

Welcome / turnout / honoured

Derek Anthony – Chairman
David Wickens – Secretary

Tonight I'd like to share with you some of my family history, with a particular slant towards our many connections to Basingstoke & Hampshire.

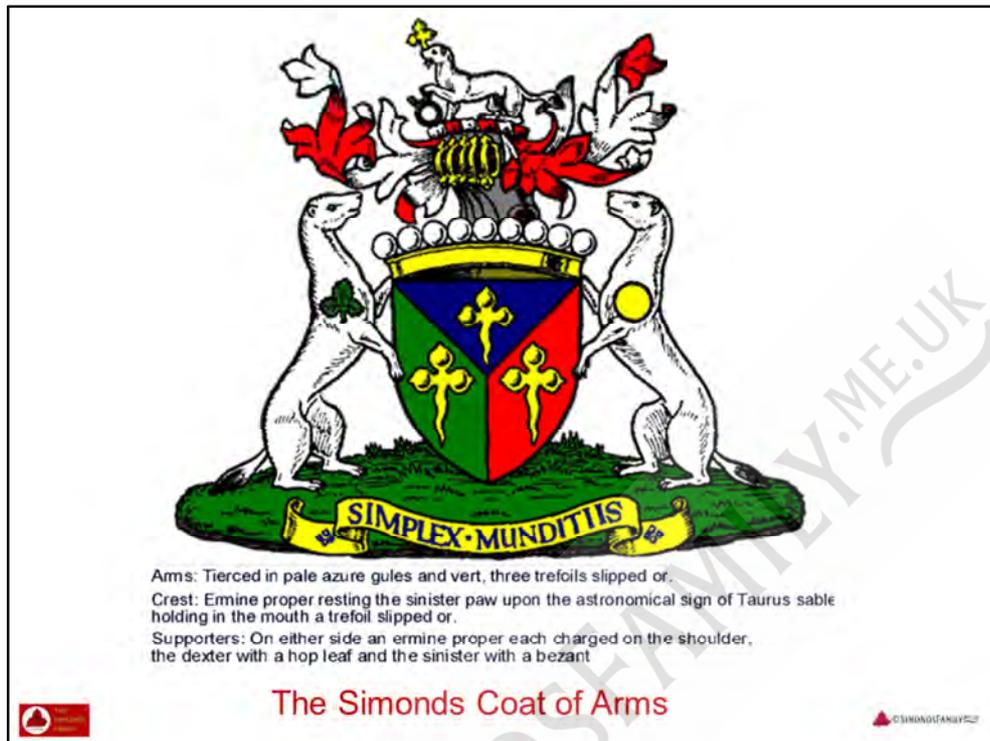
I have a lot to get through in an hour, but have planned to leave a little time at the end for questions. Please stop me at any point to ask questions – as you will not be able to remember them by the end! I'll try to answer briefly if I can - but if I will cover it anyway – I shall tell you.

I have brought a selection of our most precious archives to share with you – on the table over there. Please ask me before handling any originals.

The 'message' that I would like to get across is of a family with its roots firmly in the Reading area for close on 1000 years, but who travelled very widely and by marriage brought genes into the family pool from all over the world.

Maybe it was this that gave so many of them the spirit of adventure – to take them at young ages to seek their fortunes overseas.

In the family they were many 'Adventurers', some could be characterised as 'Swashbuckling' others as downright scoundrels!



The family crest [at the top] consists of an ermine passant, holding a trefoil of clover in his mouth.

The family motto 'Simplex Munditiis'

Is taken from a poem by Horace to his mistress and has been translated variously:

'Be what you are'

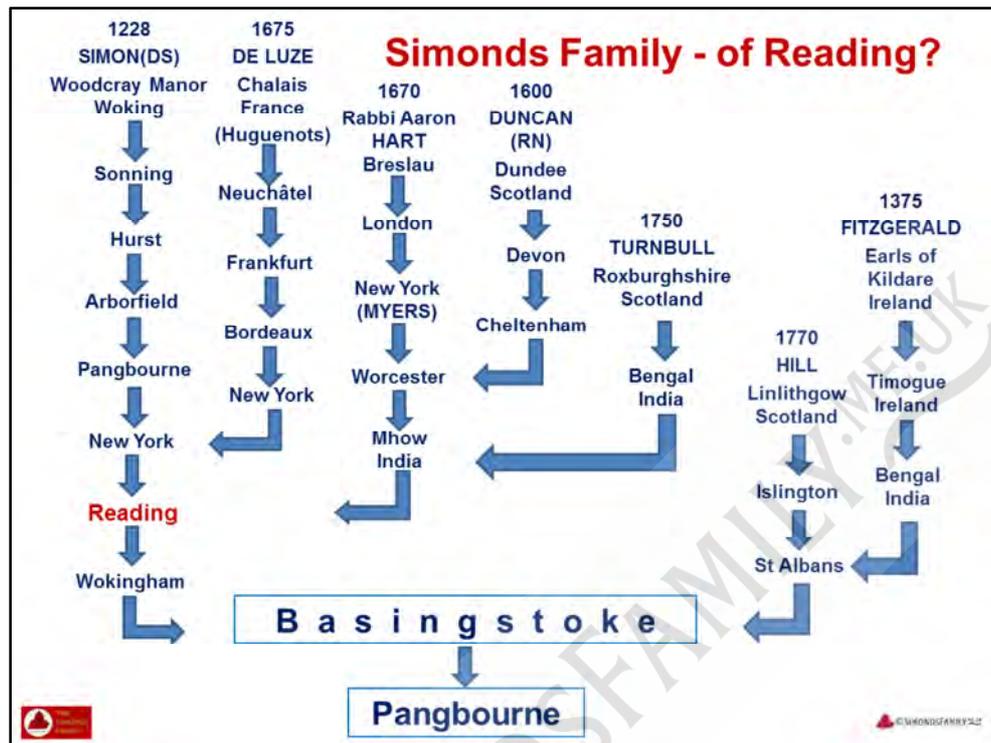
'Be true unto yourself'

'With simple elegance'

'Don't let success go to your head'

The College of Arms however has no formal record of this Coat of Arms ever being issued to the family!

So it may have been simply 'copied' from a family living in the South with a similar name, which it seems was quite a common occurrence in the 17th – 19th centuries!



I suppose it could be said that I am actually here on ‘false pretences’ – since whilst my Simonds family ancestors have been living ‘near here’ for close to 1000 years, not that many in my direct line are actually recorded as ‘born in Reading’ amongst them my grandfather Eric in 1881, last family Chairman of the Simonds Brewery. My father Eric Duncan and his 2 brothers were born at Audleys Wood. So lets examine where we started out – and the ‘journey’ that brought us here.

I can only speculate that the extraordinarily varied gene pool contributed largely to their ‘larger than life’ characters and careers. They have been variously described as ‘Swashbuckling’ and even ‘Rumbustious’! Certainly not all were very honest ☺

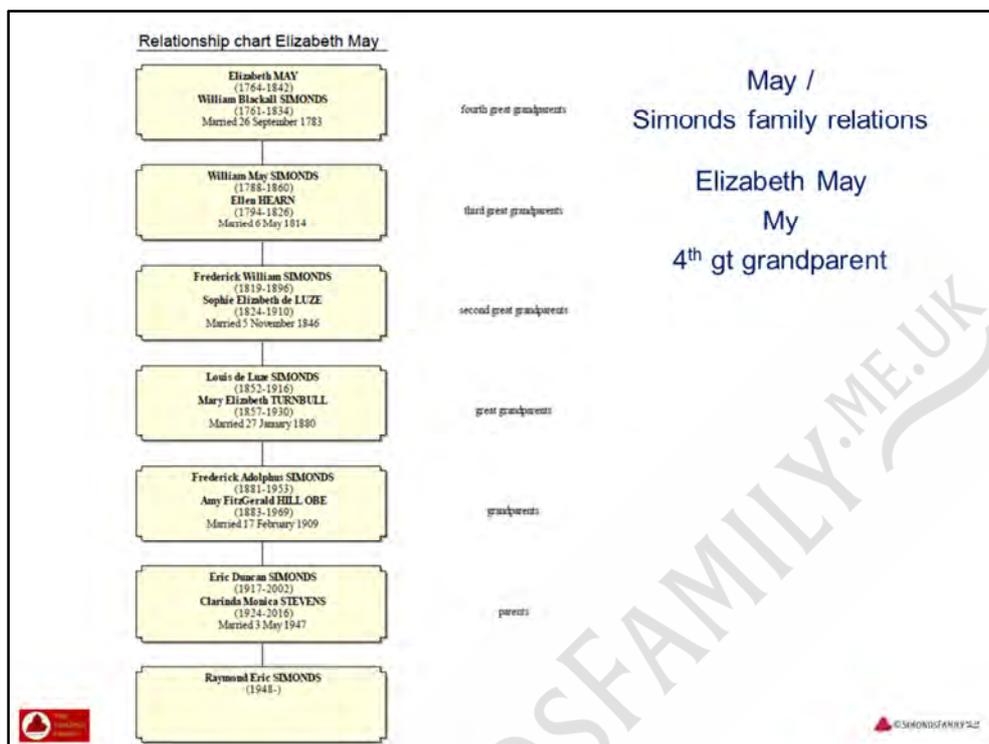
The date shown represents the 1st properly dated entry in my family tree for that family. Each horizontal line represents a marriage, but not all are shown.

My family tree now has about 5,500 entries, 600 with images. There is a short A4 version of it on the table, starting from William Blackall, 5 generations down to my late father Duncan – so if you think we are related – there is your chance to find it!

There is NO logical order to present the images and Biographies that follow – so I apologise for any confusion before I start!

Chief Rabbi **Aaron Uri Phoebus Hart** (Hebrew: רבי אהרן אורי פייבוש הרט; (1670 Breslau – 1756, London) was the first chief rabbi of the United Kingdom and the rabbi of the Great Synagogue of London from 1704 until his death.

He was son of Naphtali Hertz of Hamburg (Hartwig Moses Hart), a prosperous Jewish resident of that city. After studying at a yeshiva in Poland, he married the daughter of R. Samuel Ben Phoebus of Fürth, author of a commentary on Eben ha'Ezer. He was appointed rabbi of the first Ashkenazic synagogue in London in 1692.



The May family of Basingstoke and the Simonds Family of Berkshire - Have been entwined since the 18th century with several marriages, including:

Thomas Simonds (1731-1808) of Brimpton married Jane May from Long Sutton (1733-1802) in 1758. This is our 'banking family' branch

Again

Colonel John May's mother Mary Simonds (1804-1873) married Charles May (1800-1841) in 1828. She was the eldest child of John Simonds (1) (1766-1845) of Reading, who co-founded the bank [John & Charles Simonds](#) & Partners, on King St, Reading in 1814.

THE KEY SIMONDS – MAY WEDDING

On the Brewing family side:

[William Blackall Simonds](#) (1761-1834) married Elizabeth May (1764-1842) in 1783 in Pangbourne Church . Their marriage led immediately to the founding of Simonds Brewery.

Almost 200 years later – I was married in the same church.

Simonds Family



1543
William Symonds
Mayor of Windsor 1542
Witness for the
prosecution (false)
The Windsor Martyrs



c1550
Simon Symonds
(brother of William)
The Vicar of Bray

© SIMONDS FAMILY ME.UK

NOT ALL OF OUR FAMILY HAVE BEEN FINE UPSTANDING GENTLEMEN !
BUT THROUGHOUT OUR HISTORY, THERE HAVE BEEN REMARKABLE CHARACTERS WHO HAVE STOOD OUT FROM
THEIR PEERS AS CLEVER AND ADVENTUROUS RISK TAKERS, OFTEN WITH OUTSTANDING SUCCESS.

So to clear out a couple of skeletons first!

The Windsor Martyrs:

William Symons/Simons was born about 1488 as he was aged 17 when he started at King's College, Cambridge in 1505, becoming a lawyer. He lived in Windsor and, perhaps mindful of the turbulent times or out of 'convenience', became a religious fanatic. William was also Mayor in 1529 & 1542. William was one of three witnesses for the prosecution of the Windsor Martyrs and he also threatened the jurors at the trial. [not something to be proud of!] Four local men were convicted and three were burned at the stake for being Lutherans [too protestant] so falling foul of 'The Act of Six Articles' passed under Henry VIII. Robert Bennet, the fourth man, was sick with the plague when they came to take him, so was left in gaol and later recovered. Henry initially approved & condemned them all to death but - too late - changed his mind. He then had William tried and punished for 'perjury' by making him stand in the pillory in Newbury and then ride on a horse facing backwards & wearing a paper hat, through Reading, Windsor and Newbury. He was ruined by his public humiliation and died a pauper about 5 years later after 1547. Such was Tudor justice!

His brother was probably Simon Symonds, one of the candidates to have been
The Vicar of Bray

Soundtrack; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viw5JXopin0>

There is no certainty as to whom the famous song relates. We prefer:

Simon Symonds who was an [Independent](#) Christian minister under Cromwell's [Protectorate](#),
an [Anglican](#) cleric under Charles II, a [Roman Catholic](#) under [James II](#), and again an Anglican under [William III](#) and [Mary II](#).



Born in Arborfield.

The son of **William Simonds (1733-1782)** and **Mary Blackall (1730-1797)** he was first really energetic family businessman & brewer about whom there are some [sometimes conflicting] records. **Aged just 22 in 1783**, he was married at The Church of St James the Less, Pangbourne, Berkshire [like me] to **Elizabeth May (1764-1842)**,

Elizabeth, born like me in Pangbourne, is my 4th Great Grandmother. She was the daughter of **Daniel May (1734-1780)** from a wealthy family of millers in Basingstoke. [May brewery taken over in 1947] Her mother was from the long established Blackall family of Henley & Bradfield.

She brought with her a dowry of £2,000. His wedding was just 2 months after he had inherited his father's brewing business and 4 pubs and he wasted no time in developing it, **opening a new brewery at 85 Broad Street in 1785. [aged just 24]**

3 years later at the **age of just 27** he commissioned a huge new brewery with a capacity of '25 quarters' or 6,000 barrels a year and a spacious new Georgian home. All designed by a leading young architect friend [later Sir] John Soane. This cost some £6,400 a huge sum, with a projected value today of over £9m, which left him deeply in debt. It may just have been a happy coincidence that in the same year he also became Receiver-General of Taxes for West Berkshire, and a co-founder of Messrs. Micklem, Stephens, Simonds & Harris' Bank in the Market Place, each partner contributing £1,000 capital.

Reading's new Brewery had an output of 6,000 barrels per annum.

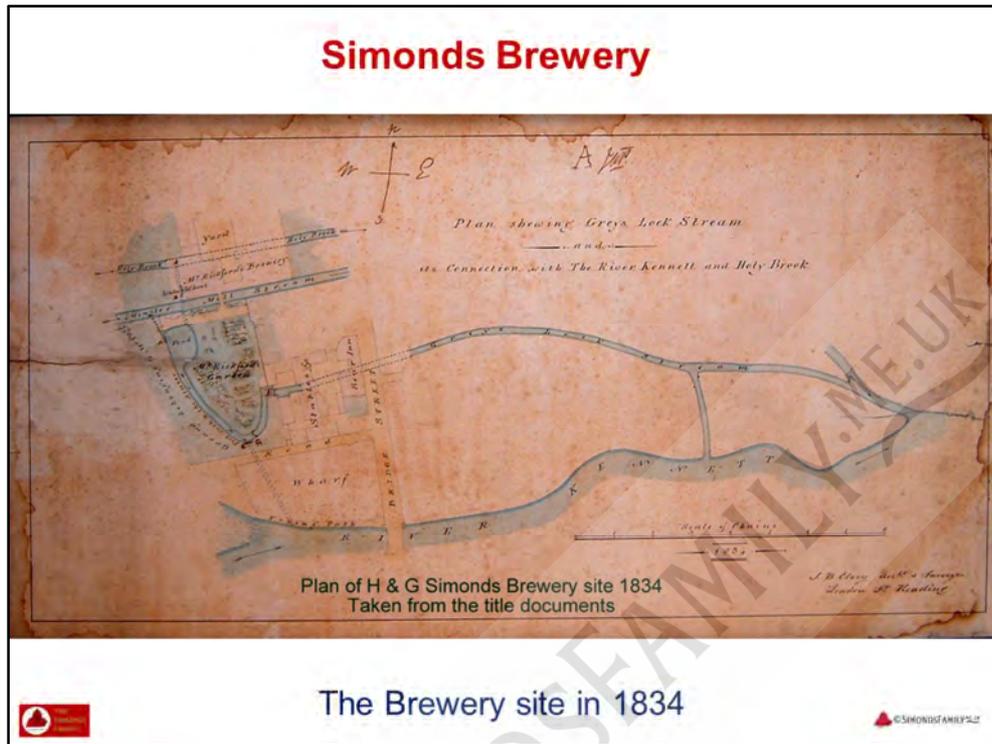
William was the 1st to use the **iconic 'Hop Leaf' motif**

However his ambition was curtailed by the onerous licensing laws and inability to expand **beyond his 10 pubs in Reading and 7 elsewhere**. Besides which, the other Reading Brewers had set up a cartel against his beers, which they perceived to be of higher quality, to control prices. [BBC Berkshire put out a splendid skit on this in 2017]

In 1813 his fortunes changed, with the award of a contract to supply the Army at Sandhurst [see letter] which started a very long relationship with the Forces.

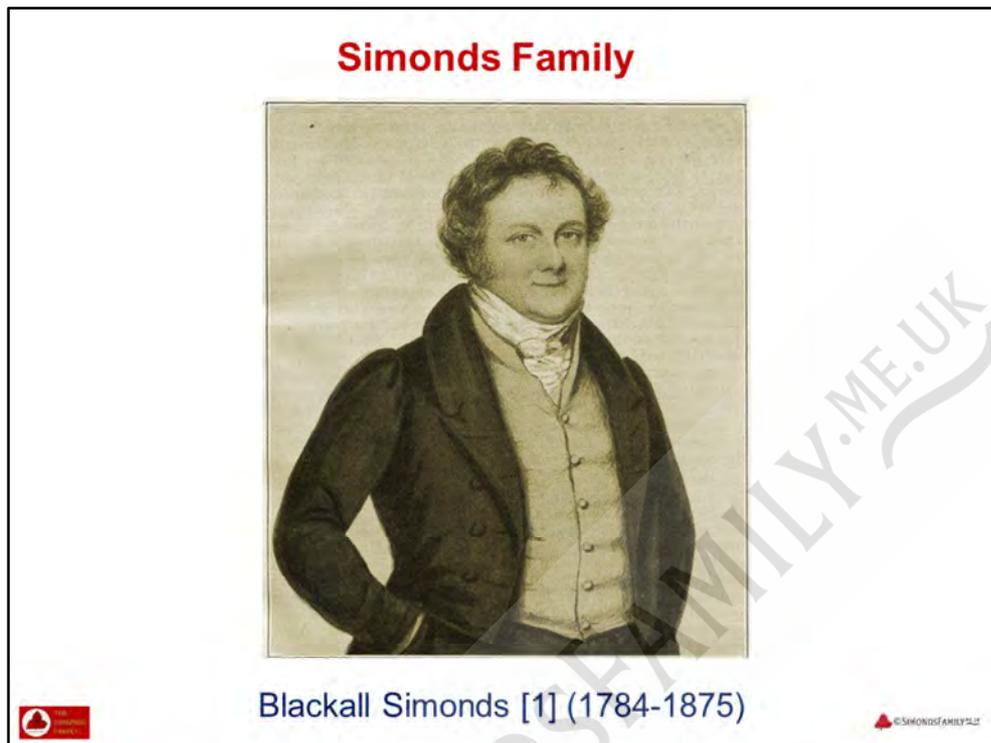
But this was not good enough for the ambitious William – who then turned his energies to a new banking business with his cousin John & Charles, founding J&C Simonds Bank on King St, which was eventually swallowed by Barclays in 1913.

So his eldest son Blackall (1784-1875) took on the brewery.



This faded & fragile drawing, mounted on wood is in my archives

- It shows the ideal location for a brewery:
 - River & canal for transport of heavy raw materials & finished goods by barge
 - Good clean water – from own wells
 - Central location to the town
- s



Eldest son of William Blackall Simonds & Elizabeth May Blackall was a pivotal man in our history.

He took on the business in about 1813.

He lived in [Caversham Court](#) in Caversham and was very different to his father [William Blackall](#).

Just as energetic, but with all the rumbustiousness of a Regency character that got him into various scrapes, including an argument at the Gun Street billiard room and only at the last moment was he restrained from fighting a duel.

He enjoyed two of the most energetic activities of his day: politics and fox-hunting.

In parliamentary and local elections, long before the secret ballot was introduced, he was accused by his Liberal opponents of making 'practical appeals to voters' [in today's language, that means offering bribes!] but he was never taken to court.

Family anecdotes also suggest that he was not over-sensitive when handling members of the public who criticised his business methods.

He hunted with Sir John Cope's hounds, later the Garth & South Berks Hunt, that often met at another Simonds family home [Newlands](#) just North of Arborfield Cross. With his groom in attendance, he pursued foxes with 'ardour'. During these outings, he carried a notebook and it is said, noted down each time he spotted a good location for a future pub within the 15 mile range of a horse-drawn dray, all in anticipation of the liberalisation of the licensing laws. This foresight allowed him to move fast when the opportunity finally came, beating his competitors to key locations.

Because - Following widespread protests and public inquiries to combat the high price and poor quality of most beer, the Duke of Wellington's administration passed the [Beer House Act in 1830](#), which authorised the opening of pubs on payment of just 2 guineas and without the need to obtain a magistrate's licence.

At a stroke the older brewers' monopoly was destroyed and Blackall Simonds showed what could be done with an opportunity to compete on equal terms.

Over the succeeding years the number of tied houses was gradually increased but there were also many newly-opened independent beer houses without brewing facilities that were only too glad to purchase his good quality beer.

By 1839 the brewery was larger than any of its Reading competitors producing 15,000 barrels, well over double the original brewery capacity. With thirty-seven tied houses, twelve in Reading itself.

So Blackall Simonds merited his reputation for business acumen, energy and foresight. By building up his

local trade, he also prevented the larger London breweries from gaining a foothold in 'his' Berkshire area. Those breweries had for a long time complained bitterly about being unable to sell their porter in the counties but he showed conclusively that locally brewed beer could fully satisfy local needs.

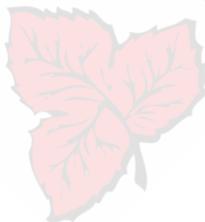
In 1834 he began to brew a novel kind of beer, pale ale, for export; it travelled well, even on the six-months' journey under sail to the remote colony of Victoria in Australia, although the 1st shipment a few years later was a financial disaster because the importer failed to return the costly ['hogsheads'](#) in which it was shipped!

Business however developed well and who knows if it was helped by the arrival in 1835 at Port Phillip settlement of [Charles Joseph la Trobe \(1801–1875\)](#) as 'Superintendent', becoming the 1st Governor of Victoria in 1851. Huguenots like the Simonds family, his granddaughter Victoria would later marry a brewery Director, Stephen Shea-Simonds (1874-1955).

Blackall retired in 1845 and moved with his wife Emma Jane (née Usborne) from the family home at [Caversham Court](#), to Ryde, Isle of Wight, where he built a new home and called it [Caversham House](#).

Here we believe that he was one of the first in the family to take up the sport of sailing, at The Royal Victoria Yacht Club, then in Ryde.

He and Emma had one son, George Mellish Simonds, but he was never well enough to be involved in business. So his younger brothers [Henry \[1785-1879\]](#) and [George \[1794-1852\]](#) joined the firm in about 1834 and in 1885 the brewery was incorporated and called H&G Simonds Ltd.



Simonds Family



Born at Brewery House on Bridge Street.
The 2nd son of William Blackall Simonds
& Elizabeth May.

He married Mary Goodman in May 1811
and they had 4 children.

Henry with his younger brother
George Simonds (1794-1885)
gave their initials to make H&G Simonds.

When the original partnership was turned
into a limited company in 1885 Henry
became the first Chairman.

Henry Simonds
(1785-1874)

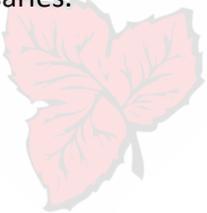


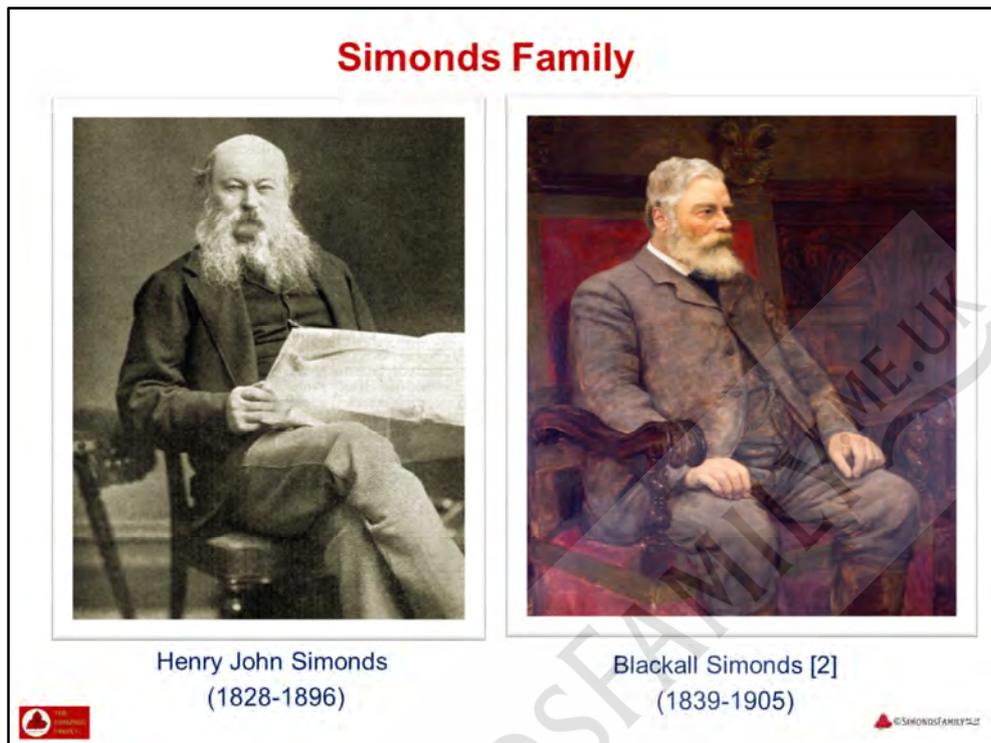
When the original partnership was turned into a limited company in 1885, Henry with his younger brother **George Simonds (1794-1885)** gave their initials to make H&G Simonds. Henry became the first Chairman.

He was described as a Brewer and Wine and Spirit Merchant.

He lived his later years at 'The Old Rectory' [later Caversham Court] in Caversham.

Family folklore relates that he was a contemporary of William Gladstone at Eton becoming friends, but political adversaries.





Henry's son Henry John Simonds joined in about 1856 after time as a barrister. He injected new vigour and was responsible for **the 1st bottled beers, Pale Ale in 1858.**

There are 3 fragile green glass bottles from different eras on the table. The earliest ones had cork stoppers, later wood – then bakelite.

When his father Henry retired in 1868 [aged 83] Henry John brought in George Simonds' son, his 1st cousin [another] Blackall [1839-1905]

- Next image -

Blackall was probably the last Simonds to be born in Bridge House, on the Brewery site at Bridge St. [in the foreground of the next image] Which they converted to offices then demolished in 1869 to make more space for brewing.

In February 1850, he was also the 1st boy on the register at Bradfield College. When he left in 1857, the school had grown to 97 pupils. He was later a key benefactor to the College.

Blackall was an engineer and made countless innovations:

The main barrel store [below] built in about 1870 was the 1st ever 4 storey industrial store built in concrete. The task was huge, considering it was all shuttered in timber then mixed by hand!

He introduced the new 'Burton Union' method of brewing and built a QA laboratory, keeping the brand ahead of its competition in quality brews.

However – **A family crisis was 'brewing'** as there was a shortage of eligible sons to take over the growing business. So we now move away to see where the next generations of Simonds' came from!

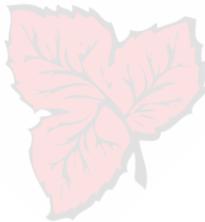


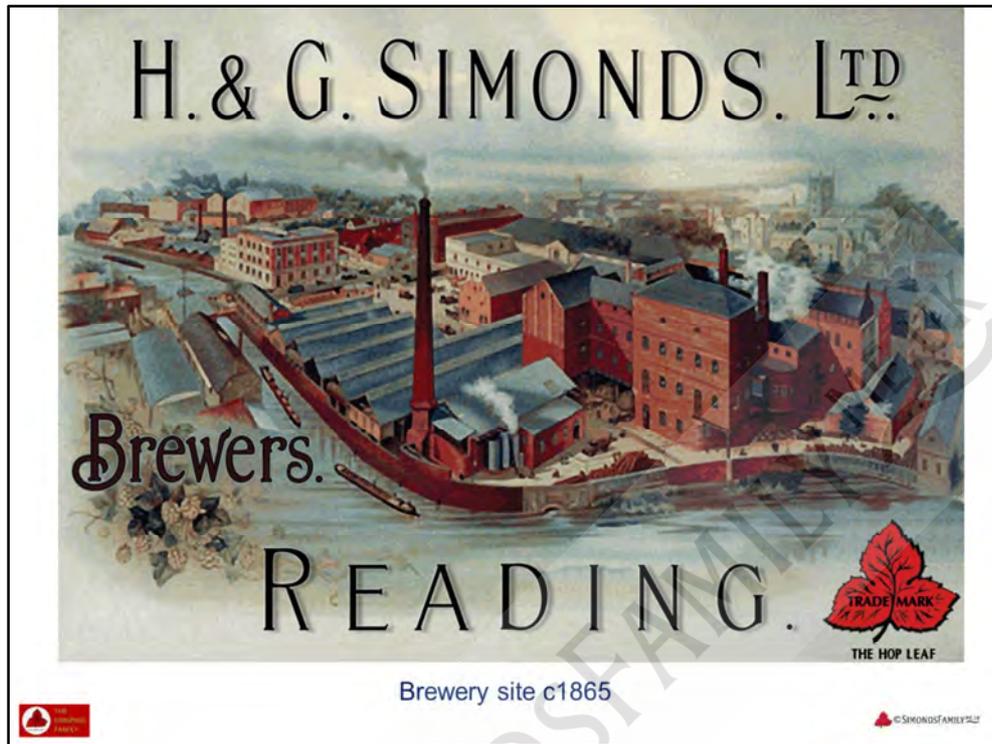
Showing Bridge House, the family home that was designed by Sir John Soane, demolished in 1869

The 3 storey barrel vaults were designed and built in 1870

By the architect Blackall Simonds

They were probably the first unreinforced concrete structure of the type in the UK.





This image taken from a family mirror was used to show the brewery on the Kennet Riverside Information Board in 2005

The image does not show the family home
So – dated after 1869

In ** Reading Civic Society erected an 'Information Board' on the south side of the Kennet, looking across to the Oracle that now occupies the site.
It features this image





Now we move briefly away from the 'Brewers' in the family – to make the point that there were other remarkable characters, also children of that same Simonds/May marriage in 1783:

Born in Reading then educated at Eton, William was a venturesome type!

He turns up in **Moscow in 1814 aged just 26**

That is just 2 years after Napoleon had sacked then retreated from the city, so the place must still have been a disaster zone.

He was a merchant or 'Russia broker', trading it seems mostly in tallow through the London Tallow Chandlers & shipping to St Petersburg, where he had a partner called Giles Loder, from offices at 75/80 Old Broad Street. [Note, Giles Loder retired to Wilsford House near Pewsey in Wiltshire. When he died in 1871, he left a staggering £3m. He was the father of the 1st baronet of that name.]

Together they chartered British ships for voyages to Russia which though very profitable, do seem to have had their problems, with the Bristol schooner brig 'The Clarence', en route from the UK to Copenhagen via Elsinore, then on to St Petersburg, ending up on 'Fosterborne' reef off Sweden in 1823 which cost £1,077 to repair and led to protracted cases through the Court of Appeal in 1829. In 1820 the British ship Marshall, again en-route to St Petersburg but from Spain via the Isle of Wight, hit rocks off the Islands of Lessee, Jutland, and even though recovered, this led to claims on the ship's master in court.

He seems to have been entrepreneurial on other fronts as well, investing £4,000 in the start-up of the Birmingham & Derby Junction Railway in 1837, some 2% of the equity and a huge sum in those days.

He went on to become a member of the Worshipful Company of Patten-makers and was made a freeman of the City of London in 1820.

On May 6th 1814, at the British Chaplaincy in St Petersburg, William married **Ellen Hearn (1794-1826)** Born in St Petersburg, where her mother **Ellen Riches (d1846)**, widow of **Joseph Hearn (d1796)** was working as a governess in the household of Czar, Nicholas I. So she was brought up in the Royal Court.

This fabulous headdress and a yellow diamond necklace were her wedding gifts from the Tzarina. [The tiara was last worn by Amy Simonds at the wedding of her son Duncan in 1947, 133 years later]

Simonds Family & Bank



John Simonds [2] (1807-1896)
Born at Brewery House on Bridge Street
Owned Newlands farm & Sindlesham Mill
Succeeded his father as partner of J&C Simonds Bank in 1871

© SIMONDS FAMILY CLUB

Many brewers of the era turned to banking, in part to employ surplus wealth but also because Brewers and their Publicans generated so much cash, that many publicans deposited their funds with their landlord.

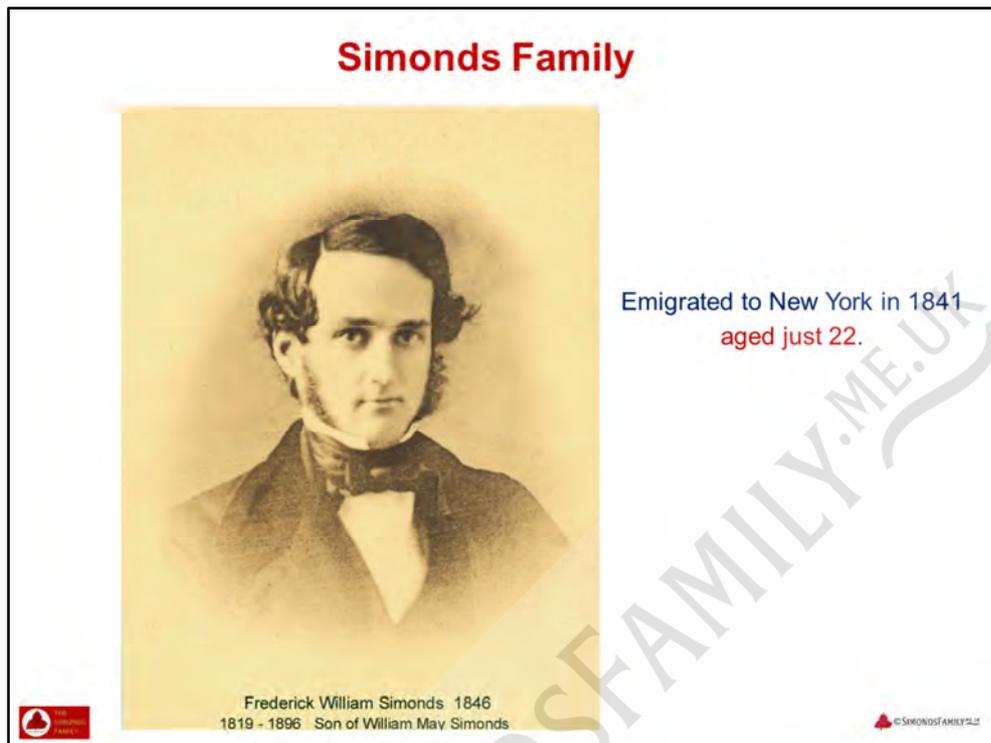
In 1791 the same **William Blackall Simonds** had also founded a bank with three other partners, Messrs Micklem, Stephens and Harris, in Reading Market Place. In the same year that he had been appointed Receiver-General of Taxes for West Berkshire and he could use the accumulating tax receipts for up to six months before remitting them to London, another useful source of short term funds for the bank.]

By 1814 a frustrated William had decided to move on from brewing and concentrate on banking. He withdrew from his then banking partnership and founded another in nearby King Street. His partners were his son Henry, Ralph Nicholson, and two cousins, **John Simonds [1] & Charles Simonds**. Five branches in nearby towns were established over time.

The banking partnership was carried on completely separately from the brewing business. By 1859 John Simonds was the only partner left alive so in 1871 he took his two sons, **John Simonds [2]** and William, and a nephew, James Simonds, into partnership. Over the years, there were about 33 partners, all from the family. In 1913 the bank amalgamated with Barclays.

John and his family lived at Newlands Lodge just North of Arborfield Cross from 1840. Then built Newlands House on the same land in 1860 and remained there till 1949.

We tend to look back on the life of privilege and ease of that time. But John [2] left us 20 volumes of diaries that give great insight into his life and passions. He made entries in 2 colours. Black for normal working days and red for days spent hunting with the Garth Hounds. There were of course many 'red' days. This entry for about 1861 when he had just completed a new home for his family on his Newlands estate typifies them. Rose at 6.00 and after a brief breakfast my groom brought my horse "Blackbeard" and we rode to the market, where I bought the weeks supply of grain for Sindlesham Mill. Arrived in the bank at 9.00 to deal with the day's post. My groom brought back the horses at 2.00 and we rode to hounds. Returning home about 6.00.



Now for a brief family adventure 'across the pond' to New York.

Moving to the next generation - so the grandson of that same Simonds / May marriage and the 2nd son of William May Simonds & Ellen Hearn

Frederick was born in Hampstead, London and after studying languages and spending some time in Germany, he **set off to New York by sailing brig, aged just 22**, where he landed on 24th November 1841.

See letters in file

~~Like Louis-Philippe~~

He met Louis-Philippe de Luze and his family of French Huguenots, from Bordeaux, on the long and potentially dangerous crossing, it is perhaps not surprising that Louis-Philippe took Frederick in and set him to work in his Merchant House, where they both prospered.

Louis-Philippe and Frederick had another thing in common. They each came from wealthy families and had successful fathers, so had no real need to undertake these dangerous adventures to foreign lands to seek their fortunes.

Diverting a moment from Frederick to his forbears --

Frederick was the 2nd son of a swashbuckling entrepreneur and 'Russia Trader' William May Simonds (1788-1860) Who made a huge fortune from the supply of 'Tallow' from Spain to St Petersburg for the Czar during the Napoleonic wars.

Louis-Philippe was the eldest son of Baron Charles Henri de Luze (1760-1824) who had estates in Switzerland.

No surprise then, that in 1846, just 5 years after arriving in New York, Frederick married Louis-Philippe's daughter Sophie Elizabeth de Luze. They had 10 children including 8 sons!

Much of his life and times are recorded in a fragile typescript written by his daughter Ellen Hearn Simonds, that you can see on my website.



Frederick Simonds married into the illustrious De Luze & Ogden families. Two of the founding and powerful families of America.

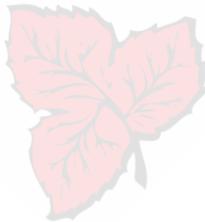
On the journey across the Atlantic, he met Abraham Ogden [1743-1798] and through his sister Sarah Ogden, Sarah's husband **Louis Philippe de Luze (1793-1877)** and his family, then living at 54 Seventh Street, New York. The de Luze family are Huguenots, originally from Neuchatel in Switzerland. A branch of the family still live in Morges, close to the Lake of Geneva.

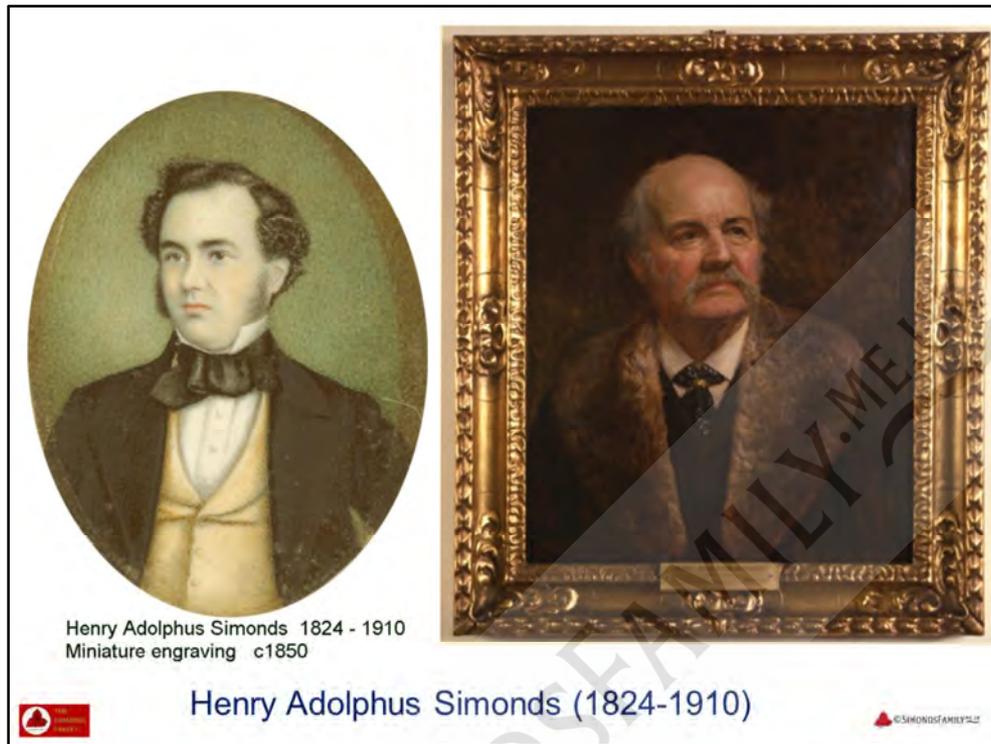
One branch moved West to Bordeaux in 1820, where they are involved in the wine trade to this day, with both a trading company and the Chateaux Paveil de Luze in Margaux.



Despite the still evident dangers in trans-Atlantic crossings in those days, Frederick and Sophie were regular visitors to his brother Henry Adolphus and family in the UK.

It amuses me to see 6 green glass bottles on the tables!
I wonder if they were Simonds beer?





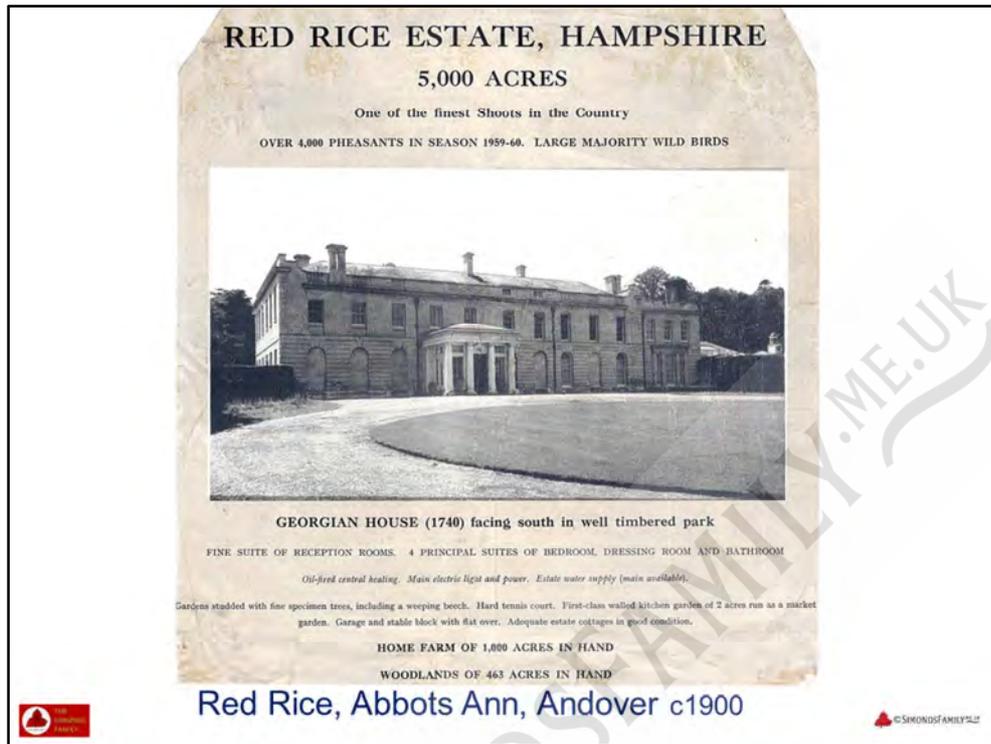
Not all of the Simonds family were so adventurous or motivated!

The 5th child of William May Simonds –

Henry took almost 10 years to get through school and was soon married off to a wealthy widower Emily Boulger of Bradfield. He spent the next 50 or so years of his life indulging his passion for fishing, often for salmon in Norway, shooting on his estate and with occasional visits to the Brewery.

He also served as Mayor of Reading and as Chairman of the Brewer's Society.

When the Simonds family bought Audleys Wood, Basingstoke in 1900, newly widowed, he moved from his mansion, Red Rice, Andover and was soon joined by his nephew Louis de Luze Simonds and his large young family.



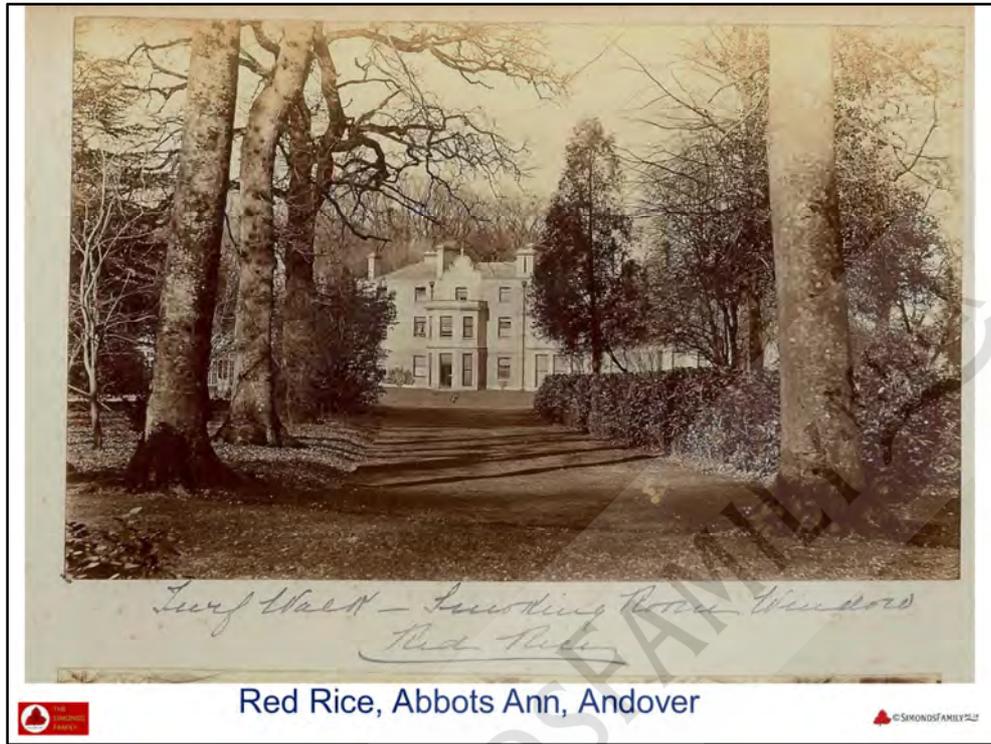
The home of **Henry Adolphus Simonds (1855-1904)** from 1886 – 1900

Leased from the family of Thomas Best who died in 1886, Henry lived here until his wife Emily [nee Boulger] died in 1897, so he decided to move to Audleys Wood - in 1900.

Red Rice was a fine Georgian home with a sporting estate, so that he could indulge his passion for shooting. It was said to have been the hideaway of one of Charles II's mistresses.

There is a family letter to relatives in New York, explaining the horrors of the night it caught fire over Easter in 1892, written by [Mary Simonds, née Turnbull \(1857-1930\)](#)

The house is now a boarding school

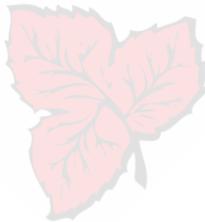


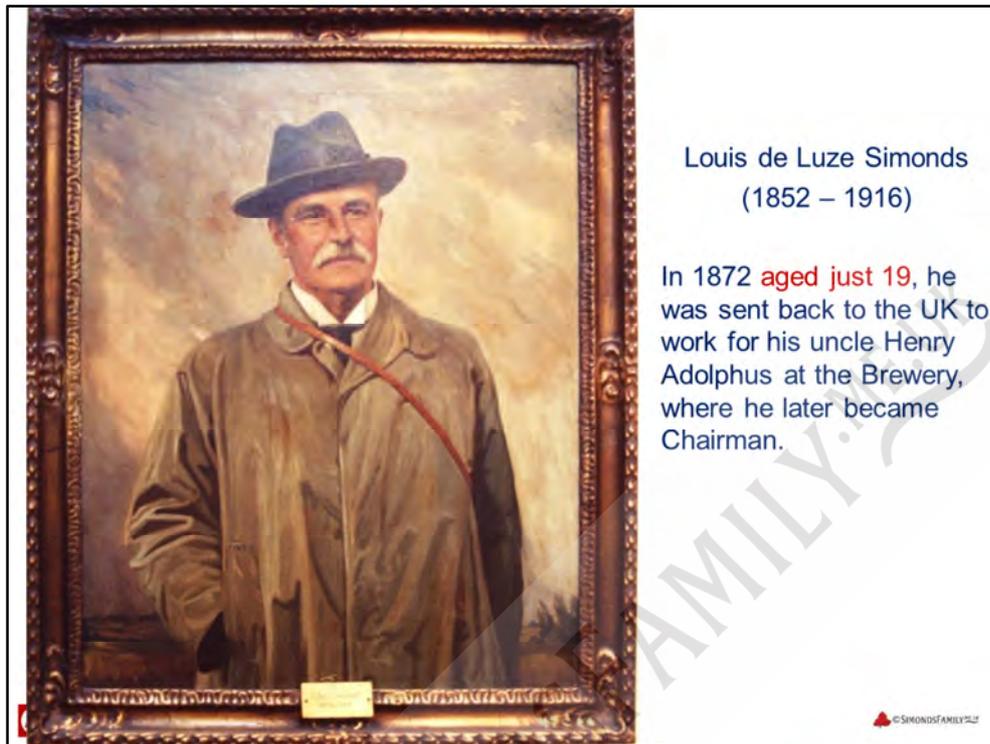
The home of **Henry Adolphus Simonds (1855-1904)** from 1886 – 1899

‘The Turf Walk’



Interesting to note that there appears to be no electric light in the drawing room image.





Moving on again to the – NEXT GENERATION

Now the great grandchildren of that same Simonds / May marriage **AND** also my great grandfather.

With closer ties to Basingstoke

Frederick's 2nd son was **Louis de Luze Simonds (1852-1916)**

Born in New York to **Frederick William Simonds (1819-1896) & Sophie Elizabeth De Luze (1824-1910)**

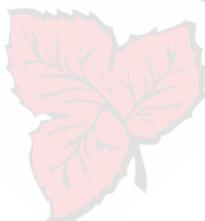
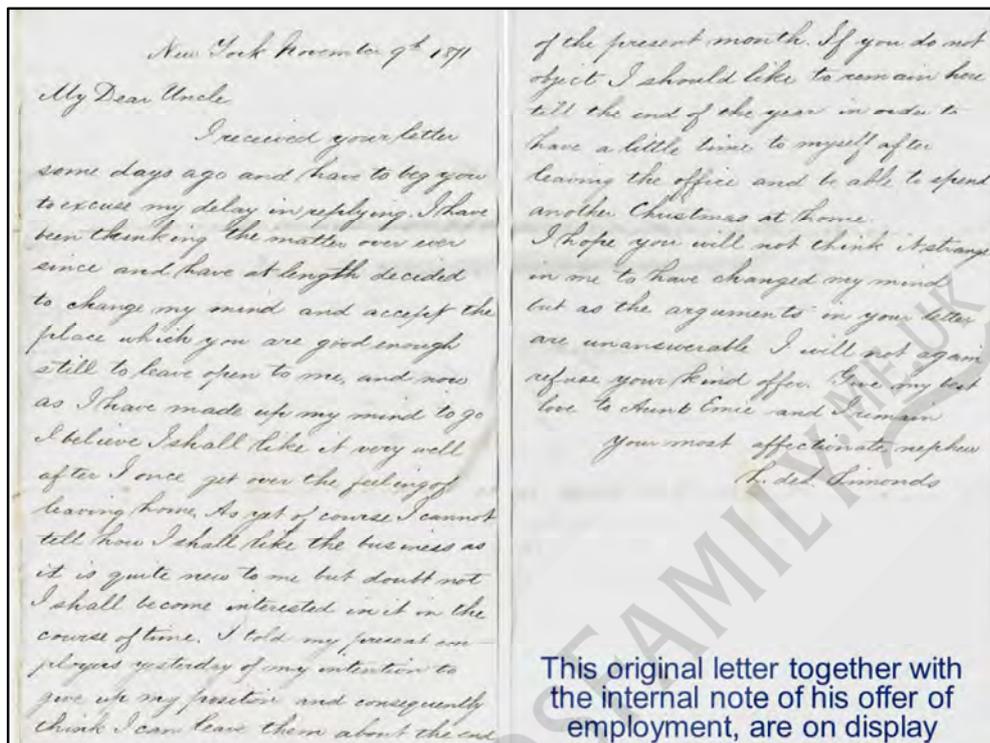
NEXT SLIDE

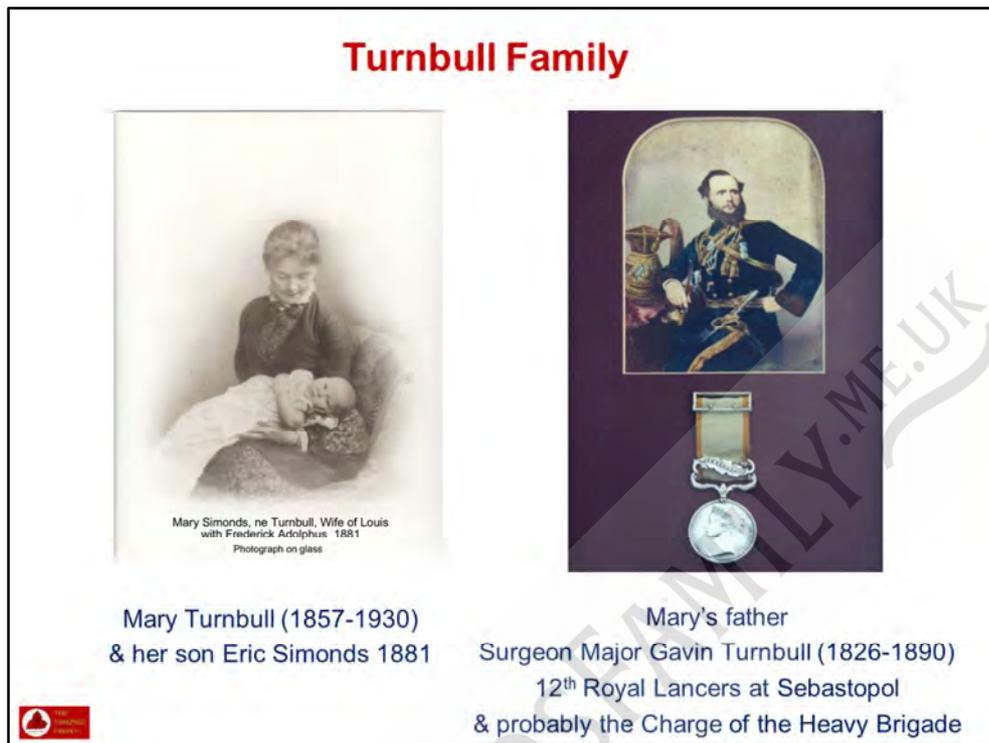
In 1871, Louis' uncle **Henry Adolphus Simonds (1885-1904)**, then a Director of the brewery, visited his brother Frederick William Simonds in New York to seek help because he had no son and heir. They agree that Louis, **then aged just 19**, would be 'invited' to the UK to be trained to take on the running of the family business. Louis took quite some persuading, initially rejecting the offer. In a poignant family letter of November 1871 [see folder for this letter **AND** the internal offer letter], Louis recorded his very natural concerns at the move, but agrees to go. So it was that, 'after one last Christmas at home' in January 1872, Louis arrived in Reading and started work. He continued working up until his death at Audleys Wood from pneumonia in 1916, where his Coat of Arms still decorates the hall windows.

Henry and Blackall Simonds, then the partners running the Brewery, both died childless and Louis took up the reins. First as Company Secretary when H&G Simonds was first registered in 1885, then as Chairman from 1872 – 1916.

He died suddenly in the flu epidemic, whilst still in office. So that his family portrait had to be painted from a black & white photograph.

Another keen sportsman, he travelled annually to fish for the large salmon that famously visited the River Orkla near Trondheim in Norway.





In January 1880 Louis married **Mary Elizabeth Turnbull (1857-1930)**

Born in Madras, Mary was the daughter of **Gavin Ainslie Turnbull (1826-1890)**, Surgeon General who served in the Crimea, at Sebastopol and in India and **Mary Elizabeth Myers (1857-1930)**.

In 1854 he was probably a surgeon at the infamous 'Charge of the Light Brigade' at Balaclava, surely a thankless task!

Gavin was also descended from:

The 'Duncan' clan of famous Naval Officers
and

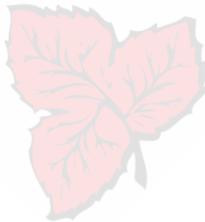
Chief Rabbi **Aaron Uri Phoebus Hart (1670 Breslau – 1756 London)** (Hebrew: רבי אהרן אורי פייבוש הרט) who was the first chief rabbi of the United Kingdom and the rabbi of the Great Synagogue of London from 1704 until his death.

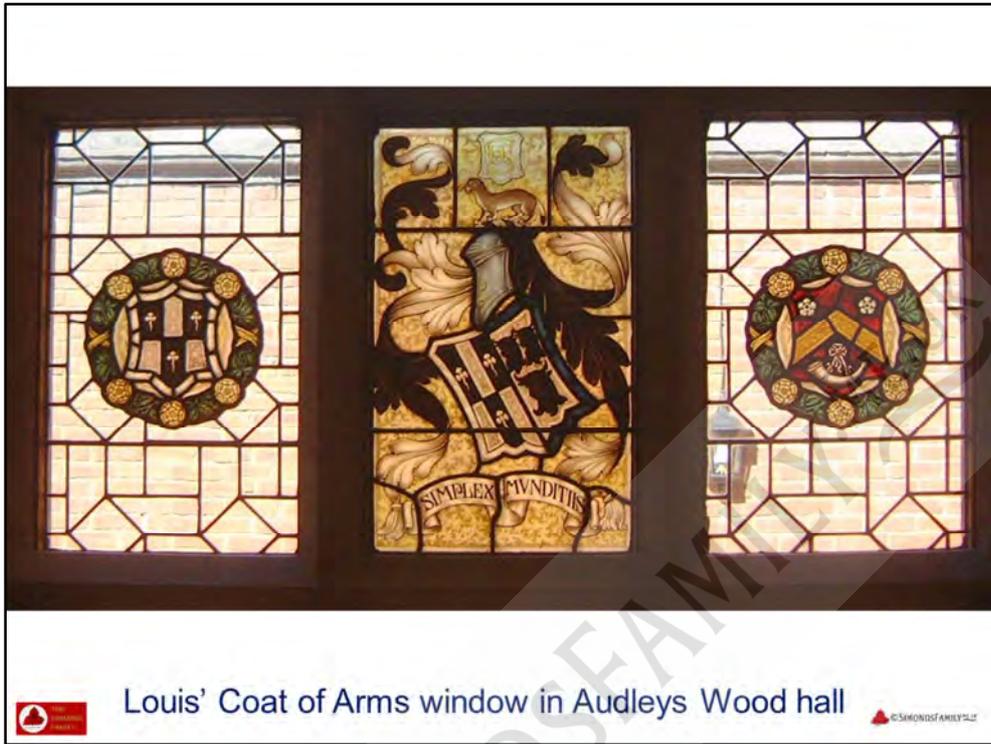
They had 5 amazing children, who I will come to next:

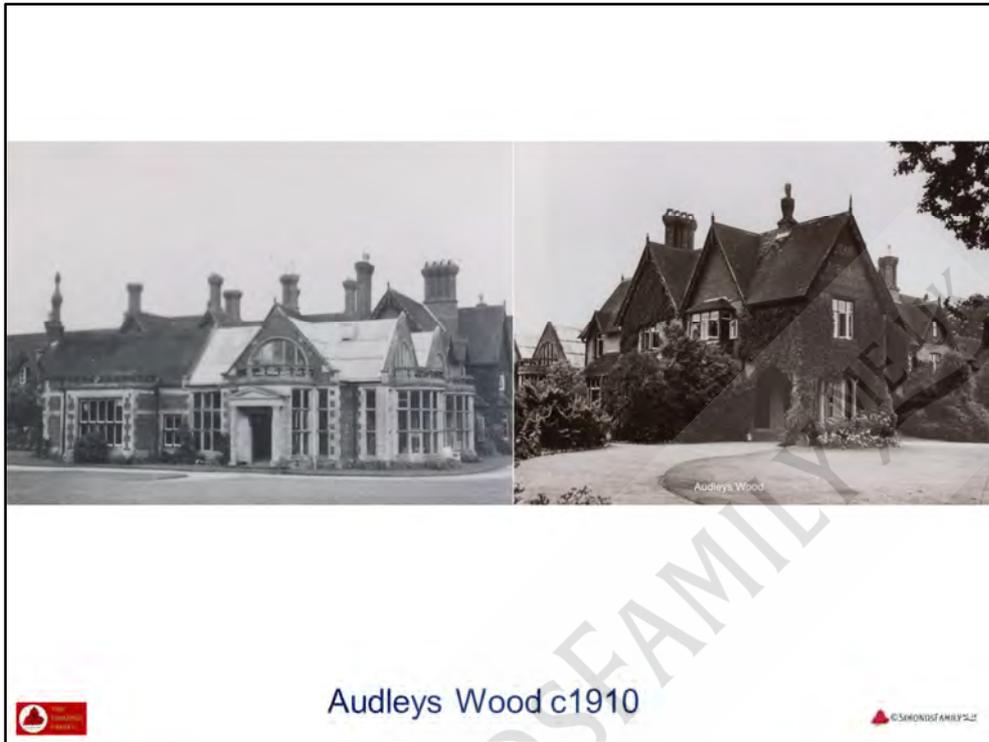


Which brings us at last to Audleys Wood – Basingstoke

Mary – aged 8 years







There are 4 different sale notices for Audleys Wood on the table undated, but:

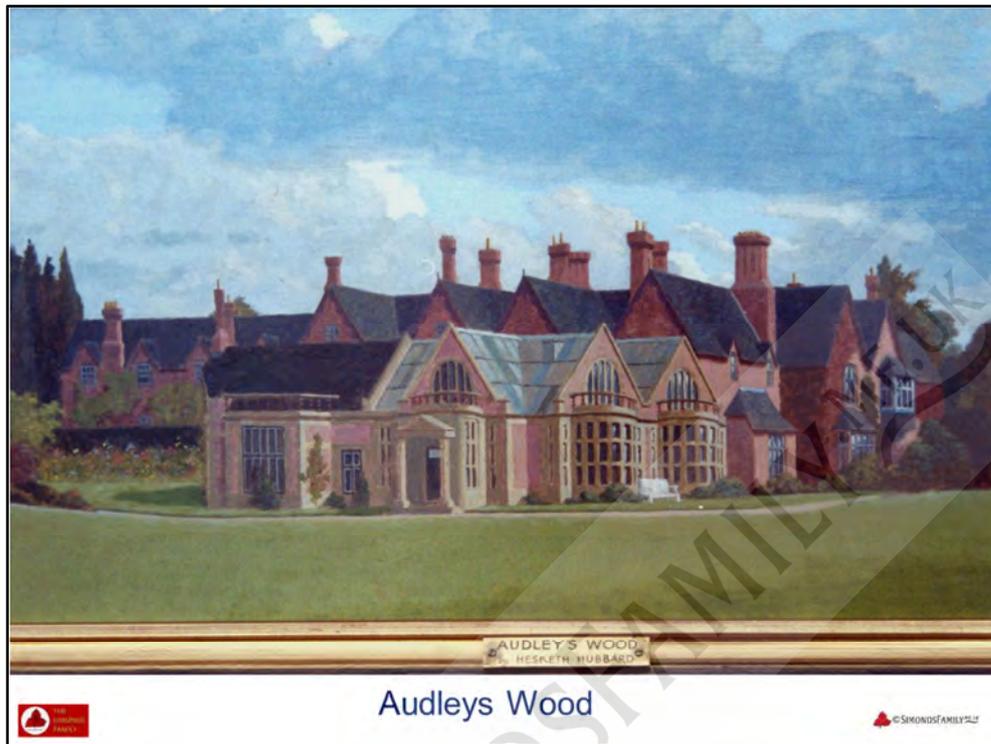
1930

1950

1951

1988

FRAGILE



The site of Audleys Wood is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as 'Oddele'.

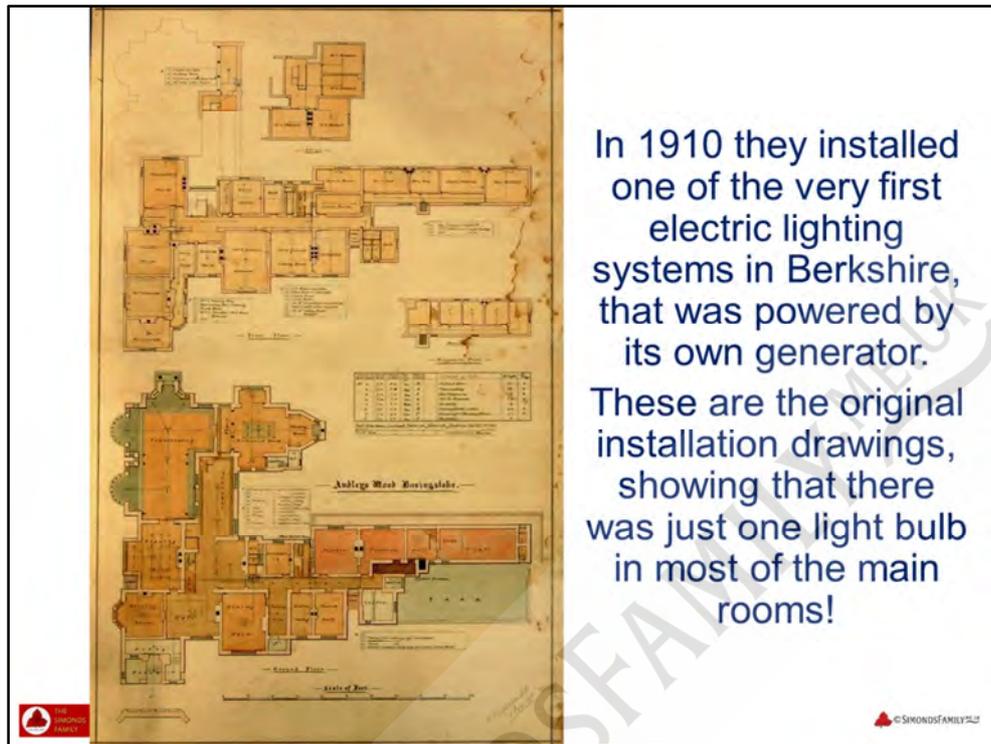
This painting of the house is from a larger work by Hesketh Hubbard (1892-1957) It was paid for by a Brewery staff subscription and presented to Eric Simonds in January 1952 by Capt A.S Drew, to celebrate Eric's 50 years service at the brewery.

Just South of Basingstoke, Audleys Wood was probably designed by Matthew Wyatt of Architects - Weston Patrick for Thomas & Rachel Pain. They bought the land from the Garrett family in 1877. Thomas had first leased neighbouring Pensdell Farm from them in 1872. Thomas was a Magistrate, twice Mayor of Salisbury and a Director of Tattersall's in Knightsbridge. They moved in about 1880 and he died in 1885.

However our family record of the [Deeds](#) show that the Simonds family was already buying his mortgages and an interest in Pensdell Farm from 1883.

The deeds show it sold by Thomas Pain's family in 1887 to William Bradshaw and his wife Elizabeth and at this time the property was extended – probably the glass roofed conservatory [HERE].
[Not to be confused with Sir George Bradshaw of Railway Guide fame who died in Norway in 1853]

In 1889 William's wife Elizabeth was killed in a hideous runaway horse accident – she was taken into The Hatch pub on the A30 East of Basingstoke then home, where she died. There is a press cutting with the sad details [HERE](#).



Following his death, William Bradshaw's family moved out and in January 1891 rented the house to The Rev Frederick & Mrs Sophia Stewart of Bournemouth for a year. William remarried in 1892.

The deeds show that it was bought in August 1900 by [Louis de Luze Simonds](#) (1852-1916) and was promptly mortgaged.

However - Henry Adolphus Simonds (1885-1904) moved in initially from his fine Georgian House, [Red Rice, Andover](#).

Shooting was his first love and both Red Rice and Audleys Wood, where he held shooting rights to several neighbouring farms, provided ample sport.

When Henry Simonds moved in, he modernised & extended, adding the function room and musician's gallery.

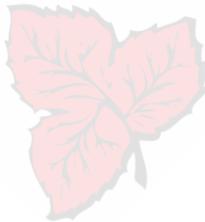
In 1910 they installed one of the very first electric lighting systems in Berkshire, that was powered by its own generator. These are the original installation drawings, showing that there was just one light bulb in most of the main rooms!



The new function room adjoining the conservatory was put to good use.

Here the wedding in 1907 of Louis' daughter Louise.

A recent family event there was a FAMILY REUNION for 170 relatives of Duncan Simonds, Louis' grandson & my father, to commemorate his 100th birthday on June 1st 2017.





Following the death of his mother Mary in 1930, Eric Simonds failed to find a buyer, so felt obliged to move in with his wife and 3 children.

The Audleys Wood Estate had always included Pensdell Farm and the surrounding woodlands, altogether a property of some 300 acres.

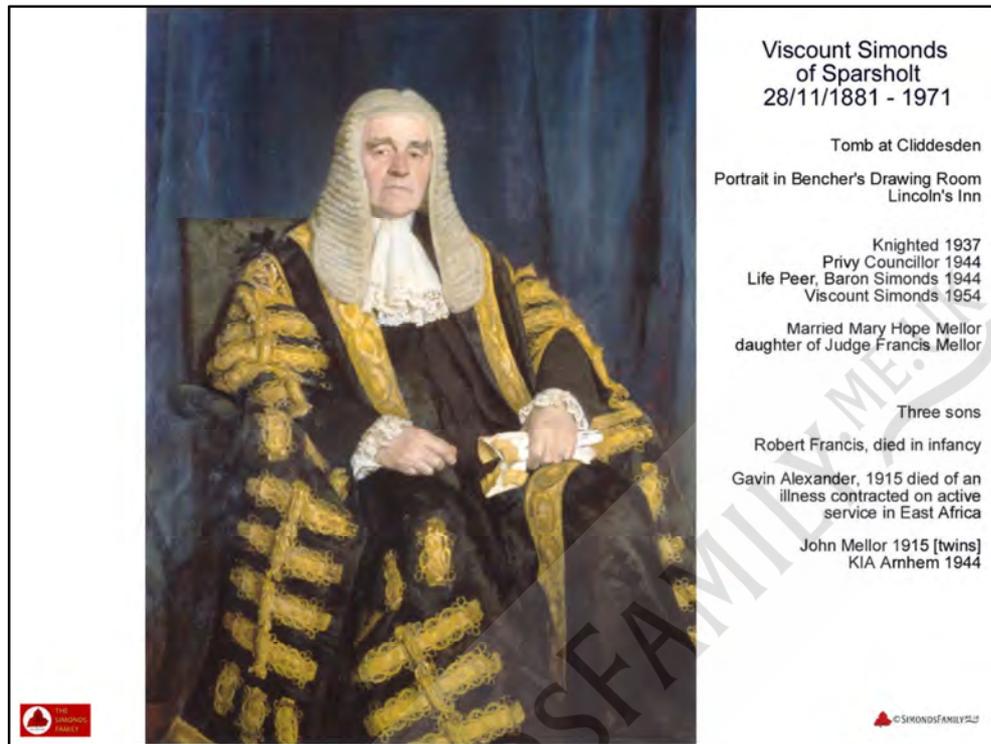
Soon after the outbreak of World War II, Hackwood House opposite was requisitioned as a Canadian Army Hospital. So in 1940, Lord Camrose took a furnished tenancy of Audleys Wood for the duration of the war.

Whilst Eric Simonds and his wife Amy Hill moved to a much smaller and more manageable house, Abbey Croft in Mortimer, which was also nearer to the Reading Brewery.

In 1950 after five years back in his old family home, Eric Simonds decided that Audleys Wood was altogether too large, costly and unmanageable in the context of post-war Britain for just himself and his wife, so it was put up for sale complete and later in parts. Lord Camrose bought part, and incorporated Pensdell Farm and the woodlands into the Hackwood estate. The house, gardens and adjacent farm buildings went to Hampshire County Council, who ran it as an Old Folks Home, with a home and later workshops for the disabled in the old stable block, for 35 years.

The family moved to Ashe House, a beautiful [now listed] house in Overton, where Eric Simonds was taken ill & died soon after - in 1953.

Like his father – he was still in office as the Brewery Chairman and having only just celebrated his 50 years service to the company.



THE NEXT GENERATION - THE 4 GIFTED SONS OF LOUIS DE LUZE SIMONDS – ALL BROUGHT UP AT AUDLEYS WOOD

The Right Honourable The Viscount Gavin Simonds, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain - Gavin's biography is available as a download on the Simonds Family website.

Brought up with his 4 siblings at Audleys Wood - Basingstoke History Society has put up a blue plaque there to commemorate him.

Gavin was appointed Lord Chancellor by Winston Churchill in 1951 [1951-54]. This meant that he was in office when King George VI died, so he carried an enormous responsibility, personally conveying the tragic news to Queen Mary and later presiding over the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth at Westminster Abbey, which is commemorated in a window of the Becket chapel at Canterbury Cathedral.

His own book of 'Recollections' of his time in office was 'sealed' for 40 years after his death. It is also now available as a website download.

We gave the original typescript to Lincoln's Inn Library.



John de Luze Simonds (1884-1917)

Who was known as Jack, became a career officer in the Royal Garrison Artillery.

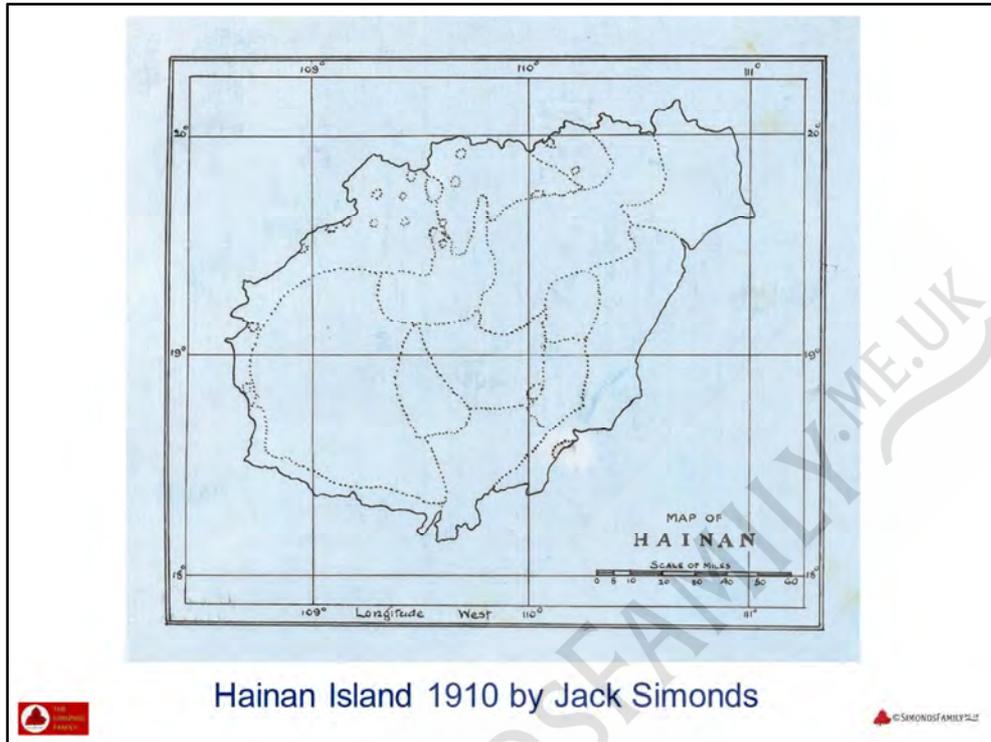
In **1910, AGED 26** he led a small contingent of troops from Hong Kong to Hainan Island, a large unexplored island off the Southern tip of China which they took 5 weeks to survey, map and report on an island reputedly still populated with head hunting savages.

His personal diary, hand drawn maps and silver chrome photographs of never before seen tribesmen and villages, give a unique insight into this dangerous assignment. They are available to view on my website in his Biography. The originals are now with the School of Oriental & African Studies Library.

He served in WW1, stationed at the front continuously from 1914 until his death in action at Mazingarbe in April 1917 while in command of a siege battery.

Jack was one of many Simonds men to be killed fighting for their country in each of the 20th century wars, including: WW1 / WW2 / Korean War

His portrait is safely housed with none other than his namesake Jack Simonds at their home in Waquoit, Massachusetts.



This is one of the simple maps they drew: [map pic] and you can read his diaries on the family website.

There has always been speculation that this survey was because the British were looking for another 'outpost' to rival the then colony on Hong Kong.



WHICH BRINGS US BACK TO BREWERY FAMILIES - -

Commander Harry Duncan Simonds (1886-1948) [pics]

Harry, the youngest son, followed a long family Naval tradition to Pangbourne Nautical College, joining the Royal Navy before World War I.

He was the senior officer to survive the sinking of the Heavy Cruiser **H.M.S. Formidable when she was torpedoed on January 1st 1915**. Only 233 of her 780 crew survived and he had to face the Admiralty Board of Enquiry. It is not recorded if he told them his true opinion, that it had been suicidal to send his cruiser out into the English Channel without its destroyer escort!

He was appointed **Lt. Commander in 1916, in time to serve on the battleship H.M.S. Warspite at the Battle of Jutland**, where she suffered severe damage.

This was the largest naval battle of that war and the only full-scale clash of battleships.

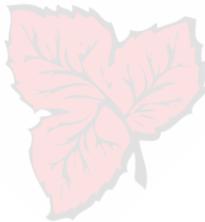
He re-joined the Royal Navy in 1939 and being too old for active service, served much of World War II based in Portland, Maine, running convoys across the Atlantic.

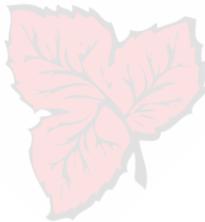
Given this experience, Harry returned from WW1 to become the Director of H&G Simonds responsible for Logistics, where he was instrumental in converting the company from horse drawn drays [pic] and steam to the internal combustion engine.

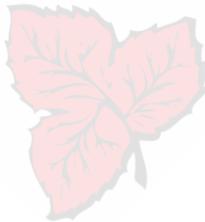
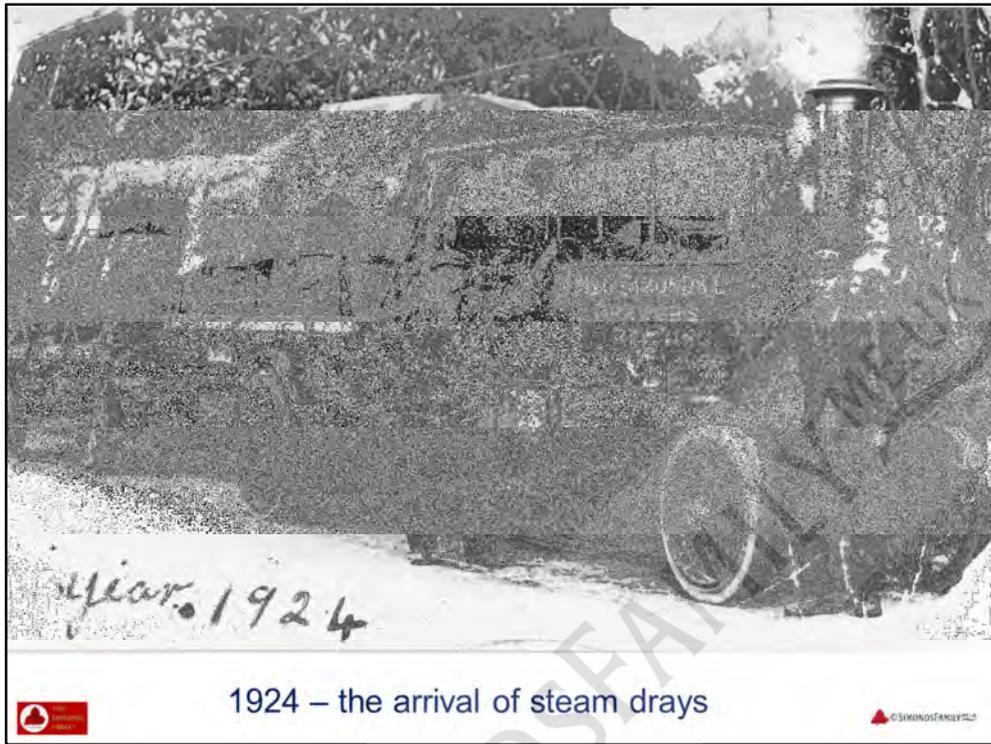
A horse drawn dray could deliver beer barrels a mere 15 miles from the brewery. and this had led to a proliferation of small local breweries. Harry converted their transport fleet before most others and this helped to fuel efficiency and the expansion of the business.



A horse drawn dray could deliver beer barrels a mere 15 miles from the brewery.

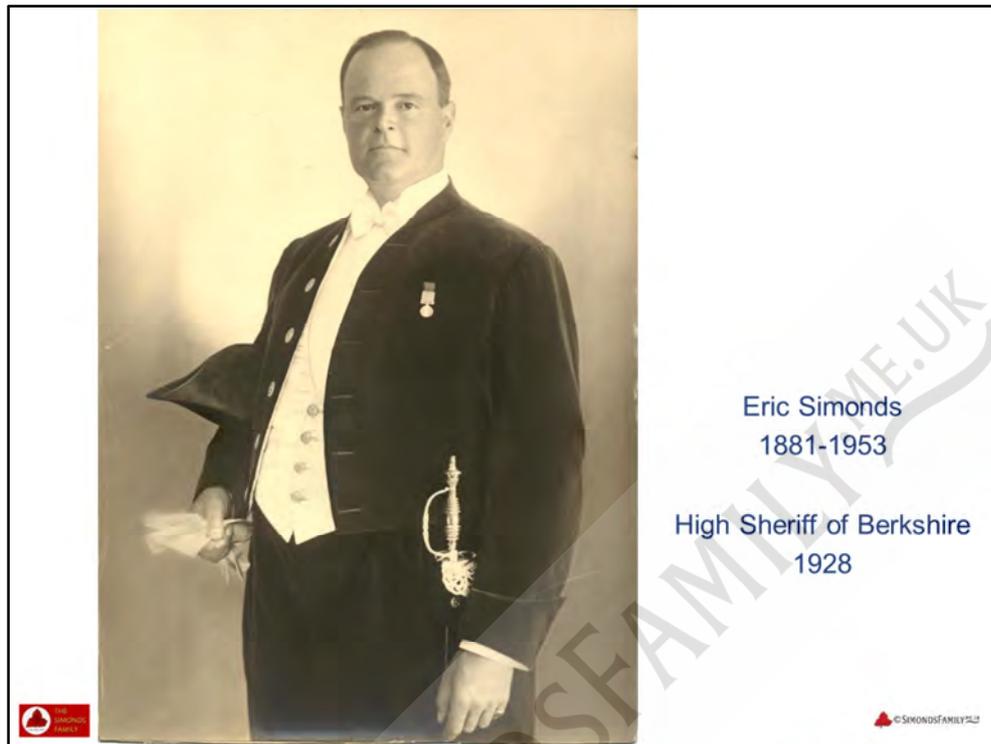








Modernisation continued after his death



Frederick Adolphus Simonds (1881-1953) was my grandfather.

Known as Eric, he was born in a new year blizzard and was the first of the five gifted children to be born at 'The Point', Bath Road, Reading. The 'East Wing' of which was extended, to make room for them.

Called up by telegram from Magdalene College Oxford [Aged 19] in 1900 he spent a year fighting in South Africa. He returned in 1901 with the rank of Lieutenant and the campaign medal. I have some fabulous letters that he wrote in sweaty pencil from the front line to home and to his grandmother in New York. [on view]

He married Amy FitzGerald Hill (1883-1969) in February 1909. Amy was the 2nd daughter of John Sherriff Hill and his 2nd wife Sophie FitzGerald, our connection to the Earls of Kildare. They set up home in Pensdell, on the Murdoch Road in Wokingham, moving to Audleys Wood in 1930 following the death of his mother Mary and when the estate failed to sell.

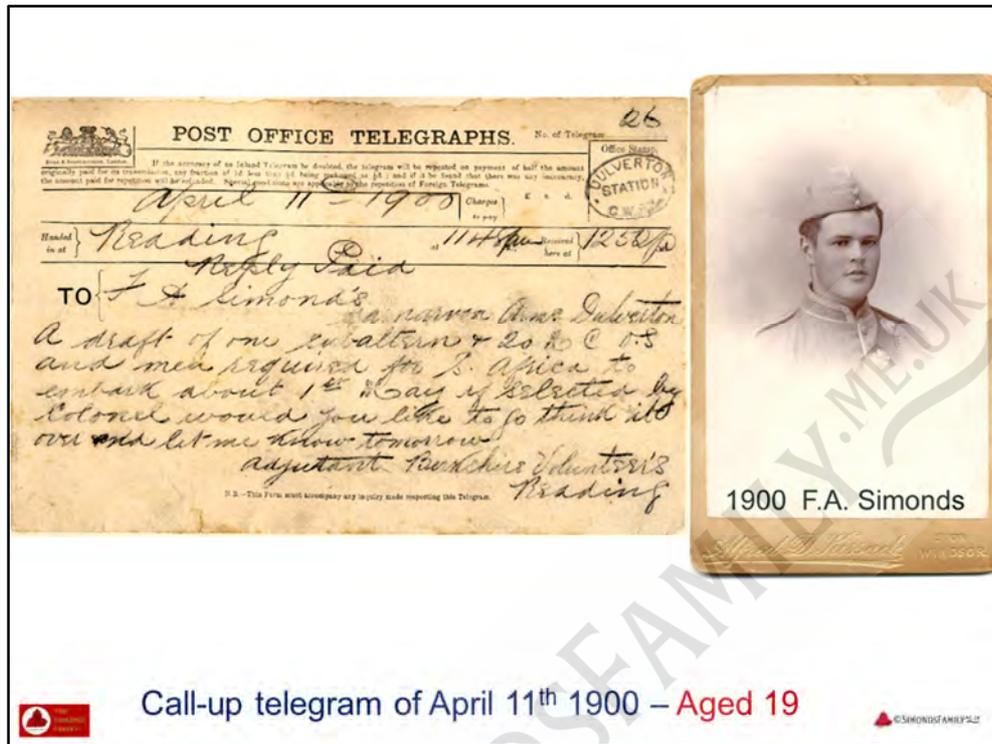
He joined the family business in 1902 and made it his life's mission. But he also had a busy social life with a passion for both shooting and horse racing. He used this interest to promote the Simonds brand and as a result, almost all the racecourses in southern England sold Simonds beer. He developed a novel way to dispense draft beer direct from the tanker!

[Americans please note – served perfectly at just below room temperature!]

He led the business through troubled times like the General Strike of 1926 and WW2.

When he became a Director in **1916 the firm had 1 Brewery & 300 pubs**. At his Jubilee, **50 years later in 1952, they celebrated 4 breweries, 36 hotels, 80 off licences and 1,132 licenced properties, with businesses in Malta, Gibraltar and Kenya. He died soon after, in 1953.**

Bizarrely by today's standards, he never learned to drive!



Call-up telegram of April 11th 1900 – Aged 19

April 11th 1900

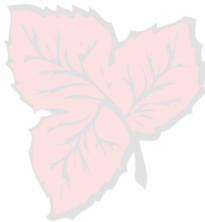
READS:

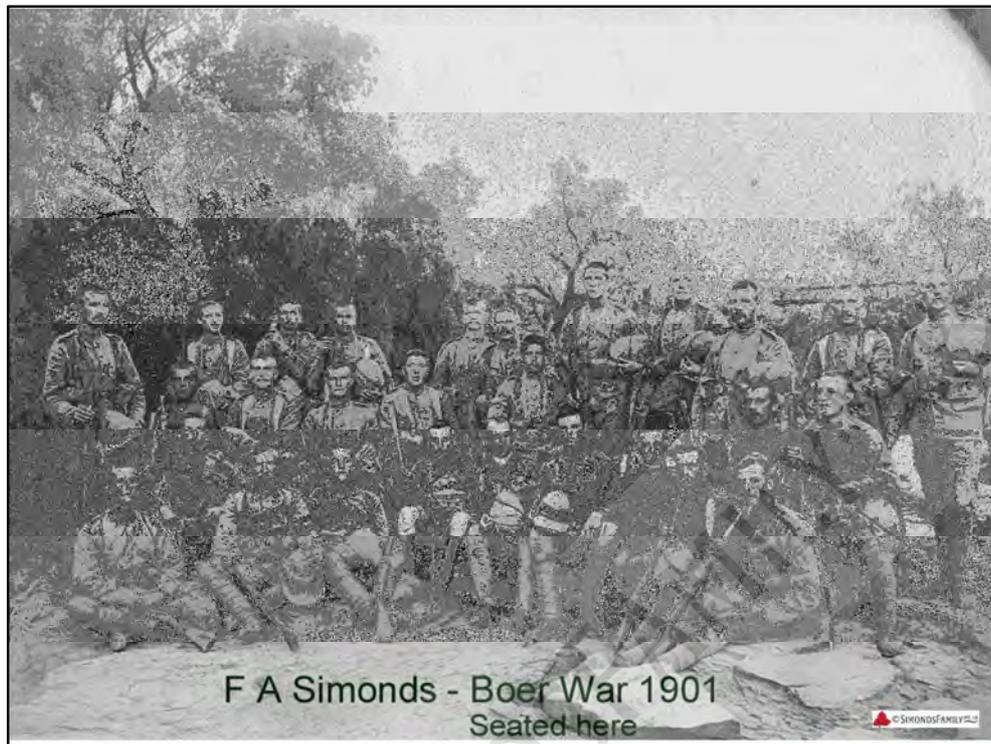
A draft of one Subaltern & 20 men required for South Africa to embark about 1st May if selected by the Colonel.

Would you like to go.

Think it over and let me know tomorrow.

Adjutant Berkshire Volunteer's, Reading

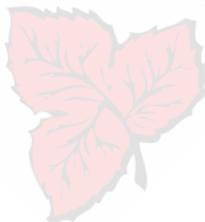




Eric served for one year and wrote poignant letters home from the front line

[SEE FOLDER]

In common with the experience of many drafted soldiers - Most of the time was spent guarding railway sidings etc. with a few short but intense engagements



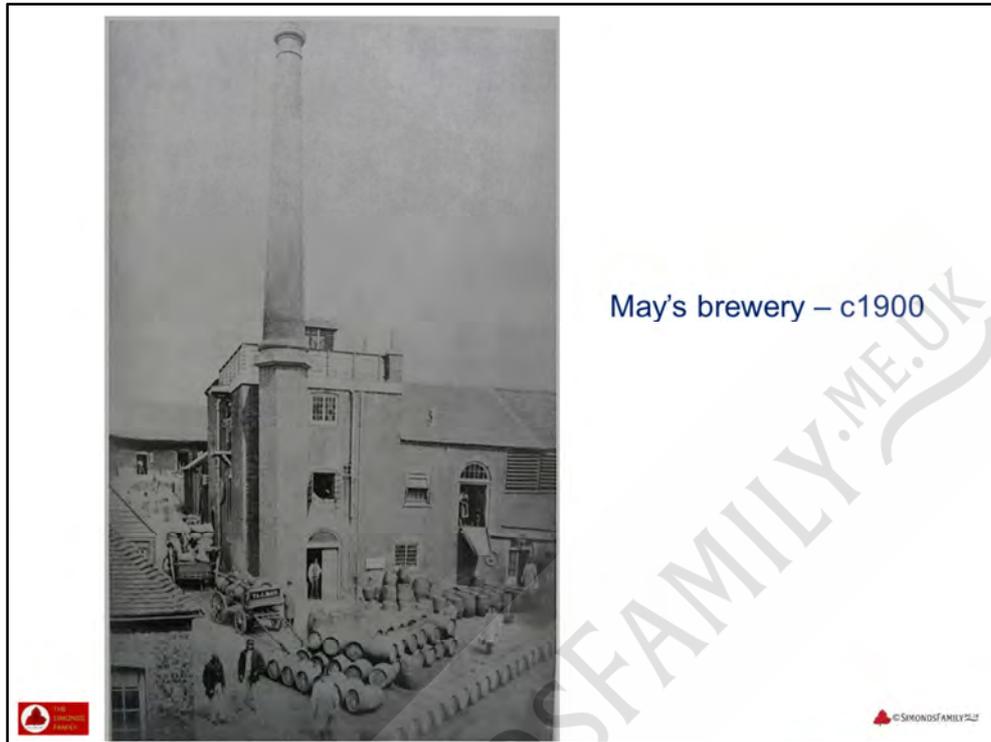


Lastly - My father – born in Audleys Wood

Like his younger brother Kenneth, volunteered to join up for Officer Training at OCTU in 1939, **Aged 21**
He spent 5 or 6 years with the 4th RHA, mostly fighting in North Africa and Italy.

The last family Managing Director of H&G Simonds Ltd up to the time of its merger with Courage in 1960.
He was the lone voice on the Board that opposed the move, but he joined them and became Group Sales & Marketing Director for more than another decade.
At this point there were about 1,100 pubs.

The Brewery was one of the major employers in Reading alongside Huntley & Palmers and Suttons Seeds.
Together making up **Reading's 3 B's**,
BEER – BISCUITS – BULBS
Although some have added a 4th, BRICKS !

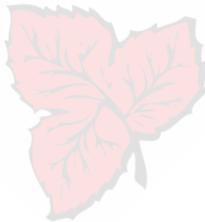


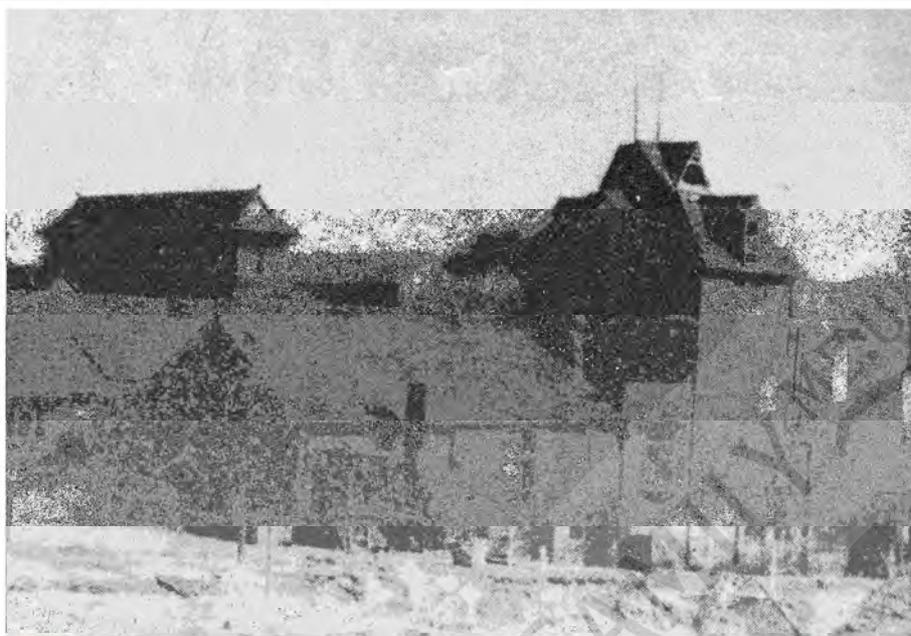
May's Brewery – on Brook Street.

I have never seen a detailed history of this firm, or found detailed archives – along the lines of the Simonds archives.

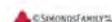
Both my grandfather FA [Eric] and my father Duncan Simonds were instrumental in the 1947 acquisition of May's Brewery.

What I have learned about this event – mostly researched for this evening's presentation, you will also find on my website on the 'timeline' page of the 'history' tab.

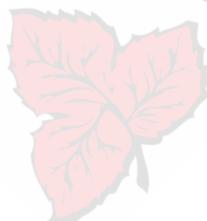




May's brewery – c1860



© SIMONDS FAMILY





The Simonds and May families had been entwined since the 18th century with at least 3 marriages, including:

Thomas Simonds (1731-1808) of Brimpton married Jane May from Long Sutton (1733-1802) in **1758**.
One of their descendants, Peter is here tonight and gave me some of this material.

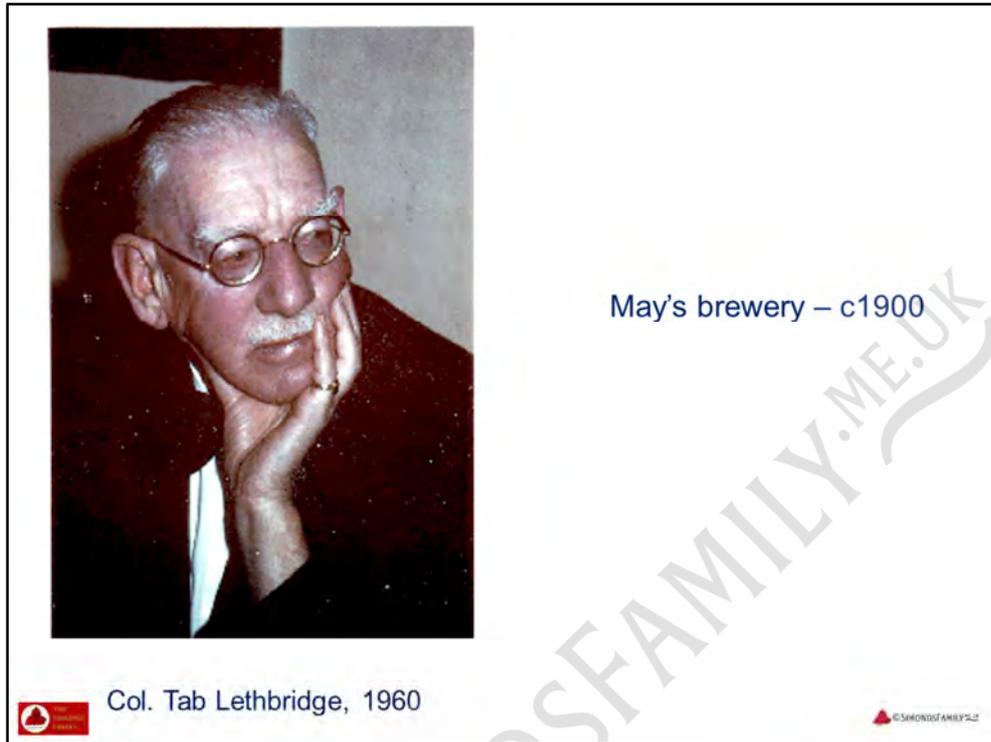
Colonel John May's mother Mary Simonds (1804-1873) married Charles May (1800-1841) in **1828**.
She was the eldest child of John Simonds (1) (1766-1845) of Reading, who co-founded the bank [John & Charles Simonds](#) & Partners, on King St, Reading in 1814.

Col John May was my 3rd cousin 3 times removed

[William Blackall Simonds](#) (1761-1834) married Elizabeth May (1764-1842) in 1783 in Pangbourne Church.
Their marriage led immediately to the founding of Simonds Brewery – partly funded by her £2,000 dowry.

There are a couple of May family deeds on the table.

Any local expert here – please tell me more about them?

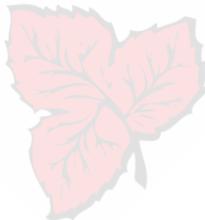


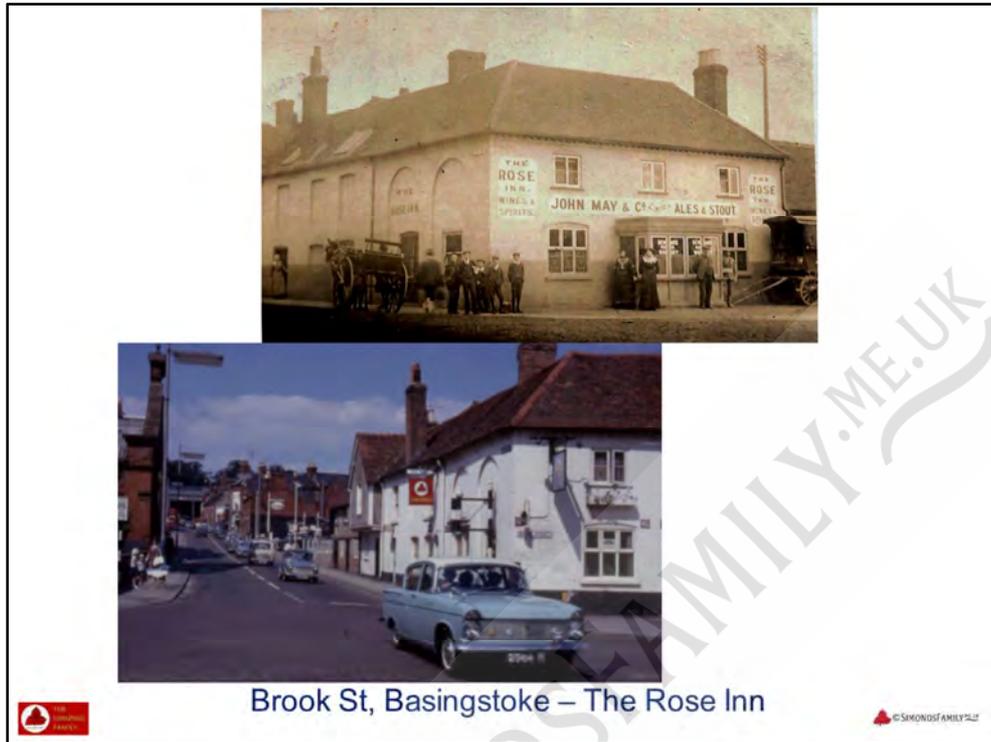
Following the death of Colonel John May in 1920, May's Brewery had struggled, in part as there were no male members of the family to carry it forwards.

Col. Tab Lethbridge (1884 – 1968) [Gt grandson of Charles & Mary in previous slide] was soon appointed to run it.

He led the eventual negotiations for a sale with my grandfather F.A. (Eric) Simonds.

My father Duncan Simonds, Eric's son, once said: "Father grew rather fond of old Lethbridge, and they got on very well together".



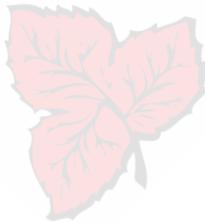


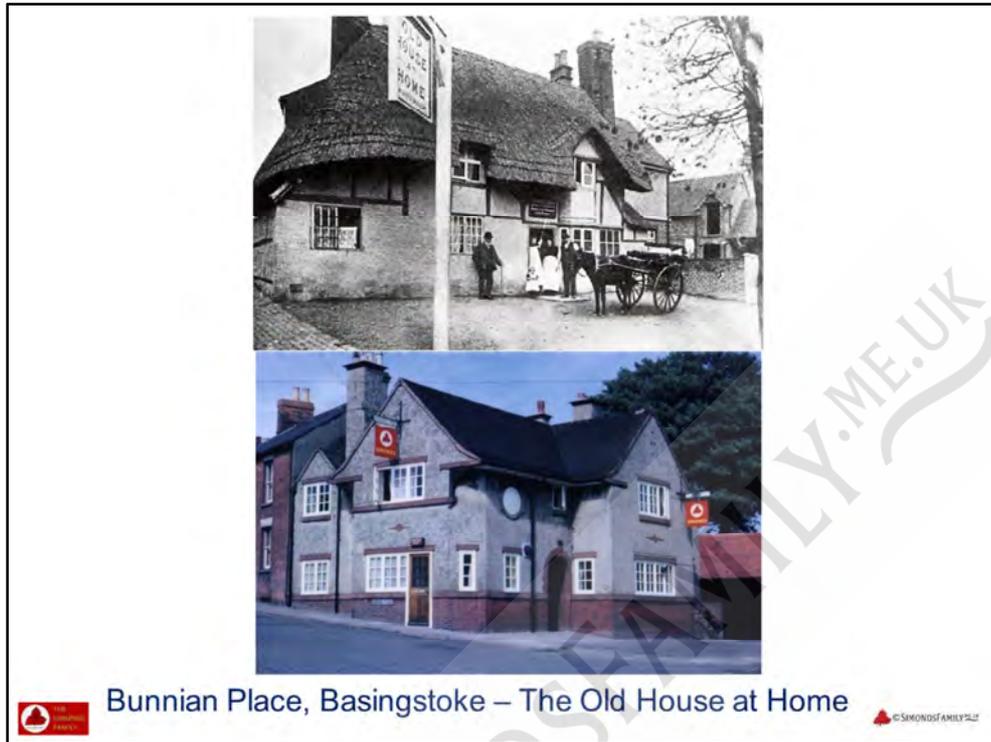
With help from the Basingstoke History Society, I have been able to create just 2 'before & after' images of pubs in the May Brewery livery and after.

In January 1947 H&G Simonds of Reading acquired the whole of the ordinary share capital (147,000 £1 Ordinary Shares) of John May & Co.

By that time May's Brewery owned or leased 94 licensed premises.

Besides 6 pubs in Berkshire, the rest were in Hampshire, so it was a good 'fit' to the Simonds estate.

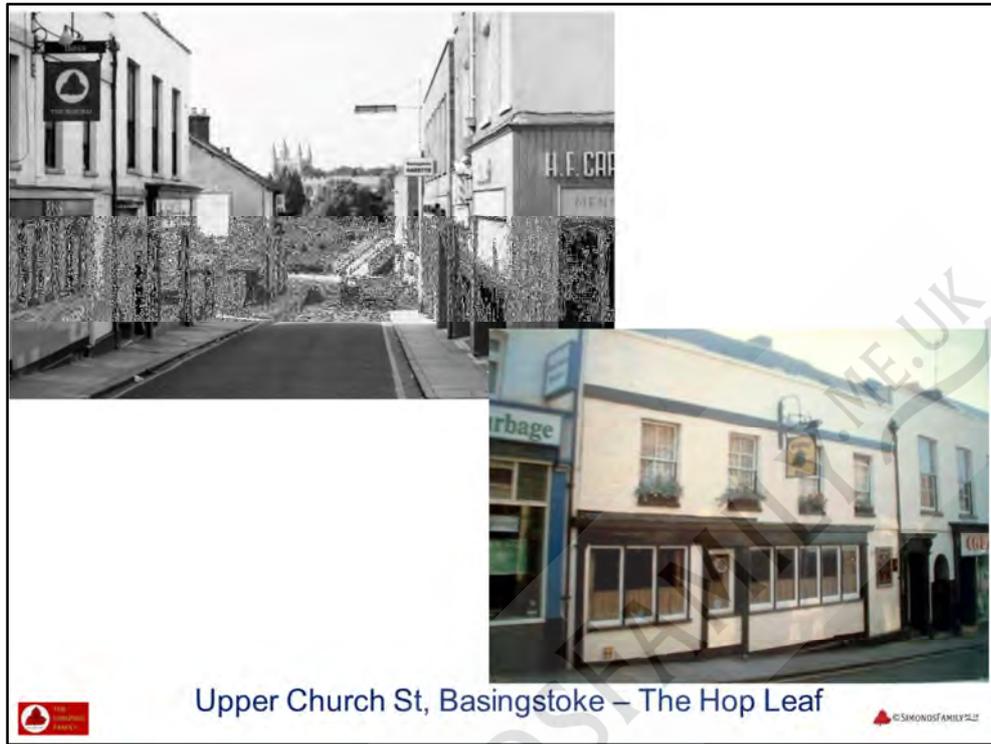




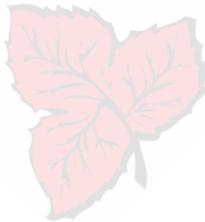
The addition of those properties brought the total of licensed properties controlled by H&G Simonds Ltd to 1,295. May's Brewery closed on 31 March 1950.

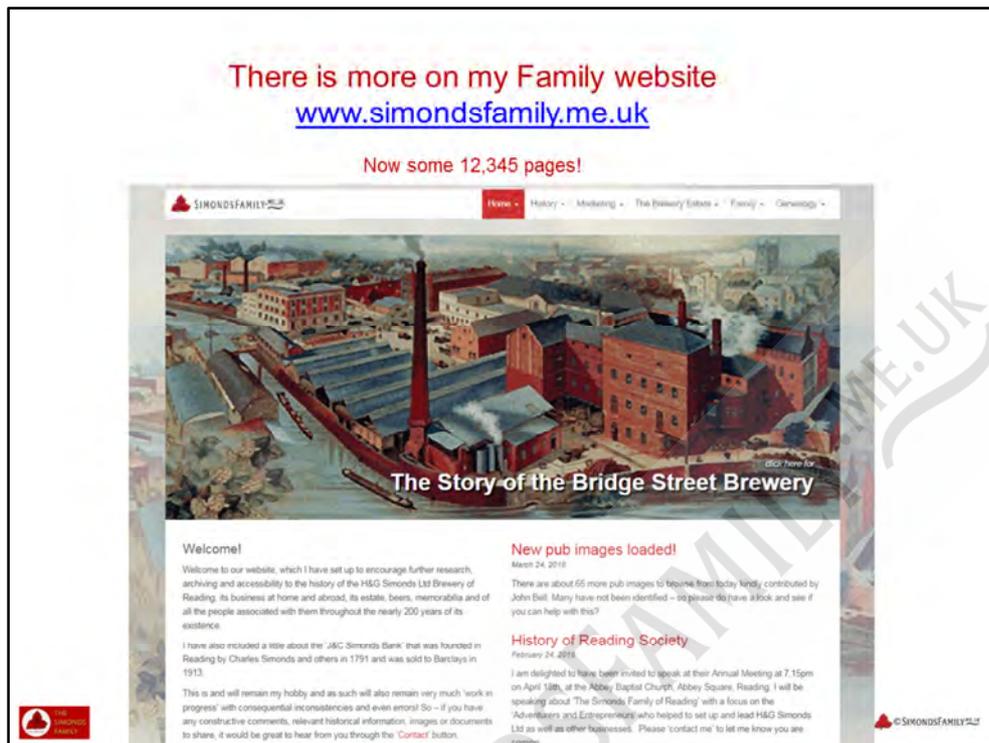
The acquisition was recorded in the Hop Leaf Gazette issued in June 1947, page 125, which you can read [HERE](#). By coincidence, the same issue records the marriage of my parents!

There is a very comprehensive history of the May family written by David Nash Ford [HERE](#); s in H&G Simonds livery



This one is different –
In Simonds Livery in the 1950's – then as a Free House later.





You will be able to read most of this in more detail on my Family History website – as I have spent the last decade steadily digitising and loading much of our archives. [It recently hit the magic number of 12,345 pages!]

It has recently become 'Crowd Sourced' as visitors often contact me and contribute historical images and anecdotes to the Simonds story. So if you have any – please let me know!

Thanks for your time and attention – I hope you found something of interest here?

~~If anybody is very bored later or wants to share this – then the whole presentation, with all the notes [including a few extra slides that I did not show on grounds of time] is now on the front page of my website.~~

68 slides [18 hidden] so 50 to show