

H. & G. SIMONDS. LTD

Brewers.

READING.



The Simonds Brewery across the River Kennet, 1861.
The malt houses are on the right, with St Mary's church behind.

Across the River Kennet from here stood H & G Simonds Brewery where beer was brewed from 1789 to 1980. During this period the brewery was one of Reading's major employers.

William Blackall Simonds, of an old Berkshire family, founded the firm in 1785 on Broad Street. In 1789 he opened a new brewhouse at Seven Bridges, designed by the locally-born architect Sir John Soane who also designed his residence on the site. It continued in operation until a further rebuilding programme began in 1900.

The riverside site was well chosen: barley for malting came from the west by way of the River Thames and the Kennet & Avon Canal, and beer was sent to London by barge until the 1930s. The company took water from on-site artesian wells, a crucial clean source in the days before water treatment.

Simonds pioneered a lighter, dry-hopped style of ale. It secured contracts to supply the Army at home and overseas and set up breweries and distribution depots abroad.

The company took over many regional breweries and grew to 1250 pubs and hotels across the South of England.

In 1929 H & G Simonds became a limited company and was also granted the Royal Warrant which it held until 1960 when it merged with Courage. In 1980 brewing finally ended in Bridge Street and was moved to Worton Grange south of Reading.



1926. Chairman F A Simonds guiding the Prince of Wales round the brewery with Head Brewer Mr Stocker.

