



Richard Powley was the seventh child of John and Jane Powley, farmers at Moneymore, on the Tokomairiro Plain. At an early age he moved to Dunedin and worked in a brewery as a barman.

A keen wrestler he competed in the Caledonian Games in the 18880s and 18890s and held winning places for several years. His main opponent was his brother Mick, who became New Zealand's champion wrestler in 1892. On 16 March 1887 Richard married Jane Kelly who gave birth to their only child, Gertrude Maud, later that year.

In 1893 Richard became licensee of the Apollo Hotel in Walker Street. It lost its license during a reduction in hotel numbers the following year, but Powley saw a new opportunity when Speight's first bottler went out of business in 1893. He went into partnership with Charles Keast and opened a bottling plant in the old Apollo building, being given sole bottling rights for Speight's in the South Island. Powley and Keast's first dark green bottles with a Moa trademark raised on the glass are now collectors' items. In the early 1900s the firm moved to large premises in Hope Street and continued to expand. After the partnership with Keast was dissolved in 1914, the firm became R. Powley & Co with Robert Greenslade taking over Keast's share. Richard Powley died on 25 May 1925, leaving his interests in the company to his wife Jane and daughter, Gertrude.

Gertrude took an increasing interest in the business. After leaving school and travelling in Europe, she was encouraged by her parents to take an interest in the firm. She became a director after her father's death, toured the bottling plant once a week, and had a half-share in the firm after her mother's death in 1950. For some years it expanded its interests into brewing. Gertrude was an astute businesswoman, a 'snazzy dresser' and a keen gardener, who enjoyed a 'wee drop of the hard stuff'. She worked hard for several charities – including the Red Cross and the Crippled Children Society. After her death in 1960, all her favourite charities received bequests from her large estate but the major beneficiaries were the Crippled Children Society and the Otago Medical School.

Richard, Jane and Gertrude Maud are buried in Dunedin's Northern Cemetery under a beautiful red granite memorial.