

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

Frank Pike

1944: The year of decision

One of the first letters of interest received in the new year came from Lord Shaftesbury.

Dear Sirs,

I wonder whether you would be kind enough to tell me on what terms you put in your managers of the various houses in your possession. You must have a lot of inns under your supervision with managers to run them for you and if you could kindly let me know the conditions on which your managers work for you and look after the business I should be very grateful.

Probably he had in mind The Horton Inn and The Bull Inn, Wimborne St. Giles.

Six Board meetings were held in the first half of the year which was more than at any time since before the war started. Most of the minutes referred to properties that reflected a stirring of positive thoughts for the future. Typical examples were: The purchase of a piece of land adjoining The Angel, Longham. A request for a lease by the tenant of The Off Licence, Coles Avenue, Hamworthy.

Negotiations with The Rivers Estate regarding The Bull Inn and The Swan Hotel, Sturminster Newton.

Purchase of three fields at Ansty 'thereby guaranteeing their water supply.'

Purchase of land at Melbury Abbas for rebuilding The Glyn Arms (referred to earlier).

Very unusually there is no record that the directors met to consider the financial result for the year to 31st May 1944. Had they done so it would have been noted that the trading profit was higher at £49,345 (£45,193) but that the available balance was £34,676 (£43,137) and the carry forward £13,776 (£22,237). The big difference was that in 1943 taxation paid and provided for was £66,090 whereas in 1944 the equivalent figure was £100,230. This included for the first time an additional item 'Deferred Repairs.'

This referred to a government scheme whereby schedules of condition had to be prepared setting out the work that would have been done had there not been a war. This included not only properties, but casks, cases and brewery plant. Their value formed the basis of a claim

for compensation. (It was one of the first major tasks I was involved with after the war).

It was necessary to obtain a licence to carry out repairs and in response to information requested by the company's architect, L. Magnus Austin the following details were supplied regarding the brewery itself.

Year ended May 31st 1942:

Expenditure £309:14:11 (This includes £56 for surface dressing yard and £99 for repairs to chimney stack).

Year ended May 31st 1943:

Expenditure £321:7:7 (This includes £178 on malt kilns which can be stated to be plant).

The insurance value of Brewery and Malt House is £58,400.

We suggest a maintenance figure of £150 or £200 be asked for. Some of the floors will want attention, especially the cask washing department, and the yard will require spraying again, the paint also is in a bad state.

February was the month for Annual Brewster Sessions and some comments made by the Magistrates and police were interesting.

At Bournemouth, the chairman suggested that houses should be open during certain hours of every day and that supplies should as far as possible be spread out. He added that even if supplies were totally lacking houses should be kept

open for the purposes of social intercourse. I wonder how the visitors would have reacted to sitting in a Public House with no drinks. The company solicitors thought they might 'conceivably express their resentment rather forcibly.'

At Poole, it was reported that there had been an increase of over 100% in drunkenness during the year, and a caution was given to the effect that lotteries were not to be permitted, and that licensees should do their best to prevent visitors 'singing and shouting' outside the house after closing hours. There was a caution also against 'the sales of rationed goods in Public Houses being negotiated.'

Finally, the Mayor of Poole expressed the dislike of the local Bench to manager licensees, and the police stated that in all ordinary cases they preferred a tenant licensee.

An anonymous complaint was received about The Upton Hotel which was referred to the company's Poole solicitors who thought they should attend Wimborne Licensing Sessions (why Wimborne?) in case there was an objection to the renewal of the Licence. Allegations were made about 'the behaviour of the notorious women who are allowed to frequent the middle bar,' also about 'the disgusting state of the public bar floor' and the fact that 'your other houses stay open longer.'

The solicitor commented that 'everyone who knows anything realises the difficul-

ties in which licensees find themselves owing to shortage of supplies and transport.' He was critical of those Benches who voiced the opinion that Houses should keep open for the sale of non-alcoholic refreshments without indicating how they could be procured.

The shortage of beer that was aggravated by the large number of troops assembling and training in Dorset for the invasion, raised problems in many ways.

From Kinson Conservative Club on 8th January a Mr Quayle wrote that 'my reason for getting in touch with you personally on the question of supplies was complaints made to me by members, and my supposition that the fault was not yours.'

The Committee of Winton Liberal Club felt that their supplies had been severely and unduly restricted for a considerable time. Members had commented:

this club is often short of supplies, whilst others appear to have ample to meet all demands ... if the difficulty is one of transport, to hear whether some further supplies may be had if the club can arrange the transport for such further supplies.

As mentioned earlier supplies to ordinary 'free trade' customers had a low priority and it is doubtful if the company was able to console the thirsty Conservatives and Liberals in Bournemouth, especially in view of the situation regarding supplies of enough beer for the troops, as the follow-

ing correspondence made very clear. Watneys were willing to help, on conditions, as their letter of 10th February explains.

... We could supply you with our 'XA' Pale Bitter at 29° or 'M.A.' Dark Ale at 30°, but we should require you to supply the necessary washed casks, which would be rinsed here before filling, and also the materials to be used ...

Mr Dunnett, the author of the above letter, was a very well known character in the licensed trade, and the story was told that whenever he arrived at Paddington, the stationmaster (complete with top hat) was on hand to meet him. I cannot vouch for the truth of this story.

In Poole the secretary of the L.V.A. advised the company they had resolved

that as and from Wednesday 8th March 1944 all licensed houses in the Borough of Poole will open every day from 12 noon to 2 pm and from 8 pm to 10 pm. These are minimum hours of opening and are subject to supplies being available. The police and the Licensing Bench have been notified accordingly.

It is most desirable that this policy shall be maintained without exception, and therefore, if you encounter any difficulty in adopting this procedure I shall be obliged if you will contact me or one of the members of the committee with a view to examining the position.

Weymouth Quay obviously had to be a very secure and strategically important area during the build-up to 'D' Day as a

letter from the tenant of The Ship Inn, Mrs. H. Jackson made clear. On 6th March she wrote:

Dear Sirs,

I wish to bring to your notice the fact that owing to recent happenings governed by Military Authority I am faced with a very considerable loss of trade this is occasional through a cordon being drawn over an area which prohibits all except residents & people engaged in & around the quay from entry into same & only then when supplied with a Special Permit. This effects 3 licenced premises, 2 of Messrs A Devonish & this one. Can you advise me in which direction I am to proceed as this is my only means of livelihood & as you are aware I am a widow.

Thank you for your considerable assistance in this matter.

Another example of increased military activity locally came in a notice dated 8th March 1944 from the Dorset District Claims Officer, 82 Salisbury Street, Blandford. It was issued under the provisions of Regulation 52 of the Defence (General) Regulations 1939.

I, Lieut Col. The Earl of Carnarvan, being one of the class of persons to whom one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State has delegated his powers under the aforesaid regulations hereby authorise the use of all the land situate in the area described in the first schedule hereto (hereinunder called the land) for military training during the period from 1st March 1944 to 24th June 1944 both dates inclusive.

I further authorise persons using the land in

pursuance of this order to do such acts in relation to the land as specified in the second Schedule hereto.

(Signed) Carnarvan Lieut Colonel

First Schedule

All that land known as The Marsh and The Ham, adjoining the main road and the river, and the field on the opposite bank of the river, adjoining the Brewery in the parish of Blandford Forum, Dorset.

Second Schedule

All such acts as may be required for the execution of military exercises, the erection of encampments, the construction of military works of a non permanent character and the supply of water to the persons using the land under the provision of this order.

This was probably to allow troops to practice river crossing, and to bridge its width with a 'Bailey' bridge or similar construction.

A serious disruption to the war effort occurred in 1943 when the coal miners went on strike over low wages, coal production fell dramatically and Ernest Bevin, by then Minister of Labour, introduced a scheme by which one in ten men called up for service was chosen by ballot to work in the mines. It was an unpopular option for being a 'Bevin Boy' was perceived to be less worthy than being in the Forces.

The effect of this industrial action was on-going so that from 3th April 1944 the Ministry of Production had to enforce an overall cut of ten per cent in the industrial consumption of electricity, and

twenty-five per cent in the industrial consumption of gas. Their letter included the following paragraph.

The recent loss in coal output, coming at a time when stocks throughout the country are low, and just before a period in which we must anticipate some interference with normal transport arrangements by reason of the additional operational load which is to be put upon our transportation system, has produced a situation in which an economy of coal, and power derived from coal is unavoidable. Furthermore, such economy cannot be delayed if complete stoppages of production on a large scale are to be avoided.

It was left to individual firms to secure the economies as best they could but failure to do so was a breach of the Defence Regulations. The company was told to 'advise your work people through the usual channels' and the Ministry hoped that 'by taking measures at this critical time, grave consequences in the near future will be avoided.'

The company was informed by the Coal Supplies Officers of The London & District Emergency Advisory Committee that its weekly allocation of coal for the summer of 1944 starting on 1st May was '14 tons of Somerset slacks' (there was a coalfield around Radstock), but no anthracite from South Wales. Presumably an allocation would have been allowed for the malting season. The notification was accompanied by a statement that the allocation 'is designed to leave you with reasonable stocks with

which to face the difficulties of next winter, but to achieve that aim, it is essential for you to exercise at all times the utmost economy in consumption.'

It is not clear to what the confession by N.K. Moores, tenant of The Hand in Hand, Farnham referred, nor why a constable from Hinton St. Mary (near Sturminster Newton) was visiting his house in uniform. Probably it was a case of serving a couple of pints outside permitted hours, but if that was all it was it seemed a very sneaky, unfriendly thing to have reported it.

The Police have taken details. I am writing to confess I made a very big mistake about a week ago. P.C. Eastman of Hinton St. Mary called here in uniform with Special Constable Read of Farnham who was not in uniform. Read ordered 2 pints and paid for them and Eastman drank one in this house. There were no other customers in the house at the time and they were not here many minutes. I deeply regret the mistake I have made and I am terribly worried and sorry, whatever made me do it I do not know. If must call would you kindly let me know.

The consequence could not have been very serious because the records show that Mr. Moores was the licensee until June 1951.

The next letter could be regarded as a case of 'one good turn, deserves another' or the old boy net working, because it was signed by A.W. Crips, the same Major Bill Crips, who was Colonel

Harold's adjutant when he died a year earlier. He was a London stockbroker by profession - and a good one at that. He wrote from Anson Barracks, Blandford Camp on 10th February 1944:

... An account for £2/6/2d, your folio number 267, dated 3rd Feb. 44, has been handed to me and I feel it my ditty to point out to you that there is no R.A.S. C. Mess in this Garrison any longer. I will endeavour to trace this order and will see that you get the account settled.

In the meantime, Mr Haydon, the bearer of 'this letter, who is the civilian caterer at the 49th AAA Bde. U.S. Officers Mess, to which Mess there are attached approximately a dozen British officers, wishes to see you in regard to the possibility of a weekly allotment of spirits in our Mess.

I spoke to you on the telephone the other day requesting that anybody endeavouring to obtain wine, spirits, etc. and quoting my name, should be refused unless I have written you previously ...

A letter was received from a gentleman living in Parkstone.

I do not know if you are aware of what is going on at one of your houses, namely The Bear Cross Hotel. [The tenant was Mr T.C. Wentworth]. But the Landlord there is refusing to serve service personnel and outsiders ... service personnel including 8th Army men home on leave who I am sorry to say were the ones refused on this particular evening, and not politely ... but after a man has been out fighting for his country for any length of time and then to come home and be refused

even a glass of beer whilst waiting for the second front to open and maybe the first man to land and even the first to be killed. I should think it is time for someone to step in and put an end to this injustice ... this soldier, or these as the case was may say well if that is what I am fighting for, then I may as well finish.

Hoping you will see into this and other cases which I have been told have taken place and make adjustments on the soldiers side.

Prior to a Board meeting on 12th April, Mr. R.M. Woodhouse wrote from his firm Peacock & Goddard, 6 Aldford Street, Park Lane, London.

Dear Uncle Frank

I am sorry I was not available when you telephoned this morning. It so happened I was having some teeth out. I confirm the telegram sent to Pike this morning as follows.

Wednesday 12th Convenient Mr. Woodhouse. Please reserve room at Crown, Tuesday night.

I have no doubt Mr. Pike will send me an official summons which I can produce to anyone enquiring whether my journey is necessary ... Yours affectionate nephew Ralph Woodhouse

This request would have been made because he was someone coming from outside into a restricted area, and therefore likely to be stopped without a good reason for travelling.

Amongst the matters minuted were resolutions to pay an interim dividend of five per cent on the Ordinary shares and to forward to Mr R.F. Woodhouse who was serving in the Middle East, a copy of the

resolution passed at the meeting eight months earlier to increase the directors fees. He would have been delighted to hear this news.

It was reported that the profits of Drummond Cellars, Boscombe were unsatisfactory, and resolved to 'await the auditors figures on same and then to keep the licence alive, but close the premises if thought necessary.' For many years Drummond Cellars at 513 Christchurch Road had been a branch shop (similar to Chamen & Richards in Blandford), from where a Mr Parsons worked looking after customers in and around Bournemouth and Poole. It was closed temporarily, and the customers with all spirit quotas etc transferred into the care of H.H. Pike at Cleveland House, 137 Windham Road, Bournemouth who naturally welcomed the additional business.

No doubt my parents had a shock when they received a telegram from me on 16th April to let them know that I had arrived in England and was at Frenchay Hospital, having docked at Avonmouth where I was surprised to see the Stars & Stripes flying at the end of the jetty. I followed this up with a letter

... we only docked this afternoon and I was one of the first off the ship. How long I shall be here I can't say ... I hope to be home on leave as soon as I can persuade them I'm O.K. Of course I'm not absolutely A1 ... I think the sea trip did me quite a lot of good ... please forward some cash post haste. I have

come ashore almost broke ... I think £4 would do ... the green fields look grand, England even smells good after Italy.

In fact, I had been labelled as a 'Severe Lying' case which was a definite exaggeration, but who was I to question it! I stayed at Frenchay for about ten days having lots of medical checks. I had been evacuated suffering the effects of two severe attacks of jaundice; and a dodgy liver.

Of my stay there I have clear recollections of:

Excellent medical facilities and very caring American doctors and nurses.

Learning to eat a whole meal, say roast chicken and vegetables plus pears (what a luxury) and custard all off the same plate, at the same time.

Taking some American exercise drill that they called callisthenics.

Seeing, but not meeting Joe Louis the world heavyweight champion who was on a tour of the E.T.O. (European Theatre of Operations).

Then I had leave. I remember the train from Bristol being packed with American troops, and feeling quite a stranger in my own land.

Within a day or so, having got myself sorted out and relating and hearing all the news, I walked through the town and into the office to say 'Hello everyone, I'm back.'

The impression I had of Blandford was that everything looked shabby and worn,

and there was an atmosphere of some war weariness abroad.

In the market place, the shop which is now Holland & Barrett had been converted from a Gents outfitters into a 'Donut Dugout' (canteen) and the shop next to Humberts (Estate Agents) that had been a branch of Liptons was the Headquarters of the 'Snowdrops' the white helmeted, American military police. It was not uncommon to see a U.S. military lorry with a mounted machine gun driving slowly through the town in case there was trouble between the black and white G.I.'s.

Blandford had its first one way traffic system for all vehicles that came in from the North past the hospital were turned left up to Kings Road, then right into St. Leonards Avenue and through the town. Some drivers failed to negotiate the bend into the Avenue and knocked the trees over - they have never been replaced.

In the brewery office, the staff who were doing their best to manage were:

E. Lethbridge	clerk	age 79
E. Foote	transport manager	age 46
O. Witt	dispatch clerk	age 40 unfit for services
E. Wellstead	clerk	age 17
E. Smith	clerk	age 17
Mrs Coles	ledger clerk	age 32
Miss Rowland	ledger clerk	(not given)
Mrs Allen	invoice clerk	age 23
Mrs Edwards	day book clerk	age 29

After about ten days at home during which I had thoughts of being sent to some distant hospital, I received an order to report to the County Hospital, Dorchester which I was very pleased about. As I was convalescing and not confined to bed this meant that I was able occasionally to catch the bus to Blandford, or to hitch a lift by one of many U.S. army vehicles going to and fro, so that I was able to keep in touch a little with what was happening in the brewery. It was on one of these visits that the chairman stopped me in the yard, and asked if it was my intention to return to the brewery after the war 'because we have in mind that you will take over from your father one day.' I thanked him, and replied 'Yes, providing I can go to college, and get qualifications' - which in due course, happened.

Locally, as the month of May passed it became increasingly obvious that the invasion of France was imminent, and the build up of troops and equipment reached its climax.

My father had by now become one of the most popular men in Blandford because it was to him that every mess, unit and canteen caterer, or anyone else for that matter, went to ask if it was possible for them to have a cask of beer-, or a bottle of whisky (or two). It was a very difficult assignment to try and keep everyone happy, and it was not unknown for a pack of Lucky Strike (he was a non-smoker) a box of Hershey bars or some other candies to arrive by way of thanks. I do remember going with him to supper in the officers mess at Langton House at the invitation of a Lieut. Wilcox who was, I think, catering officer for the U.S. 1st Infantry Division H.Q. mess.

Whilst all this activity was going on across southern England, the war elsewhere was still being hard fought.

In Italy, the British 8th and American 5th Armies were clawing their way slowly up Italy. Monte Cassino fell finally on 17th May, there was a breakout from the Anzio beachhead on 23rd May, and the Americans entered Rome on 4th June, two days before 'D' Day after which the campaign in Italy receded into the background, but elements of 8th Army ended up finally in Austria. These included 78th 'Battleaxe' Infantry Division with which both Jock Woodhouse and I had once served.

In Russia the Crimea had been liberated in April, and an advance had been made on all fronts by the Red Army. There was a period of stabilisation whilst the

Russians took time to prepare their next offensive. When they started again, by mid July, the Germans were pushed out of White Russia and the Russians were starting to overrun parts of Poland and Lithuania, not too far from the East German border.

In the Far East the tide of war had turned in favour of the Americans, backed by the Australians and elements of The Royal Navy. Island after island was being recaptured.

In Burma, the British had command of the air and after much bitter fighting especially around Kohima and Impala, 14th Army under General Slim reached the Chindwin river in July.

'D' Day 6th June 1944 was a Tuesday when the brewing book recorded - 'Brewing began at 5.45 o'clock in the morning. Thermometer in the air 44° Wind S.W. fine.' By this time men of the 6th British Airborne Division had landed in Normandy, had captured and held or destroyed as required several bridges, including the one that came to be known as Pegasus Bridge. American paratroops landed further west on the Contentin peninsula. Operation Overlord - 'The Longest Day,' had started and with it the liberation of Western Europe. 21st Army Group under the command of General Montgomery followed later in the morning.

Whilst the brewing book, no doubt, correctly recorded 'Wind SW fine' it did not, of course, mention the gale that had

blown up the channel causing a twenty four hour postponement of the assault which meant that the men on the ships and landing craft had spent an awful night in appalling conditions. This could have been a blessing in disguise because the bad weather probably put the Germans off their guard for there was no enemy activity at sea nor in the air as the fleet approached the Normandy coast and the troops went ashore on Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword beaches.

On that morning I walked with two other hospital patients along the Weymouth road from Dorchester and witnessed a never to be forgotten sight as the returning Lancasters thundered in low over the top of the Ridgeway whilst an endless stream of army trucks drove down to their embarkation points; many of the G.I.s threw a handful of coins to us as they passed. About 500,000 men and 100,000 vehicles left from Weymouth alone.

Within about a fortnight the hospitals at Blandford began to receive patients, many of whom were flown in to Tarrant Rushton airfield. They were the first of approximately 19,500 servicemen who were cared for at Blandford before the units closed soon after V.E. day in May 1945, and the staff started to return home to the United States, their task done.

At the beginning of July the company wrote to the Ministry of Food at Reading to request the release from the army of

Colonel C.K. Woodhouse. He drafted a letter also to another office, but the copy was undated and unaddressed.

The firm of H & W have applied to your Reading office for my release from the army. Briefly the case is that the Managing Director, Mr F.D.W. would like the assistance of a co-director now that he is over 80. I am unemployed, a Colonel aged 53. There is a plethora of such officers so I feel that the W.O. are unlikely to really need my services. Could you give this little matter your blessing when it comes from Reading.

The company's letter did not mention unemployment but rather 'at present time is not engaged in any military duties,' and went on to state

... he is needed to take an active share in the management. Of the other directors, one who is the Managing Director is over eighty years old, another Mr R.M. Woodhouse is a solicitor in London and Mr R.F. Woodhouse is away on active service ... you will see that the management devolves on a man over eighty with no one available to take his place and obtain an insight into the business under the present position.

The younger generation connected with the firm are all on active service and not likely to be available for several years as their education in the business has to be taken on their release from the Services. We shall be glad if you can give this application your sympathetic consideration.

J.M. 'Jock' Woodhouse (Brigadier C. H. Woodhouse's son) served with 1st Bn.

East Surrey Regiment in North Africa and Italy. He stayed in the army and later commanded 22nd S.A.S. Regiment, being awarded the M.C. and appointed an M.B.E. Although a director from 1962, he did not join the company actively until 1968. Edward and John, were both sons of Colonel H.S. Woodhouse. Edward joined the Coldstream Guards and served with Guards Armoured Division in Normandy and Belgium. He joined the company in 1947. John joined the Royal Navy and saw active service with Western Approaches convoys, and later in the Far East. He too, joined the brewery in 1947.

A later letter to the Ministry made the point 'we would add that our output for

financial year ended May 31st 1944 meant that we paid to Collector of Customs & Excise over a quarter of million pounds, it is therefore essential that the Management be efficient.'

The Ministry must have listened because when the directors met on 10th August 1944 before the Annual General Meeting, the minutes recorded.

It was resolved that Col. C.H. Woodhouse be paid a salary of £500 per annum to date from August 1st 1944 as joint Managing Director. His active participation in the business was welcomed on his release from H.M. Army.

Also, it was resolved to increase the secretary's salary to £1,000 per annum,



Figure 1. Two of the 'next generation.' Edward Woodhouse (left) and John Woodhouse, with their mother, Mrs Ruth Woodhouse (widow of Colonel H.S. Woodhouse) circa 1945.



Figure 2. Lieut. (later Lieut. Colonel) J.M. (Jock) Woodhouse when serving with The Dorset Regiment, September 1945.

and to pay Col. C.K. Woodhouse and R.M. Woodhouse £50 each as travelling expenses.

The Annual General Meeting was attended by the three available directors. Miss H.I. Woodhouse, the secretary and Mr. W.F Symonds of Mason & Son who reported that his firm had obtained all the information and explanations they required as auditors. The chairman 'presented the balance sheet that had been prepared by the auditors' - so it was not surprising that their certificate was able to include the words 'in our opinion the Balance Sheet is properly drawn up!'

After completing the remainder of the formal business the chairman addressed the meeting. He said:

After five years of war it seems that we may look forward to a period of peace in the near future. The question that such a period presents its, is how will it affect our trade? We are quite certain of some things, namely that the duty will not be taken off for a year or two and that our output will be much reduced, two factors that do not promise very good dividends, added to which we shall have to overhaul our plant, and repair our houses. We have done our best to do as much in this direction as the restrictions of war have allowed, but the rebuilding that should have been done year by year will come at once. We shall welcome a drop in the pressure of business both for ourselves and our plant, that creaks more daily. We have made provision for these contingencies in our balance sheet, added to which we should get an uncertain amount of E.P.T. refunded 20 per cent is mentioned, if such is the case it would be a help.

We hope that we may soon see some of our called up staff and workmen back with its, we have felt the loss of the workmen very much in the transport department, it is impossible to get suitable men for this job. We have been fortunate in being able to hire transport locally, this has worked satisfactorily, but one has not the same control, as with our own staff, as regards the cost there is not much in it. We are very glad to welcome Col. C.H. Woodhouse, he will now take an active part as a Managing Director after 35 years of good service to his country in the Regular Army. Let its hope that in the next few years

we shall see members of the next generation able to join is.

We have to thank the office staff, especially our older members, for their great help in carrying on the work, the junior staff are continually leaving to join the Forces, just when they are becoming useful, making the work of the seniors harder.

Although his executive participation in the company did not begin until after his retirement from the army in 1944, C.H. Woodhouse 'Brigadier Charles' as he was known to everyone had been a director since 1919. He was, without doubt, a central figure in the affairs of the company, and as such, I believe, merits the inclusion of a snapshot of his military career in this piece.

After graduating M.A. at Cambridge University, Charles Woodhouse joined with a regular army commission, 1st Dorset's in Belfast during 1913.

Following the end of the First World War, during which in 1915 he became the first Dorset's officer to be awarded the Military Cross, he held several staff appointments and regimental postings with the 2nd Battalion. These included being in Palestine during the troubles of 1938 when he was awarded an O.B.E., was mentioned in despatches and gained the General Service Medal. He Commanded 2nd Battalion 1935-38 following which he was promoted Colonel. In 1939 he commanded 128 (Hampshire) Infantry Brigade and in 1940-1941 formed and

trained 211 Infantry Brigade. His final appointment 1941-44 was as General Staff Officer, 1 Home Guard (Midlands), being then promoted to the rank of Honorary Brigadier.

Soon after the war ended, he was from 1st February, 1946 accorded the honour of being appointed 'The Colonel of the Dorsetshire Regiment' from which position he retired in February 1952. The Regimental journal at the time wrote of him:

...The Colonel can usually get into the Depot barracks (Dorchester) on Friday each week to deal with many Regimental affairs ... Charles Woodhouse is a very active 'live wire' ... The welfare of all members of the Regiment and the good of The Regiment are always in his thoughts. He is a splendid example of 'a Dorset Man and a man of the Dorset's.

Following the death of his Uncle, Frank Woodhouse, in May 1952, Charles became Chairman of the Company which position he was still holding when he died suddenly in June 1962.

There had been for several months, rumours and intelligence from the underground movement that the Germans were developing a rocket type bomber and a pilotless plane, and several high level meetings were held on how best to combat this threat. Rumours became reality on 13th June when the distinctive drone of the engine of the first V1 'doodlebug' ran out of fuel and it fell harmlessly in a field near Gravesend.

However, it was the start of a second blitz on London and the south eastern counties. Later the V2 rockets joined in, they carried a one ton bomb and travelled faster than the speed of sound, so it was not possible to hear them coming. They caused 2,700 casualties and much damage in London, and were still falling as late as March 1945. The last two V1's which had killed 6,000 people, and damaged a million homes, crashed without doing any damage, and a third was shot down by A.A. guns in Kent on 29th March. These three bombs were the last offensive action by the Germans against Britain itself.

Meanwhile, in France the liberation was going according to plan, if not quite according to timetable. On the left flank it took longer than anticipated to take Caen which fell on 9th July with the surrounding countryside a few days later; Montgomery's plan was to draw the German armour on to the British 2nd Army and Canadians thereby making it easier for the Americans to break out around Avaranches, west of the Cherbourg peninsular. Complete mastery of the air meant that enemy re-enforcements had to make long detours to reach the front, due to the bomb damage on roads and railways.

The American attack started on 26th July and by early August when the 'Falaise pocket' closed, although 50,000 Germans escaped, 30,000 had been captured with another 15,000 killed. Most of Brittany had also been taken.

Relations between Montgomery and Eisenhower were strained because although as supreme commander, Eisenhower was ultimately responsible for the strategy, it appeared that he never really understood what Montgomery was trying to do and kept making suggestions that he was being too defensive and should attempt a break out from the left flank.

There was a misunderstanding too about whether a proposed American landing in the South of France should be cancelled and the troops moved to Brittany. In the event landings near Toulon took place overnight on 14th August almost unopposed. Hopes were high that the whole of France would soon be free, and on the night of 25th August American troops entered Paris. This helped to produce false optimism that the German resistance could not last through the winter.

On 22nd August Eisenhower announced that he was taking operational control of all the armies, for by then the Americans had the majority of Forces not only on the land, but at sea and in the air. They also had vast resources back in the United States and were determined to have a much greater voice in the running of the show. This left Montgomery in charge of the British and Canadian Army Group only with which he was preparing to attack across many of the old First World War battlefields in Picardy towards Brussels and Antwerp.

Eisenhower did not agree, he wanted firstly to ensure the overstrained supply

lines from the channel ports could be maintained so as to get everyone into a position on a 600 mile front, and then to attack all along that line rather than accept a concentrated assault that probably would have resulted in the war being ended before the winter.

The result of this new plan meant that Hitler was given time to halt the northern drive towards the Ruhr, and that Montgomery did not have total command and had to liaise with a separate American Group to his south under General Omar Bradley. Both asked for priority of supplies but could not get a decisive answer from Eisenhower, and it was left to a Combined Chiefs of Staff directive from a Quebec conference on 12th September to give priority to the northern attack by 21st Army Group.

It was too late, German reinforcements stood in Montgomery's way and whilst some Rhine bridges were taken in September the one at Arnheim was not. Many of the airborne troops for this failed and costly mission flew from Tarrant Rushton airfield. However, by now the British had liberated Brussels and Antwerp (but not access to the port), and the Canadians, Ostend.

All this indecision had a ripple effect elsewhere because no troops could be spared from the western front nor Italy to speed up the campaigns in the Far East, and particularly in Burma.

A month earlier one of the most disgrace-

ful episodes of the whole war occurred. This was the uprising by the inhabitants of Warsaw which the Russians refused to aid, although their army was not far away. They also refused the Allied air forces landing grounds, so that supplies could be dropped on the city. By the time the Germans crushed the revolt 200,000 Poles had been killed.

At the brewery, the directors held another four meetings before the end of the year, but the decisions they made were parochial, and of no outside consequence.

Trade was good, brewings being higher than in 1943. It was aided perhaps by a period of fine weather; the brewer allowed himself the extravagance of writing that on 4th August it was 'fine, hot' and for 14-17th August the thermometer in the air was 60° 'Anti Cyclone.'

Sales were however still restricted by the shortage of supplies as a letter to The Brewers Society on 24th August revealed. It was headed:

Pasteurised beer for overseas troops

We much regret our position does not permit its to help with above. We are situated in an agricultural district, and have military camps and hospitals in the area as well, this results in a local demand far exceeding our capacity of production, and any diversion of our output would create a serious local shortage.

However the company had been able to supply some beer to the American

Forces, as confirmed in the following excerpts taken from a letter from Lt. Col. Thomas V. Barber Q.M.C., Chief, Procurement Division of the United States Army.

... Information has been submitted to this Office by the Army Exchange Service that supplies of beer have been made available by you to our Forces ... In order that complete price lists may be contained in our files, it would be appreciated if you would kindly submit ... a list showing the types of beer drawn by our Units, both in cask and bottle...

The profit that was made by licensees in the Tied Trade exercised H.M. Inspector of Taxes at Poole who wrote on 20th April:

Profits on Tied Houses

Dear Sir,

I should be very much obliged if you could afford me some assistance on a matter which during a normal Income Tax year causes me a considerable amount of trouble. It relates to ascertainment for my purposes of the profits on tied houses in cases where the tenant either does not keep any records of his receipts at all, or where the records which are kept are not sufficiently accurate to enable a satisfactory account to be prepared.

Would it be possible for you to indicate:

- a) Whether the tied tenants of your Company all buy their supplies from the Company at the same rates, or does it ever occur that tenant A. may be charged different prices from tenant B?
- b) As regard the years 1942 and 1943, the prices at which the Company's main products, i.e. mild beer, bitter beer, and bottled

beer, were normally invoiced to tenants. I appreciate of course that there have been alterations due to the last two Budgets.

- c) Whether, in the Company's opinion, a tenant would normally have any claim for ullage?
- d) Whether losses on bottles not returned are charged to tenants.
- e) The general rate of gross profit which might have been expected from a medium sized tied house where no differentiation in prices was in force between bar and best room trade during the two financial years ended on the 31st March last.

I fully appreciate that this is a matter of considerable difficulty and that very often the success or failure of a particular house depends as much as anything on the character of the tenant and his ability to manage it well. If, however, you can give me any guidance on this I shall be very grateful.

I have, of course, no intention of quoting any information with which you may be able to provide me as emanating from yourselves.

The secretary was helpful when he replied:

- a) All our tied tenants are charged the same price for our own beers, but in the case of Off Licences we charge a little less for proprietary beers and spirits, this makes little difference on balance, as they have no 'glass' trade to increase percentage.
- b) The price of Draught Beer from April 1941 to April 15th / 42 was 181/- per Barrel and Bottled Beers 8/6 per Dozen. From April 16th 1942 to 19th April 1943 227/- per Barrel and 10/6 per Dozen. From April 20th 1943 to date 249/- per Barrel and 11/6 per Dozen.
- c) We consider an allowance of 1 Gallon

wastage per 36 Gallon Cask is justified.

d) All Beer and Mineral Water Bottles are charged up with goods, and tenants should charge customers a deposit thereby making no loss.

e) We estimate the general rate of gross profits for the past three years:-

April 1942 ... 17½%

April 1943 ... 15%

April 1944 ... 12½%

Locally, there were indications all danger to the population was as good as over, and that some restrictions could be relaxed. Amongst these were:-

August Bank Holiday was a holiday, and Dorset no longer a restricted area had crowds once again on the beaches.

Home Guard parades became voluntary. Fire watching duties were ended.

Some Civil Defence members were released.

Permission for some street lighting from 18th September. Not a lot, but after nearly six years of darkness it was better than nothing. This date coincided with the end of double summer time.

So what was to be the last full year of war was drawing to its close. Christmas day fell on Monday, so there was a break of four days over the holiday.

The weather on 22nd December when 158 brls of P.A. was brewed was said to be 'Thermometer in the air 410 Wind S.W. fine.' Brewing began at 05.45 hrs. By 27th December the temperature had dropped to 24° and the Wind 'N.E. frost.' The standard barrels brewed during the

year were 1300 higher than in 1943, the best month being May (1912 brls) - just before 'D' Day.

January	1556	July	1763
February	1754	August	1861
March	1873	September	1664
April	1493	October	1860
May	1912	November	1760
June	1694	December	1422

As mentioned previously there were now two separate Army Groups in France with the wooded Ardennes area between the two with a front nearly 100 miles long being held by just four American divisions, with hardly any reserves. It was here that the Germans broke through in 1940, and where Hitler in great secrecy now assembled nearly 400,000 men, including armour. He aimed to wrest a victory from the jaws of defeat by smashing through the middle to cause maximum confusion, then wheel north behind the British & Canadian Forces to Brussels and Antwerp thereby encircling them. When this had been achieved he reckoned he could see off the Americans in the south.

On 16th December, in the worst of winter weather that grounded the Allied airforces, the Germans struck. The situation had become very threatening when Montgomery assumed command of the American forces in the northern sector that had been cut off. A major crisis had been averted just in time. The American soldiers fought with great tenacity under firm, expert leadership despite the snow

and fog which fortunately lifted on 23rd December thereby allowing the airforces to enter the battle. By the 26th the attack had run out of steam, and by the end of the month, the enemy had begun to give ground. Hitler's last throw of the dice had failed, the 'Battle of the Bulge' was over, but it had been a damn close run thing.

In Burma, 14th Army under command of now Field Marshal 'Bill' Slim was about to take Akyab on the coast with its air bases, and were advancing on the road to Mandalay. In the South West Pacific the Americans had a foothold in the Philippines, having landed at Leyte on 20th October and Luzon on 9th January 1945. They, were preparing too for the coming battles for Iwo Jima and Okinawa. American B29 bombers were then in a position to reach the Japanese mainland.

The plod up the Italian peninsula continued and although the Allies had forced the Germans to abandon the defensive Gothic line, they had to give up the plan to capture Bologna until the Spring. The Eighth Army was exhausted, and this pause did a great deal to improve the troops morale in advance of the final attack.

It was winter in Russia where the Red Army fronts were being re-organised in preparation for their next massive move forward.

1945 The last chapter

The New Year opened with a cold spell of weather, only on three days in January did the brewing book not mention 'freezing,' 'frost' or 'snowing.' However, at the end of the month there was a sudden improvement as the conditions leapt from '10° N freezing' on Monday 29th to '39° SW thaw' on the following day. The wind remained blowing from that mild direction for practically the whole of February. Unusually there was a brew on Saturday, 30th December and not on Monday, 1st January. Perhaps it was decided that extended new year celebrations would be in order.

There were several dances and parties held in the town and at Camp Blandford, to which many local people were invited. One of early social events of 1945 was a Hospital Ball held in the Corn Exchange on 26th January, under the patronage of the Mayoress (Mrs. D. Cuff). The Western Gazette report confirmed the weather was terrible, but that it had been a successful evening. Mr. F.D. Woodhouse gave a bottle of whisky for 'competition' and the Red Cross under Miss H.I. Woodhouse, their Commandant, were responsible for the refreshments.

Both had been for several years active supporters of the Cottage Hospital, Mr. Frank was Chairman of the Committee of The Hospital League (Col. H.S. Woodhouse had been a member, also) and Miss Rita was a 'Lady Visitor'. The NHS was not founded until July 1948 and

the present 'Friends' four months later. Mr. John Woodhouse was a committee member, and chairman when he died in 1986. The present managing director, Mr. David Woodhouse is carrying on the long association of both the family and the company with the hospital, as a member of the 'Friends' council.

At subsequent Board meetings the decisions were mainly to do with the purchase or disposal of property. For example:

A cottage in Blandford St. Mary (it was near The Stour Inn) was bought from W.H. & C.S. Shorto for £450.

Premises at 76/78 Charminster Road and 320 Malmesbury Park Road, Bournemouth were sold for £2,350.

Other cottages and land in Blandford St. Mary were bought from the Down House

Estate and their tenants.

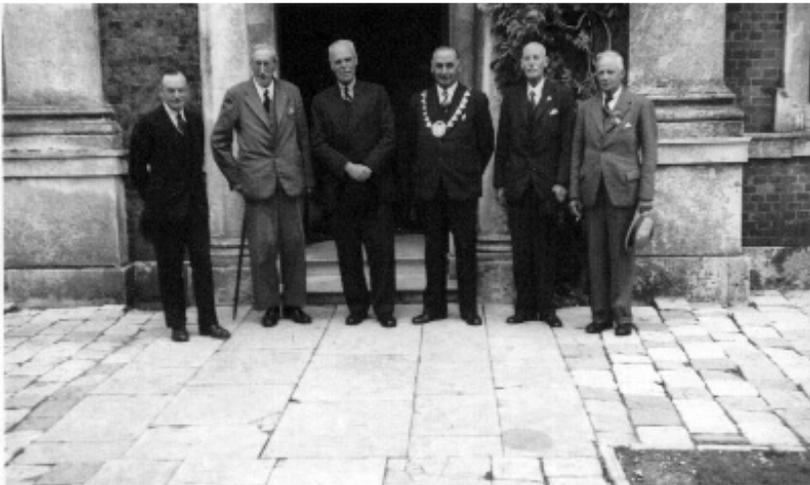
A site at Hamworthy (that was to become The Yachtsman) was purchased for £1,300 from The Dorset Yacht Company Limited and a piece at the junction of Lake Drive and Lake Road was sold to The Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Poole for £575.

The old Harbour View Inn, Poole was disposed of for £350.

An orchard next to The Bugle Horn, Tarrant Gunville was bought for £250.

Another decision made was 'that the sum of £100 be subscribed to the fund being raised by the local Branch of Legion for the purchase and equipment of Coupar House as a club.'

It was a sign of the times that notices of possession relinquishment were being



Opening Legion House Club 1946. Brigadier C.H. Woodhouse on the left of group. Others include Gen. Sir H. Huddleston, Alderman D. Cuff and Major L. Cherry.

served on the company whereas in 1940/1941, it was the opposite, requisitions by the War Department were the order of the day.

From The Fleur de Lys, Cranborne, the licensee Mr. Drake wrote:

'We received notice from the Army Authorities, they're giving up the Club Room from 15 February.'

A formal notice of surrender was received from 'Q.C. Dorset East' that the 'Cottage, stable, cowshed and garage at The Bull, Sturminster Newton being the whole of the property requisitioned with effect from 23/Sep/41 would be released,' also on 15th February. However, a warning was issued that 'should circumstances change before that date, the War Office reserves the right to withdraw the Notice of Surrender without being liable for any expense to which you may have put yourself in the meantime.'

Of The Red Lion, Stalbridge where Mrs. Wooding was still the tenant, the Lands Branch at Southern Command, Salisbury wrote on 29th May 1945 to enquire if the company would be interested in purchasing the W.D. assets that had been erected on the 3½ acre field adjoining the hotel. These included:

- a) 4 Nissen living huts, 30' x 16' standard and each with electric supply and SC store.
- b) 1 Nissen dining hut.
- c) Cookhouse, with all its fitments.
- d) 10-seat latrine - corrugated steel sheeting on wood frame.

e) Ablution formed in requisitioned lean-to; corrugated steel sheeting on wood frame to front. Two ablution benches with water and electric supply.

f) Brick incinerator.

g) WC Block, including 8 seats, urinal, water storage and electric supply. Concrete block walls and tower.

The letter added 'It is understood that two of the Nissen huts are being transferred to the Ministry of Works, and after allowing for these, the estimated present day value of the remaining items comes to a figure in the region of £450, but I should be quite willing to consider any reasonable offer you care to make.'

On the letter; there was a pencilled note 'Saw Austins, Mr. Howard and instructed him, gave him Schedule of Condition. CHW 5th June.'

This was the first reference to be found relating to Mr. F.A. Howard who later established his own architects practice on the first floor at Coupar House, Blandford (Legion House Club) and was the Company's consultant architect for many years after the war, succeeding L. Magnus Austin. He was responsible for designing several post war licensed houses such as 'The Dorset Soldier,' Corfe Mullen, 'The Dorset Knob,' Parkstone, 'The Sir Winston Churchill,' Wimborne, 'The Fryer Arms,' West Moors and 'The Centurion,' Barton on Sea, amongst others. He later took Philip Shreeve into partnership and although they both died several years ago, the

practice now known as 'Howard, Shreeve and Turnbull' is still operating in Salisbury Street, Blandford. Mr. Howard who was commissioned into the Royal Air- Force lost an eye in the Service. He worked very closely with me in applying for several new 'on' and 'off' licences throughout the company's trading area, and enjoyed a very good rapport with Mr. Edward Woodhouse.

One of the officers who served with the American 1st Infantry Division was Captain Quentin Roosevelt, grandson of former President Theodore Roosevelt. Whilst in Blandford Capt Roosevelt, who was killed in an air crash in China after the war, was married in the Parish church to an American girl serving at the camp with the Red Cross.

A letter I received from his widow Francis Webb Roosevelt in 1978 contained happy memories of her stay in Blandford and what it was like during the latter days of the war. She wrote:

One of your officers was very kind in letting the Red Cross use the Town Hall for dances we organised for the First Division soldiers and your local army girls and land army (the latter were at a slight disadvantage at first because of their less attractive uniforms but became popular because they could dance with vigour in the style of the time). We were asked, would you tell me how your chaps get so merry on our beer - we can't get sugar- and there is almost no alcohol in our light or bitter. But indeed our chaps sang merrily on their way back from the pub and

wavered through the blackout as they went. We thought the townspeople were very patient about the noise.

The music was lovely at my wedding, partly due to Hall & Woodhouse who strengthened the organ blower! Two pints, I think.

[The letter ended] - Please have a toast with a pint of ale in front of The Crown Hotel fireplace - a toast to Dorset and Hall & Woodhouse.

The directors minute book had made an occasional reference to discussions with Matthews & Co, Wyke Brewery, Gillingham the owner of which firm was G. Blandford Matthews. His service in the Dorset Regiment, like members of the Woodhouse family meant that there was one common interest they shared outside of business, but it is very doubtful if he foresaw the future purchase of his business by the company, when he wrote on 24th May.

Dear Mr. Woodhouse,

Thank you for your letter. It is some years since I heard I was selling the Brewery, and now the rumour has cropped up again.

I think it must have emanated from Mere as the new gentleman in the bar informed people that the 'Ship Hotel,' Mere was being sold and actually it is only the unexpired portion of the lease.

No, like yourself I am still going strong and hope my son, now aged 13, will come in later on.

Yours sincerely

Blandford Matthews

'My son, aged 13' was Franey Gerrard Matthews who became a shareholding

director of the company in 1963. He retired in 1991.

On 24th February 1941, the London Gazette announced that Major G.B. Matthews M.C.T.D of the Dorset Regiment had been awarded the George Medal for gallantry. His courage and initiative saved the lives of four men trapped in a minefield, and unable to move without help. His action followed an explosion that had resulted in fatal casualties.

On the Western Front the failure of Hitler's last ditch offensive in the Ardennes had affected greatly the German capacity for defensive action, and the Allies move forward towards the river Rhine and beyond was able to proceed at a smoother and co-ordinated tempo. Over the weekend of 24/25th February the American Ninth Army broke clean through the Siegfried Line. However it was an unexpected bonus that other American troops were able to cross the Rhine at Remagen on 7th March because the defenders had not set off the demolition charges under the railway bridge. During the next three weeks there were several other crossings along a wide front running south from Holland, including another airborne drop and a joint British and Canadian crossing of the lower Rhine. Meanwhile the Americans had captured Trier, east of Luxembourg and cleared the region south of the Moselle by 11th March.

It came as another source of disillusion to the British when it was learnt on 29th March that Eisenhower had started to

negotiate direct with Stalin to co-ordinate his advance with the Russians, which included abandonment of a direct drive on Berlin. All this, and more resulted ultimately in Soviet occupation of the Eastern States and sowed the seeds for the iron curtain and the cold war that was to dominate Europe for the next forty five years. The Americans reached the river Elbe on 11th April and their patrols met the Russians on the 25th at the agreed border of occupation.

The pace at which the German defences crumbled increased, and it was a major tragedy that with victory in sight President Roosevelt died on 12th April. He had been a staunch friend to Britain, especially in the period prior to American entry into the war.

With the Russians moving forward Berlin was soon under siege and the Red Army entered the suburbs. On 30th April, an hour after the Russian flag was hoisted on The Reichstag, Hitler and his mistress Eva Braun committed suicide by swallowing cyanide capsules.

Two days earlier Mussolini and twelve of his cabinet had been arrested and shot by Italian partisans. Standing on the threshold of the end, the sequence of events was:

- 30th April Munich captured by the French and Americans
- 2nd May Fighting ceased in Berlin
- 2nd May German Forces in Italy surrendered
- 4th May Allies seized Salzburg

- 5th May British Airborne Troops forced German Forces in Denmark to capitulate.
- 5th May German Forces in Holland and North West Germany surrendered to General Montgomery on Luneberg Heath.
- 7th May General Eisenhower accepted general German surrender at Rheims.
- 8th May British and Norwegian Forces landed in Norway.
- 8th May German garrison in the Channel Islands surrendered.
- 9th May Surrender ratified in Berlin.

The war in Europe was over and in Britain, Tuesday 8th May was celebrated as V.E. day. Winston Churchill, not wishing anyone to forget there was still a war to be won in the Far East, announced 'We may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing' which is exactly what happened. Britain was the only Allied nation that had been in the fight from beginning to end. It showed, the country was exhausted. Personally, having been discharged from Dorchester hospital at the end of August 1944, I had been moved around the country for the purpose of retraining, before being posted early in 1945 to 18th Command Workshops



The Victory Parade approaches the Crown Hotel.



As above.



His worship the Mayor (Alderman D.S. Cuff) takes the salute, with members of the Borough Council and Service representatives.



One of the several tea parties for children was held at 8 St. Leonards Avenue.

R.E.M.E. at Bovington Camp. I have no recollection of great happenings on V.E. day, the most exciting thing I joined in was to make a pile of blackout boards and material, and set fire to it!

It was very different in Blandford and the surrounding villages as an article in the *Western Gazette* reported very fully. There is no reason to believe that the extension of permitted hours to 11.15 pm was abused in any way, despite the fear of the Watch and Social Problem Committee of The Mothers Union. My wife Margaret remembers a very happy evening at the Victory Ball. 'There was no drunkenness at all, everyone was too happy and we all felt quite safe,' she recalls. 'At the end of the evening I was pushed out into the centre of the floor

with my father (she was deputising as Mayoress, for her mother) whilst everyone joined hands in a large circle around its and sang *Auld Lang Syne* and *God Save the King*.' The Mothers Union was correct of course, to express the sentiment that 'it would be right for all of its to remember that victory does not belong only to those of its who survive.' That was as trite then as it is true today, and that is why we still remember, especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

There was no holiday at the brewery on 8th May for the brewing book recorded that 158 barrels of XXX were brewed on that day, and that as usual 'Began brewing at 05.45 o'clock in the morning. Thermometer in the air 50° Wind SW fine' so it was a nice day in every way.

Brewing continued on a five day weekly routine for the rest of the month during which with one minor hiccup the balmy warm weather continued.

The *Western Gazette* reported on a meeting presided over by the Mayor at which it had been hoped to agree on a gift for each man and woman as a 'Welcome Home' gesture. This proved difficult and Brigadier Woodhouse expressed his opinion that 'certificates, civic letters and plaques would be regarded by the troops with something akin to derision.' Many different ideas were put forward and in an attempt to overcome the impasse Charles Jesty suggested 'deferring until the mens own views could be assessed.'

Dr. Kenneth Wilson brought the matter to a head by proposing

That a small personal gift in kind be given to each Blandford service man and woman; that the nature of the gift be decided at a later date and that the rest of the fund be used for some greater object in their interest.

The motion was carried without dissent.

I must confess to not having any recollection of receiving a gift, nor of the fate of the 'Welcome Home' fund balance.

Just three weeks after V.E. day a solemn ceremony took place at Blandford Camp when the personnel of 22nd (U.S) General Hospital dedicated their own corner of a foreign field to the memory of

their fallen comrades. It became known as The Roosevelt Memorial Park which it still is today.

The 47th Annual General Meeting of the company was held in the Boardroom on Wednesday 8th August. All the directors attended, including Mr. R.F. Woodhouse who after being re-elected, stated that he was glad to resume his seat on the Board. As in 1944, Miss H.I. Woodhouse was the only non director shareholder who attended.

The trading profit for the year to 31st May 1945 at £50,703 (£49,345) was little changed from the previous year. The available balance was £27,558 (£34,676) and the carry forward £14,158 (£13,776). However, it had been possible to purchase Tax Reserve Certificates to the value of £140,000. The dividend on the Ordinary shares remained unchanged, the total for the year being 15%.

In his address to the meeting, the chairman said:

We can all breath more freely now that the war in Europe has ceased. We as a Company have been most fortunate in escaping material damage both at our Headquarters and Licenced Houses, none are a total loss, the damage they sustained was soon repaired. Properties that were requisitioned are being released, our claims for damage is being dealt with by our architect. The repairs to our premises is much more it? abeyance than we like, but it is most difficult to get work done, the £10 limit per house is

making it worse than ever. Our brewery plant is now finding its age, we have a great deal to renew, this too is difficult to accomplish. Engineers as well as ourselves suffer from lack of men and materials.

Regarding our trade, we have more than can cope with, we are and have been brewing to our full capacity, but never have we enough. One hesitates to make any drastic alterations in the plant, at present this is impossible as we cannot stop brewing, it does not seem likely that the great demand will last long after demobilisation is complete, I think we shall have to adopt the Asquithian recipe, wait and see.

We have had more trouble than usual with the working of the business, petty thieving has been much in evidence, shortage of the right labour is the chief cause, not having the right people to superintend the loading in and out, we prosecuted two men, who were convicted and fined, the publican who received the stolen goods lost his licence, we hope this will have a salutary effect on the rest.

Demobilisation is proceeding slowly, we are most in need of the office staff, but as they were mostly young men, they do not return quickly. Materials last season were poor. Barley giving bad extracts, but as the beers are not more than a week in cask we have experienced little trouble.

We are fortunate in still having the senior members of the staff with us, they have kept the ball rolling, with very little break for the whole of the war period, we owe them a great debt of gratitude. Colonel Charles is a great help to the company, his ripe experience of

men and affairs is proving most useful. We are glad to welcome Mr. R.F Woodhouse once more to the Board, after his service in the Middle East.

Regarding the giving of the bonus, at a meeting with the men on Friday, July 6th 1945, we pointed out that the bonus was given as an incentive for co-operation to our mutual benefit, the trouble we have experienced this year did not point to their part of the bargain being kept. If we had the same trouble in the future the bonus would be withheld.

It was resolved however to pay a bonus to the men and staff, as directed by the managing directors.

The meeting terminated with a vote of thanks to the chairman proposed by Mr. R.F. Woodhouse and carried unanimously.

R.F. 'Rex' Woodhouse was elected a director in August 1926, and for some years prior to the war, lived and worked near Cirencester, Gloucestershire, where he was employed as a brewer, having for a short time in 1933 been the company's 'practical brewer,' a position that he had to give up because of ill health.

He served in the army throughout the war, and on demobilisation with the rank of Major was welcomed back to the Board in 1945, but did not have an executive role. He attended Board meetings, and would have been a member of the management committee which met for the first time on 12th May, 1952. Tragically he made only two appear-

ances because it is recorded that before the meeting on 3rd June 'A short silence was observed in memory of Mr. F.D. Woodhouse, Managing Director and Mr. R.F. Woodhouse, Director, both of whom had died since the previous meeting.'

Rex was a lively personality, and it was typical of him that at his first management meeting, he requested that a bottle of sherry should be placed on the table for refreshment. He was living with Miss H.I. Woodhouse at Larksmead, Salisbury Road, Blandford, and after the meeting on 26th May whilst cutting the grass in Pimperne churchyard, collapsed and died of a heart attack - just three days before the Chairman.

No doubt the shock result of the General Election that had become known on 26th July would have been talked about without much comprehension of what the radical policies of the new socialist government, under the premiership of Clement Attlee would mean to the nation over the next five years. Even in North Dorset the local Conservative Richard Glyn was defeated by the Liberal, Frank (later Lord) Byers. The brewery hooter would not have blown on that day.

However, it certainly would not have been possible to appreciate the full significance of events that were taking place on the other side of the world.

Two days beforehand, on 6th August, the first atomic bomb was dropped by the American airforce on Hiroshima, the day

after the meeting, on 9th August, the second one fell on Nagasaki and the world entered the nuclear age.

These two blows, following months of traditional bombardment and the fact that Russia declared war on 8th August and invaded Manchuria on the following day proved too much for the Japanese. The second World War was brought formally to an end on 2nd September when their representatives signed the document of unconditional surrender on board the U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

The vast area and many islands still occupied by the enemy meant that fighting did not cease immediately everywhere so whilst Hong Kong surrendered on 2nd September, Singapore and New Guinea did not for another ten days, and the Andaman Islands on 9th October.

Nevertheless the lives of many thousands of Allied servicemen and women were saved, because they were no longer to battle their way overland and into the heart of Japan.

It was actually, on 14th August that the Japanese agreed to the terms of unconditional surrender and the next day Wednesday 15th August was proclaimed to be V.J. day.

Aftermath

After six years duration that was an abatement of normal life, the war had

ended. At the outbreak of hostilities King George VI said 'With God's grace we shall prevail' and we had, just. The United Kingdom emerged as a duller, drabber place in which to live but in 1945 it was the wish of everyone to return to peacetime normality as rapidly and as far as possible. It was certainly the aim of the directors that the Company's independent survival having been secured thus far by virtue of their own resolve, to the dedication of senior staff and the workers left behind to carry on and deal with innumerable difficulties, that the business should first be stabilised pending the gradual return of men from the Services, and the arrival of the next generation.

That this aim was achieved where others failed was due largely to prudent financial management, resistance to the temptation of dividend profligacy and to a certain amount of good luck in that the company had come through largely unscathed, both in the loss of lives, and materially.

There was a great deal to be done, and it was agreed that the return of senior staff was of primary importance, so in an attempt to speed up one case the secretary wrote to The Ministry of Food on 5th September, concerning the release of Cyril Taylor. Reference was made in the letter to 'discharge group 25.' A group number was allocated to all Service personnel based largely on age, and length of service. Personally, although I had served from day one, I had not then reached my twenty fifth birthday so I was assigned to group 28, and released on 1st May 1946.

There was motor transport to be replaced. It is not known why it was necessary to refer to the Ministry of War Transport, except that it might have been possible to tender for surplus vehicles, or obtain a permit to be put on a list for the purchase of new ones. Of course, some consequences and effects of the war would last for many years, particularly building restrictions because of the vast amount of repair and re-building to be done. Food rationing did not end finally until 1954.

It was on 7th August 1946 that the chairman addressed the shareholders at the first peacetime Annual General Meeting since 1939, as follows:

It is now a year since the end of the war, but as regards conditions in our business, we are no better off in obtaining many things, especially machinery and motors. The supply of wines and spirits is easier, they are government supplied and very dear.

The restrictions on our brewing materials is still crippling. The reduction of 15% in the Spring hit us just as the output was catching up with consumption, the new attempt to mitigate this by reducing the gravities will not to any great extent have the desired effect, it will help its a little as we did not cut the gravities with the first order, this gives its a small margin and should increase our brewings by about 200 brls per month, we are reducing the price of the mild ale by 1d per pint. All our clerical staff have returned, and replaced the women employed during the war, the only women now employed are those in the beer bottling department.

Our trade has been greater than ever before, the output of 36,000 barrels being greater than last year, our previous best.

All sorts of materials are still short, and anything to do with wood is very scarce, this has made the repair of casks and cases difficult, but the situation is now a little easier regarding cases, but not casks.

The upkeep of the company's premises during the years between the wars has been criticised, we have obtained figures regarding this matter. These figures are remarkable - improvements and re-buildings £106,024. General repairs and maintenance £122,531. Acquisition of new properties £159,065. Tithe redemptions, sewerage to Blandford properties, electric light installations, improvements and extension of brewery premises make the grand total of £400,340, the original capital of the Brewery including debts was £275, 000, we have thus ploughed back into the business more than 1¾ as much as the original capital.

The drainage of Blandford St. Allay is about to be undertaken by the District Council, this will entail much additional expense for us, we have made ample provisions for contingencies, but have no idea of the actual cost.

The repair and renewal of properties is much delayed, permits have to be obtained for all work over an amount of £10 per house.

The future of the brewing trade is uncertain there is a talk of nationalisation, we hope it is only talk. The excess profits tax finishes this year but we are threatened with some other tax, we can be sure we shall not get away free. Thanks are due to the staff, especially the older members, for their hard work and cooperation during difficult times.

What he said was a concise expression of the situation that then obtained, and therefore a most suitable note upon which to end this story, as everyone involved with the business of Hall & Woodhouse waited eagerly for the right conditions to drive the business forward once again.

Bibliography

It was very helpful when compiling this book to be able, for the sake of accuracy in recounting the details of certain major wartime events and their dates, to refer to several books that I owned. Amongst the principal ones I consulted were:

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Appendix

Licensed properties owned or leased by Hall & Woodhouse Ltd - September 1939

Albion Hotel	Parkstone	Crown Inn	Fontmell Magna
Albion Hotel	Wimborne	Crown Inn	Hilton
Antelope Inn	HazelbmyBryan	Crown Inn	T. Hinton
Ansty Arms	Poole	Crown Inn (Martyr's)	Tolpuddle
Anchor Inn	Shapwick	Crown Tap	Wimborne
Angel Inn	Longham	Damory Oak Inn	Blandford
Antelope Hotel	Sherborne	Dorset House Inn	Wimborne
Badger Hotel	Blandford	Drax Arms Inn	Bere Regis
Bakers Arms	Child Okeford	Drax Arms Inn	Spetisbury
Barley Mow	Colehill	Drum & Monkey Inn	Hazelbury Bryan
Bear Cross	Kinson	Earl Haig Inn	Gussage All Saints
Beehive Inn	Wimborne	Farquharson Arms	Pimperne
Black Horse	S. Marshall	Fleur de Lys Hotel	Cranborne
Blackmoor Vale	Marnhull	Fountain Inn	Enmore Green
Blandford Arms	Poole	Fox Inn	Ansty
Blue Boar Inn	Blandford	Fox Inn	Holwell
Bricklayers Arms	C. Marshall	Fox Inn	Plush
Bugle Horn Inn	T. Gunville	General Allenby (Botany Bay)	W. Zelston
Bull Hotel	Salisbury	George Inn	Blandford
Bulls Head	Dorchester	Glyn Arms	Melbury Abbas
Hotel Bush Inn	W. Kingston	Green Man Inn (L)	Wimborne
Carpenters Arms	Donhead St. Mary	Greyhound Hotel	Blandford
Cashmoor Inn	Cashmoor	Greyhound Inn	W. Kingston
Castle Inn	D. St. Andrews	Grove Arms Inn	Ludwell
Catherine Wheel Inn	Salisbury	Half Moon Inn	Blandford
Central Hotel	Parkstone	Halfway Hotel	Parkstone
Charlton Inn	C. Marshall	(G'hopper)	
Churchill Arms (L)	Alderholt	Hand in Hand Inn	Farnham
Coachmakers Arms	Blandford	Harbour View Inn	Poole
Cock & Bottle Inn	Morden	Hop & Barleycorn Inn	Handley
Cross Keys Inn	Mannington	Horns Inn	Colehill
Crown & Anchor Inn (L)	Wimborne	Kings Arms (L)	Fonthill Bishop
Crown Hotel	Blandford	Kings Arms	Shaftesbury
Crown Hotel	Marnhull	Kings Arms Hotel	Poole
Crown Hotel	Wimborne	King Johns Hotel	Tollard Royal
		Knowles Arms	Shaftesbury
		Lord Nelson Inn	Poole
		Monmouth Ash	Verwood

(wef 14.10.39)		Royal Oak Inn	O. Fitzpaine
Museum Hotel (L)	Farnham	Seymer Aims Hotel	Shillingstone
Nags Head Inn	Mappowder	Ship Inn (L)	Weymouth
New Inn	Batcombe	Ship Inn	Wool
New Inn	Blandford	Silent Woman Inn	Cold Harbour
New Inn (The Stour)	B. St. Mary	Sloop Hotel	Parkstone
New Inn	Buckland Newton	(Conjurers 1/2 Crown)	
New Inn	Charminster	Smiths Arms	Wimborne
New Inn	Marnhull	Stalbridge Arms	Stalbridge
New Inn	Okeford Fitzpaine	Hotel	
New Inn (Thimble)	Piddlehinton	Star Inn	Blandford
New Inn (Poachers)	Piddletrenthide	St. Peters Finger Inn	L. Minster
New Inn	S. Marshall	Strangeways Arms	Evershot
New Ox Inn	Shillingstone	Swan Hotel	Sherborne
Noahs Ark Inn	Dorchester	Swan Hotel (L)	S. Newton
Oddfellows Arms	Wimborne	Swan Inn	Broadway
Inn Old Inn	Holt	Sweet Home Inn	Parkstone
Portland Railway	Weymouth	Talbot Hotel	Iwerne Minster
Hotel		Talbot Hotel	Mere
Prince of Wales Inn	Puddletown	Three Choughs Inn	Blandford
Pure Drop Inn	G. Wootton	True Lovers Knot Inn	T. Keynston
Queens Head Inn	Marnhull	Two Brewers Inn	Shaftesbury
Railway Inn	Spetisbury	Union Arms	Child Okeford
Red Lion Hotel	Stalbridge	Upton Hotel	Upton
Red Lion Hotel	Winfrith	(Greenridge)	
Red Lion Inn	Blandford	Wheatsheaf Inn	Blandford
Red Lion Inn	S. Marshall	White Hart Hotel	Dorchester
Red Lion Inn (L)	S. Newton	White Hart Hotel (L)	S. Newton
Retreat Inn	Marnhull	White Hart Inn	Longham
Rising Sun Inn	Wimborne	White Hart Inn	Shroton
Rivers Arms	Chesilborne	White Horse Inn	Blandford
Rivers Arms	S. Newton	White Horse Inn (L)	Hinton St. Mary
Rose & Crown Inn	Blandford	White Horse Inn	Middlemarsh
Rose & Crown Inn	Shaftesbury	White Horse Inn	Stompaine
Royal Arms Hotel	Bournemouth	Woodman Hotel	Branksome
Royal Breakwater	Portland	<i>Off Licences</i>	
Hotel (L)			
Royal Oak Inn	Buckland Newton	Alder Road Stores	Parkstone
Royal Oak Inn	Dewlish	Ale Stores	Highcliffe
Royal Oak Inn	M. St. Andrews	Beehive	Bransgore

Beer House	Fifehead Neville
Bennett House	Bournemouth
Chamen & Riehards	Blandford
Cleveland House	Bournemouth
Drummond Cellars	Boscombe
Essex House	Bournemouth
Langley House	Branksome
Latimer House	Winton
Wine Stores	Verwood
(Monmouth Ash)	
Lake Road	Hamworthy
Ashley Road	Parkstone
Churchill Road	Parkstone
Seaview Road	Parkstone
Kinson Road	Wallisdown

Bargates	Christchurch
Pure Drop	M. St. Andrews
Toronto Stores	Bournemouth

We intend to publish Frank Pike's account of Hall & Woodhouse Limited during the period 1945 - 1995 next year.