

**Sandemans Port & Sherry and Castle & Co.
The New Canal, Salisbury.**

The Sandeman Don



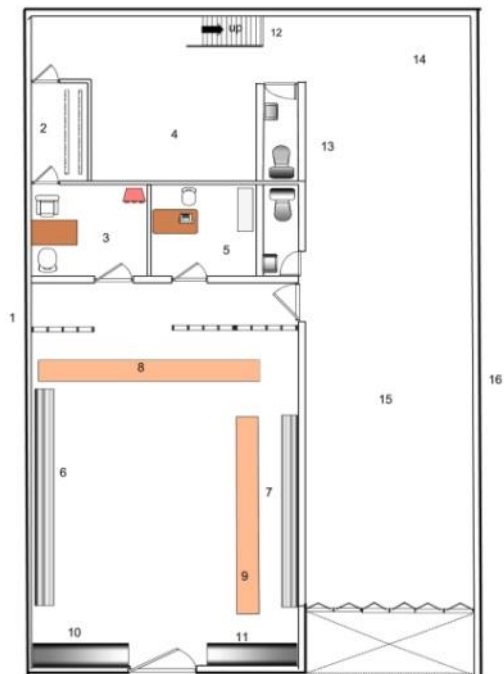
← Sandemans, Jerez, Spain.

The company of George Sandeman was known as The House of Sandeman and exported wines under its own brand name into London from about 1880. It used the port of Oporto in Portugal to do so. Various port wines were exported through Oporto and different types of sherry were sent from Jerez, Spain, to be exported through Oporto to London as well.



Salisbury had two branches of George Sandeman in the city at the end of the First World War. One branch was in the Market Place and another at 53 New Canal. In 1924 the firm closed the Market Place shop and enlarged the facilities in New Canal and appointed a new manager, William Walker. He had been the Wine, Spirit & Beers manager at the White Star hotel on the Quayside in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. This aspect of the hotel was managed by a local firm named Divers, Wine Merchants, his first employer. Around 1922 Sandemans had purchased a retail outlet of shops called Castle and Co. and this was the name the business traded under whilst in Salisbury. The New Canal branch of 'Castles', as it was always locally known, was to stay there until the development of a new shopping Mall also with an entrance in the New Canal in the 1960's. The premises of Castles had the bookstore W.H. Smith on one side and the entrance to the Knapman Son and Bament's Cattle Market on the other.

Castle & Co. thus became the sole retail outlet in the area for the Port and Sherry producer George Sandeman, famous, from a trade exhibition advertisement held in 1932, for its symbol of the black cloaked man, The Don. At the New Canal premises in addition to the range of Sandeman's Port and Sherry various beers in oak casks would be received by lorry and bottled in the works at the rear.



Castle & Co. The Canal Salisbury Wilts in the 1940/50's.



There were four staff, plus occasional staff for Christmas time, during the forty years the business was open. A photograph shows the company van, which provided a delivery service to the outer parts of Salisbury and outlying villages within a wide radius. There was also a bicycle with a small front wheel and wicker basket, usually favoured by butchers etc. which served the inner parts of the city when deliveries were required.



Fine wines would be aged and decanted in the special secure cellar using a Farrow and Jackson Cooler and the sale of Guinness became an important feature in the organisation. During the WW 2 London blitz of 1940/41 the Guinness bottling plant was badly damaged and ceased production. The New Canal premises became the focal point for collecting empty glass bottles from around the Salisbury and outside areas which were then cleaned and sent to London so Guinness could get production going again. It was the only time in the history of the Guinness company that the well-known black bottle was not used with the drink being sold in different glass bottles.

The Festival of Britain was held throughout country in the summer of 1951 with shops in Salisbury giving displays, tableaux and there were many flags and miles of bunting in all the streets. Castles contributed by William Walker making music by playing the glasses like a xylophone in the shop window, relaying the music via microphone to the outside audiences on the pavement. He was assisted by a local architect Bernard Brown who played an Hawaiian guitar, very much a novelty at the time. They won a prize.



Castles continued in business at 53 New Canal until the city centre shopping Mall was due to be built, William Walker having retired in 1953.

Family note.

William Walker married Doris Mary Richardson in St Edmunds Church, Salisbury, on the 26th September 1926. They had one daughter and one son.

List of Photographs Used in This Article

- (1) Colour photo of the Sandeman offices and warehouse in Jerez Spain taken in 2015.
- (2) Newspaper advertisement dated 1917 , either the Salisbury Times or Salisbury Journal.
- (3) Newspaper advertisement dated 1924 , either the Salisbury Times or Salisbury Journal
- (4) Castle & Company, Ground floor layout of shop, offices, cellars, stores and bottling and storage areas. There was a first floor which was mainly for general workshop usage.
- (4a) Legend to floor plan.
- (5) A photograph taken in 1951 with a Brownie Box camera looking eastwards from the junction of High Street and New Canal, Salisbury. A Morris Ten van (this model had the accelerator pedal between the clutch and brake pedals, an idea that never caught on.) is parked outside of Castle & Co.'s. and **The Don** can be seen on the name sign level. Note Boots Chemists store on the left of the photograph and the Dutch style hoist for goods under a small roof canopy which was used by Stokes Coffee Warehouse.
- (6) The Farrow & Jackson Wine Cooler was made of copper. The firm was established about 1849 in Great tower Street, London, and supplied many engineering products for the wine trade.
- (7) Both the Salisbury Journal and The Salisbury Times took photographs of the shops activities during the Festival period.