was banned from the roads as it was capable of travelling at 12 mph, that was faster than the man with a red flag who had to walk in front of it!

Amongst his inventions was a steam powered clock which was prominently displayed on the front of his Ladywood pub.

Very few steam powered clocks exist today, probably the best example is in Vancouver, Canada.

LADYWOOD THEN & NOW THE STEAM CLOCK PUB



www.tntnews.co.uk: LOCAL NEWS & LOCAL HISTORY



Checkout our website for local history news. The QR code links directly to our latest story about the centenary of the world famous Pie Factory in Tipton.

'The website has links to **The Throstle Club**, a new series, on Black Country Radio/extra featuring stories about the long and illustrious history of West Bromwich Albion. The Throstle Club is also available via many podcast providers.

Previous issues of **The Brew 'Us Bugle** are being added to the website so check it out frequently!



Kunzle story continued ...



Christian Kunzle developed a keen interest in the well-being of his workforce most of whom were locally based in inner city Birmingham. Through his work at the nearby Children's Hospital, where he was on the board of governors, he saw the problems that inner city living caused. He decided to open his Swiss chateau to sick children, hoping that the fresh air would help to cure or at least alleviate the problems of asthma and bronchitis. In May 1932, eighteen boys, twelve girls and some adults left Snow Hill station on the adventure of a lifetime. Their destination was Davos, Switzerland, the home of Christian Kunzle. For the next 20 years or so the chateau was the playground for inner city children from Birmingham, many coughing and wheezing as they arrived, happy and skipping as they went home.

The name Kunzle lives on in a commemorative plaque, which was unveiled by the Birmingham Civic Society in March 2000. The Swiss ambassador to the UK was present when it was unveiled on the site of the Five Ways Factory. Remarkably, and by sheer coincidence, the man who screwed the plaque to the wall, Peter Judd, was a recipient of Kunzle's kindness and had been on recuperation as child at Davos! He showed me a photo of him, and his group of fellow attendees being greeted by Christian Kunzle at Snow Hill Station after returning from a three-month convalescence.

Shamelessly, the plaque was covered up when the site was redeveloped to become the Park Regis Hotel but was rescued and placed in store with the intention of getting it replaced. That process should have been a piece of cake but repeated attempts, by this author, and the Birmingham Civic Society, has resulted in the significant anniversary of the death of Kunzle being missed, the plaque will be returned at a date to be confirmed. But, cough, cough, don't hold your breath!



This Month in Our History: January

1 January 1994: Ladywood resident Winnie Horton, 75, was awarded an MBE for her 40 years service in voluntary work with the WRVS, the Women's Royal Voluntary Service, in John Major's first 'classless' honours list.

3 January 1966 An angry caretaker said: 'children are making one of the city's latest housing estates a slum', so said the local press. Edward Gear, who was responsible for Charlecote Tower, Cregoe Street was quoted as saying: 'children break light fittings, smash windows, damage trees, spoil lawns with bicycles, carve on walls and wreck cars'. A housing department spokesman said: 'we usually get more vandalism near the city centre because the public passes through it more'.

3 January 1969 Birth of Frankie Bennett, former Ladywood School football star, who joined Halesowen Town before joining Southampton in February 1993 for a fee of £7,500. He played 19 times, mainly as a substitute, before joining Shrewsbury Town on loan in October 1996 and then moved to Bristol Rovers.

3 January 1976 'The band and choir gave a concert to the public at the open day at the National Exhibition Centre. They presented a very smart and efficient turnout in school uniform'. Barford Primary School logbook

5 January 1872 Death of Joseph Gillott, 73, a well-known pen maker. His nibs traded from a huge factory at Graham Street in the Jewellery Quarter that still stands today. He married the sister of John and William Mitchell, who were at the time equally well known makers of pens. Gillott's son and later grandson, also called Joseph, died a millionaire in 1907. The business became part of British Pens in 1969.

5 January 1981 'Demolition of Annexe (Follett Osler) commences'. Ladywood School logbook

6 January 1873 Sampson Gamgee raised the suggestion that 'everyone should work overtime for the hospitals on a particular annual Saturday afternoon, to be called "Hospital Saturday"'. This new scheme called the Birmingham Hospital Saturday Fund was inaugurated on 15 March 1873 with John Skirrow Wright as Chairman and Sampson Gamgee as Honorary Secretary, and was the first British scheme for raising money for all voluntary hospitals in an area. By 1879 the collection had dwindled and it was decided to replace it with a fixed weekly contribution of 1d.

6 January 1967 Final approval was given for the Sentinels scheme at Holloway Head, at a cost of just under £2 million. The architects said they believed tall flats had a big future in Britain's cities.

6 January 1989 Greenall Whitley announced that Davenport's brewery building on Bath Row, was to close with production moving to Nottingham.

8 January 1963 The City Corporation agrees to agree to provide the site for a new Repertory Theatre in the Civic Centre.

8 January 1991 Building work got underway on new residential properties between Ledsam Street, Great Tindal Street and Browning Street, on a site once occupied by Hereford House, Blythe House and Ploughfield House. 60 flats and 23 houses were eventually built.

9 January 1967 The Turf pub closed at Spring Hill to make way for the improved traffic junction.

12 January 1881 A helper in the menagerie at Sanger's Exhibition at Bingley Hall was attacked and seriously injured by a lion, whilst he was cleaning out his den.

14 January 1961 Closure of the Crown Cinema. The Last film was called 'The Angry Red Planet'.

14 January 2010 Sudden death of Ralph Hickman owner of the long established Hickman greengrocery of Ladywood.

19 January 1978 'Severe snowstorm. Bus strike. School closes at 3.00pm'. Ladywood School logbook

22 January 1974 'Judy the rabbit was put to sleep by the vet today. She died of old age'. Barford Primary School logbook

27 January 1966 Death of Edith Pitt MP for Edgbaston since 1953 during which time she was Parliamentary Secretary for the Minister for Pensions 1955-1959 and Parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Health 1959-1962. Jill Knight succeeded her.



The Turf pub, left, with Spring Hill Library on the right during roadworks