

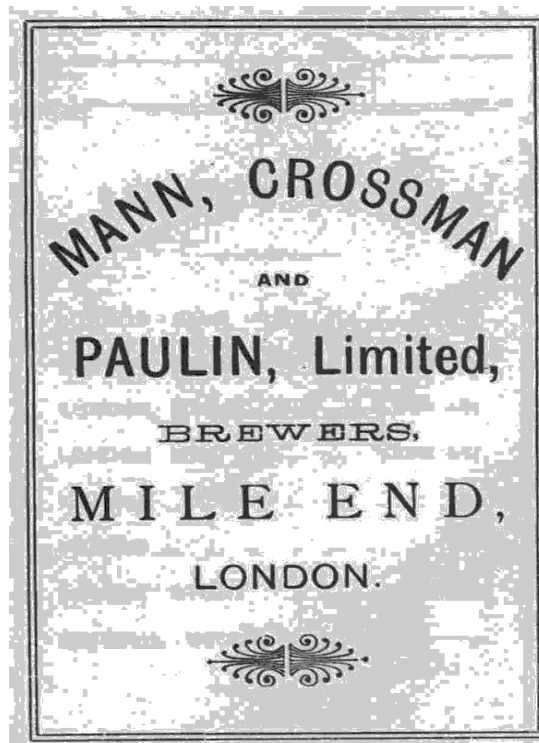
## Thomas James Mann (1848 - 1897)

*A resident of Sawbridgeworth, who was a brewer of national importance, and who left a legacy in the town.*

Thomas James Mann was born in 1848 at Green Lanes, Middlesex (now Palmers Green, London N13). He was the son of Thomas Mann and Fanny Spence, who were married in 1876 in Norfolk. Thomas was born into a wealthy family of brewers.

The Albion Brewery was built in the year 1808 at 331-333 Whitechapel Road, Mile End. In June 1819 it was taken over and became Blake and Mann, when they moved their Strandbridge Brewery to the site from Lambeth. From 1826, with the retirement of Philip Blake, Thomas' grandfather James Mann assumed control. With the addition of two new partners which brought much needed further investment, the name of the brewery from 1846 became known as Mann, Crossman and Paulin Ltd.

In the late 1840s, James Mann retired and his position passed to his son Thomas. Thomas retained part ownership until his death in October 1886, at which time part ownership was transferred to his son (James' grandson) Thomas James Mann ('our' Thomas).

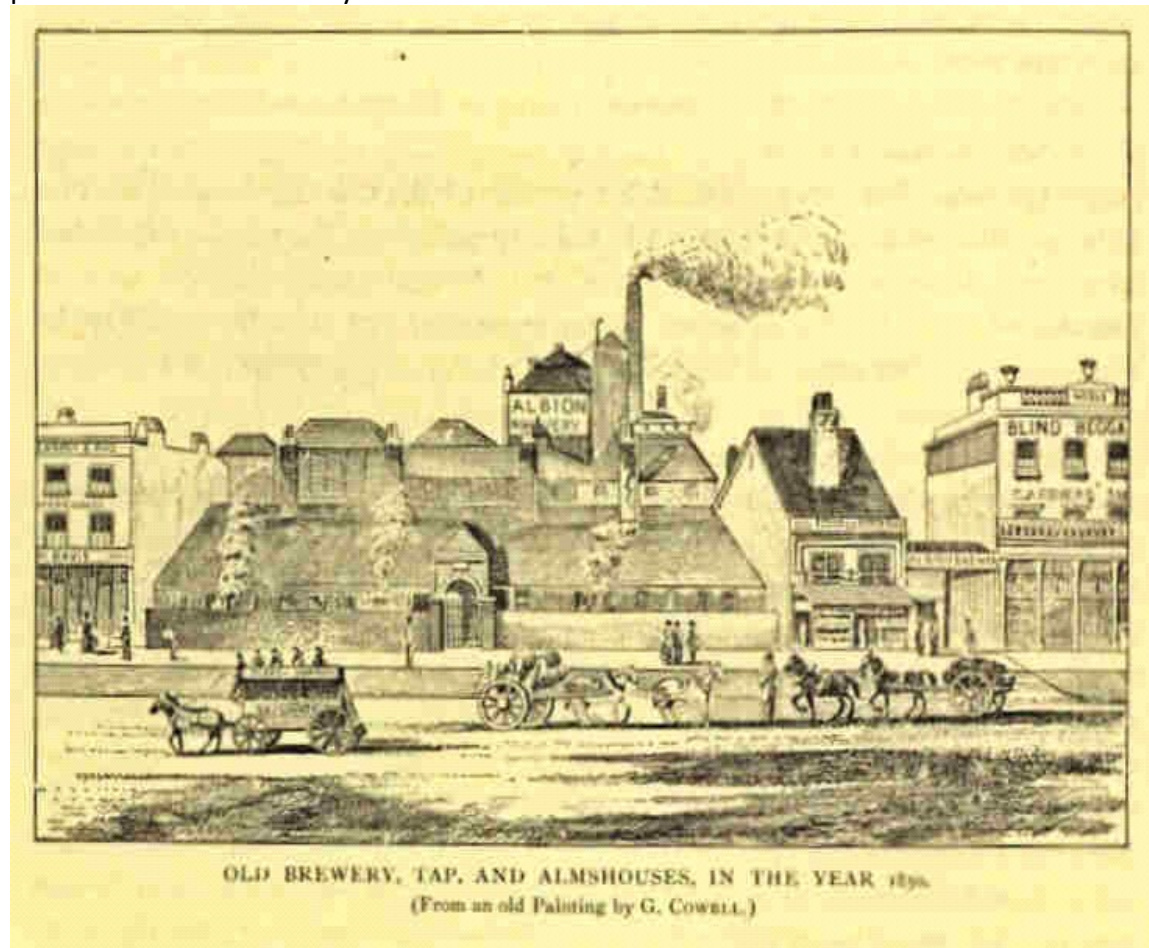


*Advertisement for the brewery*

Much later, in 1958, this brewery merged with Watney Combe Reid and Company to become the Watney Mann Brewery. The Albion Brewery finally closed in 1979. Of note, Mann, Crossman and Paulin also owned for a short time another brewery at Shobnall Road, Burton-on-Trent.

They also owned a number of public houses as part of the brewery The Windsor Castle, Lower Clapton. The Nag's Head, Enfield and the Sidney Arms, City of London, are known. There must have been others and probably included the, later to be notorious, Blind Beggar, which was next door at 335 Whitechapel Road.

As part of the family, Thomas naturally followed into the brewing business, later becoming a part owner of the brewery. He was noted in census returns as a brewer.



*Albion Brewery with the 'Blind Beggar' next door*

On 26 January 1871 Thomas Mann married Rose Ann Bell at Brisley, in Norfolk. Rose came from Brisley, and was born there in 1850, and baptised on 29 September 1850. To begin with, Thomas and Rose lived with Thomas' father at Rosenheath House, Winchmore Hill London N20, and were noted there in the census of 1871. The couple were to have four children, two boys and two girls, three of whom died young. Winifred Pauline was the eldest and was born in 1877. In 1902 she married Edward Jeorgensen at Great St. Mary's church in Sawbridgeworth. Gertrude Julia was born in 1878. She died at Hyde Hall in 1906. Percival Ramsay was born in 1882 at Christchurch. He died in 1908 at Eastbourne. Robert Douglas was born in 1885 and was baptised at St. Michael's church, Bishop's Stortford. He died in 1906 in Wandsworth.

In 1881 the family were noted as lodging in Christchurch in Hampshire. It was here that their first son Percival (usually known as Percy) was born a year later. In 1891 the family were renting at least a major portion of Hyde Hall. They must have moved there after the birth of

their second son Robert, probably early in the year 1887, shortly after Thomas had become the part owner of the brewery. The census returns for 1891 show them to be employing a governess and a further 11 servants. As well as being a brewer, Thomas was also a Justice of the Peace for Hertfordshire.



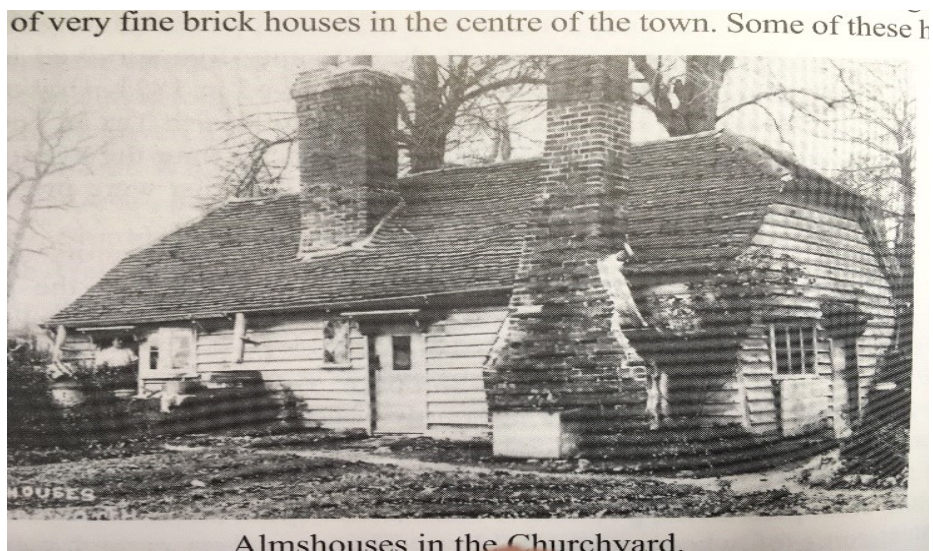
*Thomas James Mann*

Thomas James Mann died on 25 August 1897 at Hyde Hall in Sawbridgeworth. At the subsequent probate hearing, which also took place at Hyde Hall, Thomas' estate was valued at £381,082 13s 1d. The beneficiaries were given as his wife Rose, Alexander Crossman, Edward Mann, William Thomas Paulin and Edward Taylor.

Thomas was survived by his widow Rose, who continued to live at Hyde Hall. In the 1901 census she was still living there with 12 servants. It would seem that the family finally moved out of Hyde Hall sometime after the death of their daughter Gertrude in 1906 at Hyde Hall.

A friend of the family and a regular visitor to Hyde Hall was the artist and engraver George Edward Lodge. He continued to visit, even after the death of Thomas James Mann, and Thomas' sons Percival (Percy) and Robert were especially keen to see him. Today the works of George Edward Lodge are highly collectable and command high prices. He was noted for his depictions of wild birds and was also an accomplished falconer and taxidermist.

In 1898, the year after Thomas' death, his widow Rose had the Mann Memorial cottages erected close to Great St. Mary's church, numbers 1-3 Vantorts Road. These acted as a replacement for the former almshouses, which were demolished, supposedly to enlarge the churchyard and were a tribute to her husband.



*The old almshouses*

The Mann Memorial cottages still exist and are a feature of the town. They were first occupied in 1899, the date shown on the cottages themselves. The three cottages were renovated in 1970. Today these cottages are administered by the Mann Memorial Cottages Charity, registered 16 March 1964 (charity number 227461). To qualify for residence, you have to be poor, aged over 55 and have resided within a three-mile radius for not less than a year.

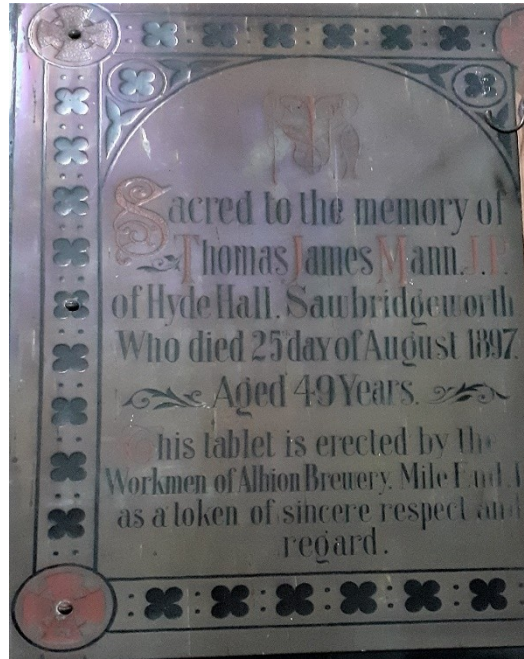
Rose finally died in 1908 in Eastbourne, Sussex. Her obituary was published in the *Essex Newsmen* of Chelmsford on 11 January 1908. Like her husband, she appears to have no known resting place. The final resting place of Thomas James Mann is unknown. The burial records for Great St. Mary's church do not show his name. Neither is his name shown in any records for anywhere else in the country. We may speculate that Thomas James Mann was

cremated, and, further, that his ashes may have been interred beneath the Memorial Cottages which bear his name when they were built a year later. The cottages themselves would effectively become his gravestone; if true, this would indeed be a fitting memorial to him.



*The Mann Memorial Cottages*

There is, nonetheless, also a memorial inscription situated inside Great St. Mary's church, erected by the workers of the Albion Brewery (see below).



*Memorial tablet in Great St. Mary's*

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Flt Lt Douglas Coe BSc RAFVR(T) Retd.

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