

## BRICKWOODS: 'THE BEST BEER UNDER THE SUN'. THE FINAL YEARS, 1953 - 1983

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Much has been written in the past by various Brewery History Society members of the early days of Brickwoods brewery in Portsmouth, especially the excellent articles by Philip Eley. However, its latter years — after the merger in 1953 with Portsmouth and Brighton United Breweries and the period of Whitbread Wessex to the end in 1983 — has been somewhat overlooked.

This article intends to fill this gap. This will be done by calling on the memories of those who worked at the brewery including myself who was employed from 4 November 1976 to 13 July 1987, although unfortunately not in the brewing department. Hugo Anderson, who was a brewer in the late 1970s and early 1980s (before moving on to Watneys at Mortlake) also provides his recollections. The article follows on from a previous *Brewery History* paper detailing the history of The Portsmouth and Brighton United Breweries published in Issue 179, Summer 2019 which covered the period up to 1953 when the two breweries amalgamated.

Brickwoods, along with Portsmouth and Brighton United breweries, had suffered extensive damage both to its many public houses and breweries during World War Two. The fermentation rooms at Brickwoods were particularly badly affected when 22 fermenting vessels were damaged during an enemy air raid in 1941 putting great strain on production. Brickwoods brewing capacity in the 1930s had been around 260,000 barrels per year and during that period many new public houses were opened, mainly in the Portsmouth area as the city expanded. A great many of the new public houses were on large estates to the north of the city and these were not as badly affected by bombing than those close to the brewery and city. As numerous public houses were destroyed during the war the company had little problem later in transferring licenses to any new builds, but this had to wait until non-essential building licences had been relaxed post 1954. After then most of the new public houses were impressively large, built of brown brick, and containing a public bar, a lounge bar and an off licence in between. A

few of these buildings remain including two on the eastern side of Portsea Island, The Cumberland Tavern and The Good Companions. At the end of the Second World War concrete fermentation vessels were installed to temporarily replace those damaged in the Blitz but there was much other work needing to be done within the brewery and in their tied houses.

Brickwoods and Portsmouth and Brighton United Breweries were closely linked during and just after the war. They both helped each other out when production was halted due to bomb damage in each other's brewery and workers were taken on by each of the companies that had previously worked at the other brewery. Consequently, when United decided to sell it was Brickwoods that was the natural choice even though Charringtons brewery of Mile End London was also in the frame with an offer. It has been said that the decision to go with Brickwoods was due to a friendship between directors and an assurance that they would keep the United brewery going. United had been forced to sell their brewery to pay for death duties incurred when the major shareholder, Sir William Dupree, died on 31 January 1953 whilst on holiday in South America.

We start at this date when both breweries were preparing for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II on 3 June the same year. At the end of February 1953 Brickwoods decided that their Mild would be reduced in strength by one degree to a low of 1030 degrees, but would be primed at a rate of three pints per barrel. It was said that this would make no difference to the costs, but should improve its quality. The bottled version, called Brown Brew, was also adjusted and described on the new bottle label as sweeter. By April 1953 it was reported that favourable comments had been received for Mild since priming commenced.

After a second offer was received from Charringtons for United in September 1953 it was decided to accept Brickwoods' offer and United director, Peter Dupree, was appointed

to the board of Brickwoods as well as W.D. Frost. The merger brought 271 public houses and United's King Street Brewery into the Brickwoods fold. Very soon after the merger it was announced, on 28 November 1953, that Sidney Charles Shepherdson, Brickwoods head brewer, had died at his home aged only 63. His position was taken by United's head brewer, John Clubb, whose salary increased from £1,500 to £1,850 per annum, although he was also now responsible for bottling. He carried on as head brewer at Brickwoods until at least 1969. The second brewer Ron Noble's salary was increased from £925 to £1,000 per annum.

The company had previously issued a bottled Jubilee brew in 1935 so were well prepared for the Coronation. A committee had been arranged to organise the brewing and marketing and reported back early in the year with a marketing program and a label design. Initially after the merger in 1953 both breweries kept working separately. United produced a bottled beer for the Coronation called Pompey Royal showing the trademark 'Pompeys Pillar,' inspired by a Pillar in Alexandria Egypt, whilst Brickwoods had produced a beer called 'Coronation Ale.'

Brickwoods was based at Admiralty Road close to the dockyard, whilst about a mile away at Kings Street, Southsea was the United brewery, encircled by houses. With both breweries there was an overlap in distribution depots and beer ranges, especially the bottled beer ranges. As with all mergers and takeovers a review took place as to the future. The report came to the conclusion that Brickwoods' site was larger and more modern and on learning in December 1953 that 26 acres of land wanted by the company for expansion was no longer needed by The Royal Navy this swung the balance towards the Admiralty Road site as the one that should be developed. Luckily also the brewery site in Admiralty Road had adequate supplies of water as a special pipe brought water from Portsdown Hill direct to the brewery guaranteeing their supply of water and this was adequate for the expansion in brewing proposed.

Towards the end of April 1954, the board received a report, known as 'Big Admiral'. While agreeing with most of the recommendations it thought some should be investigated further and a review of expenditure should take place regarding keeping United's King Street in operation. The Daniel Street project was also mentioned, known as 'Dan Project', this being a scheme to expand the brewery having its origins in the very early 1950s and recommended purchasing land for a new case store among other things. The brewery site was eventually to be extended to an area bounded by Admiralty Road (where the offices were), leading to Bonfire Corner up Cross Street to Queen Street and back to

the other end of Admiralty Road — roughly a rectangular section of land with the part at Bonfire Corner being a triangular section. On the other side of Cross Street another rectangle of land would form storage, parking and garages and later the wines and spirit warehouse. Most but not all land was owned by the company so purchasing the parts they did not own meant that future expansion could take place.

In the pre-war times any brewery expansion had been a problem due to a cramped site in Admiralty Road, so the company had been looking at new locations outside the city in the Portchester and Fareham areas. They eventually purchased Brook Farm at Fareham. However, the war had put pay to any further actions on this matter.

When hostilities ceased the company had concentrated initially on repairing public houses damaged by enemy action and a temporary renovation to the fermentation rooms. There were many houses that could be repaired and a great deal that were totally unrestorable, the latter being cleared never reopen again. New builds were a problem as the Government had imposed restrictions on non-essential work until 1954. Over the whole city large parts had to be rebuilt such was the destruction by enemy action with slum clearance also taking its toll on other public houses. I remember a story told to me by the manager of The Barley Mow public house in Southsea when I visited his pub as part of my duties at the Portsmouth brewery. He was a boy during the war and his father kept the pub. During the height of the bombing every evening the young lad was put on a train at Fratton and sent up to Portsdown hill where he camped until daylight with his friends to escape the bombing before going to school. Luckily The Barley Mow escaped destruction unlike many other houses. If Portsmouth is compared with Plymouth, both of which received heavy bombing, both cities adopted a different approach to rebuilding the city centres. In Plymouth a vast central area was totally cleared of all properties and rebuilt. Whilst in Portsmouth a piecemeal approach was undertaken with only little sections of the city being cleared and rebuilt thus saving many of the older public houses that had escaped destruction.

United had brought with them some 271 tied houses mainly in Portsmouth and surrounding areas and stretching eastwards towards Brighton. The latter area was not well represented by Brickwoods but these extra houses gave them a near monopoly on Portsea Island. The main competitors in the city area were J.J. Youngs Brewery in Landport, near the city centre, although Gales of Horndean, W.B. Mew Langton and Eldridge Pope also had a few houses.

The Brickwoods' bottled beer range included Black Bricky Extra Strong Stout at 1068 degrees. This was originally in-

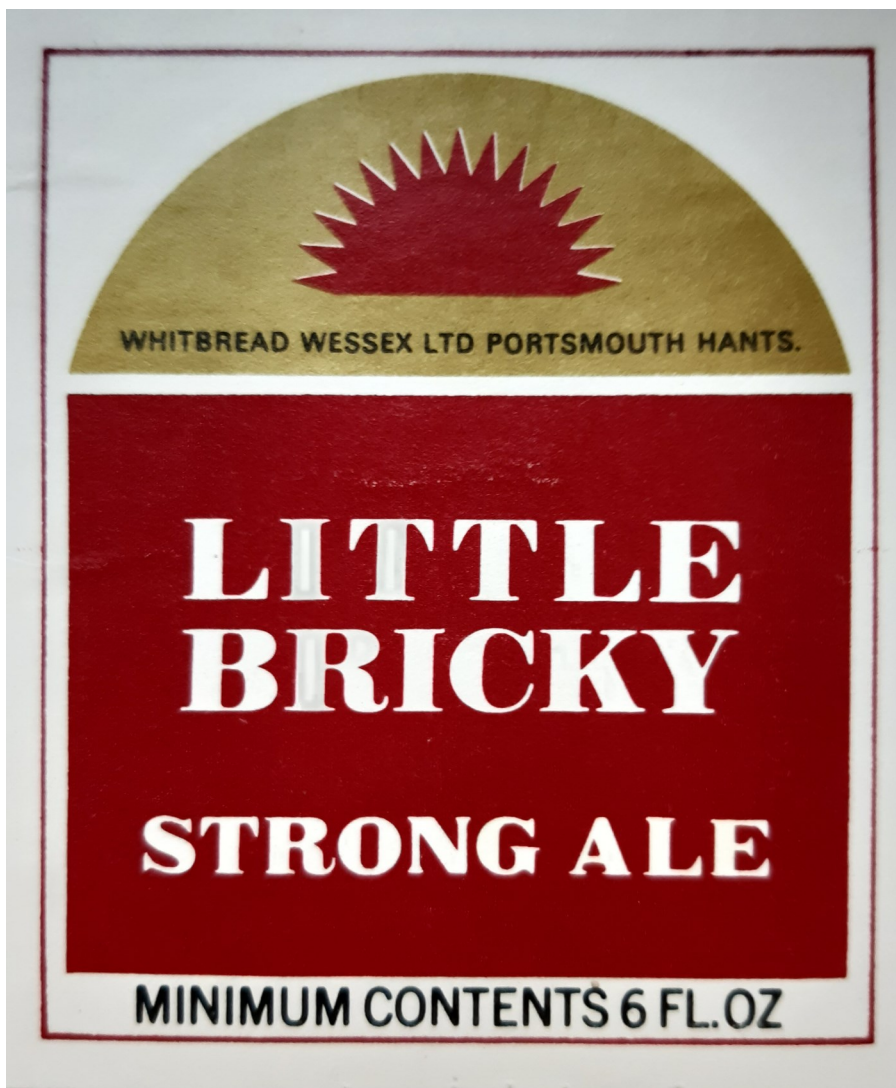


Figure 1. Little Bricky last design, Whitbread Wessex.

roduced in October 1952 with a 10-barrel trial brew. It was bottled in nips and supplied to houses on a sale or return basis and sold at one shilling a bottle in saloon bars. Due to poor sales it was discontinued in April 1954. The other part of the bottled range was Light Bitter Ale, Brown Ale, Sunshine Pale Ale, (replaced by I.P.A.) Original Malt Stout, Brickwoods Sunshine Dark and the famous Little Bricky strong dark barley wine.

It was not surprising that the company was still on the lookout for further brewery acquisitions. They had previously been approached in December 1950 by Amey's Brewery of Petersfield and they had inspected Amey's tied houses with a view to purchasing the Petersfield company which was

being offered for sale at £160,000. Brickwoods decided in that instance not to buy as the asking price was too high for the trade they were doing, but they thought they might purchase individual properties if offered. Amey's were eventually sold to Whitbread, but Brickwoods later gained a supply agreement to supply Bitter and Mild to all, except two of the Amey's houses in return for taking Mackeson from Whitbread. This agreement was worth 1,200 barrels per annum to Brickwoods.

In early 1952 Brickwoods had also been approached by Hambridge Brewery in Somerset asking £300,000 for their business which included 53 houses. However, Brickwoods declined as most houses were doing little trade. Yet another



Figure 2. Sunshine Stout, Export Stout possibly Black Bricky under a different name. Note 'Ltd.'

set of negotiations had been taking place in late May 1953 with the Star Brewery, Eastbourne regarding a possible acquisition, but this also came to nothing even though Brickwoods offered an exchange of shares and compensation to the Star Brewery directors for loss of office. Again in 1953 the brewery had been approached by the trustees of Burts Brewery, Ventnor, Isle of Wight through W.D. Frost, Brickwoods' managing director, who inspected the properties owned by the late W.A. Phillips estate, the man who previously owned Burts. It was offered to the company for valuation at £75,000 and Brickwoods agreed to pay up to

£80,000 open for 48 hours. The offer was not taken up and Burts carried on as a separate company with the trustees informing the company that they had decided not to sell at the moment, but may well do so in the future.

United had also bottled beers and had a depot at the former Toomes Cross roads brewery at Durrington near Stonehenge. As part of the review it was decided that bottling was to cease there and bottled beers were to be supplied from the old Aldridge Brewery bottling plant in Southampton (taken over in 1927 by Brickwoods) and from Portsmouth instead.

The old depot and brewery premises still remain, but are now in use as warehouses with the United name still visible on the walls. The company sold the nearly new Worsams filler at the Stonehenge bottling stores for £6,500 to Dawson Brothers.

Starting from 1 January 1954 Guinness changed the way they supplied beer for bottling at Portsmouth. In future it was to be supplied by tanker from Park Royal, London to Portsmouth for bottling instead of in hogsheads, with a price reduction of two shillings per barrel. Interestingly, Brickwoods bottled Guinness in pints, half pints and nips and in large quantities. Most breweries did not use nips for Guinness.

On the 20 September 1954 the company name was changed to Brickwoods Limited and Sunshine Hotels Limited was set up to run the managed houses of both breweries. Portsmouth Bonding stores Limited was also established to manage exports which included supplies to Royal Navy ships. Exports of bottled beers were also made to America, Bermuda and the far east, one of the brands being 'Brickwoods Sunshine Export Stout.'

Due to the cost savings on the bottling of Guinness it was decided in October 1954 to update the Guinness bottling line at Admiralty Road with a new 600 dozen per hour Dawson washer to replace the 300 dozen per hour one costing £6,600. It is unlikely that after that date Guinness was bottled at the King Street Brewery with all bottling being carried out at Admiralty Road. At one stage Brickwoods were bottling 270 barrels of Guinness per week.

Early in January 1955 it was reported that Mr Blake, Brickwoods' chairman, had died and had been replaced by R.A.N. Shutte, a direct descendent of the founding Brickwoods family. This was a time when bottled beer was becoming very popular and the Isle of Wight was no exception. During early spring 1955 building extensions to the Newport Depot at Orchard Street were approved costing around £4,000. It was ready for the summer trade in June 1955.

The *Portsmouth Evening News* reported on the 64<sup>th</sup> A.G.M. of the company held in Portsmouth during August 1955. At that meeting it was announced by the chairman and managing director that a large capital expansion plan was taking place within the Admiralty Road site and new public houses had recently opened. One of the first new houses was the Cross Keys, Birdlip Road, Paulsgrove, which opened at 6pm on 1 July 1955. Another public house, the Wheatshaf on a quarter acre site in Bramdean Drive, Leigh Park, had, in May 1955, been agreed to be leased from Portsmouth Corporation for 99 years starting on 25 March 1955 at £125 per

annum. It opened on 11 October 1956. The Swan, Jessie Road, Bedhampton, also opened on 14 October 1955 with takings in the first week of £320. Over the Harbour in Gosport, the White Horse, Bridgemary, was built on a site leased from Gosport Corporation for 99 years at £135 per annum and was opened on 17 April 1956 at 6 pm. Other new public houses included ones further away with a site on the Parklands area of Chichester costing £3,000 being purchased from Chichester Council on the proviso that no other licences could be granted on the estate. Eventually this was agreed and on this 0.18 acre spot the pub opened with the company estimating it should achieve some 6 to 7 barrels per week. This house, called the Mitre, recently closed and is now a Co-Operative store.

The recommendations of Big Admiral meant that the proposed new brewery location at Brook Farm, Fareham, was no longer required and in May 1955 it was offered for sale at £16,000 subject to a clause that no liquor licences were to be granted on the site. Eventually the company achieved £17,500 and the sale was completed on 4 November 1955 having a book value of only £7,000. Another part of the plan was that a brewery tower should be built and the greater part of the cost of restoration was to be funded by the War Damage Commission, but the internal equipment should wait. It was agreed with the Commission that Brickwoods would contribute £20,000 as it was deemed essential to Big Admiral that this was carried out and would also be a defence against the possible failure of existing concrete fermentation vessels.

The company had also been investing in other brewing companies and decided to sell their holdings in Cheltenham & Hereford Breweries in May 1956 making £63 profit. At Admiralty Road the steel chimney was rebuilt costing £4,550. 1956 also saw the delivery of 20 new Morris vehicles for beer deliveries of a standard design to cut down on maintenance costs. These vehicles had been ordered back in the Summer of 1951. Also received were eight Morris vans for small deliveries. In late June 1956 news was received that H.C. Glover, a brewer at King Street, had died after being employed for many years in that capacity. John Clubb was appointed as head brewer of United to replace him.

Some expenditure was made at King Street when the boilers were converted to oil fuel costing £5,927, plus around £700 for structural work. This was completed by 17 November 1956. As part of the overall plan, in September 1956, it was decided to close United's second bottling line, leaving just one with steps to integrate further as far as possible before Big Admiral fully started. In December 1956 the Dan Project was well under way with land purchased from Portsmouth Corporation between Daniel Street and Cross Street

to Bonfire Corner for £2,700 and from the Centurion site to Queen Street for £1,800. In return land was sold to the Corporation on the north side of Queen Street and part of Catherine Row for £1,500. Catherine Row was in the middle of the brewery and ran parallel to Cross street. Originally this had been a public road and most of it had been purchased by the company over the years with the properties even consisting of an old chapel. Also sold were 110 to 117 Queen Street which had two licenses to be held in suspension for £750. All these areas were land around the brewery that was either required for development or no longer needed and hence sold.

Further public houses opened as well as many closures of more unprofitable houses. Brickwoods tended to wait until a tenant left before selling or in some instances provided cash incentives for them to leave. The Beehive, Paulsgrove, opened on 3 April 1957 selling 100% Brickwoods products whilst other houses like the Greyhound, Leigh Park, opened under the United banner selling both brewery's beers. Many other openings were to follow during the 1950s, mainly in the developing areas of Paulsgrove, Wymering, Leigh Park, Portchester, and Cosham. It was also reported that extensions to the Brickwoods offices were almost complete meaning office staff from both breweries would work together in one building.

The company was always keen on promoting themselves in the press and newspapers in the city carried many adverts for 'The Sunshine Brewers' with slogans like 'Best beer under the sun!' It was during late 1950 that the company decided to affix Sunshine motifs on all existing frames of inn signs that carried lettering only and on all existing and future pictorial signs. Later, in September 1951, a program was initiated for enamelled inn signs to be put in wooden frames with the yellow sunshine motif above. This was carried on throughout the late 1950s and 1960s and eventually ceased on the takeover by Whitbread. The sunshine signs remained well into the 1980s with Whitbread signs gradually taking over.

Not only were new houses being opened, but numerous ones were being closed as it was considered Portsea Island was over licenced. On 27 January 1956 the site of Totterdells Hotel, Portsea, was sold to Canada Life Assurance Company for £4,000 with the licence being transferred to a new house the company had opened in the previous November called the Golden Bell in Charlotte Street, Portsmouth, part of the new Tricorn shopping centre. This house only lasted just over 20 years before closing.

Early in 1957 it was decided that the war claim for damages at King Street, originally made in 1951 and agreed at

£93,000, was to be abandoned after the merger as rebuilding was no longer going to take place. However, it was thought that the company could get £75,000 to be used in new works as part of Big Admiral instead. February 1957 saw the first brewing of United's Pompey XXXXX at Admiralty Road. It would now be known as Brickwoods Pompey XXXXX Dark Ale with a new label and became available to Brickwoods houses from 11 February 1957. United houses also stocked it as and when the old bottlings ran out. Canned beer had been on trial for the previous six months with Little Brick and Sunshine Ale being available in cans. Laboratory reports were good, but the costs of adapting the bottling line were thought to be too great. In early April 1957 a new bottle label for United Double Stout was agreed bearing the Brickwood sunshine motif. The other two United beers remaining were Brown Ale and Pompey Royal, both having the Sunshine motif but saying they were United products.

At this stage in the Big Admiral project a report stated that £90,000 had already been spent out of a budget of £531,000 and the scheme was not expected to be finished for another five to seven years. It was decided to continue with the outline plan as circumstances permitted and a brewery consultant was to be engaged for technical details when they arose. One of the cost savings from Big Admiral was a review of the bottled beers being produced. It was the United range that suffered with several beers being dropped. One of those to go was United's Pompey Royal and Sunshine by Brickwoods, both were replaced by a new beer called Brickwoods I.P.A, the beer later achieving a star of excellence in a brewer's competition.

In 1959 the company entered six seven-ton delivery vehicles into the lorry driver of the year competition, three United and three Brickwoods. It won best civilian drivers of the year in class D of the section and further awards in the E section, the most awards achieved by any company that year.

The early 1960s were a time when English coastal resorts were at their peak with cheap foreign holidays to the Continent a decade away. By this time, with building restrictions having been lifted, the company took to opening new and replacement houses including the Navigators, the City Arms, the Blue Anchor, the Viking, the Brewhouse, (just outside the brewery on Queen Street), the Victory, the Duke of Buckingham and the Raven to name just a few. All these houses were in a very small area close to the brewery. Other new houses were opened in the expanding areas to the north in Waterlooville, the Jester and in Fareham.

Southsea was the main resort of Portsmouth and was very busy in the summer months. Fortunately, the company had a

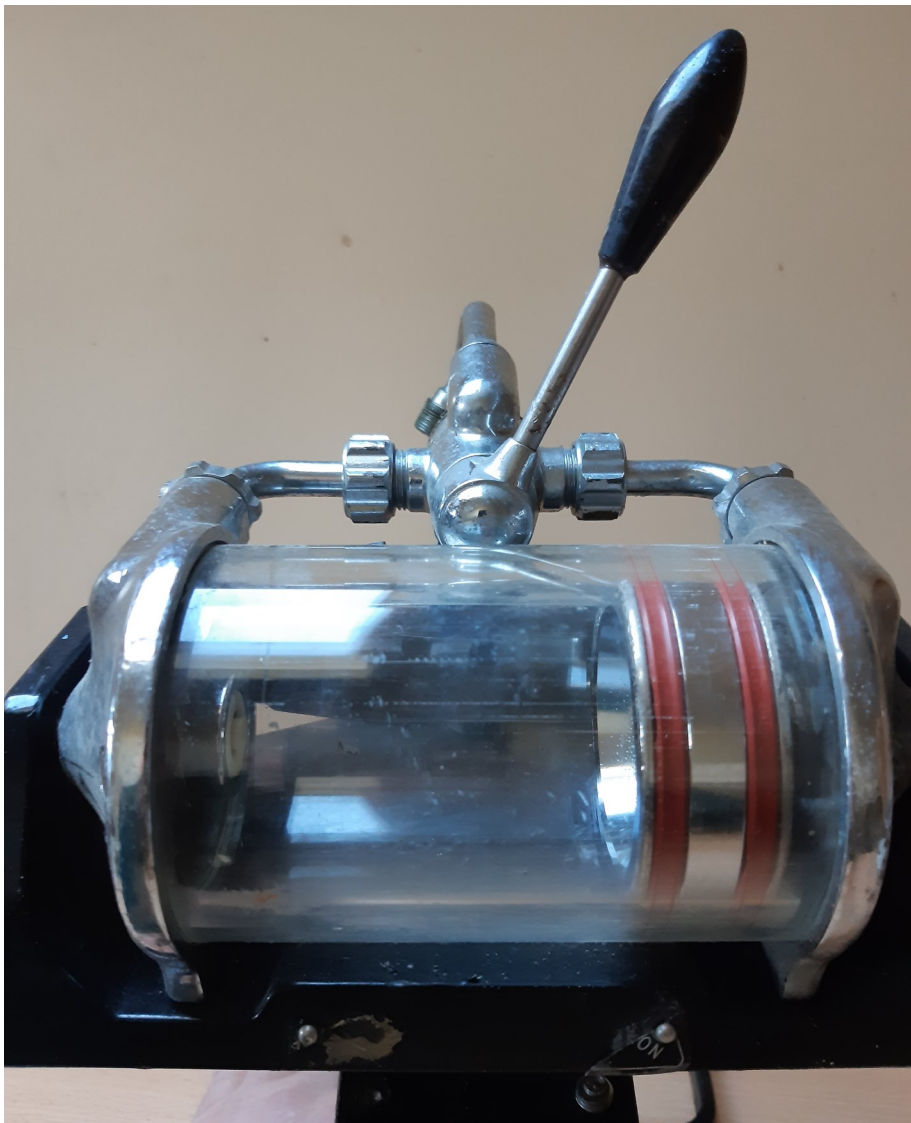


Figure 3. Hudson and Dodsworth beer pump, no pump clips used.

prime site on the seafront. Formerly the Esplanade Hotel, which had been destroyed by bombing during World War Two, Brickwoods took advantage of this site by erecting the largest of all the public houses in the rebuild program. The Seahorse Bars, at Clarence Pier next to the funfair at Southsea and close to the beach, had two floors both containing bars with a total area covering about the size of half a football pitch. The house was basically two large drinking areas with no partitions and had views over the funfair and Southsea common.

Brickwoods had been experimenting with electric beer pumps in their public houses from just after the war. In 1949

the Hampshire Rose, Widley, had the 'Jofeh system' of air pressure pumps installed. This system had clear chambers on the counter and when the pub closed beer would return to the cask in the cellar by gravity enabling the pumps and lines to be cleaned ready for the next day. For whatever reason it was decided to install a different system, made by Hudson and Dodsworth, in the Seahorse Bars. These pumps were set horizontally on the bar and dispensed half a pint of beer from a clear glass circular chamber operated by a lever — the piston went side to side dispensing a half pint each time. Interestingly, the pumps also had a label lower down on the drip tray area indicating that they were 'Manufactured by The Metropolitan Gas Company!' These pumps were



Figure 4. Mash tun, showing mixer above tun.

used extensively in the Midlands and the North, but Brickwoods were as far as I know the only company to use them on a large scale in the South. Virtually all new houses and most managed houses were converted to these pumps which sold cask beer with no top pressure. The pumps remained in most houses until the early 1980s when Brickwoods' cask beers were replaced by keg. It has been suggested that Brickwoods wanted measured pumps due to high sales of 'Boilers' (Mild and bottled brown ale mixed). As a bottle of beer is only  $9\frac{1}{2}$  fluid ounces the 'boiler' is not quite a pint. This stopped the 'long pull', the practice of pulling around a half pint, often more, and a bottle being opened and put next to it. With measured pumps customers were given half a pint in the glass of Mild and the bottle was then opened and put on the counter. As the pumps were mostly in managed houses stock losses were subsequently reduced.

On 11 August 1961, at the 17<sup>th</sup> ordinary general meeting in Portsmouth, it was reported sales fell during the poor sum-

mer of 1960, but had regained during the early part of the year achieving a profit before tax of £901,420, an increase of £13,206. The company announced that it was on line for its transfer of brewing from King Street to Admiralty Road with associated cost savings.

By 1962 the rebuilding of Brickwoods' Admiralty Road brewery first phase had taken place costing over £1,000,000. Big Admiral's implementation had taken so long due to the need to spread out costs over several years as well as the Government restrictions on building. The United merger had also led to a further review and delays. Most parts of the brewery saw modernisation especially in the fermentation rooms where numerous vessels had been damaged during the Second World War. The late 1960s saw a massive push to increase sales, especially in the free trade.

The updating did not include the brewing stages up to fermentation. The existing mill was retained as were the three

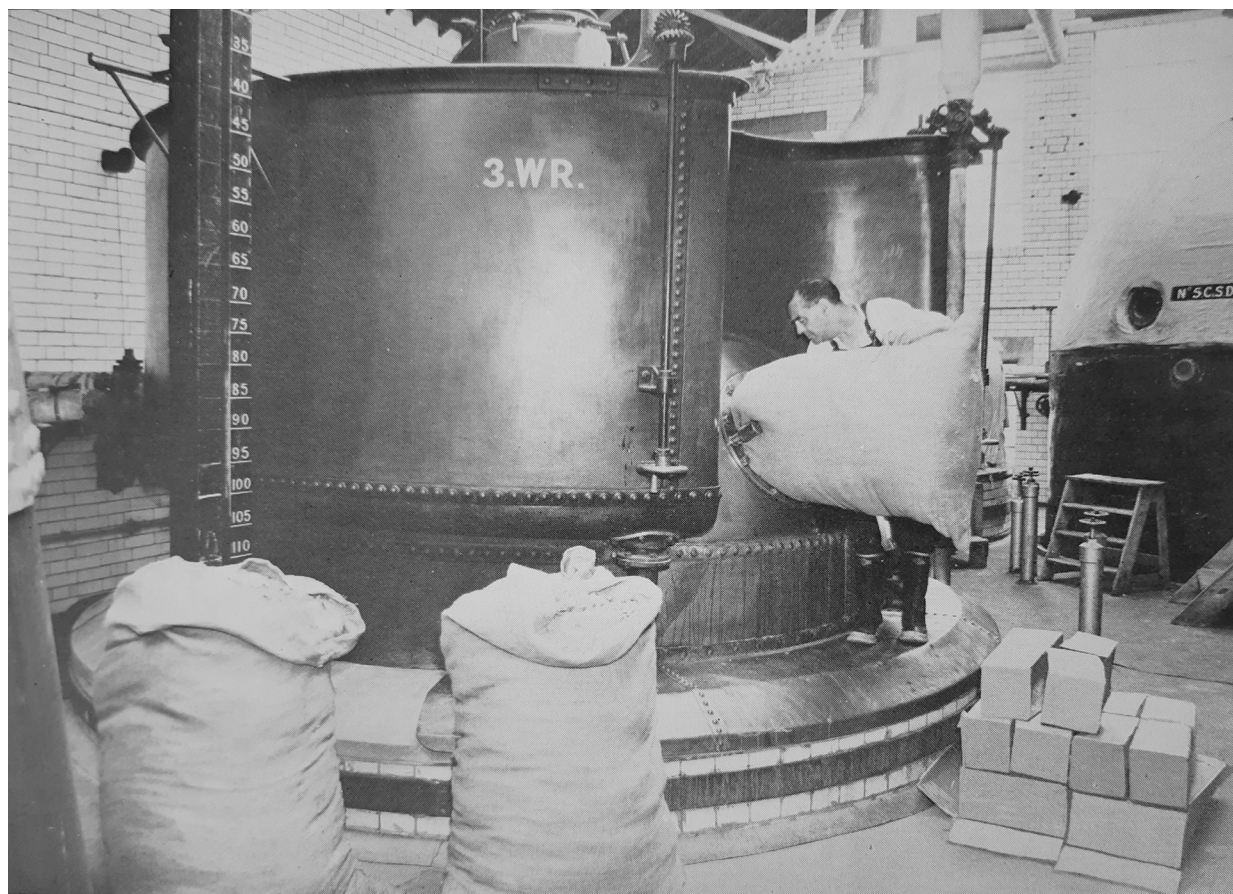


Figure 5. Wort receiver/copper with saddle back and invert sugar in boxes.

mash tuns. The normal brewing day at the time consisted of five mashes. The first started at 6am with three mashes and a further two mashes at 11am. Number 3 mash tun being reserved for Pompey Royal. Above the mash tun was a triangular coned vessel which mixed liquor and malt at 150°F in an auger before it entered the mash tun. The coppers were an interesting array of equipment. One labelled as Number 3 Wort Receiver was in fact a 'saddle back copper.' It was like a conventional copper except that surrounding the dome was a horseshoe vessel where the next wort would be held and therefore pre-heated thus saving on energy. I think this must have been unique to Brickwoods as I have never seen one elsewhere. After the Whitbread takeover it was used only as a conventional copper. Another copper of 270 barrels was a conventional one, but had later in Whitbread days a steel cabinet added on the side at the top to allow for cans of hop concentrates to be added directly into the vessel.

In the fermentation rooms a complete redesign took place based upon a 90 barrel brew length as the minimum length

with brews upwards i.e. 180 barrels, 270 barrels etc., "thus giving flexibility of the plant using either the smaller or larger fermenting vessels. Brickwoods used the dropping system of fermentation and four totally enclosed stainless steel vessels were added each of 270 barrel capacity for the first stage. Constructed by Ramsden they had the Ramsden attenuators in which cold liquor flowed through the outer of two concentric pipes so as to present a large cooling surface. As the vessels were enclosed CO<sub>2</sub> was collected from these vessels, processed and used in the bottling hall. After 36 hours in the primary vessels the part fermented wort was dropped to five new open stainless steel vessels, one of 90 barrels and four of 270 barrels. They were constructed by Worssam Products, a division of Vickers-Armstrong, and Burnett & Rolfe. Here the final fermentation took place before being transferred to a new automatic wort cooling room with yeast collection and storage. In this room yeast was pressed in the three presses or stored in liquid form ready for the next brew. Plans for the future phases included a brand-new brewing tower and in preparation the new hot



Figure 6. Bottling line using dumpy bottles.

liquor tank room was situated some 150 yards away from where the tower was to be built. In the hot liquor room there were five tanks, three of 330 barrels each, one of 180 barrels and one of 420 barrels together with two mixing vessels. A master control panel was supplied for the hot liquor and another smaller one at each of the two mash tuns.

In the cellar, actually on the ground floor, a new Hopkins Goliath cask washer was installed — at the time it was said to be the largest of its type at present in the country. It incorporated seven jets of water at 200°F and one for steam. This washer could cope with 300 casks per hour, barrels, kilderkins, firkins and pins, some wooded some aluminium and some 'Brown Bombers.' After washing the casks went to an area for cooling and drying where plastic tubes were put into the casks and sterile dry clean air blew through. When dry and later filled the casks were kept in storage until needed for delivery where two Morrison Carpenter automated finings injectors added the finings and replaced the tut (red

shive plug) with a blue plastic plug. A new finings making machine was also added and finings stored in a 30 barrel rubber lined stainless steel tank which had two compartments, each of 15 barrels. Finally, the whole cellar floor was recovered with a non-slip 'Monile' floor covering. A new laboratory was provided with one side having long windows looking out over the yard towards the vehicle entrance and run by Mr Moriarty, the head chemist.

Brickwoods' keg beer was in its infancy, but a new line was provided for, Sunshine Keg brewed at 1035 degrees (3.33% alcohol by volume) which was mainly supplied to Royal Navy Ships and the free trade. In the year the new brewery opened Brickwoods finally gained the Royal Warrant to supply Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second having previously supplied her late father King George VI and the previous King George V before him. The rules on appointment to supply a new monarch are that the supplier must have provided for three continuous years and achieve certain

standards. However, Brickwoods' supplies in the monarch's early years were not up to specification, but they were still able to claim they supplied the late King George VI, hence they had to wait for the Queen's Warrant to be given some nine years after the coronation.

Next door to the laboratory, on the second floor, was the bottling hall where an older, slower line was removed and a 1,500 dozen per hour automatic line put in. Brickwoods were unusual in that, along with the Hull Brewery, they used dumpy bottles for pint and half pint bottles instead of the standard London bottle used by most other breweries since it was first mooted in 1935. It is said the reason why dumpy bottles were used was when Royal Navy ships were supplied with bottles the smaller crate took up less room in the ship's hold. A special beer crate was standardised using a Boucher-Giles wire crate cut down to fit the dumpy bottles. After filling, the bottles were placed in crates, automatically loaded onto pallets and sent to the stackery, a new storage facility on three levels with four lifts giving access directly down to the loading bays. Here, when required, the crates were loaded by hand onto vehicles for delivery to the trade.

The cold room was newly equipped with 14 90-barrel and 22 180-barrel conditioning tanks which became useful after bottling ceased when they were used for the conditioning of kegged beers. Filtration was carried out by a Bowser plant and a Carlson Kieselguhr for the first filtration followed by a fine sheet for polishing.

In the boiler house the four boilers burnt Mobil Fuel Heavy Oil with two Todd burners and two A.B.C. burners. With all this work completed only the new brewhouse tower remained to be built, but this was never to be even started as the Whitbread 'Umbrella' closed over Brickwoods before work could commence. However, just about everything else had been renewed. The brewery extension was officially opened by the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth on 10 October 1962 by the pressing of a button on the control panel to start the flow of hot wort on the way to the chilling room and to fermentation.

The second phase of Big Admiral now commenced. As a result of extra production facilities being available at Admiralty Road the King Street Brewery in Southsea was no longer needed. Brewing had ceased at the United Brewery in February 1962 whilst bottling carried on until September 1962. The brewery was then converted into a mineral water manufacturer, previously founded by Brickwoods in 1948, called Southern Table Water Association (S.O.T.A.). Mineral waters were manufactured at King Street and delivered to depots or the main brewery for onward transition. One of the

key brands was O.K.C. (Old King Cola) as the brewery was unable to acquire a licence to make Coca Cola.

Every year the brewery had an annual outing just like most other breweries of the time. In July 1962 500 employees and guests, including 35 pensioners, travelled in a chartered train to London. They were entertained at the Criterion Restaurant and later at the London Palladium. The Chairman, R.A.N. Shutte, presented gold watches to staff with over 40 years' service including Miss C.B. Buick, the first woman to receive such a long service award. Previous outings had included Weymouth and Margate.

By 1966, when all had settled down, the brewery was capable of producing 364,000 barrels per year, much of which was cask beer. Bottling was 4,000 dozen per hour spread out on several lines whilst keg was only Tankard in small quantities, Sunshine keg having been dropped. Each year the brewery used 2,600 tons of malt with some 433 tons coming from the company maltings at Hove, formerly owned by Portsmouth and Brighton United Breweries. The remainder was purchased from outside maltsters. Use of sugar was some 350 tons and 110 tons of hops. On a normal brewing day every hour some 15 tons of steam were used and 1,500,000 gallons of water per day were drawn through the special pipe from Portsdown Hill. In the scalding yard, with the capacity of 300 casks per hour, the casks were cleaned, filled and dry hopped in the cask with Mild being the largest seller by far. Wooden casks were being phased out, replaced with firstly 'Brown bombers', a very heavy metal cask and later aluminium casks.

The 1960s continued to see a vast array of new pubs built in the 'brewers 60's style'. Most of these were of a modern style with ground floor cellars, vast areas for bottled beers and containing the new electric pumps. In Portsmouth and the surrounding area cask Mild and bottled Brown mixed in a pint glass was the most popular drink known as a 'Boiler.' This name was thought to originate from being the popular drink of the thousands of dockyard workers and especially the boiler makers. Even into the 1970s, when the dockyard whistle blew at the end of shifts, hundreds of dock workers exited the gates on their bicycles heading off home for a quick meal before pub opening times at 6pm and no doubt plenty of Boilers!

One of the most famous pubs that opened during this time was the Hayling Billy on Hayling Island in an area that was well known as a holiday destination. Ironically, the railway on the island had closed on 3 November 1963 and the company subsequently purchased the last engine that was used on the line from a private railway individual, Mr Sadler of Droxford. This engine was purchased in May 1966 and on

13 May it pulled a special train which ran from Droxford along the Meon Valley line, which was leased by Sadler, to the main line near Knowle Halt west of Fareham and back. This special carried directors of the brewery and press and was filmed by T.V. crews. On 17 May the engine was winched onto a trailer and taken to the Hayling Billy pub where it was put on display in the pub car park. An unveiling ceremony took place on 16 June 1966 by the last two footplate crew whilst the first pint was pulled in the new pub by Mr F. Norris, the guard. Later, in Whitbread's days, the engine was donated to The Isle of Wight Steam Railway at Wootton and is now preserved there.

Another railway themed pub opened on the edge of Chichester called the Selsey Tram, on the main road towards West Wittering, celebrated the rather ramshackle railway that once ran from Chichester to Selsey Bill. One of the new houses opened was unusual — the Uncle Toms Cabin at Cosham was the result of two old licences being available, but the licensing authority only allowed one new house. The East Cosham Tavern was the former Brickwoods licence and Gales of Horndean also had an unused licence nearby, so they decided to share the licence. The new house was owned by Portsdown Tavern Ltd., a company owned 50/50 by Brickwoods and Gales. It was run by Brickwoods managed houses department, but sold in the main Gales beers dispensed through electric pumps, although minerals and spirits were supplied by Brickwoods. The year ended with the trading agreement with Whitbread being extended for another seven years in a deal with Tankard and Mackeson both being brewed at Portsmouth, the latter sold alongside Admiral Stout.

In 1967 the Hove maltings ceased production with malt now being purchased from outside companies and in 1968 bottling ceased at the old Brickwoods Aldridge brewery site in Bedford Place, Southampton. Bottling at this site had included Watneys Pale Ale, Manns Brown and Brickwoods beers sold in that area.

By 1969 take home beers were becoming very popular with some, like Light Ale and Brown Ale, being sold in two-pint flagons, but there was still a market for draught and this was

solved by a new product reported in the *Brewers Guardian* of August 1969. Polythene Drums Ltd. made a two-gallon plastic container in a cardboard box with a tap for the take home market. The beer was called 'Double Eight', a special bitter for the home. This contained pre-racked beer and went by the slogan 'The Best Take Home Bitter.' The beer was only phased out in the late 1970s and in latter days carried the Whitbread Wessex name on the label.

Back at the brewery more expansion took place. Cross Street ran as a public thoroughfare splitting the main part of the brewery from the empties yard, transfers area and vehicle storage area. In 1970 part of the north side of Cross Street yard was cleared of workshops and garages and a new bottled beer warehouse built costing £66,000. At 8,200 square feet all storage was now undercover close to an area which could take large lorries, with a cage area for wines and spirits at one end. A total of between 80 and 100 lines of minerals were stocked, enough for a week, which was brought over from S.O.T.A. and loaded by forklift trucks directly onto lorries. Likewise, the stackery was already outdated, used just for local deliveries. Loaded pallets directly from the bottling stores would now be taken by forklift truck to the long-distance transfer lorries across Cross Street. Work took some eight months to complete and when finished the 'Queens by appointment sign' finally hung on the outside of the new Warehouse facing Queen Street.

During 1970 the brewhouse was enlarged and two new conical fermenting vessels were added to give an even greater turnover. The brewery considered brewing its own lager as many other breweries were at this time, but were carrying out a costing exercise. The company had been associated with Whitbread since 1959 and sold Heineken lager as well as brewing Mackeson Stout, but were keen to enter this expanding market. However, nothing came of it. The company reported that they were installing their first computer in readiness for decimalisation in February 1971 with the sales accounts being the first to be put on the new system. Also reported at the Annual General Meeting was the public house position as below:

Year to 31 March	Closure of Public Houses		Contracts completed	
	Compulsory purchases	Other closures	New/rebuilt houses	Spends over £5,000
1966	5	1	4	7
1967	12	3	6	11
1968	4	3	4	6
1969	12	3	10	6
1970	12	3	3	9



Figure 7. 'Margaret' the steam wagon.

As can be seen for the size of the company there were a considerable number of closures. These were due to various reasons; road widening, town centre development, unprofitable houses and slum clearance. On the plus side a significant number of new/rebuilt houses were opening as well as large spends on modernisation with a bias towards food in many houses.

Always ready to promote Sunshine Ales the company acquired a 53-year-old Foden steam wagon called 'Margaret', registration TP 9530. It was refurbished and the Queen's by appointment crest put on the cab side. It could carry five tons and did 400 miles to the ton of coal. She delivered at a sedate seven or eight miles per hour to houses on Portsea Island, but took some 90 minutes to get up steam each morning. Originally the engine had been supplied to the War Department in 1917 as a tipper. It had been acquired from Scotland in 1969 and renovated by the Wiltshire Steam Wagon Company of Durrington, Wiltshire. The registration came from an original vehicle Brickwoods owned in 1931.

After twelve years of being under the Whitbread Umbrella it was suddenly announced, in the summer of 1971, that Whitbreads had acquired the capital of the Brickwoods brewery and some 675 houses for £15,000,000. Obtained also at the time were seven depots, 65 Smeed wine shops and three subsidiary companies including, S.O.T.A. Brickwoods had seen numerous speculators purchasing shares in the company over the previous few years with a view to making a

quick profit. Regrettably this became a reality, and the speculators readily sold their shares at a profit to Whitbread so that they eventually held over 50%. Whitbread had previously held some 32.74% of the issued shares through their investment company and the company itself. The board recommended acceptance rather than see a hostile bid from elsewhere which was agreed and the largest independent brewery company in the south was under Whitbread's control. Profits of the previous year were estimated by the board as £1,750,000 compared to a previous year's profit of £1,527,000, but this did not matter to the speculators on the lookout for a fast profit.

Almost immediately integration took place with the Strongs / Mew Langton area of Whitbread Wessex previously started by Whitbread when they had purchased the Strongs group in 1969. Whitbread houses in the Wessex trading area were transferred to Wessex control which included several houses that had been newly rebuilt or opened, including ones in Brighton, Worthing and Crawley. Whitbread property such as their Penny Street Depot in Portsmouth was integrated with Wessex and used as a cask and bottle store as was the bottling stores in Hambrook Street. The dumpy bottle was dumped in favour of the standard London bottle. Wire crates were discontinued with wooden and later plastic crates replacing them. However, the greatest change was the integration of Brickwoods with the former Strongs and Mew Langton breweries, depots and houses. Strongs of Romsey together with Mew Langton had been

acquired by Whitbread in 1969 and Tankard had already replaced John Barleycorn Keg in the Strong's tied houses.

The new Wessex region covered an area from Swanage in the west to Newhaven in the east, up to Crawley, across to Basingstoke through to Salisbury, plus of course the Isle of Wight. The trading area was split east and west, The Portsmouth brewery had total control over the east and all the Isle of Wight, whilst the Romsey brewery had control over the west area. The dividing line ran approximately from the Hamble River northwards through Petersfield with Basingstoke being in the east area. The old brewery of W.B. Mew Langton which had ceased brewing in 1969, remained as a depot until around 1980 supplying all free trade and tied houses on the Island. Supplies of beers, some minerals, cigarettes, wines and spirits were brought over from Portsmouth via Sealink ferry to the depot before being delivered to houses and free trade on the Island. A bottling line continued at Newport manufacturing and bottling R. Whites soft drinks which mainly consisted of R. Whites lemonade in 25 fl oz returnable bottles and later litre bottles.

Initially each of the two areas on the mainland produced their own beers plus the Whitbread products already brewed. Products in the east region consisted of Brickwoods Cask Mild at 1031 degrees, Brickwoods Bitter, renamed Trophy at 1036 degrees in cask, a small but increasing amount of Tankard keg and finally Brickwoods Best Bitter at 1046 degrees in cask only. In the west Strong's bitter in cask at 1038 degrees was also renamed Trophy, but was a different beer to the Portsmouth one. Mackeson quickly replaced Brickwoods Admiral Stout and Strong's Black Bess Stout. In the eastern area Whitbread light and Whitbread Pale ale replaced Brickwoods Light Ale, whilst Forest Brown replaced Brickwoods Brown. Whitbread Gold Label and Whitbread Final Selection were brought in already bottled, whilst surprisingly Little Bricky was kept. This was the only bottled beer that had Whitbread Wessex on a bottle label, but even this was discontinued when sales of Gold Label took off around 1978. Little Bricky was an excellent dark barley wine style very much like Fullers Strong Ale and in a blind tasting it was difficult to distinguish one from the other.

A letter from Jasper Clutterbuck at Romsey on 1 October 1973 to the Portsmouth board members, G. Hosier, P. Dupree, M. Shutte, L. Littleton, R. Spreckley and copy to Ron Worland showed how close the company was to implementing tank beer in their larger Wessex houses. As the letter is important in other respects I will reproduce it in full:

Tanking for Bulk Beer.

I have discussed this question from time to time and sometime ago I asked Ron Worland to run, from the computer, an analysis of those houses taking more than 150 barrels per annum of either Tankard, Trophy, or Heineken. (about 3 barrels per week). Regarding Tankard 73 houses take this or a greater quantity and Trophy 63 houses or a greater quantity.

		Tankard	Trophy
Managed Houses	Western region	16	26
	Eastern region (inc. I.o.W.)	28	2
Tenanted Houses	Western region	14	32
	Eastern region (inc. I.o.W.)	15	3
	Total	73	63

If these houses were tanked, it would mean, from the production point of view, at least 11,000 barrels of bulk Tankard and at least 9,500 barrels of bulk Trophy, and it is the latter which probably provides the major problem. Personally, I take the view that all beer will eventually be sold bright (Keg), and it is just a question of time. Clearly with the advent of new major production centres the change is likely to be speeded up. Therefore, I think we ought to consider very carefully whether we ought not to be gradually phasing the trade over to bright beer (of course the free trade are already getting bright Trophy) and in conjunction with this consider a tanking programme for our bigger houses. In order to further this matter could R.A. Spreckley give some consideration to what he feels are the distribution savings and L Littleton on the production difficulties of more bright beer. I would like to have a meeting early November with addresses to consider the matter further.  
Signed J.M. Clutterbuck.

Some interesting points are made in this letter. Firstly, as far back as 1973 the company was thinking of tanked beer. Secondly, it was Mr Clutterbuck's view that eventually all draught beer would be bright, but this did not happen for about eight years. Thirdly, there was no mention of Mild even though sales in Portsmouth were high. Fourthly, no mention was made of Heineken which at the time would not be a great seller, but increased in sales considerably during the latter part of the decade. Fifthly, the company must have realised closure of the brewery and of Romsey was a possibility once major production sites came on stream. The reasons why tanked beer was never rolled out in Wessex are not known, but may have been several. They could include the costs and logistics of going bright with Trophy, new beers coming out in the houses spreading sales, (local produced Mild sales falling and lager increasing). The costs of

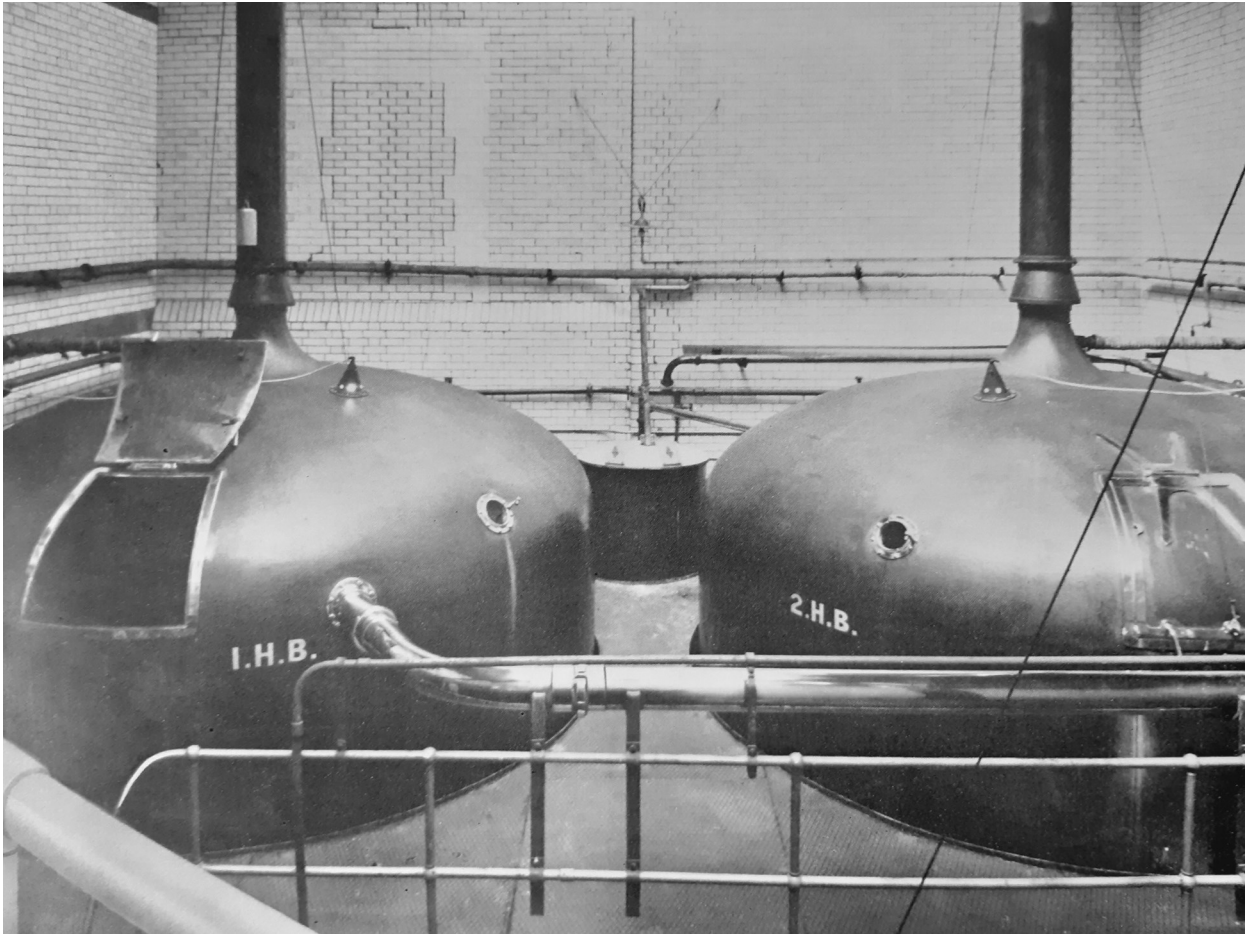


Figure 8. Hop backs, later converted.

vehicles and tanks in houses and possibly it was thought that now Whitbread owned the company the brewery would eventually close with supplies from the new mega breweries.

Hugo Anderson (a member of the B.H.S.) remembers working at the Portsmouth brewery from the late 1970s to the early 1980s and confirms Whitbread Wessex carried out the brewing differently from Brickwoods. By then the dropping system was not used, the enclosed fermenting vessels and the open vessels were used for the full fermentation plus there were also four Ebon lined concrete fermenting vessels. In the brewhouse mash tuns were of 45 qtrs and 30 qtrs. There were no underbacks and two copper whirlpools which were converted from the hop backs. In the late 1970s there was a rudimentary yeast culture plant next to the brewing room consisting of a single aerated tank. It sported an unusual crease in the vessel where it had collapsed following steam sterilisation, but still managed to function. In the cask racking cellar there were three racking tanks all of 90

barrels. In the kegging line home trade keg beers were not pasteurised and had a 31-day shelf life. However, export beers were flash pasteurised and had a shelf life of a year. Filtration was two streams allowing for two beers at the same time. There were seven bright tanks on the ground floor where Guinness was received from Park Royal in tankers into warm conditioning tanks where it was kept for three days to condition before bottling. Lager for bottling was also received here and any beers to be sent to Romsey for kegging were loaded into tankers from these vessels. Unusually I have a beer label Carlsberg Lager bottled by Brickwoods Limited, but with a Whitbread shape, I can only think the label was issued very early in the takeover before the Wessex name was used but after Whitbread had taken over.

Over on the Western region all old Strong's beers were quickly phased out with only the very pale straw-coloured Strong's Pale Ale remaining, but with a Whitbread shaped

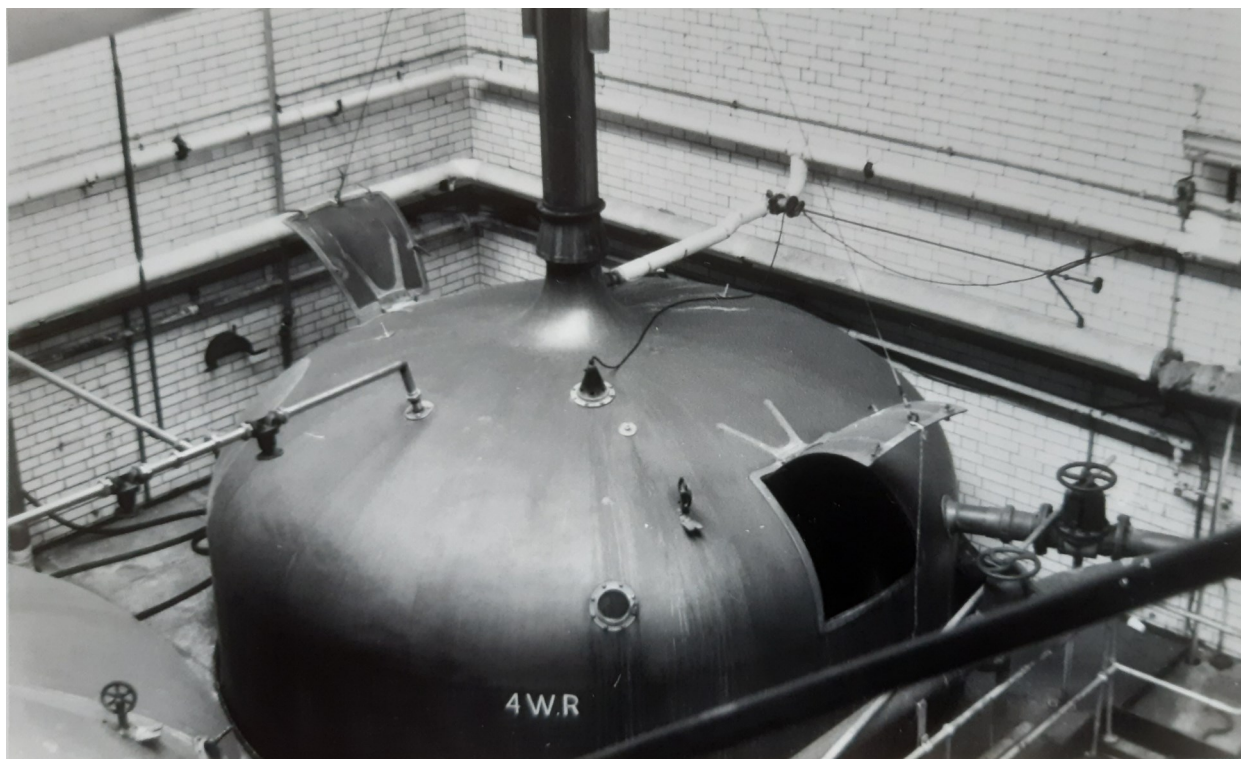


Figure 9. Wort receivers in the brewhouse.

label. After a short time even this was phased out. The Portsmouth brewery also gained extra production from the Whitbread products it brewed and bottled for the Wessex area. Brewmaster was produced for home trade and export whilst County Ale was produced for Fremlins, (the beer was in fact Pompey Royal), chilled, carbonated and primed prior to bottling. At Romsey English Ale was brewed and bottled there or tanked to Portsmouth and bottled. This was due to the fact English Ale required stirring in the fermenters to ensure all sugars were fermented out and facilities did not exist at Portsmouth for this process. The last brew of English Ale at Romsey was on 9 April 1980. Final Selection was also brewed at Portsmouth for Bass who used it in their Shandy Bass. Some of the brew was made available at Christmas time on draught one year as an experiment.

At first, after the takeover by Whitbread, the brewery still seemed like a fully integrated brewery and was so for a few years. The lorries were only slowly changed from the Brickwoods red painted vehicles with 'The sign of good ale' motifs displayed above the cabs to the brown painted ones carrying Whitbread signs. Gradually signs were changed on houses to the brown Whitbread ones with sunshine giving way to dark brown. The new Wessex company introduced a

series of matchboxes for sale in the Wessex pubs with a picture of each tied house or the inn sign on each box over both east and west areas. A special album was available with the idea that collectors would visit each pub, purchase a drink and a box of matches thus building up a collection. Similar schemes were run by many other breweries ranging from passports to stamping books on visits.

The Portsmouth brewery continued to produce vast quantities of cask beer with almost all houses selling cask this carried on to at least 1982. The 1970s was a period of growing lager sales and as none was produced at Portsmouth, some was sent in bulk for keggering and some already keggered was brought in from Luton and later Magor. Stella was even brought in from Belgium for keggering. However Mild was still the most popular South Hampshire's man's drink. Some houses in Leigh Park in the area north of Portsmouth, the Fox, the Greyhound and others in Farlington and Paulsgrove had such a large sale of cask Mild and cask Trophy they sold some six to eight 36 gallon barrels of each per week plus up to 200 dozen bottles of Forest Brown.

In 1973 the production at the Portsmouth brewery was still 216,316 barrels per year making it the second biggest pro-

ducer in the South outside London after Harp's Manor Park Brewery in Alton. As far as employees go some 339 male staff and 37 female staff were employed, much more than at the Alton brewery of Harp which was only ten years old.

The Island Cowes Week also brought in a vast amount of trade, but by the end of the 1970s the rundown of the dockyard and the loss of a great deal of the tourist trade, together with the relentless growth of lager, took its toll on production. The year of 1977, the Queen's Jubilee, and review of the fleet at Spithead in the Solent taking place boosted trade a little. The brewery came up with an idea to celebrate the occasion by renaming Brickwoods Best Bitter using an old name from United days and calling it 'Pompey Royal'. Special plaques in plastic were produced and fixed onto the walls of public houses selling it. Generally, the beer became more widely available in firkins and kilderkins and sales increased. It was a truly excellent 4.5% (1046 degrees) mahogany coloured ale hopped with Styrian hops although the original United brew was 1060 degree! Another keg beer called Hampshire Bitter was also introduced, brewed at Romsey (1031.8 degrees), but available in both regions.

Whitbread Wessex supported the Around the World Yacht Race in 1978/79 and this brought a great deal of trade to the area, especially to the Cowes pubs. The race was organised from Portsmouth by an ex-Navy officer who was taken on for the purpose. Advertising material produced included badges and car stickers.

Then suddenly, in 1981, it was announced that Wessex Mild would become keg only. Previously, the last brew of Mild at Romsey had been on 24 March 1980 and Brickwoods cask mild had been made available to Strong's houses that required it. A little while later it was announced that Trophy was also to be keg only. That left the vast cask racking plant in use only for Pompey Royal. Everyone could see the writing on the wall, with both Trophy and Mild sold only in keg this led the way to supplies coming in from other plants in the Whitbread empire and the loss of cask beers. However, to fulfil a demand from cask ale drinkers and C.A.M.R.A. it was announced that a new beer was to be sold in houses and free trade in both regions and on the Island. This beer was Strong Country Bitter at 1037.8 degrees. It was said to be similar to the old Strong's Foremost bitter and was brewed using the standard Whitbread grist, that is pale malt 65%, crystal malt 7.5%, torrifed wheat 15% and invert sugar 12.5%. It contained 90% hop extract, 10% Target pellets and dry hopped with Target, and was a pale coloured beer. The first brewing of Strong Country Bitter had taken place as far back as 26 September 1979 in Romsey, but had originally been sold mainly in the western

area. It was now to be extended to the Eastern area and the Isle of Wight.

For public houses this meant hand pumps were put in and the electric pumps taken out, replaced by keg taps for Mild and Trophy keg. In one swoop Whitbread had reduced cask beer sales by hundreds of thousands of barrels each year. The Strong Country Bitter was not to prove a replacement in the larger houses and many houses did not stock it. For the many of the smaller Strong's houses selling only by gravity this became the only standard strength beer available, but some also took Pompey Royal.

From the production point of view this was not too much of a problem for the brewery as due to the fall in the sales of bottled beers conditioning capacity was available for both Trophy keg and Mild keg. The cask racking line was just ticking over with only one beer being racked in kilderkins. Firkins were withdrawn and replaced with standard Whitbread ten-gallon stainless steel casks. Barrels (36 gallons) were discontinued altogether. Pins had already been phased out but continued at Romsey until the closure there.

The Romsey brewery ceased brewing on the 26 June 1981 with a brew of Trophy. The last brewing at Romsey of Strong Country Bitter was on 22 June 1981 and from then onwards it was brewed and racked in Portsmouth. It was later transferred, when Portsmouth closed, to the Cheltenham brewery and then to Morrells brewery of Oxford before finally disappearing around the year 2000. However, the volumes were nothing like they were for Mild and Bitter although there were beer mats and posters little was spent on advertising the beer. It was about this date that the depot closed at Durrington with deliveries now coming direct from Romsey.

Even more of a problem was that sales of bottled beers were falling quicker than leaves off trees on windy autumn days. Meanwhile, Magor-brewed Heineken lager was taking off like a rocket. This led to the underutilisation of the brewery, not helped by some depots being supplied directly with Trophy and Mild in kegs direct from Luton or Magor.

Peter Bolt, the brewer in charge of kegging, reported that on a momentous day in April 1982 when H.M.S Hermes sailed for the Falklands he came down to the racking line to find it all at a stand with no one around. On checking he found all the staff were upstairs on the roof waving off the fleet as they sailed from the dockyard. Nothing was said about the break in production. Other memories of his time at the brewery were the bottling of Heineken for The Royal Family. Brewed in Holland at 5% strength, it was sent in bulk and bottled in new green bottles, individually wrapped in white

tissue paper and packed in cardboard cases. This lager was also sold in the off sales of Wessex pubs but did not contain the wrapping paper.

With the Romsey brewery ceasing some of the brewing was transferred to Portsmouth, but all was not good. In 1982 Stephen Mellings, the brewer in charge of Portsmouth bottling, told me at a party at his home over Christmas that year he had the task of going in on Monday to tell all the workers that bottling was to cease at Portsmouth and they were all being made redundant. That day was a very sad one as everyone could see what was coming. Sure enough the rest of the brewing staff did not have to wait long.

It was no great surprise that in February 1983 Ron Worland, the current managing director, announced the brewery was to close and all production was to cease. The last brew took place in November 1983 with 123 persons being made redundant. However, a new depot and kegging plant was to be opened close to the new M27 at Hedge End, a location in the central part of both east and west Wessex regions. After brewing ceased the old brewery became just a delivery depot and local offices with 200 personnel retained. The Hedge End Depot finally opened in late 1989 and all other depots in Romsey. Upton, Stonehenge and Lancing closed with beers for the south of England being delivered from Hedge End.

In 1990 The Admiralty Road site was cleared and became a car park. Apartments have now been built on the site overlooking the dockyard and harbour with no trace of the brewery left. The Hedge End depot later closed when Whitbread exited brewing and pub retailing as did numerous public houses, even the most modern ones. Some of the older public houses are listed buildings and show tiles of the former brewer's name outside, probably the most spectacular one being at Fratton called the Talbot, close to the railway station on Goldsmith Avenue.

Regarding Pompey Royal, this beer lived on after closure being brewed by Gales at Horndean as late as 1995. It was later phased out, but was reincarnated by Oakleaf brewery of Gosport as one of their beers, but by 2016 was not being produced. Oakleaf brewery later ceased brewing and the name has not been revived. Strong Country Bitter had, by 2007, been reincarnated by the Hampshire Brewery of Romsey not far from its original location, but now called Strong's Best Bitter.

At the old Strong's site in Romsey some buildings remain; the brewery tower and old offices are in use as offices. The maltings are still standing but everything else has been cleared and has remained as an overgrown wasteland for the last 25 years. However, the Flack Manor Brewery in Romsey keeps the brewing tradition going there using their double drop fermentation system and the old Strong's port-cullis motif.

Understandably, massive older production facilities were now longer needed as drinkers moved from mild and bitter to lagers, whilst bottling had fallen to a low level and with the site not able to produce cans and especially lager it was inevitable that closure would have had to take place. A very sad end to both the Sunshine brewers and Strong County. When you are in Portsmouth look out for the impressive mosaics on buildings advertising Brickwoods, many of these are now listed and imagine a pint of Sunshine 'The best beer under the sun'.

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