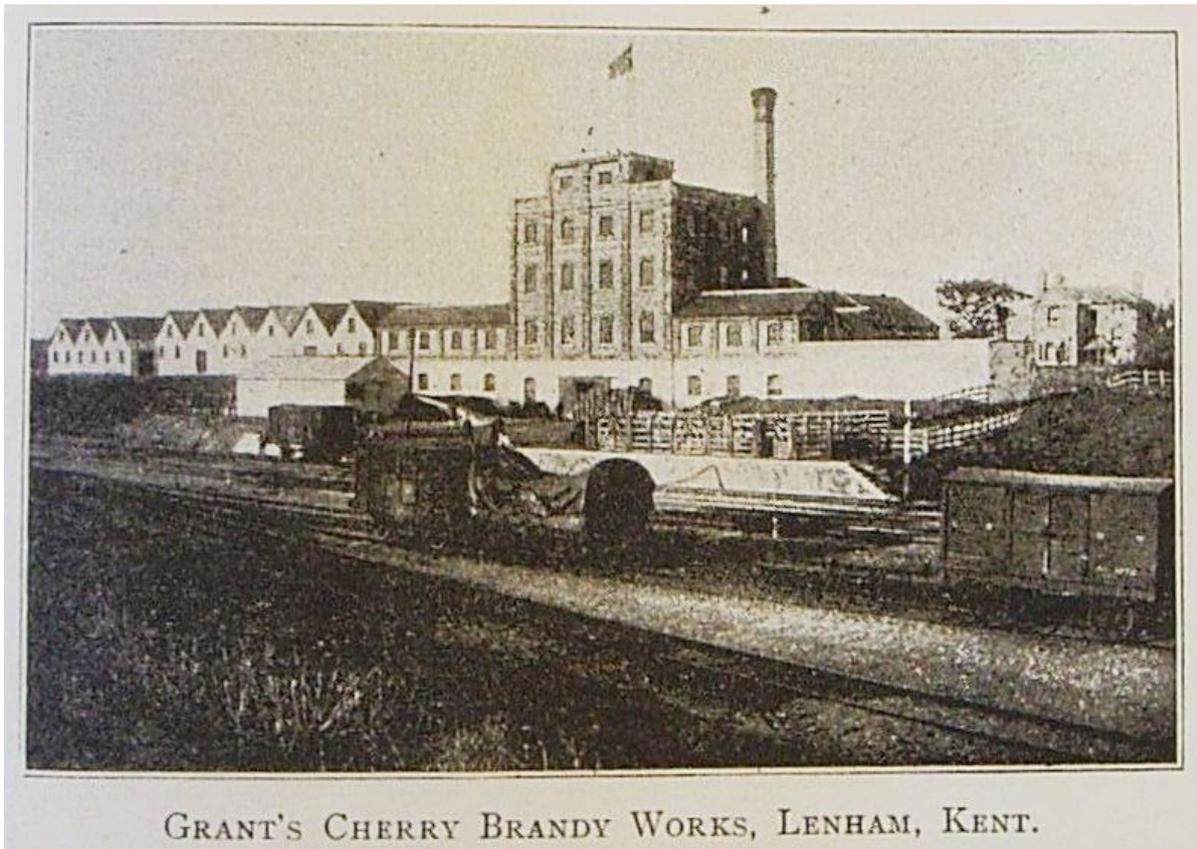


Lenham's Brandy¹



On the site which is today occupied by Lenham Storage was once Grants Morello Factory.



Grant's Morella Cherry Brandy has a long history and was first produced in 1774. The brandy holds a Royal Warrant from the Prince of Wales, is mentioned in the Pickwick Papers and was once a favourite drink of Queen Victoria ².

¹ This article is, by permission of Pippa Palmer, based on her article , which is published here: <https://kentorchards.org.uk/heritage/story/grants-morella-cherry-brandy/lenhams-brandy/>

² <https://www.thewhiskyexchange.com/p/10129/grants-morella-cherry-brandy-liqueur>

Thomas Grant became the sole proprietor of the factory in 1847. At first, the company was based in Dover but, after a cliff-fall, they moved to Lenham in 1853 and a while later to Maidstone. When the railway was built, a railway siding was installed next to their premisses.

The brandy itself has a distinctive flavour due to the variety of cherries and the way it is produced. Pippa Palmer writes³: Thomas Grant had a small quantity of Morello cherries sent to him by a local fruit grower. The species of cherry was relatively scarce and not a prolific bearer.



The colour of these cherries was so rich and their flavour so very distinctive, he began to experiment with the cherries. As a result, he succeeded in producing the well-known delicious liqueur, which has found favour for many years with the general public. Most persons who have tasted and enjoyed Grant's Morella Cherry Brandy will have observed that

³ <https://kentorchards.org.uk/heritage/story/grants-morella-cherry-brandy/lenhams-brandy/>

it has a peculiarly agreeable, nutty taste. This was obtained by the kernels being added to the mixture, therefore imparting this very distinctive flavour. He also used not only Morello cherries, but also wild hedgerow cherries, many grown in the area of Lenham Heath and Charing Heath. Grant purchased these orchards with 20,000 of these cherry trees which, in 1892, were said to be 'now in their prime and serve to furnish a very considerable proportion of the fruit used in the production of this famous cordial'.

Grant's Morella Cherry Brandy was well advertised with a series of advertisements to tantalise the taste buds of the discerning public.

Grant's Morella Cherry Brandy was also recognised as a tonic and considered invaluable as its medical properties were so important it was even served at St. Thomas' Hospital, the London Hospital, and other important institutions. This must have been a medicine few would refuse.



Ah! That reminds me!
Grant's Morella

Welcome always
Keep it handy

Grant's
MORELLA
CHERRY BRANDY

Sportsmans - dry 39/6
Queen's - sweet 35/9

THE DISTILLERY · MAIDSTONE · KENT

Eventually the factory and the Grant family moved to Maidstone, but many Lenham residents remember the cherry trees which were abundant around the village in the very recent past. If there were a fruit representing Lenham then it would be the Morella cherry.

Today several road names⁴ and 'Grant's cottages' are a reminder of this aspect of Lenham's past. However, the 'Cherry Downs', a picnic site on Rayners Hill is a

living memorial. Its orchard, wildflower meadow and cobnut platt are enjoyed by both, the locals and the walkers on the Pilgrim's Way.