

Hall and Woodhouse Limited: the war years, 1939-1945 Part II

Frank Pike

1941: The line up is complete

The Blitz did not hamper vital industrial production, although there were inconveniences as a letter from The Hampshire Brewers Union dated 20th January 1941 shows:

Dear Sirs,

The destruction of hops in the City and the increasing difficulties of obtaining materials, will shortly be making the problem of keeping up normal supplies a very difficult one indeed. It may be necessary to contemplate some scheme of rationing but to do this all Brewers should be prepared to act together.

Tied licensees should be the first to be considered and that being the case it would appear that the initial curtailment should be confined as far as possible to free and club trades. To institute this the time seems to be opportune to ask the free and club trades to pay the same prices as tied trade people, but it is useless for any single Brewer to adopt this scheme unless all others are prepared to fall into line.

Perhaps you will let me have your observations.

Yours faithfully,

R.C. CHAMBERS Secretary

Another effect of the air raids resulted in the following emotive appeal being received from Queen Charlotte's Maternity Hospital.

Dear Sirs,

I am appealing to your Company, after months of air-raids that have left us the only large maternity hospital in London, because the simple facts are such that your Board might wish to aid this national work for Service-Men's wives, a work not assisted by existing war-charities or authorities.

One of our Nurses' Homes has been hit by high explosives and has been rained "incendiaries". Here in Britain's oldest maternity and infant hospital, we know the quiet courage of our mothers-to-be, their husbands (sailors, soldiers and airmen) absent, serving their country. Very poor, they can only contribute Life - for Life Must Go On ... a child is born ... Our steel-helmeted nurses often reach the mothers under gunfire, driving cars with anti-shrapnel mattresses on the roofs. These patients are cared for free.

Bringing the new Life into the world and aiding it until 5 years old, costs this unendowed hospital over twelve pounds (including two weeks in hospital). Our patients come from all over the country but our former London Supporters

have left town ...

Would your Company most generously help us by sending a donation toward the care of one or more of these British Fighting Men's Wives and their Babies?

I am yours gratefully,

SEYMOUR LESLIE

The two guineas the company donated was the equivalent of about £50.00 in the year 2001.

The winter of early 1941, like the previous one was long and cold with plenty of snow and slush, but by March the weather had turned fine but still quite cold with the wind blowing almost every day from the northerly quarter. According to the brewing book, with an occasional rainy day, the fine weather extended through to mid August when for about ten days the entries recorded 'SW wet night' - 'W stormy' - 'SW heavy rain in night, drizzle since' and so on. A typical British summer. On 4th May the clocks were advanced another hour to 'double summer time' so that it stayed light until about 11 o'clock. Long days for the girls of the Land Army which was formed in 1941.

Militarily, at least in western Europe, 1941 was a period of mark time. At the beginning of the year there was still perceived to be a threat of invasion. Of course, no one knew then what might happen but in hindsight when it is remembered what immense preparations had to be made before 'D' Day in 1944, the fears of 1940/41 may seem to have been excessive. Had they come, the German

soldiers would doubtless have carried a copy of *Guidelines for the behaviour of troops in England*.

Guidelines for the behaviour of troops in England.

1. The Englishman suffers from a certain lack of imagination when faced with new situations. Therefore he reacts more slowly to given instructions or inquiries than do most European peoples. His slowness in reaction is not necessarily malevolent.

2. The greatest strength of the Englishman is to appear ignorant (stupid). He is a master at questioning others while not giving away anything of himself. When he disagrees he almost always has a hidden purpose. Mostly by disagreeing he wants to get others to speak.

3. The Englishman doesn't like to say yes or no, he doesn't like to commit himself and is a master at the art of evasion. Instead of yes he likes to say; 'It's possible;' instead of no: 'That might be difficult.' The Englishman will not tell others, even when they ask, that they have done something wrong, he doesn't correct.

4. The Englishman is very reserved.

Pushiness is considered in bad taste in England. It is considered extremely tactless to intrude in another's domain, or to push oneself upon someone. That explains the cool attitude to strangers. Compared to the Englishman the Scotsman is avowedly taciturn, the Welshman is more open-minded and temperamental. With him one has to watch his cunning.

5. The Englishman is used to having even orders and instructions preceded with the word 'Please', whereas the word 'verboden' will automatically arouse resistance in him.

6. Extreme friendliness and humour especially pay off with members of the public (lower class). With a joke one achieves more than with an order when dealing with a workman.

7. The working-class man, when handled with reserve and friendliness, is easily trusted (won over). He is then reliable up to a certain level and will be grateful for being treated decently.

There was plenty of activity elsewhere, so it was a time when it came to be recognised that Britain's strategic problem was no longer parochial, but global. For example:

January - There were heavy air raids on Malta

February - General Wavell had advanced some five hundred miles up the desert and annihilated an Italian army in Libya. This did not last, because on 31st March the Germans under the newly arrived Irwin Rommel struck and within twelve days the British were back within a few miles of the Egyptian border. The Afrika Corps was in business.

March - The U.S. Congress passed the Lease/Lend Bill. Hitler invaded Yugoslavia.

April - British troops from Libya who had earlier landed in Greece had to be evacuated by a minor Dunkirk-type operation.

May - By the 27th Crete had been evacuated. On the 24th, the Admiralty announced that the Bismarck had sunk H.M.S. Hood with the loss of 1,500 lives. Three days later Bismarck which had been badly damaged by gunfire and was on fire was finished off by torpedoes from

the county class cruiser H.M.S. Dorsetshire.

June - On 22nd news came that Germany had invaded Russia.

There is no evidence that any of these happenings had an effect on the company or its operations, and were not commented on formally in the minutes.

Travel was difficult, and no doubt this coupled with the fact that three of the directors were serving officers, were the reasons why the Board meeting to consider the accounts for the year ended 31st May 1941 was held on Sunday 20th July.

The result was almost the same as the previous year with a balance of £47,577 (£46,029). The total dividend remained unchanged at 15% but the net distribution was reduced from £6,250 to £5,000 because taxation had been increased from 7/6 to 10/= (50%) in the £. The carry forward was £33,677 (£33,221).

The Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday 9th August at the registered office of the company. Again, only directors were present.

The Customs & Excise certificate of beer produced for the year to 30th June 1941 showed a marginal decline from the year to 30th September 1939, from 18,421 to 18,186 standard barrels.

Supplies of all kinds were becoming more difficult as shipping losses mounted due

to attacks by U Boats. Imported raw materials were particularly scarce and the company made an application for the replacement of sugar used for the supply of mineral waters to N.A.A.F.I. A Mr Chandler who described himself as the Food Executive Officer of the Blandford Rural District Food Control Office replied from 6 West Street on 11th March. 'Would you be so good as to send us the amounts of sugar and for glucose used in the manufacture of these goods during the month of February.' Underneath my father wrote:

5½ lbs = 1 gal syrup
12 gals syrup = 96 doz
290 doz = 200 lbs

Whether the application was successful is not known, but a letter was received from N.A.A.F.I. dated 4th July,

... we very much regret to learn that you will be unable to supply Institutes with mineral waters on and after 19th July. We appreciate your difficulties with regard to transport and materials, but shall be extremely obliged, nevertheless, if you are in a position to reconsider your decision, as all our supplies are for members of H.M. Forces only.

Later in the year, another appeal was received from N.A.A.F.I.

Dear Sirs,
Christmas Beer

It has always been the custom to arrange that members of His Majesty's Forces, who are unable to obtain leave to be with their

families, are provided with additional seasonal fare including beer to be consumed with the Christmas dinner.

It is hoped to be able to arrange similarly this year, although in common with the civilian population, the additional items will be very much restricted.

The difficulties with which the brewing trade is confronted at the present time in meeting the demand, are fully appreciated by this Corporation. Nevertheless it is hoped, and indeed I feel sure that you will endeavor as far as you possibly can, compensate the men of the Forces on duty in the United Kingdom for the loss of family contact at Christmas. Orders for the additional beer required will be sent as early as possible.

Following a decision made at the Board meeting on 27th July 1940 to establish a relationship with the T. & G.W.U. the following letter was received by the chairman.

Dear Sir,
Brewery Workers - wages

With reference to our interview in March of this year, followed by letter of confirmation on April 4th, when it was agreed to regulate the wages of your workpeople to that agreed nationally through the Road Haulage Wages Order, and confirmed by the Minister of Labour, I beg to advise you of the amended Order R.H.8. which becomes effective as from 25th August 1941, which increases the weekly wage of adult workers by 4/- and that of juniors by 2/3d.

We would thank you for giving same effect as and from the date mentioned above.

Yours faithfully
W.A. HUMBER

Note: The General Secretary was Ernest Bevin who was later to become a member of cabinet and Foreign Secretary, and for whom Churchill had a great regard.

I was amused to find a copy of a letter that my father wrote to H.M. Inspector of Taxes, Yeovil on 27th August 1941.

... we must still maintain that the Brewhouse and Stores are not occupied by the military ... The payment of £13 for which you mention is, we understand, payable to our tenant Mr E. Allen and is solely for the right of usage of water and trough in yard for soldiers ablutions ... We fail to understand why you insist that the charge is on the Brewhouse and Store.

This refers to the same ablution block that I opted out of using in September 1939 at The Kings Arms, Shaftesbury.

Later in the war there were comprehensive schemes to save fuel by curtailing deliveries, but the company was trying hard to do so in 1941 as the following information reveals.

1. Economies effected in deliveries within 15 mile radius - 3,500 miles saved yearly.

2. Economies effected in delivery within 15-30 miles - 8,700 miles saved yearly.

3. No houses outside 30 miles radius.

4. 100 gallons petrol saved monthly by above.

5. Our area of delivery does not extend beyond a 26 miles radius, and it is not practical to exchange barrelog.

6. The above miles are saved by delivering fortnightly in several districts instead of weekly, we have also cut out supplementary deliveries which we estimate save another 6 to 10 gals petrol weekly.

This statement was sent on 28th October to The Brewers Society, 5 Upper Belgrave Street, London.

Operationally, at home, the second half of 1941 started much as before. The army continued to re-equip and to carry out large training exercises whilst reinforcements of men and material had to be sent to the Middle and Far East by the long sea route around the Cape of Good Hope.

The navy was still fighting hard against German surface vessels and the U Boat menace, particularly in the Atlantic. In this it was supported by long range Coastal Command aircraft, whilst Fighter Command had to counter more indiscriminate bombing raids. For example, Weymouth was raided on the night of 1st November when three people were killed, eleven injured and 171 houses damaged; but Bomber Command was starting to take the war to German cities by night raids.

By October, the invasion was going from bad to worse for the Russians and it seemed as if nothing could halt the German advance. The Royal Navy helped with aid by the famous, or infamous, arctic convoy runs to Murmansk.

On 18th November the 8th Army, now commanded by Auchinleck and Cunningham moved again across the Western Desert with considerable success at first, but just after the turn of the year Rommel counter attacked and in three weeks had pushed 8th Army back nearer Egypt than its start line in November.

However, like Napoleon before him, Hitler had failed to take account of the Russian winter and on 7th December it was learned that his last desperate bid to capture Moscow had failed and that in temperatures of about 40° below zero, the Russians had launched a counter attack.

On the same day, Sunday 7th December the Japanese struck at the American Phillipines and at their naval base at Pearl Harbour where its bombers wreaked havoc with the American navy; and almost at the same time attacked Hong Kong and Malaysia.

Now although great disasters and suffering was to ensue, the die was cast and the fact that the United States of America was in the war undoubtedly sealed the enemies fate and made all ultimate Allied victory inevitable.

On 12th December the Prime Minister sailed for America and meetings with President Roosevelt. From their discussions came several crucial decisions, but none more so than the Americans brave agreement that come what may Germany must be defeated first, and to set tip with

Britain and its Commonwealths, the United States, other friendly countries, and the resistance of the people in those countries occupied already, a single combined command structure.

In the brewery, trade must have been good for brewing continued on a regular five times a week basis. Many pubs were granted an extension of permitted hours from 2200 hrs to 2300 hrs on Christmas Eve and Boxing Day, but that alone could not have accounted for the fact that over the holiday period, 126 brls of XX were brewed on 24th December (Christmas Eve), 157 brls of Pale Ale on 26th December (Boxing Day) and 126 brls of Pale Ale on New Years day, not then recognised as a holiday in England.

The best that could be said as 1942 dawned was that Britain no longer stood alone; otherwise there was little cause for celebration and the country's strategic position appeared about as poor as it had been a year earlier.

1942: The tide begins to turn

Life for most civilians, including the five men charged with managing Hall & Woodhouse was becoming wearisome and lacking in variety. Organised leisure activities had virtually ceased whilst petrol rationing it made an occasional pleasure trip in the car almost impossible. With the exception of Reg Rose, the other four members of the 'Literary Institute' a popular businessman's club in

East Street (now Chestnut House flats) where in the evenings they were able to relax and enjoy a frame of snooker, and a game of darts or cards.

Running the business was made more complicated by the plethora of Government Ministries, Local Authorities and other organisations, all armed with Regulations, Orders and Statutory Instruments. An instruction or request for information arrived on the secretary's desk from someone on most days. Amongst those involved were:

- Ministry of Food (Brewing and Distilling) branch, Colwyn Bay
- Ministry of Food, St. Johns College, Oxford
- Ministry of Food, Reading
- Ministry of Fuel and Power
- Ministry of Home Security, Air Raid Precautions Department
- Ministry of Labour and National Service
- Ministry of Supply (Iron and Steel Control)
- Ministry of Works & Buildings
- Ministry of Works (planning)
- Dorset & West Hants Fuel Efficiency Committee
- District Fuel Organiser, Dorchester
- District Manpower Board, Southampton
- London & South Emergency Advisory Committee - Coal Supplies Officers
- National Fire Service
- The Brewers Society
- Hampshire Brewers Union
- Red Cross and St. John War Organisation
- War Savings Committee of the

- Licensed Trade
- Borough of Blandford Forum Civil Defence Service
- Blandford Rural District Council, ARP Controller
- Dorset County Council, ARP Department

Examples of their requirements that had to be dealt with were:

- Defence (General Regulations), 1939
- National Service Acts, 1939-1941
- National Service (Armed Forces) Acts
- Defence (Home Guard) Regulations, 1940
- Malt (Restriction Order), 1940
- Registration for Employment Order, 1941
- Consumer Rationing Order, 1941 (Industrial Workers overalls)
- Control of paper (No. 48) Order

A letter dated 29th July 1942 from the Ministry of Food was singularly unhelpful.

... It is not the function of the Ministry to interpret the Orders which it makes. You are advised to obtain a copy of the Soft Drinks (Licensing & Control) Order 1942 (price 1d) from H.M. Stationery Office and if you are in doubt about its meaning, to obtain independent legal advice. A form of application to manufacture soft drinks will be sent to you shortly, for completion and return to this office.

Presumably it was the use of sugar in soft drink ingredients that caused all the trouble. Later in the year W.J. Bush & Co. Ltd. (essence suppliers) wrote.

Under the Statutory Order soft drinks may not, after the 1st January (1943) bear the name of the bottler. As we understand the new War Time Association labels have not yet been received by all the manufacturers, we wish to bring to your notice that we are holding stocks of labels for Aerated Beverages without brand names ...

Other manufacturers were also in trouble.

Fund raising campaigns to help the war effort were frequent and varied, and included 'Wings for Victory,' 'War Weapons Week' and 'Warship Week.'

A minute of a Board meeting held on Saturday 11th April under the heading 'Investments 2½% War Bonds' recorded that 'the action of the directors in investing £5,000 in the name of the Company, and £1,000 in the name of Chamen & Richards (the off licence branch) during Blandford Warships Week was ratified and approved.'

The Licensed Trade launched the 'Tank'ard fund to present the nation with a Battalion of Tanks. This was their press release:

(To appear, if possible, on Cambrai Day, November 20th, if not possible, on the nearest day of publication before Cambrai Day.)

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO (November 20th, 1917) THE GERMAN DEFEAT BEGAN
Licensed Victuallers Celebrate it with the 'TANK'ARD FUND

Twenty-five years ago, in the battle raging at

Cambrai, British Tanks first penetrated the German lines to a depth of many miles - and thus opened the road that led to the defeat of Germany.

The Germans admitted it was the Tank that beat them in the last War - and the Licensed Trade of Great Britain is determined that the enemy shall have good cause to say it again. Today, Licensed Victuallers all over the country are commemorating Cambrai Day with the launching of The 'Tank'ard Fund - by which they hope to present to the Nation a whole battalion of tanks.

In 50,000 Licensed premises today - and every day until Saturday, November 28th, when the Appeal ends - sixpenny 'Tank'ard stamps will be on sale to customers, who can thus make their own contribution to 'Tanks Giving' Week.

Also the Red Cross and St. John War Organisation issued a national free display of posters that they asked should be displayed in public houses.

They wanted particularly to appeal to everyone to give all they could for prisoners of war parcels. A letter received, dated 23rd November, ended,

To mention but one of many responsibilities - that of caring for British prisoners of war. There are approximately 150,000 British, Dominion and Indian soldiers, sailors and airmen, merchant seamen and civilian internees in Europe alone, and each of these relies on the Red Cross to supplement his scanty rations and to provide medical comforts and other things to sustain them in their captivity. The Red Cross is now spending on this,

which is only one of many services, at the rate of £4,500,000 a year.

We shall be deeply grateful for your continued support.

There is quite a lot of evidence as proof of the many and varied difficulties that responsibility for the Licensed Houses and their tenants brought to the brewery management.

On 12th January 1942, the Clerk to the Blandford Magistrates, W.H. Wilson (the senior partner of the company's local solicitors, Traill, Castleman Smith & Wilson) wrote that the Magistrates and the police were very much concerned with the nuisances committed by soldiers in the town, and pointing out that in some licensed premises 'conveniences are not quite so satisfactory as they might be.' Neither were the location notices. Houses listed were:

The Three Choughs
The White Hart
The Damory Oak
The Half Moon
The New Inn

It was about this time that the Ministry of Supply directed that Local Authorities should make schedules of unnecessary railings which, of course, included public houses as well as ordinary dwellings.

One of the first came from Sherborne Rural District Council reference The Fox Inn, Holwell where the railings were said to be 65ft long and to weigh 450lbs. Two

paragraphs in the notification are interesting:

If the railings are placed on the Schedule, they will be removed by the Ministry of Supply, and, if the owner so wishes, a standard rate of twenty-five shillings per ton will be paid. The Ministry hopes, however, that railings will be freely offered and that claims for compensation will be few.

When any railings have been placed on the Schedule, there will be no appeal, except on the grounds of artistic merit or historic interest.

Other properties affected included:

The Drax Arms, Spetisbury -
Ornamental Chains, Railings, Gates to be left

No. 1 Brewery Cottages - railings on wall in front of dwelling

The Farquharson Arms, Pimperne -
25ft iron railings outside.

An objection was raised to this decision because the Ministry of Works at Reading felt it necessary to reply, 'The Farquharson Arms has been inspected but it is regretted that it is impossible to allow the railings to remain.'

The Retreat Inn, Marnhull - Gate

It is very doubtful if much of this iron was of any use to industry which required high grade steel. The whole exercise was more psychological than practical, rather like the collection of aluminium saucepans.

Some licensees wrote to express their concerns at the lack of supplies, and in some cases the quality also.

Edward Best wrote on 8th November from The Smiths Arms, Wimborne.

Whilst on leave I have seen the remarkable shortage of bottled beers and spirits in my house, and it has become almost a regular procedure for my wife to have to close this Licence, two or even three days a week ... we have nothing but mild to sell after Saturday night ... we are losing a considerable amount of money. Will you please look into this and see for yourself the small amount of bottled beers sent compared with what we used to get ...

E.J. Shiner at The Strangeways Arms, Evershot, whilst appreciating the difficulties of supply asked, like Oliver Twist, if he could have some more on the grounds that

the camp which is situated near here is being made permanent. Very shortly after the Ministry of Works flying squads have finished preparing the site, over 500 workmen will be employed in erecting a Prisoner of War camp and they will be sometime in doing so. After that American personnel will take charge ... I am only opening at Sunday hours and shall have to close down before tomorrow week as fresh gangs are arriving daily and although I try to ration the demand as far as possible, it is still heavy.

Mr and Mrs Christopher Mullett at The New Inn, Buckland Newton, (it really was

a small, unattractive pub) were worried about their living.

Its this Sir, with 18 short of mild. I know we had 18 ale but that's 2/6 less for us. We don't feel Sir, it will be worth my work to try to run this as a licensed house ... we will stay here and pay rent and water rates. Let Mr Butler (he was at The Royal Oak in the village) have our beer until this wicked war is over, Sir ...

From The Ansty Arms, Poole H.G. Blandford wrote on 12th October.

I regret to say my customers are complaining very much about the mild (Brew No. 40). Apart from being very light in colour there seems to be very little body in it and I must confess I agree with them ... I have to compete with four other brewers beers within a radius of 250 yards whereas some have practically no opposition and does not interfere with their trade...

Dear Sirs,

Renewal of Licences

In view of the fact that early in February next year licensees will be applying for the renewal of their Licences I think it would be of service if I called attention to Section 10 and part I of the Sixth Schedule of the Finance Act 1942.

Under the provisions of this Act an application for a certificate that a business has been temporarily discontinued by reason of War circumstances as defined in the Act must be made to the Commissioners of Customs and Excise, who, if satisfied, will certify accordingly and on a grant of such certificate the Justices Licence will be, and

will be deemed to have been in suspense from the time of the discontinuance of the business without the necessity for any further action on the part of the applicant. Any licence in respect of which a certificate has been granted is not subject to renewal. I think it is possible that you will have one or two houses in Weymouth or Portland which have been affected by War circumstances and in respect of which the procedure outlined above should be adopted.

Yours faithfully Sgd. G.G.H. Symes

This was an important piece of legislation that initiated and led to the establishment after the war of Licensing Planning areas in towns and cities where licensed houses had been destroyed or put out of action by war circumstances. Portsmouth, Southampton and Weymouth were so classified.

As mentioned previously, it was important to save fuel by curtailing deliveries and positive steps were taken to do so as the minutes of Board meetings reveal. On 11th April 1942 it was reported

Owing to representations made by the Ministry of Transport, we had come to an arrangement with Messrs. Gibbs Mew & Co of Salisbury for them to supply our two Salisbury houses, and we their Blandford one. Negotiations had also taken place with Messrs. J. Groves & Sons Ltd. for exchange of Weymouth and Portland trade for their Wimborne trade.

And, on 12th July

After some discussions on a letter received from Eldridge Pope & Co. Ltd. as to supplying their Salisbury houses in exchange for Dorchester and Weymouth districts it was resolved not to proceed in the matter, but to write to J. Groves & Co. as to the proposed exchange of Weymouth & district for their Wimborne trade.

On 3rd December Mr. Sullivan, manager of the Poole depot of Whitbread & Co. Ltd. wrote,

Now that the zoning of breweries has become more acute we have been instructed from our chief office to enquire whether in the event of our not being allowed to receive supplies from our London brewery, your company would be in a position to brew and bottle for us. This is a tentative enquiry and the question of bottles, cases and other matters could be gone into at a subsequent stage.

There is no evidence that this approach was proceeded with, but the Company enjoyed a friendly relationship with Whitbread at the time, the off licensees selling their bottled beers such as India Pale Ale, London Stout, Oatmeal Stout and Forest Brown Ale.

The first part of 1942 was spent by the Allies searching for; and more importantly trying to agree on, a concerted plan of campaign. The doctrine of defeat Germany first and then Japan that had been decided upon in Washington was not without opponents, in fact the great majority of U.S. troops that had at that time gone abroad had gone to the Pacific

where the U.S. navy and the Australian government both wanted re-enforcements, whilst Britain foresaw great danger to India, Ceylon and ultimately to the Middle East by the drive of the Japanese navy into the Indian Ocean following the fall of Singapore on 19th February, and Malaya. The problem all along was that commitments everywhere were much heavier than the resources to carry them out. There were too many competing priorities.

However, on 1st April (maybe an appropriate date) President Roosevelt was presented with a plan for an early Anglo/American invasion of Northern France. There was no doubt that the Americans wanted to get into the fight, but the scheme for an invasion in 1942 was pie in the sky born out of impetuosity and ignorance of the facts. They had not begun to grasp the complications involved, nor the German superiority. It was agreed finally by the British that planning for an invasion of Europe when it became practical should start, and in the meantime to welcome to the U.K. as many as possible U.S. soldiers and airmen.

The decisive factor in all movements was the lack of shipping. It cannot be stressed too much how critical was the Battle of the Atlantic for during the first half of the year despite an enormous ship building programme under way in the States, the loss to Allied vessels was more than three million tons greater than the replacements. Part of this loss was due to the convoys to Murmansk and Malta,

where supplies were running out rapidly.

At home there was a widespread and vociferous campaign for a second front to help the Russians, but the public, like the Americans, had no idea of the problems involved, and the great danger of an appalling shambles, and yet another disaster. An attack in 1942 was simply not on, nor in 1943 despite Churchill's resolve at the time that it was.

On 17th June the Prime Minister went again to Washington. He flew, with his party, a 27 hour journey at a time when crossing the Atlantic by air was rare. The desert army was in full retreat, and Tobruk fell a day or so afterwards. The Eighth Army was far inside Egypt but held firm at Alamein only sixty miles front Alexandria. The Americans had not completely given up the idea of invading France, when Churchill wrote a note to the President that concluded, 'It is in this setting that the North West Africa operations should be studied.' The strategic object was to clear the enemy out of Africa, that in less than a year was done.

Meanwhile the Germans had broken the Russian lines in the south and were driving on to the Volga and Caucasus.

In July another series of conferences with the Americans took place in London. Initially there was much argument, but finally on the 24th agreement was reached for Operation 'Torch;' the North African landings with the object of driving East to Tunis and Bizerta. The idea of a

second front was killed off. However, it was decided to carry out a reconnaissance in force, the object being to capture a Channel port, hold it for a day and then re-embark. So it was, on 19th August that the raid on Dieppe took place. It was a bloody affair, most of all for the Canadian division which lost nearly 3,000 men killed, or taken prisoner. Though valuable lessons must have been learnt, the sacrifice of men and material was extremely difficult to justify.

At the Board meeting on 11th April, the following were also minuted:

The Managing Director reported that one half of the annual bonus to the wage earning employees had been paid to avoid the total amount being liable for income tax in the same six monthly period.

Beer trade for 10 months ending 31st March 1942 was up by 6288 brls of which 2488 brls had been purchased from the Anglo Bavarian Brewery Co.

A statement showing that the company was paying over £600 p.a. to pensioners and war serving dependants was produced. It was agreed to pay the premiums re pensions assurance for the members of staff serving in H.M. Forces.

A statement listed that the payments were:

Pensioners

(per annum)

F. Barrett	13.0.0 + house
C.R. Churchill	45.10.0
G. Cottle	26.0.0

J. Curtis	26.0.0
T. Damon	6.10.0
S. Fry	26.0.0
E. Harris	26.0.0
A. Lane	26.0.0
A. Moors	52.0.0
W. Northover-	60.0.0
A. Peach	52.0.0. + house
J. Roper	26.0.0
Miss Snook	6.10.0

War Service Allowances

(for House Rent)

J. Barrett	15.12.0
B. Christopher	26.0.0
Cole	7.16.0
Critchell	13.0.0
Fiander	9.2.0
L. Fry	13.0.0
Gould	7.16.0
Joyce	20.16.0
F. Lane	13.0.0
S. Neale	7.16.0
W. Neale	26.0.0
Mrs. Neale (Ansty)	7.16.0
R. Thorne	26.0.0

Staff

{H. Adams	7.10.0
{Pension Assurance	26.0.0
{M. Gilbert	7.10.0
{Pension Assurance	
A. Hussey	4.0.0
{N. James	5.0.0
{Pension Assurance	
{J. Parsons	10.0.0
{Pension Assurance	
F Pike	4.0.0
{C. Taylor	52.0.0
{Pension Assurance	10.0.0

Employees who were still working at the brewery came under scrutiny for direction into various avenues of National Service work.

Some because of their occupation were deferred. This applied to the maltsters Tom Chant (Blandford) and E. Squibb (Ansty) when the company was advised in August 1942 that the District Manpower Board had 'decided to grant deferment until further notice.'

Others were not so fortunate, as this example illustrates. In September 1942, Harry Read was directed 'to perform services' as a motor driver with Messrs. G. Wimpey & Co. at Tarrant Rushton, four miles to the east of Blandford. They were the contractors who built the airfield. This was done because of 'the urgent need for labour for vital war work in other establishments.' Tarrant Rushton was destined to play several very important roles before the war in Europe was won. Afterwards it was for many years the home base of Flight Re-Fuelling Ltd.

The company was luckier with another heavy goods driver; Charlie Thorne. Application was made on 4th July for maximum deferment on the grounds that:

1. This employee drives our one heavy lorry and delivery of beer is essential, especially in this area.
2. He is also the driver of A.R.P. ambulance.
3. Also, earmarked as driver of our heavy lorry, registered to be taken over in case of emergency.

It appears to have worked as he was still on the payroll in 1944.

Under the Defence (Home Guard) Regulations 1940, Fred Uren and Sidney Cuff were directed to serve in the Home Guard. The commitment was for training and operational duties not exceeding 48 hours in each period of four weeks, though they were liable to be mustered 'for the purpose of resisting an actual or apprehended invasion.'

Women were not exempted and under the Registration of Employment Order 1941 two clerks, Misses E. Edwards and C. Schofield, and Eileen Cross, described as 'a bottler' were so registered. The notification stated that they would 'be regarded as available to meet the very heavy demands of the Women's Services and of expanding war production unless they have special qualifications or occupy a pivotal position.' They, too, were still at the brewery in 1944.

W. Loxton, a drivers mate, volunteered to join the army in December 1942 despite being over 43 years old. His foreman was stated to be 'Mr. Woodhouse.'

Another employee, Mr. Mullett was not so ready to serve, a letter from the Officer Commanding M.T. Coy at Poundbury Barracks, Dorchester, dated 22nd June said that he was shown 'as the driver of AJT 621, but it has not been possible to contact him, or ascertain if he is enrolled in the Home Guard. If Mr. Mullett is still available and is willing to enrol, would

you kindly assist me by asking him to complete the enclosed form.' Mr. Mullett was obviously not willing because another letter dated 29th June from the O.C.M.T. Coy said;

... as Mr. Mullett does not wish to enrol in the Home Guard, will you please inform him that I consider it inadvisable to call upon his services and I will endeavour to find another driver for vehicle AJT 621 from enrolled personnel. I thank you for assistance in this matter.

The next Board meeting was held on Sunday 12th July when the main item for consideration was the financial result for the year ended 31st May 1942. They were virtually identical to the previous year with an available balance of £47,474 (£47,599) and a carry forward of £31,574 (£33,677).

Colonel Charles Woodhouse wrote to apologise for his non attendance. Colonel Harold Woodhouse was able to be there, but as he was 'O.C. Troops, Blandford camp' at the time, no doubt this was easy to arrange.

Three other items rminuted were:

The chairman reported that Mr. F.A. Mantell had completed fifty years of very conscientious service with the firm, and proposed that the directors should recognise same, it was resolved to give him the sum of £50, free of tax.

It was resolved that the sum of £30 be deducted from annual bonus paid to Mr. A.E.

Pike and £30 paid to him towards car expenses. (Well! Well! - tax was 10/= in the £).

It was resolved that should any of the company Debentures come on the market, they should be bought by the company. (This referred to a 4% 1st Mortgage Debenture Stock issued in 1898 on the registration of the Limited Company).

The Annual General Meeting was held on 7th August, only the directors were present.

On the same day the directors met again, and amongst items minuted were:

It was resolved to pull down the old cellar portion of Ansty Brewery and store the bricks.

It was resolved to give a donation towards the cost of work necessary at Blandford St. Mary school, a sum of £10 was voted for this.

It was reported that,

the trade for June and July was down by 223 brls, this was accounted for owing to the fact that last year the company purchased 800 brls during the same period.

Also,

that under the Ministry of Food, Soft Drinks Industry Scheme, we had been notified that in all probability the company factory would be selected to supply aerated drinks for this area.

The unusual circumstances of the time did not discourage would be 'take over' predators, as this letter shows.

Dear Sir,

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

I am taking the liberty of enquiring whether your Directors would consider the sale or amalgamation of the Company's business. This is not an idle enquiry, as I have genuine parties ready to negotiate whose resources are such as there would be no difficulty in providing requisite finance to carry through the transaction.

There is now an opportunity to arrange a very useful amalgamation in your area which might be of interest to you. In either case of purchase or amalgamation continuity of management is desired, but not essential.

The present time is propitious for negotiations, and I believe that a deal at the moment would be greatly advantageous to you.

If there is any possibility of your considering negotiations for sale - amalgamation or reconstruction etc., I should be happy upon receipt of brief particulars to place you in direct touch with my friends so that you could be satisfied that the enquiry is genuine and that the matter would be treated in the Strictest Confidence.

I trust you will kindly give this letter serious consideration and shall be pleased to have a favourable reply at your early convenience - when an interview for a preliminary discussion either at the office of the brewery or elsewhere could be arranged.

Yours faithfully,

Sgd. R.S. Leveson Gower.

P.S. I would esteem it a personal favour if you could let me have sight of Balance Sheet which would be returned if desired.

The approach, others were to follow, did not merit any formal consideration by the

directors for it was not recorded in the minute book.

Meanwhile the Prime Minister with the C.I.G.S. (Alan Brooke) was off on his travels again, firstly to Egypt to sort out the Middle East and then to Moscow to explain to Stalin why it was impossible to launch an invasion of Western Europe in 1942, despite the incessant clamour that the Allies should do so.

The result of many meetings in Cairo, at which General Smuts the South African Prime Minister made a significant contribution was that Auchinleck was relieved of his command of the Middle East and moved to a new command, Persia/Iraq. He was succeeded by General Harold Alexander, and on 7th August a telegram was sent to London ordering General Bernard Montgomery out to take command of 8th Army.

Before leaving Cairo on 23rd August, Brooke wrote to Monty:

Before leaving Egypt I must just send you a short line to tell you how happy I am to, feel that Eighth Army is in your care ... I am leaving with a great feeling of satisfaction at the thought of Alex and you at the helm ... God bless you, and the best of luck in your great enterprise ...

So the team leaders that were soon to be victorious at the Eastern end of the Mediterranean were in position, and busy reorganising and transforming a tired reorganised worn out army into the legend

that it still is. Despite Churchill's impatience Montgomery refused to launch his attack before he was ready, which by 23rd October he adjudged he was, when 1000 guns opened up on a 7000 yard front and the infantry and sappers moved forward into the enemies minefields. The battle of El Alamein (Operation 'Lightfoot') had begun. It ended around 5th November by when 30,000 prisoners, 350 tanks and 400 guns had been taken. Rommel and the Afrika Corps was in, full retreat, and at home the order was given for church bells to be rung.

It is not easy to convey to the reader how critical the situation was at that time, how touch and go everywhere. In the Atlantic where shipping losses were still horrific, in southern Russia where the Germans were at Stalin grad and in the Pacific region where the Japanese were still advancing. Malta too, so strategically placed, was in grave danger and vulnerable to attack.

At home, and in America plans for the invasion of North West Africa 'Operation Torch' were in hand and going reasonably well. Secrecy was of paramount importance because of the German spies in southern Spain, enemy forces in Sicily and the very delicate relations with the French with whom the British were most unpopular following earlier naval encounters at Oran and Dakar, and later engagements in Syria and Madagascar. It was hoped that the sight of The Stars and Stripes would help, but it was appreciated there was likely to be hostile

French reaction. It was feared too that the enemy would find out the destination of the large concentrations of shipping in the River Clyde, and the eastern American ports.

There were differences of opinion between the Americans and the British about the operation because they were apprehensive of sailing very far into the Mediterranean and believed the safest place to land was at Casablanca in Morocco with no British to antagonise the French, and at Oran (with Royal Navy support), whilst the British insisted on going straight to .Algiers, six hundred miles to the east.

There were great political overtones to this operation because of the French, and in mid October, General Dwight D. Eisenhower who had arrived on the scene to command 'Torch' received an urgent message from the American Agent General in Algiers that someone should be sent to make contact with those French officers, notably Generals Juin and Giraud, who were believed to be sympathetic. So it was that the American General Mark Clarke made his epic and brave journey there by submarine. He established favourable contacts that were to be of great assistance and smoothed the way for the landings.

In the event, in Morocco the Americans had difficulty in getting ashore at all because of the surf, and then encountered fierce resistance. After three days General Patton with 34,000 G.I.'s had not taken Casablanca and a major naval

engagement had to be fought against the French fleet. There was also two days fighting in Oran, whereas at Algiers the British achieved almost complete surprise when they started landing at 1 am on Sunday 8th November.

There was some sporadic fighting around the harbour where two destroyers were sunk, but at 7 o'clock that evening the city surrendered. Soon our troops were well established in the city, the airport (Maison Blanche) and the fertile countryside around. What was to become First Army was in business, it was to gain many honours in the next six months.

For my part, I sailed from the Clyde on 14th November aboard the liner-Strathaird which anchored safely in Algiers bay on the 22nd after a completely uneventful voyage.

In a letter home I wrote

... the rest of the time we spent sitting about on deck or else queuing to get to the canteen where they seemed to have a limitless supply of oranges, chocolate, tinned fruit, cream, sauces, apples - indeed almost anything ranging from fountain pens to vests and soap, to Brylcreem ...

(It was about three years since these goodies were readily available in the UK).

So started in my service overseas that ended in Frenchay Hospital (then 298th American General), Bristol on 16th April 1944 after a voyage from Naples to

Avonmouth on a hospital ship *The Atlantis*.

By the end of 1942, although the pincer movement was under way, atrocious weather was slowing the advances, particularly into Tunisia where some 50,000 Axis troops with air support had landed, and it was to be 12th May 1943 before all the enemy territory was in Allied hands (British & Commonwealth, American and Free French) and it would have been possible to drive safely from the Atlantic coast at Casablanca to Cairo, and beyond. I was privileged to watch the victory parade through Tunis, an unforgettable experience.

It was now three years since the outbreak of hostilities, and the War Department took steps to accept its responsibility to pay compensation for damage done to company properties as a result of 'the military occupation. A start was made by issuing instructions that Schedules of Condition were to be prepared, as letters received from our agents Chapman, Moore & Mugford of Shaftesbury illustrate.

The Red Lion, Stalbridge:

... as at the date of occupation 16th September 1939. As a result of enquiries we have made from the licensee Mrs. Wooding we have prepared the enclosed draft ...

Tile Royal Oak, Milborne St. Andrew:

... date of occupation, 7th February 1940 in respect of the skittle alley and portion of the yard. We have made an inspection in company with Mr. A.P. Higgins (the licensee).

The Swan Hotel, Sturminster Newton:



Royal Breakwater Hotel, Portland.



Figure 2. Blandford Arms, Poole.



Figure 3. Kings Arms Hotel, Shaftesbury.

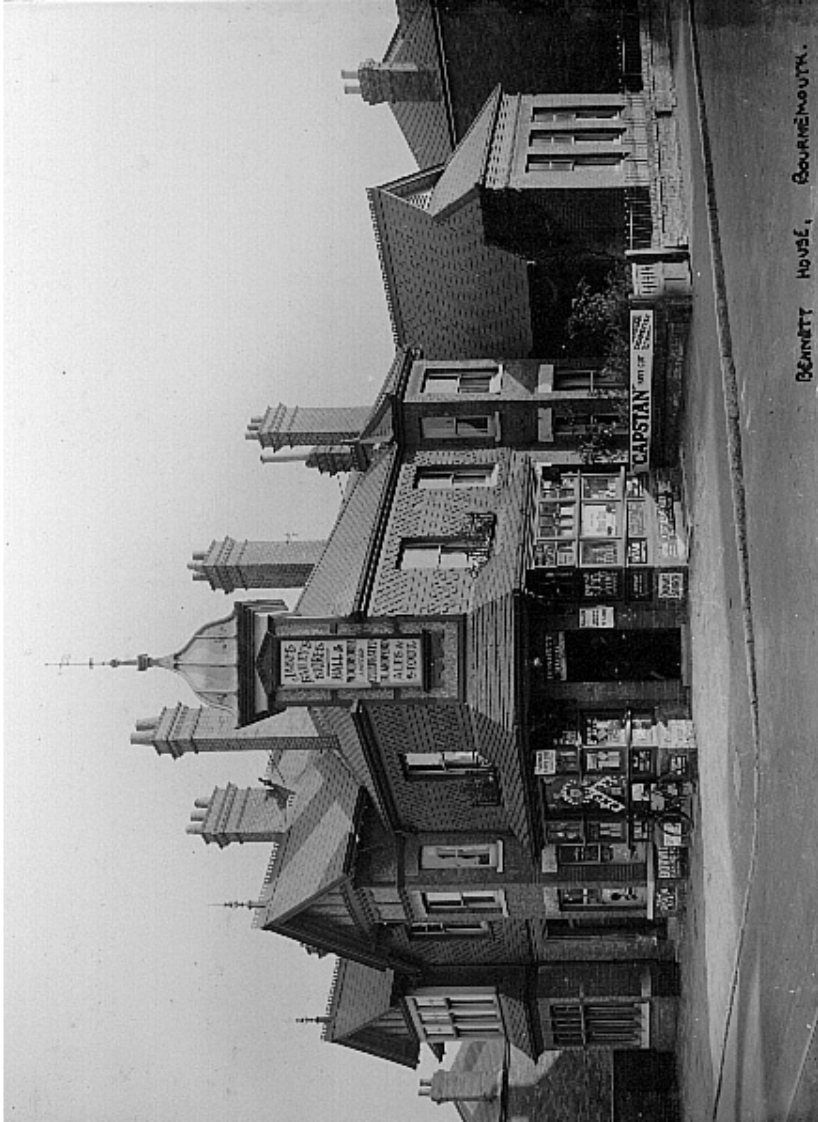


Figure 4. Bennett House, Bennett Road, Bournemouth.



Figure 5. Swan Hotel, Sherborne.



Figure 6. Royal Arms, Commercial Road, Bournemouth.



Figure 7. Essex House, Bournemouth.



Figure 8. Cleveland House, Windham Road, Bournemouth.

... date of occupation 6th September 1939 in respect of 2 lock up garages, long shed and coal house ... [The licensee, H.G. Pruden, wrote direct to the secretary on 11th June 1942 that there was damage to both requisitioned and unrequisitioned buildings, but] I should like to point out that the one and only case of damage by the present unit; Newfoundland Royal Artillery has been made good.

The White Hart, Sturminster Newton:
 ... date of occupation 9th September 1939 in

respect of the clubroom and stables, Mr. Short, the licensee has told us of the damage that has already occurred.

The chairman was not lacking in the volunteer spirit when he received a letter from the controller of the Borough of Blandford Forum, Civil Defence Services, who was the rector The Revd. C.F. Hall O.B.E.

Thank you for your letter of 28th May, kindly offering the use of your car as a sitting case

car. I am having this vehicle registered for this purpose and will communicate with you later.

Nor, as Jim Mantell remembers, when he took up a beautiful lawn tennis court at The Old Ford House to make three vegetable plots. One the chairman cultivated, Jim's father and grandfather had the other two - all were 'Digging for Victory.'

On 14th August, James Longley & Co. Ltd. wrote from Crawley, Sussex:

This Contract is now nearing completion and we shall not be drawing water from your Maltings at Ansty as there is now a supply on the site. We would like to express our thanks to you for this concession for it solved one major problem facing a contract located such as this. With many thanks.

An unusual appeal was received from Mr Rutter, Solicitor at Wincanton:

My brother who is a Squadron Leader in the R.A.F. writes that one of his Station Commanders wants to get hold of a skittle alley, and I am wondering whether you have amongst your various properties, an alley which is not in use which you would be prepared to sell for dismantling and re-erection.

Very doubtful, I think.

Even in those days of rationing and control, it seems extraordinary that H.M. Inspector of Factories had to authorise the purchase of two pairs of clogs. Similarly, through the agency of The Brewers Society, under the control of The Iron and

Steel Distribution Scheme, the company was authorised by reference 170/1267/10491 to purchase in period four of 1942 ¼ cwt (28 lbs) of wire for binding beer crates and ½ cwt (56 lbs) of nails and staples for beer crates.

On 23rd September a long letter was received from The Dorset & West Hants Fuel Efficiency Committee of The Ministry of Fuel & Power. It pointed out that a serious shortage of fuel to meet national requirements had 'led the Minister of Fuel & Power to set up efficiency committees in each region of the Country.' Blandford came within the Southern (No. 6) Region and the Company was required to complete a data sheet about the business. The appeal was, save fuel

it will not only directly help the country's war effort, but will also be of financial assistance to your undertaking ... The Ministry sent out a notice recently to 25,000 factories asking them to appoint a fuel economy officer in each works. I shall be grateful if you will let me know if you have already done this, and the name of the official who is responsible.

I wonder what the reply was!

Despite the worsening position with supplies, brewing was maintained on a regular basis, mostly five days a week after the end of April, with Monday continuing to be the day to be missed out when necessary.

The brewing book for 1942 recorded that the monthly standard barrels brewed were:

January	1731
February	1460
March	1400
April	1506
May	1618
June	1659
July	1810
August	1793
September	1568
October	1642
November	1347
December	1476

Apart from the small increase in July and August, the volume was very constant and suggests that production was as high as the raw materials available would permit.

It must have been a dry Spring and early Summer because during the four months April to July the records mention rain on eleven days only, and even conceded on 4th June that the wind was 'SW Fine and hot.'

August played its usual trick with several wet days, but it was warm and 28th August was recorded as 'Wind SE Fine and hot'.

Rain during the rest of the year too, seems to have been sparse and although on two days in November the wind was from the North, and it was frosty, the weather seems to have been quite mild and dry for Christmas.

It was probably not a very happy Christmas, the blackout, food rationing, shortages of petrol and fuel, and the absence of loved ones away from home

serving in every part of the world that brought the pain of separation and the fear of loss were not conducive to much merry making. Also, by now it had been decreed that the maximum depth of water allowed in the bath was 5 inches!

Local Home Guard units were trying to get into the festive mood as the following letters show. Lieut. J. Sherry, Officer Commanding, No. 3 Platoon 'B' Coy 6th Batt, Dorset H.G. wrote from Verwood;

... can you see your way clear to assist its. On 10th December we propose having a supper and a sing-song when of course we shall require a certain amount of liquid refreshment. I remember that you have, in the past, helped its when we held our British Legion annual function and if you could help its now on similar lines I shall be extremely grateful. We are 50 strong.

From Winfrith Newburgh, Lieut. G. Hooper wrote

It is the wish of the officers to give the Winfrith, Chaldon and Moreton H.G. Plns a Christmas party. The idea is liquid refreshments, the number of men will be 110 - 120. It is thought 18 gallons of suitable beer of good quality and mineral waters will be required. Could you please tell me the charge you would make for the supply of same. I may add as The Red Lion is the H.Q. of this Pln your firm derives much patronage from the members. The party is proposed to be held at the Winfrith Village Hut Jan 9/43. Your views re quantity required would be esteemed; and any other comments for the success of the undertaking will be esteemed.

He must have had a quite discouraging response because he wrote again on Christmas Day:

Dear Sirs

I was very disappointed to receive your letter saying you could not promise to supply us - I carefully notice you do not say you will not supply us - so I do hope you will, anyhow I am willing to pay you for it for their benefit out of my own pocket - They are a jolly good lot of men and they deserve it, when you think they have now put in 2 evenings a week and 2 Sunday mornings a month for over 2 years after all their own work for our protection for nothing - no pay at all - I think we should do some little thing for them and I know you feel the same but it is how to get it all done. I get boxed up the same myself but as my C.O. told me one day I feel just the same but another day I see some light and it all seems so worthwhile so I hope you will do something, I can collect it from the Red Lion if you do not drop that week -

I fail to see if you don't who else we can look to.

Signed

Lieut. G. Hooper

There was a P.S. to the letter 'I will sell you 100 qtrs. Barley if you are short' - someone crossed this through, so it is not known whether the offer was actually made - or accepted.

So the third full year of war ended, and as events turned out at the beginning of 1943 it had passed the halfway stage.

1943: 'Now this is not the end, it is not even the beginning of the end, but it is perhaps the end of the beginning' (Churchill after Alamein)

Early in 1943 two events, each in their own way of great significance happened. Firstly, on 2nd February after a savage battle of attrition that had lasted for several months, the remnants of the German 6th Army that had been surrounded by the Russians in Stalingrad, surrendered.

This meant that their army further south, and much further to the east in the Caucasus had to retreat, away from the rich oil fields that so nearly came within their grasp.

They succeeded in their retreat by the narrowest of margins, but at about the same time the Russians launched another offensive in the far north that resulted in the encirclement of the city of Leningrad that had lasted seventeen months being broken, which lifted the pressure of the siege. Thereafter the Red Army began to punch holes in the German lines at places all along the vast front.

It was a defeat coming so soon after Alamein from which the German armies in the East never recovered, neither materially nor morally.

Secondly, on Wednesday 10th February, Colonel Harold Woodhouse died on active service. The story as told to me several years later by his adjutant Major Bill Crips was that a lone Dornier flew over

Blandford Camp and dropped a stick of bombs most of which failed to explode. The Colonel hearing the alarm and commotion rushed out of his office, and suffered a fatal heart attack. He was 49 years old. His sudden death was a great shock to everyone at the brewery but even more so to his wife Ruth and their four children Edward John, Richard and Stephanie. Myrtle Barnett (nee Fletcher) who worked in the company accounts office from 1967 to 1980 was at the time serving in the Women's Land Army at West Lodge, the family home and recalls the time well. 'It was a day I shall never forget' she said, 'I was working in the garden when Mrs Woodhouse came out of the house. She said come in Myrtle and sit down, I have some sad news for you. I stayed, and did what I could to comfort her for she was very upset, and crying. No, I shall never forget 10th February 1943.'

The following letters are just two of many that were received at the brewery:

From J.H. Parsons, Drummond Cellars, Boscombe

Dear Mr. Frank,
My wife and I wish to extend to you our deepest sympathy in your recent bereavement. Will you also convey our condolences to Mr Harold's wife to whom the loss must be so much felt. Mr Harold was a man of many and wide achievements, and his loss will be as great in Dorset as it is bound to be by all who knew him and worked with him at the brewery.

And from Mr & Mrs Tom Bacon at Latimer House, Winton.

... we were deeply grieved on hearing of his passing so suddenly, as we know full well how very much his battalion and also the staff and tenants of the brewery will miss him. He was very much liked and respected, and we feel that your loss is irreplaceable.

The Directors met on the following Saturday. After dealing with one item from their previous meeting.

A resolution was passed regretting the loss to the Company by the death of Colonel Harold S. Woodhouse, and the sincere sympathy of the Board was expressed to all members of his family.

Mr R.M. Woodhouse then proposed 'that until another director be appointed, one director should be a quorum;' and the chairman seconded by Mr R.M. Woodhouse 'that Mr A.E. Pike be appointed secretary to the company at a salary of £600 p.a.'

At the same time as expressing their grief at Colonel Harold's death at such an early age, the company's Poole solicitors Dickenson, Manser, Brandreth & Yeatman wrote on 12th February to report on the local annual licensing sessions. All the licences were renewed despite these observations by the Police.

1. That Licencees were slack in the observance of permitted hours
2. That lotteries especially poultry, were

sometimes started, thus encouraging the black market, and

3. That performance of musical instruments by amateurs were sometimes permitted, thus attracting young persons into the public house.

It is probable that by 1943 an emergency food store in the cellar beneath the maltings was in place. It consisted mainly of boxes of corned beef, and large packets of granulated sugar. Fortunately, the need to use it did not arise and soon after the war ended Ministry of Food officials removed the meat but because the sugar was found to be rock hard they gave permission for it to be used as part of the quota for manufacturing minerals. It must have been a superficial check because going back a few layers the sugar was found to be in perfect condition for domestic use. Sugar was still rationed!

So far as the war in the West was concerned, the middle of 1943 was indeed 'the end of the beginning;' in the Atlantic, in North Africa and in Eastern Europe. The tide was ebbing slowly away from the Axis powers, and turning in favour of the Allies.

Reference has been made already to the Battle of the Atlantic, and the menace of the U Boats to convoys of merchant shipping bringing essential supplies of all kinds to Britain. For instance, in the middle of March 38 U Boats attacked 2 convoys, and sank 21 ships for the loss of just one U Boat. The Admiralty recorded that 'the Germans never came so near to disrupting communication between the New

World and the Old as in the first twenty days of March 1943.' Then with more concentrated counter attacks, much stronger long range air cover and the use of a new radar set which the U Boats could not intercept, an amazing change came over the scene very quickly, shipping losses decreased and U Boat sinkings increased to thirty percent of those at sea, so that by mid May the German naval chief reported to Hitler 'we are facing the greatest crisis in submarine warfare since the enemy, by means of new location devices makes fighting impossible and is causing us heavy losses.'

This battle was as good as won.

In North Africa, a few days after Tunis was entered on 12th May, the remaining Axis troops surrendered and the British and American forces had a well earned rest before beginning preparations for the next move - into Europe, through Sicily.

The task of the 1st Army had been well, and courageously completed. In the east, Russian progress was at first slow and they suffered enormous losses of men, but it was relentless despite German counter attacks in several sectors. The Russians were by now receiving considerable American aid by way of transport and just as importantly food. whilst the Germans were finding it more and more difficult to renew and sustain their losses. By September the Russian forward move was able to accelerate.

There was a marked reduction in enemy

massed air activity over the United Kingdom during 1943 mainly due to his pre-occupation elsewhere. Nevertheless many raids continued to occur; particularly on Southern coastal towns in the Solent area. For example, on 13th May (a Sunday) over 100 people were killed in Bournemouth where great damage was suffered in residential districts, but particularly, in the shopping centre where Beales was left in ruins together with much of the Square; also The Metropole Hotel at the Landsdowne. Further damage and casualties were caused in other raids on 12th August and 1st November.

Portsmouth was bombed again on 16th August. On the other hand, the British and American Air Forces working in co-operation with each other increased their raids into occupied Europe although daytime sorties were restricted to the range of the fighter escorts then available. Precision bombing at night was rarely achieved, an exception being the famous 'dambuster' raid of 16th May by 617 Squadron R.A.F.. Some prototypes of the 'bouncing bomb' had been tested at the 'Fleet' lagoon behind Chesil beach, near Weymouth.

In the Pacific there was a lengthy lull in 1943 whilst the Allies carried out longer and larger- preparations for an ultimate offensive. The only initiative was an American one to regain the Aleutian Islands, the only value of which was as a reassurance to the American public. In all 100,000 troops with full support of the navy and airforce were used. It was a clas-

sic case of bad economy of force, but a good example of a distraction.

In Burma, it was different for the British, for the main factor was another Japanese offensive that saw them cross the Indian frontier into southern Assam.

At the brewery, the directors met on 12th March, 9th April and 12th June. Nothing of significance was minuted, the principle discussions being on the need to redeem Tithes and Land Tax. Another financial year had passed when they met on Saturday 10th July to consider the annual results to 31st May 1943. Mr W.F. Symonds of Mason and Son (accountants) was in attendance. The trading profit was marginally higher than the previous year, but the tax paid or provided for was nearly £14,000 more. This resulted in an available balance of £43,137 (£47,474) and a carry forward of £22,237 (£31,574).

It was reported that a request had been received from The Brewers Society by which they asked for particulars of a post war building programme, and it was resolved to complete this as far as possible and estimate the repair figure at a sum of £10,000 per year and include for a construction programme the building of The Glyn Arms, Melbury Abbas (this would have been a rebuild on a site acquired at the junction of the higher road to Shaftesbury from Blandford where there is a branch off to Ringwood. It was never proceeded with, and The Glyn Arms was sold), Angel Inn, Longham and Red Lion Hotel, Winfrith and two new houses at

Thorney Hill (near Bransgore on the site of the Beehive off licence. This too, was never done), and Leigh Common (The Sir Winston Churchill), Wimborne.

The Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 11th August and for the first time an ordinary shareholder, Miss H.I. (Rita) Woodhouse attended.

Having disposed of the formal business, with confirmation of Mr A.E. Pike's, appointment as secretary, and the payment of bonuses to the manual employees, and staff, the chairman spoke. There was more than a hint of resignation and frustration in what he had to say.

The past year has been a very busy one. We have sustained a great loss from our directors and managing staff by the sudden death of Colonel Harold S. Woodhouse, his ability was well adapted to our business. I personally feel the loss of his help in many ways, we can only hope that the war will soon be over, and that we shall be getting the younger generation of the family into the business. The conducting of the business is becoming increasingly difficult with the calling up of so many, of both sexes to work for the State.

The difficulty in obtaining building materials has hampered us, both in keeping abreast of the repairs in licensed houses, as well as the necessary re-conditioning of our casks and cases, the right materials are not to be had, we have to make do with green timber for case repairs. The coal shortage is likely to be more acute than ever. We are threatened with coke to replace the second grade coal we are

now getting. There is plenty of barley in this neighbourhood, but we have to substitute oats for barley to the extent of 10 per cent in the grist for brewing, so far it has not affected the quality of our article.

As usual, the directors met on the same day, when amongst the items mentioned were the following:

The action of the managing director in purchasing a plot of land at Longham, with the idea at some future date to rebuild The Angel Inn thereon was approved.

It was resolved to pay Mr P.J. Joyce £2 per week during the malting season 1943/44 to supervise the maltings at Ansty.

A letter was read from Eldridge Pope & Co. Ltd. as to their having been approached by Mr Chambers of Strong & Co. Ltd. to sell to his company their Ordinary shares. They suggested that the local brewers might meet and form some amalgamation of brewing interests, to keep control from passing into the hands of financiers. It was resolved that should the company be approached, to state they had no intention of selling, and it was suggested a Gentleman's Agreement might be arranged, whereby any local company on being approached would notify the other companies, so that any local arrangement could be considered.

It was proposed by Mr F.D. Woodhouse and seconded by Mr R.M. Woodhouse, that Colonel C.H. Woodhouse be appointed as managing director in place of Colonel H.S. Woodhouse deceased, without remuneration.

It was resolved that directors fees be paid in future as follows:

F.D. Woodhouse - £200 per annum
R.M. Woodhouse - £200 per annum
C.H. Woodhouse - £100 per annum
R.F. Woodhouse - £100 per annum

They did not meet again until January 1944.

On the principle that a happy worker was a productive worker the B.B.C. started broadcasting *Music whilst you Work* every day at 10.30 am and 3 o'clock in the afternoon so that factory workers were able to sing along with the popular tunes of the time, such as *We'll Meet Again*, *The White Cliffs of Dover* and *That Lovely Weekend*. No one can remember whether the beer bottling department, or the racking cellar ever echoed to the strains of *Roll out the Barrel*, or anything else for that matter.

The dream that it might be possible to mount a successful, and decisive invasion of the mainland of Europe in 1943 had faded long since, and more realistically massive preparations began to do so in 1944, particularly in Southern England. An integral part of the build up of Allied Forces during 1943 was the need to provide hospital accommodation suitable to accept casualties from the clearing stations that would be set up behind the lines, once the invaders were ashore. A decision was taken that Blandford Camp, or 'Camp Blandford' as the Americans called it should be converted into a base hospital for their Forces. At the time the camp was

being used for battle training, and a vast amount of 'work that started around March was needed to convert an ordinary military base into a General Hospital with wards, operating theatres, clinics and medical services, together with all the administrative support required. It took about eleven months to assemble, train and then transport across the Atlantic all the doctors, nurses and administrative staff of 22nd General Hospital. They arrived at Liverpool, having crossed unescorted, on 6th April 1944 and after a short stay in Tidworth arrived in Blandford where they at once set about making the basic accommodation into an efficient hospital complex.

They were to be joined soon by 119th, and then the 125th, 131st and 140th General Hospitals, so that there were no less than five units on the camp under the control of one headquarters. Each unit had beds for 1248 patients.

In the circumstances, and with the benefit of hindsight, the notice that was issued by The Ministry of Food, Emergency Services Division, Colwyn Bay Hotel, Colwyn Bay on 25th January 1943 would appear to have been unnecessary, almost a joke, but perhaps in Denbighshire in the depths of winter, the civil servants needed something to occupy their time.

Distribution of Alcoholic Liquors under invasion conditions

1. It is not proposed to make any special arrangements for the distribution of alcoholic liquors if invasion comes.

2. At the present time breweries distribute beer to the points of consumption almost as soon as it is brewed and, with certain exceptions (e.g. Burton-on-Trent and London), it is normally consumed within a few miles of the brewery. No considerable stocks of wines and spirits are held locally.

3. If, under invasion conditions, communications break down, and parts of the country accordingly become isolated, the responsibility for all food services will pass to the Divisional Food Officer, or the local Food Officer will make any arrangements which he considers necessary or desirable with brewers in the areas involved for the distribution of available supplies of beer.

It was on 10th July that Allied Forces landed in Sicily, almost unopposed. Some surprise had been achieved partly by an ingenious deception by the British Intelligence Service who planted false information on the dead body of a 'Major Martin' which was allowed to float ashore from a submarine on to the coast of Spain. This was well told years later in the book and film *The Man Who Never Was*. The British landings were made at various points at the south east corner of the Island with the Americans along the south coast, some twenty miles apart.

It would have been better had they landed on the north-west coast near Palermo, much nearer the straits of Messina across which the enemy could re-enforce or retreat which they did, and lived to fight another day. The British had the more difficult task of occupying the Catania plain and moving round Mount Etna (very dusty

- Etna) to the north coast. The campaign had its traumas, but was not too costly, nor lengthy and finished on 17th August when an American patrol entered Messina, just ahead of a British party.

In Italy, Mussolini was deposed on 25th July, but it was not until 3rd September that 8th Army crossed the straits and landed on the toe of Italy. Five days later, on the west coast, the Anglo-American 5th Army landed at the Gulf of Salerno and the Italian capitulation was officially announced. In fact, they left the Axis and joined the Allies.

The campaign opened well enough with 8th Army pushing up the Adriatic coast beyond Foggia and Bari, scarcely disturbing the population going about their normal day to day business. There was a slight problem at Termoli before the Germans turned to fight at the Sangro river. It was not such plain sailing in the west where the 5th Army met determined resistance. Soon, difficult mountain terrain and awful weather caused a slow down, almost stalemate which might have pleased the Germans, but it certainly did not impress Winston Churchill.

The Allied Commanders were too cautious, and did not take advantage of several opportunities that presented themselves. It has been written that they followed the cautious bankers principle of 'No advance, without security.' Consequently, the best that could be achieved was negative, to keep as many German divisions as possible in Italy

where they would not be able to meet an invasion of France.

At the end of 1943, General Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, and Montgomery handed over command of 8th Army. Both returned to England for there was much work to be done in preparation for what was to become the cross channel invasion of Normandy in 1944. They made several visits to Dorset, as did the King and Winston Churchill.

Amongst the units that fought in Sicily was the American 1st Infantry Division 'The Big Red One.' After that campaign ended they were withdrawn to England, and eventually established their Divisional Headquarters on the outskirts of Blandford at Langton House with their troops spread all over the local countryside where they stayed until 'D' Day, 6th June 1944. When they embarked at Weymouth, their destination was 'Omaha' beach. Langton House was demolished in 1949 but the stables block was converted into houses in the 1980s. They still contained the war time ablution fixtures.

It is not difficult to appreciate why, in his statement at the Annual General Meeting, the chairman referred to the difficulties of running the business, and to the shortage of supplies when stiff regulations had to be contended with.

Some public houses were still receiving the attention of their Local Authority. For example, on 8th September 1943, the

Town Clerk of Poole wrote to advise the company.

It is proposed to light the Convenience at The Central Hotel, Parkstone.

The lighting will consist of special low powered lamps and not by the use of painted glass etc., and accordingly, the question of subsequent wilful damage by persons using the Conveniences, should not cause any infringement of the blackout regulations.

It is estimated that the cost will be approximately 7/- per lamp per annum based on the use of 15 watt lamps lit from lighting up time to 10.30 p.m. giving a total of 1,200 lighting hours per annum with electricity at the standard rate of 4½d per unit. The above arrangements will, of course, be subject to review should the blackout regulations be relaxed, the cost of current be increased, or larger wattage bulbs used.

Whilst in respect of The Ship Inn, Weymouth, H.M. Electrical Inspector of Factories wrote from Bristol:

For the purposes of an outdoor electric lighting scheme now being erected on behalf of the Ministry of Home Security for which I am authorised to act in this matter, it is desired that some small insulated conductors should be fixed onto the surface of the front walls of the 'Ship Inn.' This electrical work is for certain war purposes, is being installed to wartime standards and will, if you so request, be removed after the war use has ended. The actual installing will be done, under my jurisdiction, by the Weymouth Corporation Electricity Dept and I confirm that any slight cutting away

or other damage which may be necessitated by the fixing, operation and removal of the wiring will be made good; if you have any particular wishes in regard to the fixings, which in general will be by the ordinary small porcelain cleats or conduit run as commonly used for surface wiring in and on buildings, I will of course try to meet them as far as practicable.

This was a strange request in view of the blackout regulations. It must have been to do with the railway that ran along the quay, or the naval shipping in the harbour.

The fair distribution of available beer supplies was becoming more difficult, every landlord wanted more to satisfy the demands of his customers, but this was not always possible.

On 5th November, the chairman of J.A. Devenish & Co. Limited wrote from Weymouth.

My dear Woodhouse,
Breakwater Hotel, Portland [a company house they were zoned to supply]
Do please drop the 'Colonel' for good. I should be so pleased if you would after all the years we have known one another. I have handed your letter to Ludlow who deals with the question of output and he tells me that the weekly allowance as given to us for the above Hotel was 2½ brls Draught and 72 doz in bottles = 5½ brls total. During the last few weeks your tenant has received 6½ brls Draught and 24 doz bottles = 7½ brls total. Therefore he is running 2 brls per week more than was originally arranged.
However, I feel sure that Ludlow will do all he can for your tenant but you fully realise the

difficulties under which we all have to work now ...

Generally, the Hampshire Brewers Union was the channel by which information and instructions reached the company.

On 26th August the secretary wrote that it had been agreed by the London Committee:

- a. That no new accounts will be permitted except on the grounds of supply.
- b. No new account may be opened by a Brewer with a customer who is the subject of an interchange between two other Brewers under the Divisional Schemes, which would thus defeat the exchange.
- c. Increased supplies by an existing supplier to defeat an exchange arrangement will not be permitted.

Should it be alleged that any Brewers or their Customers are attempting to exploit the position to their own advantage where the Rationalisation Scheme for transport economy is involved, the facts of the case should be reported to the Divisional Food officer at the Ministry Of Food, Rotherfield Grange, 61 Bath Road, Reading immediately. The name of the Brewers concerned in the transfer and also the name of the Brewer attempting to step in, the quantities involved and particulars of the customers concerned should all be sent. The D.F.O. desires that Brewers should be asked to confirm the facts of any case before reporting it.

If it is necessary for you to contact the D.F.O. may I have copies of the correspondence, please?

And on 24th November regarding revised instructions issued by the War Office which included:

a. Increasing difficulty is being experienced by brewers in delivering their products to officers' and sergeants' messes, due to transport problems. To assist brewers, and to ensure a regular supply of beer, etc., with a minimum use of transport, consideration is being given to the introduction of 'a "zoning" scheme for deliveries. Under this scheme road transport deliveries by brewers will be limited to specific areas.

b. Officers' and Sergeants' messes will consult their local N.A.A.F.I. representative when placing orders on brewers or agents for the supply of beer, etc. and will forecast their requirements with care, in order to facilitate the distribution of supplies and alleviate the transport problems of the brewers.

c. Except as provided in sub-paras (d) and (e) below, the use of W.D. transport for the collection and delivery of supplies of beer, etc., from brewers is strictly forbidden.

d. A.W.D. vehicle proceeding on an authorised duty journey and actually passing the brewer (or brewery depot) may, be utilised to collect brewery products, or return empties on condition that no deviation whatsoever takes place, that no material waste of service time is involved, and that a larger vehicle than that necessary for the authorised service does not have to be employed.

e. A.A. batteries and coastal defence units in isolated locations may, on the authority of the command headquarters, arrange for supplies of beer, etc. for their officers' and sergeants' messes to be delivered by brewers to the local command supply depots, R.A.S.C. from which

final delivery may be effected in the W.D. vehicles used for the conveyance of ration commodities

2. For Canteens: Delivery of beer to regimental canteens will be undertaken by the brewers (or agents) concerned. The use of W.D. transport is forbidden except under the conditions laid down in sub-para (d) above, or in the case of onward conveyance to the canteens of A.A. batteries and coastal defence units in isolated locations when the provisions of sub-para (e) above will apply ...

Brewers were still willing to help one another where possible as the following letter of appreciation from H. & G. Simonds Ltd. of Reading shows:

Dear Sirs,

We are indebted to you for kindly undertaking to wash a quantity of casks, equivalent to 20 to 30 barrels per week, in readiness for filling under arrangements which we have made with Messrs. Eldridge Pope & Co., Dorchester. Our Blandford Branch Manager will commence deliveries of empty casks to you towards the end of this week and will collect them after cleaning.

We appreciate only too well the difficulty in securing sufficient labour for cask washing and racking and we are, therefore, grateful for the assistance which you are kindly rendering to us, which will be to the ultimate benefit of the the Forces. In due course we shall be glad if you will send us your account of charges for washing.

The following is an extract from a letter from the T. & G.W.U. The new rates represented an increase of about 13%.

The Minister of Labour & National Service has issued Order, that as from December 6th, 1943, the wages of workpeople covered by the Road Haulage Wages Board, be increased as follows:
Adults 3/6 per week, Under 21 1/9 per week ...

It was a few days before Christmas that the government issued an order that over 3,000 acres of land including the parish of Tyneham had to be evacuated because the area was required as an extension to the Purbeck tank gunnery ranges. After nearly sixty years, the villagers and farmers have not been allowed to return, although the area is now open to the public when the ranges are not in use. The church, school and nearby Worbarrow bay are well worth visiting.

Christmas day 1943 fell on a Saturday. The weather was quite cold but dry according to the brewing book that recorded on 24th December when 62 brls of XXX was brewed 'Thermometer in the air 32 degrees. Wind N fine.' The standard barrels brewed for the whole year were just 315 higher than in 1942 at 19,317 (19,002). For the last week of the year the temperature remained about the same, but on New Years Eve it was frosty.

With the war situation looking better everyone's spirits would have been up-

lifted but there were still no extras with which to visibly celebrate so the holiday passed quietly and pleasantly enough, with most people celebrating inwardly and spiritually by going to their church services, and praying that peace would come soon.

Conventional air conflict had by the end of 1943 virtually ceased over the United Kingdom, although small, sporadic, raids by a few bandits on local coastal towns continued almost until 'D' Day. During the preceding years Dorset had been well protected by the pilots of Fighter Command who had flown mainly from Warmwell, Boscombe Down, Middle Wallop, Exeter and from as far distant as Tangmere.

Planes, both R.A.F. and enemy, were brought down or crashed all over the county and in the close vicinity of Blandford this had happened at Nutford, Travellers Rest (Durweston), and near Bere Marsh (Child Okeford), Iwerne Minster, Shapwick, Sturminster Marshall, Tarrant Gunville, Tarrant Rushton and Winterborne Houghton. Others were lost protecting shipping in the channel.

The third and final part of Frank Pike's history of Hall and Woodhouse's war years will appear in the next issue of the journal.