

Stacey Hill Snippets

Taylor's of Newport Pagnell, Mustard Manufacturers

A search around local antique shops will soon produce stoneware pots inscribed with the name of Taylor's Mustard. Little has been written of the history of this local firm, but a summary of the known information is described.

The company was founded by William Taylor who arrived in Newport Pagnell in 1825 and set up business in the High Street. This expanded and in 1830 Taylor relocated to land on the other side of the road and opened as an apothecary and druggist. As this land contained a well he started developing a soft drinks business producing sodawater, lithium water and seltzers. This proved to be successful and a thriving business soon developed. The water was very good for soft drinks as it had passed through a layer of oolitic limestone, making the water very hard.

After a couple of years William Taylor started experimenting by preparing mustard seeds, and eventually produced the condiment that is still sold to this day, and to the same recipe. Mustard found popularity in high places including at the table of King William IV, whose portrait still appears on the jars. It was also popular with the Royal Navy as it had a long shelf life, and the strong taste spiced up the traditional rations of salted meats which could be of dubious quality and noxious odour. The mustard business was carried on as a sideline to Taylor's main business of chemists supplies and soft drinks. It passed through William's sons, Thomas and Frederick James, who represent the 'T&FJ' featured as part of the company name.

The mustard was sold in a variety of coloured glazed stoneware jars and came in various sizes, with the manufacturer's name imprinted on them. They were used up until 1941, when due to wartime shortages they were replaced with amber glass jars. Amber was apparently chosen because it was similar in colour to the stone jars. It continues to be sold to this day in these jars.

Until 1953 the chemist, drinks and mustard business operated as one company, but was then split so that one son had control of the drinks and mustard business and a daughter managed the chemists. During the 1960's the drinks business merged with North & Randle of Aylesbury, and then commenced trading as Dayla Drinks. Drinks production continued in Newport Pagnell until 1981 when it was decided to stop, following problems which were being experienced, including problems with the water supply from their own well. Mustard production continued at the site until 1990 when it was decided to move the operation to its present base in Cheshire.

For more details see: <http://www.mkheritage.co.uk/nphs/docs/business/taylors.html>

