

Kia ora, gday and welcome to the History of Aotearoa New Zealand. Episode 90 – Speights: Like a Zip. This podcast is supported by our amazing Patrons. If you want to support HANZ go to patreon.com/historyaotearoa. Last time, we went over the first few major gains made by the prohibition movement in their effort to rid at least parts of the country from alcohol and how the brewing industry responded to them. We also talked about some big changes at Speight's, from getting new equipment and staff to becoming an LLC. Today we will continue to see the prohibitionists gain more ground and see how the outbreak of WWI affected the brewery, both of which led to a key decision that changed the course of Kiwi brewing. But first, let's talk money.

An interesting little tidbit that may interest you what the workers at the brewery were earning in comparison to their bosses. Around this time, Speight's shares were paying out a dividend of 30%, giving Greenslade and Dawson an annual income of about 7,500 pounds each, potentially more than \$1 million in today money, which of course doesn't include any of their other business interests or their salary. This could have been around 2,500 pounds or about \$500,000 today, which is what one director was earning a couple of decades later in 1929. We also know the figures of what other workers earned that year too, such as the head brewer got 1,500 pounds, \$165,000 and Hugh Adam as secretary, accountant and director got 1,296 pounds, \$142,000. Brewers, travellers and clerks tended to be on the upper tiers of payment, between 240-480 pounds, that is \$26,000 to \$52,000. Apprentice brewers were earning much less than that, Charles Greenslade's grandchildren earning around 96 pounds or \$10,000. To compare this to what the workers who were doing the hard graft were getting, such as coopers, cellarman, carpenters, maltsters, caskwashers and the foreman for each of those areas, they made about a shilling an hour. If we assume they got paid for 45 hours a week, which excludes unpaid hours that they quite possibly have worked, that comes to about 117 pounds a year or \$21,500, and that's a generous estimate, others have it closer to being 100 pounds, or \$18,000. The salary of an average worker that I just gave comes from 1907 but we have the numbers for what these workers were being paid in 1929 as well and it's roughly the same. Which means over two decades these workers didn't get a pay rise and with how inflation works, that means they got a pay cut. For reference, all of these numbers are annual salary. Something else to keep in mind is that those guys were doing a lot more manual and back breaking labour than their bosses were and earning a shitload less money. To say that the founders were earning off the backs of their workers would be an understatement. In any case, with his large amount of wealth, Dawson now invested in another major business, a jeweller which had an optician attached to it. George Chance was the optician and he was also a well-known photographer, pushing the jewellery/optician firm to also move into photography supplies as well.

At the same time, Speight's acquired a pretty significant asset, a whole entire second brewery. It was on the corner of Pitt and Elder Streets, up the road from the current Bog, and although it isn't there today, apparently the remains of the water well is still within the flat at number 18 Pitt Street. The brewery was called Strachan's (pronounced 'Strawns') Victoria Brewery and was put up for sale by the National Bank. However, initially Speight's didn't want it, Hugh Adam saying it wouldn't really result in any extra sales. The bank kept persisting though, their final offer coming to 10,000 pounds, which was again rejected. This probably would have been the end of the matter, if Greenslade hadn't been approached by someone when he was in Christchurch. The person told him that a syndicate of Speights' rivals were planning to buy the brewery instead and would "dispose of as many shares as possible among the free houses". The free houses are pubs and hotels not owned by a particular brewery. So, the idea was that the syndicate would buy the shares and just hand them out among the unaffiliated pubs, tying them to Strachan's and meaning they likely would only purchase beer from that brewery and stop buying all others. This is partly guesswork on my part but what is clear is that this very much alarmed Greenslade cause he immediately approved for Speight's

to purchase the brewery. The one condition he had was to keep the acquisition private and not let anyone know, possibly because he thought that a newspaper headline that said 'Speight's buys out competition' would be fuel for the prohibitionists.

Unlike his counterparts who off doing their own thing, Charles Speight was pretty consistently hard at work as a brewer despite being a company director. As well as his normal duties in the top job he also took it upon himself to come in on nights and Sundays to check the malt floors, temperatures of the fermenters and all that kinda stuff. Additionally, he was very active outside of work. Like his father James, Charles was in the Volunteer Forces which led him to being on the committee that was to raise and equip two contingents that would be sent to South Africa to fight in the Boer War. After the war he was also helped organise the men that came back from South Africa to return to civilian life. Naturally Charles was involved in other businesses too, having an interest in the same electric company as Greenslade. As well as being invited onto the boards of several other companies, he was a founder of the Dunedin Manufacturers Association, a member of the Chamber of Commerce and the Freemasons and also was involved in sports and charities. All of this put a big strain on his health so on his doctor's orders he went on holiday around the Pacific Islands and Australia in 1910, the only occasion he left NZ. At this time, he also bought a holiday home in Broad Bay on the Otago Peninsula, which was the place to be if you were a rich Dunedinite, especially if you liked sailing, which Charles did. He was a keen yachtsman, having a 45-foot yacht which he had the workers clean and polish when it was raced. The house was pretty big with a tennis court and a horse paddock which had a horse in it named Ginger, named for Charles' own nick name as he was also ginger haired. The only way to the bay was by ferry and the managing director of the company that operated the ferry was Charles Speight, who also owned 25% of it's shares. Though the shares never paid out as he only did it to keep the ferry service running as it was vital for the residents that lived there all year round. He also took up rifle shooting as a sport after WWI, creating his own club.

Election season loomed again in 1911, meaning the prohibitionists were back and they were gaining even more ground. Up until now there was no real threat of the entire country going dry all at once. The chances of every single electorate getting past the 60% threshold was really unlikely. However, since the last election, the movement had convinced parliament to make a couple of changes to the law. The first was that the drinking age had been raised from 18 to 21, which was a simple but effective change in removing a whole group of people from being able to purchase alcohol, at least legally. Another simple change was that the time pubs had to shut their doors for the night had been pushed back, first to 11pm in 1893 and then again to 10pm in 1910.

These new rules were all fairly minor in comparison to what the government changed on the voting polls that coincided with the national election. As I said before, so far it wasn't terribly likely that the entire country would go dry after one election, the 60% threshold for prohibition was just too high for all 76 electorates to hit all in the same year. However, when voters went to the polls in 1911, there wasn't just boxes for reduced licences or local prohibition. They could now tick whether they wanted to have the whole country become dry all at once. No take backs, no redos. New Zealand would have no alcohol sold within its borders. There was a catch though, over 60% of voters had to go for it before it would be put through, same as local prohibition. This was a monumental victory for the temperance movement, for the foreseeable future, this would be the guillotine over the head of the industry. The worst part was that the industry would need to fight for their jobs every three years, almost like politicians did.

With such a huge amount at stake for both sides, things were tense right up until the final count. In 1911 the wowsers gave it their best go, pamphlets, prayer circles, protests, letters, sermons, you fucken name it, they did it. And in the end they got 55.8% of the vote. Obviously this wasn't a total

victory for the prohibition movement, they failed to get the 60% needed. However, they were only 4% away and that was enough to give them some hope that the fight wasn't over just yet.

Taking this back to Speight's, what did they have to say about the whole situation? Well, with sales still growing, Speight's had been confident that national prohibition wasn't going to happen. They were so confident in fact that they decided to commission even more development on the Rattray Street property. In 1911, in classic fashion, a well was dug and connected to one of the older wells. At the same time some more land was purchased that had a blacksmith and carpenter, leasing them to tenants for time being. The next year Strachan's Brewery, now owned by Speight's, was moved to the site of the Red Lion Brewery which had also been bought by Speight's. You can start to see here the gradual domination that the Pride of the South was getting over the Dunedin brewing industry. Being the largest brewery in the country, they were well placed to secure their hold on the lower South Island. The next year, 1912, the Shamrock Hotel that had stood on the corner of Rattray and Maclaggan Street next to the brewery since before it was founded was demolished and a four-storey fermentation house was erected. This building still stands and contains the Speight's Ale House restaurant on the bottom floor. At the time the building was called the Shamrock Building but in future I'm gonna refer to it as the Speight's Ale House for simplicity. The upper floors held a bunch of equipment but the basement was rented to a brass band for a while as their practice room and was known as 'The Band Room' even after the lease ended. While the building was being completed, the 50 hogshead brewing plant that had yet to be upgraded was replaced with a 100 hogshead plant, bringing the total to 200 hogsheads that Speight's could output per brew. That translates to about 48,000L of beer and remember, they were brewing about three times a week. Capping it all off, they acquired some new land, the cask washing courtyard was moved and a changing room for staff was added.

Up until this point, Speight's had an entirely male staff, except for Mary Jane Speight who was an employee both in the sense that she had shares in the company after her husband's death and since she cleaned the offices part time. The brewery's first full time female worker was Norah McGhie who started working at Speights in October 1913. She was employed as a typist and shorthand writer for 2 pounds a week (about \$350 or so). As with a lot of employees at Speight's, she got in partly due to familial connections, hers being that her father was a traveller for the company. Funnily enough, not only was she the first woman on staff, she was also the first typist, up until this point all letters, documents etc. were written long hand.

In 1914, sales were booming with shares increasing their dividend pay out to 40% so things were going extremely well despite all the prohibitionist stuff. Speights was being sold in many different places around the Pacific from various islands, Australia and all over NZ except for north Auckland and Rotorua. Every region had up to approx. 40 outlets that sold Speight's, the most being in Wellington which had 39, the next most being Taranaki with 34. Interestingly, Auckland only had six which I suspect may be because a lot of major breweries were based there so competition would have been high. Speight's was even so popular that one writer said that Kiwi drinkers were in two camps, "those who drank Speight's and those who didn't".

That same year, Charles Keast pulled out of the bottling partnership with Powley, his share being bought by Greenslade and given to his son Bob for his 40th birthday. This prompted a name change from Powley & Keast to R. Powley & Co. Some new labels were made to reflect this, though the logo was by and large still the same with the characteristic moa on the front. The contract was also possibly renegotiated somewhat so that Powley's bottling contract for the Middle and South Islands were for the next 99 years.

Something you might be wondering is, what did Speight's taste like back then? Of course, the Speight's sold in modern pubs is different to that of the late 19th and early 20th century since technology, regulations and science in general has progressed over the last 100 years.

Unfortunately, the variety of hops that were used back then are no longer grown so we aren't able to make the Speight's that Dawson, Greenslade and James Speight would have brewed but we do have a description of what it tasted like, "Its alcoholic strength was considerable. At first I did not like it. It was too bitter for my young untried palate. When I made a grimace the barmaid smiled and told me I should have "made it a shandy", so next time I called for a glass of Speight's I asked for a lemonade with it. Only too soon, however, I grew to hate the sweetish destroying aspect of lemonade, and always called for a Speight's 'straight'. There was something stern and solid about Speight's in those days, but, oh, it was a lovely beer. It was 3-D. No one who had drunk old time Speight's can ever forget it. I know of New Zealand exiles now in Australia and further abroad who still think of the land of their birth in one word only – Speight's." I'm not sure how much of that is true given the clear nostalgic tone but it does provide some useful insight, namely that Speight's was very bitter at the time.

Something that Speight's was quite well known for, other than their beer, was their tug of war team, of which Dawson was the captain. This team won a number of events, including the championship at the Otago Anniversary Sports in March 1914, which came with a 20 pound prize. They again won at the Garden Fete a month later and according to the ODT garnered "much excitement." This was some good fun and a bit of brightness in the lives of those in attendance. Many of those men watching would soon be leaving Aotearoa's shores, never to return, as New Zealand went into one of its first true tests as an independent nation.

The outbreak of the Great War or WWI resulted in a number of changes in legislation for breweries, mostly ones that hindered them but helped the war effort. In 1915 the duty on beer was increased, meaning that breweries would need to pay more to the government to export their beer. In response, most of the brewing industry decided to lower the alcohol percentage in their product, as the duty tax was linked to this. So less alcohol in a beer, less tax to be paid. It was none other than Charles Speight, who had considerable reputation and standing in the industry, who convinced the other brewers to reverse their decision. In Charles' own words, "This matter was fully discussed at a meeting of brewers held in Wellington last month. It was the intention... for the brewers to reduce the weight as much as possible with a view of saving the duty, but I pointed out to them that if they did it would probably mean a further increase in duty at the next session of Parliament. After a good deal of discussion had taken place, it was decided that the whole of the brewers representing the Brewers' Association would agree to continue brewing as at present with a view to endeavouring to keep up the duty for the current year to the amount as stated by Sir Joseph Ward." Joseph Ward was the leader of the Liberal Party and at this time was the deputy leader and Finance Minister in a coalition government with William Massey's Reform Party. Basically it would be like National's current leader Chris Luxon, accepting to be the deputy leader and Finance Minister in a cross government coalition under the Labour party headed by Jacinda Ardern. It was something that was done in response to the war and apparently wasn't very smooth sailing cause Ward and Massey didn't like each other that much but we don't have time to get into it here. Point is, Charles managed to convince the brewers not to lower the alcohol in their beer cause ultimately, the government were just gonna make them pay it anyway cause the whole point was to raise money for the war effort. Charles apparently did this speech despite the fact that he wasn't a very good public speaker, tending to mumble to the point where it was hard to understand him. So this shows that either he really pulled out a ripper of a speech or the respect the brewers had for him was so immense that they were swayed in spite of his lack of rhetoric skill. An impressive feat either way.

In 1917, what would become one of the biggest influences on the culture of Kiwi drinking was introduced, the six o'clock swill. This came off the back of nearly 160,000 people signing petitions to call for the six o'clock closing of pubs as being drunk was seen as being unproductive to your work, and if you were unproductive you weren't helping, or could even be harming, the war effort. Thus a reduction in hours that pubs could operate would give people, mostly men, less time to drink and more time to be patriotic, essentially. Pubs put up surprisingly little resistance, hoping that an earlier closing time would take the wind out of the prohibitionist's sails and stop them from pushing for an outright ban. This didn't quite eventuate as we will see. For Speight's part, it was the barley growers that got a big spook and many considered switching to other crops to make up the loss that would occur from the downstream effect of reduced sales of beer. Every year Charles Speight and his maltster, Charlie Beazley toured the 'Barley Districts' to inspect the crop and 1917 was no different but it came with that added challenge. Upon hearing this concern, probably numerous times from different farmers, they decided to buy the whole harvest upfront. In exchange the farmers would exclusively supply barley to Speight's in future and the brewery would be contractually obliged to purchase. Naturally many farmers took them up on this offer but not all the barley was up to the standard required for brewing, so it was instead sold as chicken feed. This was obviously not ideal but then again, the whole situation wasn't ideal and getting quality barley wasn't exactly the point of this venture. It was to give the farmers a cash injection now while also giving them confidence and stability knowing that Speight's would buy their product in the future. For Speight's this meant that less farmers would switch over to other crops and thus ensure the supply of one of their main ingredients.

Interestingly, another response by Speight's to the six o'clock closing was planning a non-alcoholic beer, possibly with the idea that it would be sold in places that beer ordinarily couldn't. Powley registered the label but it doesn't seem like there was any further progress than that. We do find later in the 60s that Speight's made a 'near beer' called Tom Thumb which was made by taking a tiny amount of beer, adding hops, sugar, wort, caramel and heaps of water before then carbonating the whole thing. Its taste was... well, I'll let Speight's archivist tell you himself, "One had to be extremely thirsty to enjoy it". Big oof. Once the swill ended in 1967, Tom Thumb soon followed since it was no longer needed.

With a war on, the logistical and supply chain side of things was naturally being strained, meaning there was a shortage of imported goods such as new casks and oak needed for the coopers. These deficiencies in their supply, along with national restrictions on shipping, meant that Speight's weren't able to send product to quite a few of the previous international market, mostly Australia and the Pacific Islands. As was to be expected, sales dropped, the first time since the depression of 1883, 34 years earlier. The needed oak did eventually manage to make its way across the world from Russia to New Zealand but it was soon discovered that some of the wood had bullet holes in them from the recent unrest in the country, that being the Russian Revolution. Just cause there was a war on didn't stop expansions at the brewery though. In 1916 an even deeper 50m well was bored into the ground, gaining access to an even larger source of water than before. Above the bore hole a pump known as Clanking Annie was set up to pump water from the well to the reservoir connected to the other two sources. This provided the brewery with all the water it needed so some of the older wells were sealed.

In late 1917 on 19th October, Charles Greenslade was in his office, waiting to be picked up to go to the Caledonian Bowling Club. He was to inspect preparations for the opening of the season, something that he was very fond of. Unfortunately, he never made it having collapsed in his office and died from an unknown cause. He was 74. As you might expect, his stake in the brewery pass

onto his son, Bob who also filled his now vacant seat on the board. Charles Speight taking Greenslade's position as managing director since he was basically doing that job already and Dawson took Charles' board chairman seat, since he couldn't since he couldn't do both jobs. It sounds like Greenslade's death hit Dawson particularly hard as he started devoting more and more time to working for the brewery, more so than he had for many years. He also stopped his overseas trips, though he was forced to do so again after he had a health scare in 1922. He arrived most mornings in a chauffeur driven car and his daily routine started with the same instruction, sent via telephone to the upstairs office, "Bring up the bank books.". If there wasn't anything else that needed doing he would invite a mate round to have a whiskey with him before heading off to Dawson's Ltd, the jeweller/optometrist/photographer.

Over the course of the war, the prohibition referendums had been suspended, since that cost money and that was needed for the war effort. In 1918 the government agreed to hold a special referendum the next year just for prohibition, not attaching the general election to it. After this the referendums would repeat with each election as they had done before the war. The government were willing to go a step further now though and drop the voter threshold from 60% to 50%. This was fantastic news for the temperance movement, giving it just as good of a go as they had done in 1911, and they came extremely close. For a little while it had seemed like they had done it, they were going to win. But 40,000 special votes from soldiers who were still overseas or on ships returning home took a bit longer to be counted and their votes were almost entirely anti-prohibition. As such, at the final tally, prohibition was defeated 51% to 49%. This still yet wasn't the closest they would come.

Another referendum was to be held at the end of 1919 to coincide with the regular national election. This is also the first year where a third option was added to the regular wet or dry, state purchase and control, basically that the liquor industry would be owned and controlled by the government. The referendum for national prohibition at the election came as close as NZ has ever come to going fully dry, the wowsers getting 49.7% of the vote. This result was a pretty clear sign to the brewing industry in New Zealand that to secure their future they would need to make some bold choices. As such, it would have been around this time that a radical idea was probably put forward to ensure the breweries across the nation would survive, with Charles Speight being a major player in those discussions. These talks were kept fairly secret for quite a while and we wouldn't see the result of them for some time yet.

With the future of Speight's and the brewing industry in general looking a bit a bleak, no major developments were made on the Speight's site in the late 1910s in an effort to save money. What they did invest a bit of money in though was transport, specifically motor vehicles. By 1919 early cars and trucks were starting to replace horse drawn carts as the main method of getting around town and delivering goods, including for casks of beer. Near the end of the year, a garage was built on the Maclaggan Street side of the brewery but despite this, Speights' first company car was pretty average in size and not used all that often. Very few people in the brewery were allowed to drive it, one of them being traveller Alf Browne who only was allowed to use it for out-of-town places like Outram since it didn't have any public transport. Typically, the travellers would make their rounds to each pub on foot, trying to sell Speight's beer to them and ensure that their current customers were looked after. During these visits it was customary shout everyone currently in the pub a round or two, which they did at every establishment they visited. Browne had a bit of a problem though when some rather enterprising folks found an exploit. After figuring out Browne's schedule, which I assume was the same and fairly regular, they would go to the first pub and get a round for free on the Speight's company wallet. After downing this pint as fast as they could, they would head outside

to where they had parked a bunch of bicycles and ride off. Browne would then finish up his business and head to his next stop, where he would find the same group of chaps waiting for him to shout the patrons another round. And so it went that the cyclers would bar hop just in front of Browne all afternoon to get sloshed entirely for free. This apparently caused a bit of tension between Browne and Adam when the former came back asking the accountant for more money to do his rounds, which Adam was rather unwilling to give!

Around this time is also when Speight's most iconic piece of branding appeared, the three eight-pointed gold stars which started appearing on Powley bottles. It was thought that these were meant to represent the 'triple star' as mentioned in the national anthem. Another thought is that they represent the three Xs in the XXX beer, however the story I was told when I went to the Speight's brewery myself was that they represented the first three gold medals that Speight's won early in their brewing career, playing off the other part of the logo which had always been on the labels prior to this, calling their beer 'Gold Medal Ale', which is still the name of their most recognisable beer to this day.

By 1920, two years after WWI had ended and after many years of lackluster sales, Kiwis began buying more beer again and the brewery needed more space to handle casks, so some more land was bought to expand the operation. Even so, international shipping still hadn't recovered to its pre-war levels which was a bit of a problem for Speight's, but thankfully a solution was found in collaboration with some other Otago manufacturers. One of these manufacturers was Richard Hudson, a wealthy baker who sold biscuits and chocolate eventually merging with Cadbury's, possibly leading to what would be the famous Cadbury factory in Dunedin. The other was John Shacklock who made hobs, ranges and other kitchen equipment. The plan was to approach the head of the Union Steam Ship Company, New Zealand's largest shipping company at the time, to see if they could work out a deal to ensure their products made their way to other markets. Despite the fact that the three men, plus others they spoke for who were not present, represented a large portion of Otago's manufacturing, the Union Company were pretty harsh on them, telling them to either make do with what they were already offering or just don't bother. This took the blokes by surprise as they were pretty positive going into the meeting and rather deflated upon leaving. In the end they decided to take up the Union Company's offer, if the current service wasn't good enough, they would do without and make their own shipping company, with blackjack and hookers. Well, not the hookers or blackjack but they did make their own shipping company called the Dunedin Wanganui Shipping Company in 1921 with their ship the *Holmsdale* making regular trips up and down the eastern side of the country. Of course, all the manufactures took shares in the new company, including Speight's, with Charles Speight taking some for himself. The *Holmsdale* carried a supply of Speight's weekly across the country and quickly became known as the Mercy Ship. It would keep doing this until 1956 where it would be sold to another company in Japan and renamed the *Pacific Maru*. Not all Speight's was shipped on the *Holmsdale* though, some was shipped via the Christchurch Shipping Company too.

In 1923 everything changed for Speight's and indeed the entirety of the New Zealand brewing industry. Those discussions that were being had at the end of the 1919 election were starting to come to a head with a proposal being put forth by the owners of Lion Brewery in Auckland; a merger of the largest breweries in the country. They posited this idea to have a number of advantages, chief among them being the ability to make a centralised propaganda campaign to fight the prohibitionists. Amalgamation would also have the effect of removing some of the aspects of the industry that the prohibitionists pointed to when making their arguments, such as upon merging they would release shares for purchase to the general public which would mean that it could no

longer be said that a select few 'beer barons' were the only ones profiting of New Zealand's drinking. Additionally, merging the largest breweries would see less competition for tied houses, pubs that were associated with one brewery and only sold that brewery's beer. If all the breweries were essentially the same company, then a pub tied to their overall company would have access to all the company's breweries. Naturally this was put forth as being a good thing for customers, and indeed it was, since they could get a wider selection of drinks from their local. What's interesting is that this merger may not have even happened if the prohibition movement had pumped the brakes, but they didn't. The referendum at the 1922 election showed that prohibitionists were still going strong, but slowly losing steam. A positive result for Speight's and other brewers in one sense, but in the other it showed that there were still a fair number of people that would prefer for their business to not exist at all. Spurred on by these results and likely other indications from the prohibition movement, the merger went from just talk to a reality. Brewers from Auckland, Wellington, Gisborne, Christchurch and McGavin's from Dunedin all signed on but it wouldn't mean much if New Zealand's largest brewery, who probably made as much beer on their own as the others combined, didn't join up. However, things weren't so simple in the Speight's camp. Charles Speight, having been involved in the early talks was naturally pro merger but Bob Greenslade, now having his late father's shares, was against it. Dawson likely didn't care either way as he was suffering from breathing and heart issues as well as possible depression from the recent death of his wife, so he wasn't much involved with this. It's important to note that this wasn't a merger in the sense that the three directors would retain full control or even near full control of Speight's, it would require a sell up of the land, buildings, equipment and everything else. They would get to keep their shares and we will come to see they did retain their directorships but it would come at the cost of no longer having total autonomy in high-level decision making. This was Greenslade's chief sticking point, saying "They're not going to sell my bloody birthright!" To me this seems that Greenslade's opinion was as much about the emotional aspect, possibly tied to his late founding father, as it was to the business aspect of Speight's. Despite this staunch opposition, he was put under intense pressure from Charles Speight to agree, probably saying that if the brewery went at it alone, he soon wouldn't have a birthright left. Greenslade then announced that he consented to the merger but only if the price offered for their shares was increased substantially, the rumour being he wanted 100,000 pounds more. The motion was put forth on 18th May 1923 and the final decision made just over week later at Dawson's home, the last original founder shakily signing his name. With that Speight's was no longer an independent brewery but rather one of several run by the parent company New Zealand Breweries Limited, who I'm going to call NZB from now on. The official handover taking place on the 1st July 1923.

If you are interested in the numbers on how much NZB paid for Speight's, well we actually do know that! It was just under 370,000 pounds in total, which included 75,000 for the land and buildings, 68,000 for the machinery and other equipment and 31,000 for the beer already brewed and sitting on site. An additional 194,000 pounds was also added for goodwill. Strachan's wasn't included in that sum since it was a subsidiary of Speight's but it sold for 38,000 pounds bringing the total to 407,455 pounds paid, about \$46 million in today's money. Taking stock, at the time of the merger Speight's production was higher than ever before, 70,000 hogsheads a year with about 150 staff, including 30 cellarmen, 29 maltsters, 24 coopers, 18 cask washers, 18 office staff, 16 carters, 5 coppermen 5 engineers and 4 carpenters. One of these was Alex McDonald, a cooper and former All Black captain. He was based in Wellington, being the Speight's representative there and part of his job was to inspect the casks as they arrived off the boat. He found on more than one occasion that they had been tampered with, thirsty sailors having taken the white hoops off, drilled a hole in to

extract the beer inside and then replaced the hoop to cover the hole and the evidence of their misdeeds.

As mentioned, Charles and Bob became directors for NZB along with an additional six others, Dawson not being among them. As the leaders of the largest brewery in the merger, they were expected to attend monthly meetings in Wellington but Greenslade never did for as long as Charles was alive, possibly harbouring some resentment towards him for the whole situation. In total there were three breweries in Dunedin that were part of NZB and a local board was set up to manage them specifically. Both Charles and Bob were named to the board, the former being the chairman. Also on the board were Hugh Adam and John Ainge, the managing director of McGavin's.

Less than a month after the merger went into effect, tragedy struck again. On 27th July 1923, in Wellington, after a few months of declining health, William Dawson died. He was 71. He was a rather important man in the Otago area having been a councillor, mayor, MP, philanthropist and businessman, in fact his wealth was so large it resulted in nearly 100,000 pounds in death duties which is a tax of 40% of all assets, just over \$11 million today. He did leave behind 9 houses and a number of thriving business interests though so it wasn't too bad. Additionally, two archways from one of his properties was bought by the city council and placed at the corner entrances of the Botanic Gardens, where they still remain. July 1923 was a month of incredible change for Speight's and I wouldn't be surprised if Charles, Bob, Hugh and others at the company felt that this was the end of an era. The last founder of the brewery had passed away, one of his last acts being to relinquish control not to a family member like the other two founders, but to a larger collective. Well, I say all that but by in large Speight's continued on as it always had, they were still shipping via Dunedin-Wanganui Shipping Co., which they still owned, beer was still being sold all over New Zealand and exported across the world, and perhaps critically, the beer was still called 'Speight's' on the bottle, even if the brewery was technically known as the Dunedin branch of New Zealand Breweries Ltd. 1923 was the year that everything changed for Speight's and New Zealand brewing and in many ways, nothing had changed at all. Immediately after the merger though, Speight's effectively went dormant, no new bold moves were made, no new buildings constructed and no new land purchased. Whether this is because everyone was just getting used to the new situation or whether there were some other factors such as the finances, we don't know. Whatever the case, it would be a couple of years before the beast of southern brewing awoke from its slumber.

Next time, we will see Speight's go into some of its darkest times as the golden age comes to an end. Between the deaths of key figures in the company, a second world war and a disaster, things start to go downhill rather quickly.

If you want to send me feedback, ask a question, suggest a topic or just have a chinwag you can find my email and social media on historyaotearoa.com. You can also find helpful resources there like transcripts, sources and translations for some of the Te Reo Māori we have used. You can help support HANZ through Patreon, buying merch or giving us a review, it means a lot and helps spread the story of Aotearoa New Zealand. As always, haere tū atu, hoki tū mai. See you next time!