

Liddle's Brewery, Albury

Joe Wooding

James Liddle was an alderman on the Borough Council 1871-1873. In 1866, he bought the Albury Brewery in Dean Street from Thos Bullock. The site was one acre on which the brewery, dwelling house, stores, stabling etc were established. Agent John Solomon was glowing in its' potential "This property will lay the foundation to a sure fortune." A little prophetic, today the Commercial Club graces this site.

In 1870, Liddle decided to build a new brewery on a site at the southern end of Thurgoona Street "overlooking the Cricket Ground." Brewing commenced in December of that year. Bullock returned to his former establishment in Dean Street.



Liddle's Brewery situated at the extreme southern end of Thurgoona Street, overlooking the Cricket Ground

After operating for just a month, a most dreadful accident occurred at the new brewery. Around 10 pm on January 19th, Joseph Skates was putting bags of sugar into the boiler, a vessel some 9 feet deep, while Joseph Evans held the candle. Skates tripped and fell head first into the boiling fluid. With great difficulty Evans managed to get his workmate out. By coincidence, Constable Anderson was nearby and heard the screams. Medical assistance was called. Dr Barnett applied oil and flour to the critically scalded man before he was taken to hospital where he died a few hours later.

An inquest at the hospital was held that same afternoon. Were they or weren't they drunk was an issue, but after visiting the brewery, the jury returned their verdict – "Accidental death by falling into scalding liquor." They recommended immediate steps be taken to ensure that parts around the boiler be made more secure to guard against future accidents.

Liddle was in Wagga at the time. The Border Post later reported "Mr Liddle has conferred a boon upon the public by letting the whole of the liquor in which the man Skates was scalded, run to waste, which is of no small loss to him, though a gain to the public." Skates left a wife and four children.