

The Hop Leaf Gazette.

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Edited by CHARLES H. PERRIN.

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THE LATE
Mr. HENRY HARDING.

THE LATE MR. HENRY HARDING.

Our front page in this issue is dedicated to the late Mr. Henry Harding, whose deeply regretted demise at Malta on the 5th December, at the age of 70 years, is recorded on page 169.

Mr. Harding retired on the 1st July, 1929, after 44 years' service, during which he filled the important position of Chief Clerk at Malta for over 34 years. Highly respected throughout the island and having the absolute confidence of the Directors, he served the Firm with a devotion which might have been equalled, but never excelled. His sense of justice and fair play in all his dealings were so apparent and well known throughout the whole of our large clientele in Malta that he gained the entire trust of all with whom he came into contact.

Born in Aldershot in 1869, Mr. Harding went to Canada with his father, who was a N.C.O. in The King's Own Scottish Borderers, and remained there for several years. It is interesting to note that Mr. Harding's ancestors for several generations served in His Majesty's Forces and his father took part in the Fenian Raid in 1866 and was awarded the medal which marked the event. During the annual visits of Mr. F. A. Simonds to Malta many years ago, Mr. Henry Harding's father often called at our Offices in Strada Reale. Mr. F. A. Simonds has lively recollections of these visits and his recent description gave us an interesting and vivid mind picture of a grand old gentleman.

In the course of Mr. Harding's service he represented the Firm in Crete and successfully carried out the business entrusted to his care in that island.

This abbreviated biography of Mr. Harding's career would not be complete without a reference to the great efforts which he made to secure the welfare of his family. It is, perhaps, an adequate tribute to record that two of his sons are professional men in Malta, viz. Dr. Henry Harding, M.D., and Judge William D. Harding, B.Lit., LL.D., and Mr. Walter M. Harding is Secretary to our allied Company, Messrs. Simonds-Farsons, Limited.

Mr. Harding was buried in the crypt of St. Paul's Church, Citta Vecchia, the old capital of Malta.

Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine oft infirmities.—The Bible.

CHAT *from*

THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

(By C. H. P.)



OUR TWO PRIME MINISTERS.

No man strove for peace more than the Prime Minister of England, Mr. Neville Chamberlain. But the powers of evil prevailed and we are at war. The burdens and anxieties of Mr. Chamberlain must appear almost greater than any man can bear but how nobly is he carrying on his great duties of State! His firm and unflinching, but always reasonable, attitude concerning the great questions of the day, his dignity, his words of wisdom, uttered from time to time, when a thoughtless phrase might mean dire disaster—what a great statesman he has proved in these dark days and the country is indeed indebted to him. And then, in every way fitted to be coupled with the name of Mr. Chamberlain, is that of our own "Prime Minister," Mr. F. A. Simonds. With four of our Directors away, serving in various capacities in H.M. Forces, many additional burdens have to be shouldered by our hard-working Chairman and Managing Director. But his great qualities of heart and mind make him more than equal to the occasion. The amount of work he gets through is immense, his responsibilities are indeed great, but the manner in which he is accomplishing his colossal task has won the respect and admiration of us all. We raise our glasses to "Our own 'Prime Minister'" with the fervent hope that he will be blessed with health and strength to "carry on" until the dawn of a happier day brings him some measure of relief.

A VERY DIFFERENT PLACE.

As Charles Dickens wrote: Christmas comes but once a year—which is unhappily too true, for when it begins to stay with us the whole year round we shall make this earth a very different place.

SIMPLE!

Woman at Tottenham police court: "I asked my husband, 'Where do you think you're going?' And he said: 'Isn't that a superfluous question, ten minutes before closing-time?'"

VICAR SMITES HITLER.

"The more one knows of this vegetarian, non-smoking, teetotal, celibate, hysterical mesmerist, the more one feels, 'Thank God for the ordinary man.' A genius may be all very well in his way, but this genius is simply a monstrosity. Had Hitler married a good German wife, given up all these everlasting eggs (extremely bad for the digestion in such quantities), eaten a good German sausage for his dinner, washed it down with a tankard of good German beer, and smoked a good German pipe afterwards, he would probably have been a decent human being."—*The Rev. R. N. Pyke, Vicar of Southwold, Suffolk.*

TRADE ALWAYS PAYS.

Here is, I am told, a true incident which occurred quite recently, writes J. Gardner-McLean, in *Harper's Wine and Spirit Gazette*:—

A man phoned the General Post Office in one of our largest cities and asked to speak to a high official there. This conversation followed:—

Man: "My wife has given me £2 to invest in the best way possible, to help the Government win the war. Tell me, shall I invest the money in Savings Certificates or shall I spend it on bottles of whisky?"

There was a long silence, but the P.O. had the correct answer: "Spend the £2 *all* on whisky. We'll get far more out of it that way."

I could not help thinking what extremely wise advice this was to the main purport of the question. The man concerned would be confirming for all time the payment of a sum of 23s. to 24s. to the Government. Whereas had he bought Savings Certificates, I fear the Government would certainly not have fared so well, as the small sum involved would take an extremely long period to give them anything like the same return. The P.O. official who gave the reply should be congratulated on his astuteness.

The trade continues to pay, and keeps smiling.

FROM ONE BAR TO ANOTHER.

Anxiously his evacuated wife studied a letter from her husband. He said he had consulted a doctor about his health, and had been advised to go carefully, as he was suffering from "syncopation" (medical term for heart affection leading to fainting fits).

But the anxious wife looked up the word in the English dictionary and this is what she saw: "An uneven movement proceeding from one bar to another!"

HOME BREW FOR THE B.E.F.

British troops in France are nightly toasting a captain of the R.A.S.C., who has produced a fivepence-a-pint beer "just like home-brewed."

This B.E.F. benefactor is in civil life director of a brewery known throughout the south country, and in producing his brew, similar to mild ale, he visited the chief breweries around Paris and modified the French brews to English tastes.

[The above paragraph appeared in the *Daily Mail* and some of us could make a pretty good guess as to the name of the popular Captain referred to.]

A.E.I.O.U.

How many words do you know in the English language where all the vowels appear in their correct order?

I can think of two at this moment—arsenious and facetious—but there are others.

NEEDS A LONG SPOON.

As the late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain observed on another historic occasion, when Germany threatened us: "To sup with the devil you need a long spoon."

Our Prime Minister, in no uncertain language, has said that on no account would we negotiate a peace with Hitler and his gang of criminals.

HIS BITTER HALF.

Man at a North London police court: "My wife is not my cup of tea. But she's my favourite drink all the same—mild and bitter, mostly bitter."

AFTER CLOSING TIME.

Samuel Untermeyer, a New York lawyer, has invented a new way of getting a drink after closing time. He has discovered a way of putting a "kick" into the melons he grows as a hobby. He calls the process "irrigating." Here's what happens. A cotton wick—rather like that used in an oil lamp—is run from a bottle of liquor to an incision in the stem of the growing melon. The bottle and wick are bound to the stem with grafting wax and sealed, and the plant then absorbs the liquor from the bottle. In this way the melons can be flavoured with brandy, whisky, port, or even beer. But maybe most gardeners would rather drink their flavouring straight from the bottle.

BEER FOR THE AGED.

Among the old people at Queen's Road Homes who received a pint of beer at Christmas was Mrs. Ellen Fletcher who claims to be nearly 107.

The grant of the beer is made by the Croydon Public Assistance Committee.

OPENING OF READING'S CANAL.

Reading, April 5th. On Thursday last, says the *Bristol Journal* of April 10th, 1802, the new canal from this town to join the Thames, was opened, and a barge freighted from London, belonging to the Navigation Company, on board of which was a great number of respectable inhabitants of the town, sailed up it. There was a blue flag and a laurel bough hoisted at the mast-head, and the men were decorated with blue ribbons. She sailed to her moorings amidst a grand discharge of cannon that were fixed at her head, and the acclamations of numberless spectators who lined the shores. Afterwards the Navigation Company dined together in their office where the day was spent with the utmost festivity and hilarity.

WHEN IS AN EGG FRESH?

A fresh egg, in the eyes of the law, is merely an egg that has not been artificially preserved or kept in cold storage. The law makes no provision about the length of time that the egg takes to get from the hen to the egg-cup. This point was mentioned at Tottenham, when a case against an Edmonton store relating to the sale of eggs, was dismissed on payment of costs.

THE BUDGET OVER 100 YEARS AGO.

In the House of Commons on Monday, April 5th, says the *Bristol Journal* of the same date, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, among other things: "On malt I propose laying an additional duty of 1s. 0½d. per bushel, upon hops an additional duty of 1¼d. and 8-20ths per pound, in order to make the duty 3d. I also propose to repeal the allowance of 16d. per barrel, granted to the common brewer for the additional malt-duty in 1780; and to lay an additional duty of 2s. upon the barrel of strong beer, subject to a drawback of 6d. for the present year, in consequence of the difficulties with which the brewers have had to contend for the advanced price of hops and other circumstances; making together 5s. 11d. upon the barrel, but for the present year only 5s. 5d. I propose to reduce the existing duty from 3s. to 2s. on table-beer, and the price to be 18s. the barrel. The distinction between small and table-beer I mean to be done away; for there is a species of small-beer brewed at the low duty of 1s. 4d. for the purpose of being mixed with strong beer, evidently with the intent of defrauding the revenue, as a beverage at so low a price could not be fit for consumption by itself. I calculate the produce of the tax on malt, beer and hops at two millions."

SOLDIERS' GRATEFUL THANKS.

Mr. C. Absolom, landlord of the Rose and Thistle, Argyle Road, Reading, recently sent a football, subscribed for by his customers, to the men of the 4th Royal Berkshire Regiment and he has received the following acknowledgment from Captain D. R. Jardine:

Lieut. Picket has passed on the football you so kindly subscribed for the men of this Company. It was a great as well as a generous idea and you may be sure it will be vastly appreciated by many men in our County Battalion. Please accept and convey to subscribers our very sincere thanks.

Captain Jardine's name is a very familiar one in the world of cricket.

NAVAL OLD COMRADES DINE TOGETHER.

Among naval men there is a camaraderie that is nowhere excelled and this good fellowship was much in evidence at the annual dinner of the Reading Branch of the Royal Naval Old

Comrades' Association held on New Year's night. All present thoroughly enjoyed the evening and "Absent Friends" were not forgotten. Great credit is due to "Joe" Nuccoll, Secretary of the Club in Duke Street, and his assistants, for the excellent food they provided and the prompt manner in which it was served. The musical programme went with a swing. Shipmate "Chip" gave an accomplished display at the piano and "Boy" Griffiths was responsible for a very fine accordion performance. Nor must I forget that wonderful dance, Booms-a-daisy. There was a whip-round in support of the Reading Sea Cadets annual dinner to be held the following day and this was generously responded to.

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR.

Another successful year in the history of the Company was recorded by our Chairman and Managing Director, Mr. F. A. Simonds, in his excellent speech to the Annual General Meeting held at the Social Club on Monday, 18th December. It was pleasing to note once again the cordial atmosphere and the expression of confidence which accompanied the re-election of the Directors. In thanking the staff generally for their efforts during the past year, the Chairman mentioned in particular the names of Mr. P. F. Knapp, our Head Brewer, and also Capt. A. S. Drewe, M.C., who has been responsible for the A.R.P. organisations; whilst Mr. A. G. Richardson, our Chief Accountant, and his efficient staff were the recipients of congratulations upon the production of the Balance Sheet and Accounts under such great pressure of time. The honour of being "mentioned in despatches" was well deserved by these gentlemen who, in their respective spheres, have encountered many abnormal difficulties in recent times.

"THE MAN OF THE YEAR."

The following tribute to the King was paid in the *Boston Post* (quoted by Reuter from New York):—

"To our readers we commend as the man of the year one who, in fulfilling a tremendous position of exalted influence for which he was untrained, is a man of impeccable decency, a family man of worth and dignity who treads the daily paths of duty with gallantry and grace—a true gentleman.

"We could not overlook to-day that simple, kindly man who bears Britain's Sceptre and Crown. He represents the decent love of home and family for which all men have battled since the beginning of time. He faces the travail of the future with a courage which will eventually overwhelm the false gods of tyranny."

"JITTERY" DECISIONS.

During the first week of the war, quite a few business men made "jittery" decisions. They suspended their businesses, or sacked valuable employees or moved out of town. In one building on Regent Street, five firms moved out of London on the first day of the war, and two of them moved back on the tenth. "Jittery" decisions! Now it is all well enough to be prepared, but no one should, in a moment of fear, expect the worst. The worst seldom happens. Decisions made by fear are almost always bad decisions. It is wiser to take no action until the spasm of alarm is over. To cancel and scuttle and sack useful employees—that is a costly policy at any time. Any stout-hearted man can see that there is no good reason for it, not in Great Britain and France.—*Efficiency Magazine*.



H. & G. SIMONDS LTD. ANNUAL MEETING.

RECORD OUTPUT OF BOTTLED BEERS.

INCREASING PRICE OF BARLEY.

An expenditure of £10,000 on air raid precautions at the Brewery was reported at the annual meeting of H. & G. Simonds Ltd. which was held at our Social Club, 19 Bridge Street, Reading, on Monday, 18th December. Mr. F. A. Simonds (chairman and managing director of the company) presided, and other directors present were Mr. J. H. Simonds (vice-chairman), Mr. A. J. Redman, Major G. S. M. Ashby, Mr. R. B. St. J. Quarry and Captain F. H. V. Keighley.

The secretary (Mr. E. S. Phipps) read the notice convening the meeting, and the auditors' report.

The report of the directors and statement of accounts for the year ended September 30th, 1939, stated :—

During the year a former subsidiary company, viz., W. J. Rogers Ltd., of Bristol, has been liquidated and absorbed, and this fact must be borne in mind when the comparative figures are taken into account. On March 1st, 1939, the business of J. L. Marsh & Sons, Ltd., Blandford Forum, Dorset, was acquired.

After providing for interest on the debenture stocks and making ample allowances for depreciation, repairs, and various expenses of the business, including taxation, the net profit for the year amounts to £221,593 5s. 11d., to which has to be added the balance brought forward from September 30th, 1938, viz., £104,899 12s. 5d., making a total available for appropriation of £326,492 18s. 4d.

Out of this has been paid or provided for, the following : Dividend on £1,200,000 cumulative preference stock at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, less income tax, for the year ended September 30th, 1939, £41,250 ; interim dividend on £800,000 ordinary stock at the rate of 3½ per cent. less income tax (paid 9th June, 1939), £20,300 ; leaving for disposal the sum of £264,942 18s. 4d.

THE CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH.

Mr. F. A. Simonds, in his speech, said :—

Two of my co-directors, Commander H. D. Simonds and Captain L. A. Simonds, have joined His Majesty's Forces, and I much regret their absence to-day. Two others of our colleagues, Mr. R. St. J. Quarry and Mr. F. H. V. Keighley, have also joined

up, but I am glad to welcome them here to-day, as they have been able to obtain leave to attend this meeting. I know you will join with me in wishing them all a speedy return, safe and sound, to their duties with the company. I also have to apologise for the absence of Mr. W. W. Collins, principal of the firm of Messrs. Collins, Tootell & Co., our auditors, who has not missed our annual meeting for very many years. Mr. Collins has recently undergone a serious operation, from which I am glad to learn he is making a good recovery, and I trust that he will soon be released from his period of enforced leisure.

Turning to the profit and loss account, since the last report our former subsidiary company, W. J. Rogers, Ltd., of Bristol, has been liquidated and the whole of the profits from the trading of that concern is now included in the profits of this company, whereas in previous years our income from this source was received in the form of dividends. The effect of this development on the accounts of the company is reflected in the increase in the gross profit, which reached the figure of £933,053, an increase of £185,259 over the previous year's total. This same factor also accounts, in the main, for the heavy increases in the various expenses charged to profit and loss account, but there have been other additional charges to be met this year. Income tax and national defence charges have absorbed £21,866 more, and expenditure on the shelters and equipment in connection with air raid precautions has involved to date approximately £10,000—a necessary but, I trust, non-recurrent item ; whilst trading expenses, generally, have been heavier, particularly those of distribution.

Trade during the past year showed an increase over that of the preceding year, especially during the last few weeks when, for a short period during mobilisation, we were unable to cope with all the orders entrusted to us, preference being accorded, naturally, to the requirements of His Majesty's Forces. I must take this opportunity of expressing our regrets to those of our tenants and customers whom we had, perforce, to disappoint. Our products throughout the year, thanks to our head brewer, Mr. P. F. Knapp, and his assistants, have been of excellent quality, and have met with general approval. The sales of bottled beer amounted to the record total of 70,350,000 bottles, which included a small quantity of canned beer and bottled cider.

A HANDSOME CONTRIBUTION.

The Cirencester Brewery Ltd., and Wheeler's Wycombe Breweries Ltd., have, as in the past, made a handsome contribution by way of dividend, and we are grateful to the directors responsible at Cirencester for the management of the former company's

operations. In the Bristol area we have continued to make good progress, and the beers brewed at our Bristol Brewery are becoming increasingly popular throughout a wide district, which includes South Wales. Our Tamar Brewery has had a record year as regards sales, and we have established ourselves in a pre-eminent position in Devon and Cornwall. The lavish outlay on the brewery and licensed houses in this locality has begun to bear good fruit. Simonds-Farsons, Ltd., our associated company in Malta, has enjoyed a profitable year's trading, and the dividend received from them is, as always, most welcome. They have of late been working under very onerous conditions of shortage of materials and requisites; we sympathise with them and hope that, despite these difficulties and further burdens of excise taxation recently imposed, they will be able to carry on and continue to produce the good ales for which they are now famous in that island.

I am pleased to report that we have now almost completed the new power plant upon which we have expended a large sum of money, and we are already beginning to benefit by the economies thereby effected. We are all indebted to Major G. S. M. Ashby for his unremitting efforts to achieve this result. It is gratifying to receive continually favourable reports as to the conduct of the houses under the control of our hotels and catering department. Both the service and the food and drink provided earn, as ever, the appreciation of the travelling public, and the turnover in the "Simonds" houses shows a marked increase over that of the previous year.

LONDON TO PENZANCE CHAIN.

In the early part of this year we acquired the business of J. L. Marsh & Sons, Ltd., Blandford, and the addition of this old-established concern in the county of Dorset should prove a valuable asset and a link in the chain of our interests from London to Penzance. The wine and spirit department has again produced most satisfactory profits, and members of the company and friends would be well advised to study the comprehensive retail price list which we are pleased to send to them on request or which can be obtained from all branches of the brewery and any of our fully-licensed houses.

The net profit reveals a slight decrease of £162, and, after due consideration, the Board has decided to recommend that the rate of distribution to the ordinary shareholders be maintained at 18 per cent., less tax, and an interim dividend of 3½ per cent., less tax, having already been paid, a final dividend of 14½ per cent. is now recommended. I would point out that the total distribution this year is made on an ordinary capital increased by £44,958, and I

would also mention that this year the increased preference capital ranked for a full year's dividend, whereas last year a half-year's dividend only was paid on the increase of £179,390.

Turning to the balance sheet, you will observe that assets and liabilities are substantially increased, mainly by the inclusion of the items which formerly appeared in the balance sheet of W. J. Rogers, Ltd., and which are now absorbed in this company.

I must again, this year, refer to the very serious burden imposed upon our tenants and ourselves by heavily increased assessments, consequent upon the judgment in what is known as the "Robinson" case. I would once more assure our tenants, who have been badly hit already and may be even harder hit in the current year and years to come, that we are employing on their behalf all the professional skill which is at our disposal to contest these assessments. We realise the gross injustice of this imposition, and will continue to do our utmost to have these assessments reduced when and where opportunity presents itself.

BARLEY AND MALT.

The future as regards materials, particularly barley and malt, is most perplexing, and causes us much anxiety both as regards prices we may have to pay and the difficulty in securing our requirements. In implementation of the agreement made six years ago with the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, and the subsequent agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture, we in the brewing trade have given all possible support to the British farmer by buying from him a very large proportion of our requirements of barley, and, in so doing, have foregone considerable sums in profit which would have accrued to the shareholders if we had bought our supplies from overseas. Last year there was a bountiful harvest and low prices obtained, and, as a consequence, the brewing trade voluntarily acquiesced in a levy in order to maintain a minimum price of 40/- per quarter to the farmer. However, this terrible war has intervened; the levy has been cancelled, and prices have soared. Despite another bountiful harvest this year a price averaging 70/- for malting barley rules to-day, and I do not think it would be unreasonable under these circumstances to ask the Minister of Agriculture to consider sympathetically a request that there should be a levy on the farmer's profits whereby the cost of beers could be modified and relief afforded to the beer consumer as also to the brewer.

In addition to the directors to whom I have referred, a large number of our staff have enlisted in His Majesty's Forces. You will all share my feelings in telling them that we wish them also a

safe and speedy return and that, in the meantime, those of us who are left behind will do our utmost, however hard the task may be, to keep the flag flying. I would ask all our customers in His Majesty's Forces, and that important and powerful body of caterers, hotel keepers, free licence holders and club committees, to accept our grateful thanks for their patronage during the past year, and would assure them that we will do our utmost during the current year to maintain that excellent reputation which we have enjoyed in the past, not only for the quality of our goods, but also for supervision and delivery, and would ask for patience and tolerance if, particularly in these short days and "black-out" nights, they do not receive their deliveries with the same expedition as heretofore.

SPLENDID A.R.P. WORK.

I must refer to the splendid work in connection with the provision for A.R.P. directed by Captain A. S. Drewe and his staff and many other willing workers. I believe that our organisation has been regarded as a model in this district. I must also congratulate on your behalf our chief accountant, Mr. A. G. Richardson, and his assistants on the admirable manner in which, under great pressure of time, they have completed the lucid report and balance sheet which is now in your hands, and which I trust sets out faithfully, and in an intelligent form, the position and operations of the company to date. Finally, the warmest thanks of the directors and shareholders are due to the whole body of staff and employees who have produced such excellent results, and who, particularly during the period of mobilisation, were working under abnormal difficulties due to a great extent to the calling-up of so many of their number. The gaps were, however, speedily filled by men and women who, if untrained, willingly and quickly learned their duties, and one and all are now working harmoniously and efficiently.

£264,942 FOR DISTRIBUTION.

I now beg to move the following resolution:—That the report of the directors and statement of accounts for the year ended 30th September, 1939, be received and adopted; and that, having already paid the dividend on £1,200,000 5 per cent. cumulative preference stock, *less* income tax, for the year ended 30th September, 1939, and an interim dividend of 3½ per cent., *less* income tax, on £800,000 ordinary stock, the directors now recommend that the balance of £264,942 18s. 4d. be appropriated as follows: To service of debenture redemption, £9,820 10s. 0d.; to pay a final dividend on £800,000 ordinary stock at the rate of 14½ per cent., *less* income tax (making 18 per cent. for the year), £75,400; to add to pensions reserve (making a total of £120,000), £5,540; to add to property

improvement account (making a total of £150,000), £24,821 4s. 3d.; to add to general reserve (making a total of £450,000), £35,817 1s. 0d.; to add to contingencies reserve (making a total of £110,000), £10,000; to carry forward to next year, £103,544 3s. 0d.

Mr J. H. Simonds seconded the resolution, which was unanimously approved.

Mr. A. J. Redman and Major G. S. M. Ashby retired from the Board in accordance with the articles of association, and they were re-elected on the proposition of Mr. R. B. St. J. Quarry, seconded by Major M. H. Simonds.

Mr. A. J. Redman, in reply, said it was a great pleasure to serve under their chairman and on a board where they were such a happy party and where everything went so amicably.

Major G. S. M. Ashby also replied.

Messrs. Collins, Tootell & Co., of Queen Victoria Street, E.C.4, were re-elected auditors, on the proposition of Mr. A. J. Redman, seconded by Major G. S. M. Ashby.

Mr. J. J. Chaplin, replying on behalf of the firm, expressed the regret of Mr. W. W. Collins that he was unable to be present. At the moment he was convalescing after an operation, he said, and was forbidden by his doctor to venture out.

Captain E. T. Cripps, moving a vote of thanks to the chairman for the able way in which he had conducted the meeting, expressed thanks for the wonderful report and balance sheet which he had put in front of them. He stated that they appreciated tremendously the amount of work which he did for the company. They realised the very difficult months through which the chairman and managing director had had to go; he had had to give most important decisions and give them quickly. No one would envy him that position, but they could not have had anyone better to have tackled the job.

Captain F. H. V. Keighley seconded the resolution, which was carried with acclamation.

The chairman, in responding, apologised for the absence of their senior shareholder, Mrs. Caversham Simonds, who was too unwell to be present, and also for Mr. G. W. Smith, who always attended their meetings, but was prevented by indisposition from being present that day. "I only hope that next year," added the chairman, "we may meet under happier auspices. I pray that by then, if we are not already living in a period of renewed peace, we may see in sight victory and a restoration of peace and liberty."

The chairman concluded that, speaking on behalf of those who were left, they hoped that they would be spared to give of their best to the company, that their health and judgment would be unimpaired, so that when this terrible war was over they might hand over again that share of the organisation to those gentlemen who were doing work for them elsewhere. They would be very glad to have them back to take over some part of the burden which was on their shoulders to-day.

BEER AT 107.

MRS. ELLEN FLETCHER GETS HALF-A-PINT A DAY.

When Croydon Public Assistance Committee served 40 gallons of beer (a pint each) to inmates of Queen's Road Homes, Croydon, on Christmas Day, in accordance with their Yuletide custom, one of those who received it was Mrs. Ellen Fletcher, who is 107.

Beer is no novelty to Mrs. Fletcher. Because of her age and because it keeps up her health, she is allowed half-a-pint daily.

She describes Hitler as "just another miserable teetotaler."—*Evening News*.

GREETINGS TO YOU ELLEN FLETCHER ON YOUR 107TH YEAR.

Here's a health to you Ellen Fletcher on your 107th year,

We wish you all the happiness you'll get from good old beer :
The "spirit" that has served you throughout your gallant life,

We hope will take you safely through these present days of strife.

The sentiment expressed by you about the "King of Knaves,"

Comes out we know from glorious brew, mellowed in oaken staves.
Contrast the thoughts of he who wrote "Mein Kampf" on other
brews—

He would have had no conflict, had they not him bemused !

Refrain.

For good beer is still the Nations' best drink

Whatever disgruntled teetotalers may think,

And so we raise up our glass to you, dear,

Filled with Simonds' "S.B."—the best of all beer.

E.D.O.

Amongst the contributions to the Lord Mayor's appeal for the Duke of Gloucester's Red Cross and St. John Fund is that of £105 from H. & G. Simonds Ltd.

RESTRICTIONS INTENSIFY TROUBLE.

In *The True Temperance Quarterly*, referring to "Drink and the War," it is stated : "No case has been made out yet for any further interference with the drinking habits of the nation, or for the further control of the brewing and allied trades. Great unrest was caused during the last war by unnecessary regulations ; we cannot afford unrest now, when we need the greatest possible unity and co-operation between all classes of the community. The public is already being restricted in innumerable ways ; and the greater the number of unavoidable restrictions, the more important the avoidance of those that are not essential to the efficient prosecution of the war. Restrictions intensify a trouble, as was found when hours were too severely restricted during the last war, with the result that drinking became concentrated into short periods instead of being spread out in an even temperance. Government control of industry is unavoidable in many directions, and this is all the more reason why it should not be extended without sufficient cause. We are being urged by posters that our courage, our cheerfulness, our resolution will bring us victory. In the last war Dora did her best to drive all cheer away. Nothing like that must be allowed now. If this war is to be largely a war of patience, it will not be our side that capitulates, and no needless strain of gloom must be imposed to weaken our resolution. And let us remember always and all the time that this is a war for freedom."

A MAN IN THE RIGHT PLACE.

Locally they regard Mr. H. Musgrave, the Chairman of the Spelthorne Licensed Victuallers' Protection Society, as the right man in the right place, says *The Licensing World*. Certainly he is a fighter, and brings his knowledge of the trade to bear in the energetic way in which he leads the organisation. Licensee for about eight years of the Phoenix, Staines, he has all that time belonged to his society, now soon to complete another year as its chairman. Mr. Musgrave was born in Clerkenwell. In 1905 he was a champion road cyclist, setting up time records and winning, during his racing career, several cups. An excellent organiser for charity, too, he is Chairman of the Staines Bonfire Society, which has raised large sums of money for the local hospital and other institutions. To-day, Mr. Musgrave is organising a fund for the supply of comforts for those of H.M. Forces who have left the Staines district.

WORDS OF WISDOM.

History is a voice for ever sounding across the centuries the laws of right and wrong. Opinions alter, manners change, creeds rise and fall, but the moral law is written on the tablets of eternity. For every false word or unrighteous deed, for cruelty and oppression, for lust and vanity, the price has to be paid at last : not always by the chief offenders. . . . Justice and truth alone endure and live. Injustice and falsehood may be long-lived, but doomsday comes at last to them.—J. A. Froude : "*The Science of History*."

Good nature is the cheapest commodity in the world, and love is the only thing that will pay ten per cent. to both borrower and lender.

Take a tip from the glider and gain height from the bumps.

Despotism is the normal and legitimate government of an early society in which knowledge has not developed the powers of the people, but when it is introduced into a civilized community it is of the nature of a disease which, unless it be checked, has a continual tendency to spread. When free nations abdicate their freedom, they gradually lose both the capacity and the desire for freedom. Political talent and ambition, leaving no sphere for action, steadily decays and servile, enervating, and vicious habits proportionately increase.—LECKY : "*European Morals*."

There are omens in the air,
And voices whispering, beware !
But never victor in the fight
Heeded the portents of fear and care.

Many see more with one eye than others with two.

It is the company and not the charge that makes the feast.

Hearsay is half lies.

He who would rule must hear and be deaf, must see and be blind.

He who pleased everybody died before he was born.

An ill workman quarrels with his tools.

There are cases where little can be said and much must be done.

There are no tricks in plain simple faith.

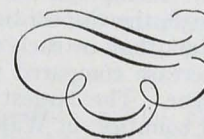
There are no laws by which we can write Iliads.

God often visits us, but most of the time we are not at home.

Idle people have the least leisure.

Life is poor when its old faiths are gone,
Poorest when man can trust himself alone.

Measure men around the heart.



LICENSING CHANGES OF 25 YEARS.

DECLINE IN SALES OF BEER AND SPIRITS.

A slight decrease in the total number of convictions for drunkenness in 1938 compared with 1937 is recorded in Licensing Statistics, 1938 (issued by the Stationery Office, price 1s.). This is held to suggest that the effect of the conditions which led to the abnormal decreases in 1931 and 1932, and the subsequent increases from 1933 to 1937, has died away, and that the gradual improvement of the figures which occurred in the years 1921 to 1930 may be starting again.

The present is therefore a good opportunity, the report states, to compare some current statistics with those of a quarter of a century ago, noting the changes since 1913, which was also a year preceding the outbreak of a war. The comparative figures are :—

	1913	1938
On-licences per 10,000 of population	24.04	17.94
Off-licences per 10,000 of population	6.40	5.35
Clubs per 10,000 of population	2.29	4.11
Hours of sale on weekdays	16-19½	8-9
Hours of sale on Sundays	6-7	5
Convictions for drunkenness per 10,000 of population	51.16	11.31
Percentage of women among persons convicted	18.94	12.91
Consumption of beer (standard gallons per head of population)	27.86	14.22
Consumption of spirits (proof gallons per 100 of population)	69.65	20.65

The number of cases in which charges of simple drunkenness or drunkenness with aggravations were proved in 1938 was 52,661, compared with 53,973 in 1937, a decrease of 1,312 or 2.49 per cent. The total number of charges of drunkenness proved in the year (including cases in which other and more serious offences were proved) was 54,518, of which 85.9 per cent. were men and 14.1 per cent. women. Convictions for drunkenness decreased by 154 to 46,603. Convictions since 1932 have shown an upward tendency corresponding closely with the economic recovery of the country as reflected in the decrease in unemployment. The monthly figures showed that up to July, 1938, the rise continued at about the same average rate as in 1937, but that in each month from August to December there was a decrease compared with the corresponding month of the previous year. The largest increases were in the south-western agricultural counties, in Wales and Monmouthshire, and in Lancashire and Cheshire.

In England 30 per cent. of the total number of arrests leading to charges of drunkenness being proved took place on Saturday,

10 per cent. on Sunday, and 11 per cent. on Monday; while for Wales and Monmouthshire (where licensed premises are closed on Sundays), the corresponding figures were 39 per cent. on Saturday, 5 per cent. on Sunday, and 12 per cent. on Monday. Cases in which charges were proved of drunkenness reported to be due to the drinking of methylated spirit numbered 973 (848 men and 125 women).

The number of on-licences in force on 31st December, 1938, was 73,920, a decrease of 406 compared with one of 355 in the previous year. The total decrease of on-licences since 1905 is 25,558. The total of justices' off-licences was 22,052, a decrease of 57 compared with an increase of 15 in the previous year. The number of registered clubs was 16,951, an increase of 388. The districts in which the largest numerical increases occurred were London (54), Surrey (28), and West Kent (19). The total increase of registered clubs since 1905 is 10,362, equal to 40.6 per cent. of the decrease of on-licences during the same period. The number of persons convicted of offences in relation to registered clubs decreased from 1,420 in 1937 to 968. The figures of offences in relation to unregistered clubs increased from 282 to 324.

DEATH OF MRS. CHARLES BENNETT.

Our hearts go out to Mr. Charles Bennett, Manager of the Estates Department at the Brewery, in the loss of his wife which occurred recently in a Reading nursing home. They were indeed a devoted couple and the lady who has now been called to higher service won, by her sweet and womanly ways, the love of all privileged to know her. We know that Mr. Bennett's loss is irreparable but the deep sympathy of so many of his fellow men, expressed verbally and by letter, must be some solace to him in his great sorrow.

The funeral service took place at St. Luke's Church with which Mrs. Bennett had been associated for many years.

The mourners were Mr. Charles Bennett (husband), Mr. and Mrs. L. C. Bennett (son and daughter-in-law), Mr. A. G. Locke and Mr. O. Locke (brothers), Mrs. Welch (sister) and Mrs. Leno (sister-in-law).

Among those present at the church were Lady Abram, Councillor H. F. Dunster, Councillor C. H. Eves, Mr. H. G. Hawkins, Mr. R. R. Thackeray (representing the Reading Conservative and Unionist Association), Dr. Franklin Cox, Mrs. T. A. Burrows, Mrs. E. Kay, Miss C. M. Edwards (representing the St. Luke's Girl

Guides), Mr. W. H. Davis (Estates Department at the Brewery), Mr. W. Bowyer (Home Trade Manager), Mr. S. J. Moore, Mr. C. W. N. Sharp (Messrs. Cooksey & Walker), Mrs. K. Forrest and Mr. G. Emery (The Grenadier).

The wreaths included those from Estates Department, The Brewery; Hotels and Catering Department, The Brewery; Councillor and Mrs. H. F. Dunster; Mr. and Mrs. E. S. Phipps; Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Richardson; Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Bradford; Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Davis; Mr. and Mrs. W. Bowyer; Capt. A. S. Drewe; Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Davis; Major and Mrs. H. Kaye; Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Wadhams; Mr. and Mrs. F. G. Bowyer and Marjorie; Mr. and Mrs. S. J. Moore; Mr. F. C. Hawkes; Mrs. K. Forrest; Mr. and Mrs. Bob Duguid.

MR. H. C. DENNIS.

THIRTY YEARS LICENSEE OF RAILWAY HOTEL, STAINES.

Many changes have taken place since Mr. Dennis took over the Railway Hotel on 3rd January, 1910. Staines was then a quiet river-side resort, crowds flocking down at week-ends for the river.

The extensive stabling used to be filled with horses, and coaches frequently changed teams. There was one of the best skittle alleys in the district; the late Mr. Frank Ashby was a patron and took the Chair at a Skittle Club Supper on 17th March, 1910. The Railway Hotel still has customers who used to play there 30 years ago. But all this has given way to garage accommodation to meet the present-day requirements, Staines having grown to be a popular residential neighbourhood and shopping centre, with three cinemas.

It is well served with buses from all quarters.

Sweeps recently working in the rural headquarters of the L.N.E.R. came across two jackdaws' nests, one with a built-in cartridge case and the other embodying portions of an 11-year-old copy of the *News of the World*.

NATURE NOTE.

(BY C.H.P.).

VISITORS TO THE BIRD TABLE.

BREAKFAST AT 2.45 A.M.

With wintry conditions prevailing, I have a regular succession of little feathered friends visiting my bird table. They display a great partiality to finely-flaked peanuts and just outside my window, as I write, are greenfinches, chaffinches, hedgesparrows, blue tits, great tits, cole tits and sparrows. In the garden starlings are fighting fiercely over scraps of meat, while blackbirds, thrushes, etc., are pecking away at some half-rotten apples fixed to the ground by means of skewers. The head and neck of the cole tit are of a glossy black, while there is a patch of pure white on the nape of the neck and on the cheeks. The tits are very much alike in their habits. Off they fly with a flake of nut, hold it firm on the twig of a tree by their foot or feet, and peck away at it until the food is finished. Then they make the return journey to their dining table. One little blue tit has a broken leg, but he manages to get the food under the foot in use, and this has to fulfil the dual purpose of holding the food and enabling the bird to take his stand on the tree. But he shows not the slightest sign of inconvenience.

THIRSTY BIRDS.

By the way, birds suffer as much from thirst as from hunger in cold weather. The difficulty of keeping drinking water from freezing can easily be overcome by the simple method of placing a pan of water on four bricks, under which is put a nightlight. This will stay alight all through the day and keeps the water just above freezing. Wild birds are seen to bathe as well as drink, continually, and they will often go to the water when it is put out—before the food.

THE VERY EARLY BIRD.

I remember, a good many years ago, when there was an eclipse of the sun and darkness came over the face of the earth in the

daytime, that many birds thought it was night and acted accordingly. I was with a gamekeeper at the time and to our surprise his ducks waddled home for their evening meal hours before the appointed time. In a big building, where work of national importance is being carried on throughout the night, sparrows are attracted by the light and apparently think that night is day. In any case, there they may be seen waiting for their breakfast long before break of day. One particularly perky little fellow comes regularly to be fed at 2.45 a.m., and the kindness he receives at the hands of the men concerned has made him very tame.

ABOUT PIGEONS.

The wintry weather resulted in the wood pigeons getting together in flocks numbering thousands. For some unknown reason I did not see so many as usual while strolling up the Thames-side between Reading and Mapledurham. They had apparently moved *en masse* to the Goring district where they were to be observed in unusually large numbers. They need not have travelled so far to find their food of clover and turnip, but perhaps they liked a change of scenery. It is a pity that, as a result of their enormous appetites, pigeons do so much harm to agriculture.

I love to hear the ring dove's note. It is among the first of the woodland sounds in spring. Wordsworth celebrates it under a name generally given to the stock dove :

I heard a stock dove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day ;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze.
It did not cease ; but cooed and cooed,
And somewhat pensively he wooed ;
He sang of love with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending ;
Of sorrows, faith, and inward glee ;
That was the song, the song for me.

A GREAT THOUGHT.

Let us thank God for the wonderful words used by the King in his Christmas broadcast, as a correspondent says in *The Times*.

Let each one of us grip to our soul the thought that we are individually enlisted in a Crusade to save Europe from the domination of Powers of Evil, which scorn every consideration of mercy, truth, good faith, justice, and liberty, and which regard the human being, for whom Christ died, as the mere tool of an idol State.

Nothing less is the cause entrusted to our Allies and to us ; but we shall betray it if we do not, in the King's words, put our hand into the Hand of God.

A new year is at hand, said our beloved King. We cannot tell what it will bring.

If it brings peace, how thankful we shall all be. If it brings us continued struggle we shall remain undaunted.

In the meantime I feel that we may all find a message of encouragement in the lines which, in my closing words, I would like to say to you :

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year—

Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.

And he replied, Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way.

May that Almighty Hand guide and uphold us all.

[Many millions of people must have heard the King quote these moving words at the end of his Christmas Day broadcast, and while listeners and famous literary men were still puzzling over the authorship, the writer of the lines was revealed—Miss Minnie Haskins, of Crowborough, Sussex, a retired tutor at the London School of Economics. Miss Haskins, who is elderly, has written two volumes and a good deal of verse. She wrote the passage many years ago, and, with other work of hers, it was printed for private circulation among friends.]

TO IZAAC WALTON.

Bless you—for brighter times than I can tell !
 When you have entertained me with your charm.
 —For moments when, along the rivered dell,
 I've moved with your old book beneath my arm.
 (For who would read your "Angler"—all "Compleat"
 And would not choose a willow-stump for seat ?)

Within a quiet pool I cast my bait
 And as I watch the bobbing of the float
 —Or bubbles from a crafty eel await,
 I count the ripples from a passing boat :
 —Then (having not the patience that I need)
 I stretch my arms, and settle down to read.

Above me (shield and shelter from the blaze
 Of scalding noon) a thorn white-blossomed bends :
 And I—as round my feet its shadow plays—
 Enjoy the discourse of your jolly friends :
 —I hear your recipe, a pike to stuff ;
 And how St. Peter was a fisher rough.

The gauzy mayfly settles on the stream,
 But I, enchanted, turn from page to page ;
 —The water-crowfoot opens petals cream,
 But I am walking in another age :
 —Regardless of my rod I'm with you there
 Along the road from Tottenham to Ware.

Then, as at length we sight the welcome inn,
 (With supper good, by honest Betty spread)
 I hear among the clouds a sudden din ;
 And with a frown I slowly raise my head :
 —A line of gilded 'planes moves into space,
 And I am back in this our Year of Grace !!

S. E. COLLINS.



BREWERY JOTTINGS.

(By W. DUNSTER.)

It would seem everyone had a most happy time at Christmas, and just for a few days before the holiday we were greeting quite a number of old friends, in khaki and Air Force blue, who had managed to get their leave at the proper time. Certainly they all looked well and "no complaints" the order of the day.

From all accounts it was a good Christmas for trade so the rest was well-earned by all employees of H. & G. Simonds. Orders came along as they should, in the majority of cases, and in spite of black-out difficulties our transport were able to do their job of work in a highly creditable manner. Fortunately the weather kept fine and dry, a great help this.

Although colds have been troublesome, the staff have "stuck it" well and casualties have been few and far between, thank goodness, especially as the start of the new year sees them doing the usual quarterly balancing.

Just before the holiday a rose was seen at The Brewery, sported by a member of the staff. Tilehurst and Caversham Heights are suburbs of Reading and in this case we must hand it to Tilehurst. However, a gentleman who lives at Caversham says he still has roses in his garden and has promised to wear one soon, which may even matters up a little.

Football still carries on and we at Reading are quite satisfied with our team. It would seem when Reading go to the seaside they win, yet when playing a London team they lose.

The Offices look somewhat different now with so many ladies working there and it may be that there will be even more when these latest groups are called up, for throughout The Brewery there will be quite a number who will have to go, in their turn.

I understand our Savings Association is going as strong as ever for there are a number who "left it late" and have joined up with the Secretary, Mr. A. H. Hopkins, and he has had many enquiries regarding the Association.

We regret to record the deaths of two of our employees, viz. Mr. J. W. Giles of the Transport Dept. and Mr. W. Cropp of the Engineers Dept. Both had been employed on the Firm for 9 years and they died whilst serving with H.M. Forces. Our deepest sympathy is hereby extended to their relatives in their sad loss.

The Minor team of Simonds Athletic Football Club are playing regularly with a fair amount of success and no doubt it was a

very wise decision to run a third team and particularly so in view of happenings since it was decided to do this. I understand the Ladies Hockey team are still without an initial success. Perhaps 1940 will be their turning point.

Overheard on the bus : " Do you always carry your gas mask wherever you go ? " " No ! But I always carry a hot water bottle. I would rather risk the uncertainty of death than the certainty of cold feet."

Messages of sympathy have been pouring in to Mr. C. Bennett from all quarters, in the sad loss of his wife at Christmastime. I feel I am voicing the sentiments of all of us at The Brewery in saying how grieved we were to learn the terrible news.

The following changes have taken place, and to all tenants we wish every success :—

The Victoria, Hayes (H. & G. Simonds Ltd.)—Mr. C. Middleton.

The Iron Duke, Crowthorne (H. & G. Simonds Ltd.)—Mr. S. E. Barber.

We are sorry to record the death of Mrs. Chapman, mother of the present tenant of the Olive Branch, Inkpen. Mrs. Chapman was the widow of the former tenant and lived at this house for many years.

DEATH OF MR. C. E. HEWETT, J.P.

MR. F. A. SIMONDS' TRIBUTE TO A GREAT SPORTSMAN.

The world is poorer by the death of Mr. C. E. Hewett, O.B.E., J.P., which occurred on Saturday, December 30th, at Lime Home, Mapledurham. The record of his life is one of long public service given unobtrusively and unstintingly, which earned for him the esteem and gratitude of a large section of the community.

The following glowing tribute is from our Chairman and Managing Director, Mr. F. A. Simonds :—

" The news of the death of my old friend and political colleague, Charles Hewett, has come as a great shock to me. But a few days ago I was wishing him a happy New Year at lunch at the club, and I thought how wonderfully well he had retained his health and vitality.

" I feel but an infant in politics when I look back on his own record. He was indeed a link between the giants of the old Tory Party of the early part of the century and to-day. I recall the names of Charles Keyser, Blackall Simonds, George Philbrick and Stewart Abram among many others. Long before I accepted the chairmanship of the Conservative Party in 1912, Charles Hewett had held that office, and I was happy in the knowledge that he was occupying the deputy-chair and at my right hand at all times when I wanted help and guidance. At the time of his death he was still deputy-chairman, and no one knows better than I do the power he has exercised on behalf of our party in all those years. Whenever I was in difficulties I always sought his help, and I do not recall any occasion when he refused it. There were times when, owing to my illness or absence abroad on business, he deputised for me, and how he used to love having a tilt at me over my being abroad at a place somewhere beginning with an ' M ' ; he never would believe that ' M ' stood for Malta as well as Monte Carlo.

" His vitality and powers of endurance were amazing, even at an advanced age, and he was never averse to turning out at nights to attend some meeting on behalf of the cause. He was always ready to help financially any appeal on behalf of the activities of the Conservative Association, and usually that assistance was rendered covertly. I shall ever miss the merry banter which helped to lighten the drab atmosphere of many committee meetings when he and I were having a dig at each other.

" I have known him as a great sportsman, and I recall some happy evenings up north when, after a heavy day's walking on the moors, he was always ready to tell me ' just another one ' over the last nightcap, and would start again next morning as fresh as a daisy and leave me stone cold after many hours of tramping.

" Others can tell of his prowess in the hunting field ; I knew not that side of him, but I knew him so well in the paddock at Ascot and Newbury and elsewhere with his life-long friend, Mr. Graham ; he was a fine judge of a horse. It was only two years ago that he was seen in Bond Street by my wife, as proud as a peacock, having just bought a new grey top-hat for the Ascot of the following week. I think the previous one had lasted for at least a generation. How we all wish he could have been spared to wear it again ! "

NAVAL OLD COMRADES AT DINNER.

NINETY PER CENT. OF READING CLUB'S MEMBERS
SERVING.

The Reading branch of the Royal Navy Old Comrades' Association held their annual dinner on Monday, January 1st, says the *Reading Standard*, at the Royal Naval Club, Duke Street,

Reading, which has been their headquarters since June. Unfortunately for the club, about 90 per cent. of the members have rejoined the Navy since war broke out and are now serving in the North Sea, Dover Patrol and mine sweeping units. About 50 members, however, were present when dinner, piped in Navy fashion, was served in a large room beflagged with the Union Jack.

Lieut. F. C. Way, R.N., who presided, referred to the absence of two of the branch's senior officials, Admiral Dashwood Moir (president) and Commander H. D. Simonds who, he said, had been recalled since hostilities commenced. It was gratifying, he added, to see so many present and he was sure they were like him, thinking of their brother shipmates, members of that association, who were serving their country at that time. Lieut. Way expressed the members' gratitude to Mr. J. Nuccoll (secretary of the branch) and lady helpers who had worked so hard to make that function such a success.

ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY.

Mr. Nuccoll proposed "The Guests," mentioning Mr. W. Bowyer who, he said, had come along to represent Commander Simonds, and Leading Seaman Wilson, of the Royal Canadian Navy, a good and worthy shipmate who was making the Reading club his home.

In reply, Mr. Bowyer said that Commander Simonds would be delighted to hear that the members had rallied round to make the dinner a success under the present difficult circumstances. He complimented the chairman and members on the excellence of the function which had brought them so closely together. Whenever he had visited the club he had always been welcomed as one of their own members, and he valued exceedingly the friendships made.

Leading Seaman Wilson proposed the health of "The Services," remarking that where he hailed from—west of the Rockies—he had been accustomed to seeing Red Indians, and it was most pleasing to meet his English comrades at that dinner.

In reply Mr. W. F. Bird said they welcomed their friend from Canada. His presence at that function was further evidence of how the British Colonies had rallied round the mother country in the present war.

The toast, "Absent Friends," was submitted by Mr. W. Bumstead.

A musical entertainment followed.

Mr. Nuccoll asks us to call the attention of any members of the public who are interested to the fact that the Royal Naval Club is at present in need of nautical pictures and flags for internal decoration. People who wish to help the club in this way are asked to communicate with him at 16A, Duke Street.

THE LIGHTER SIDE.

A man came to visit a friend early in December, and stayed on until a few days before Christmas. The host was wearied of the long visit, and cast about for some way of getting rid of his guest without hurting his feelings. Finally, he hit upon what he thought was a brilliant idea.

He called his guest aside, and after remarking how near Christmas it was, said: "Don't you think, old man, that your wife and kiddies will want you to be with them during the Christmas holidays?"

The guest wrung his host's hand. "Thank you very much for the invitation, old man," he said, "I'll send for them at once."

* * * *

On Christmas Eve the local doctor was called in to attend the butler of a distinguished but impecunious peer. After a careful examination of the patient he could not discover any symptoms of illness, and was astonished when the butler, in a confidential whisper, said: "It's all right, Doctor, there's nothing wrong with me. His lordship owes me £6 in wages and I'm going to stay here till I'm paid."

"A darned good idea," said the doctor. "Move up; he owes me £60."

* * * *

A man journeying homewards in the early hours of Christmas morning found a belated reveller endeavouring vainly to insert his key into the keyhole, and approaching him, said, "May I assist you?"

"Shertainly—hic—not," replied the drunk. "'Sout of the question," and returned without success to his attack on the keyhole.

"Well, I'll knock for you," offered the other.

"Mos', mos'—hic—decidedly not," was the reply, "let 'em wait."

* * * *

An elderly lady bought a parrot from a sailor. Its language was appalling, but the old lady put up with it for a time, until one day Polly *really* let fly. Patience exhausted, the old lady put her hand in the cage, clutched the parrot, and hurled it through the open window.

Going through the window, Polly caught her head and lost some feathers therefrom. Fluttering down into the yard, she eventually found her way on to the kitchen window sill. Inside was cook plucking a turkey for the Christmas dinner.

Polly looked in, saw the almost naked bird, and shrieked: "Blimey, what's *it* said?"

* * * *

Word had been passed round that the Commanding Officer had offered his men £1 for every German shot. That night a look-out ran silently to his sleeping friend. He shook him. "Ssh," he whispered. "Don't wake the others, Bill. Just grab your rifle and come with me. There's fifty thousand of the blighters coming over the top."

* * * *

The new recruits were having a lesson on tactics, when the sergeant-major noticed three of them not paying attention. Calling them out to the front he bellowed: "What is the quickest way to send a message? . . . come on . . . sharp."

FIRST RECRUIT: "Telegraph."

SECOND RECRUIT: "Telephone."

THIRD RECRUIT: "Tell a woman."

* * * *

"I wish the blighters would come and relieve this monotony," Tommy had written from the Front. "We'd chase the whole lot to hell."

But . . . a blue pencil had been scored through the last word by the censor, and a footnote read: "All references to future movements of the enemy are strictly forbidden."

* * * *

Nobby was a staunch supporter of his regiment's football team. On the day following an important match one of his pals asked him for a transfer to another tent.

"Why?" asked the officer.

"Well, sir, it's like this. Last night Nobby gets so excited in 'is sleep, 'ee shafts and 'ee rives. 'Ee kept grabbing 'old of me 'air, putting 'is knees in me back and pulling like 'ell. Then 'ee yelled: 'If only I could get this ruddy turf up, I'd blind that ——— referee.'"

* * * *

Pat was on leave, and having the time of his life. Not surprising then that after a particularly heavy evening he was arrested for using indecent language.

Next morning, when brought before the magistrate, he was asked if he had anything to say.

"Shure I have, yur honour," he replied. "Faith an' how could it be indacent language when I wus talking about Hitler?"

* * * *

One day a Scot was in hospital with a badly-wounded stomach. When the M.O. was examining him he looked up and said, "D'ye think I'll pull through, doctor?"

"Aye," replied the doctor, "Ye've got a chance if ye'll keep a good heart."

"If I could get a drop o' whisky it 'ud keep me heart up," said the soldier.

"Medical comforts are restricted, but I'll see what we can do about it," consoled the medical man.

The soldier sank back upon his pillows. "Meanwhile," he murmured, "come and see me as often as possible. I like the smell of yer breath!"

* * * *

Notice in an Irish engineering firm:—

"Danger. To touch means instant death. Any employee breaking this rule will be dismissed."

* * * *

THE MORNING AFTER.

WIFE AT TOTTENHAM : He woke with a gurgle and said : " There's something awful in my mouth ; I must have swallowed a bit of the blanket." I said, " Don't be a fool, it's your tongue."

* * * *

Somewhere in France, Bill said to his mate : " A pal of mine saved a whole battalion."

JACK : " Did he ? How did he manage that ? "

BILL : " He shot the cook."

* * * *

The senior and junior boys in the school evacuation party from near Birmingham were going for a tramp into the country in Worcestershire when the following conversation took place :—

ROY (*a bright, precocious boy, aged twelve*) : " How long shall we be staying here, Miss ? "

TEACHER : " Oh, I don't know, Roy ; probably till the end of the war."

ROY (*in a self-satisfied voice*) : " Well, that means I can see myself going back home with wife and kids."

* * * *

The beautiful actress was visiting a military hospital.

" Did you kill a Nazi ? " she asked the occupant of the first bed.

" Yus, lady," he said.

" Which hand did you use ? "

" Me right 'and."

The actress took his right hand and kissed it.

The turn of the man in the next bed came.

" I killed 'undreds of 'em," he said.

" And which hand did you kill them with ? "

Tommy leaned forward eagerly. " I bit 'em to death," he replied.

OLD LADY (*to man milking cow*) : " Why are you not at the Front, young man ? "

YOUNG MAN : " There isn't any milk that end."

* * * *

" Please note that the provision of females for wardens will cease as from to-night under Home Office instructions."

So ran the official notice to an A.R.P. sector. " Females " should have read " free meals."

* * * *

WOMAN : " If you don't go, I shall call my husband."

TRAMP : " He is not at home."

WOMAN : " How do you know ? "

TRAMP : " A man with a wife like you is never at home."

* * * *

" I would like to marry your daughter."

" One word first. Can you support a family ? "

" Certainly, sir."

" Very good. I must tell you there are seven of us."

* * * *

CAPTAIN : " And you expect to get paid for loading the ship with flour, while you stand gazing at the sacks still lying on the quay ? "

STEVEDORE : " Well, I've been waiting for the last hour—they sacks is marked ' self-raising.' "



BRANCHES.

PORTSMOUTH.

On Saturday, December 16th, Portsmouth were at home to Reading at Fratton Park in the Regional Tournament. Reading were able to beat them but while giving the visitors full credit for their dash, Portsmouth should have done better and with a little more "pep" at the right moments they could have won the match with something to spare. The associations of Reading and Portsmouth in the football world go back as far as 1899. Their first meeting took place over 40 years ago in September, 1899, when they played a Southern League match and during the last 40 years Portsmouth and Reading have met on 60 occasions. Most of these fixtures have been in the Southern League and the Third Division, but in their long association Reading can claim only two previous victories at Portsmouth. Their last visit to Fratton Park was in March, 1927, when Portsmouth won 5—0. This was Portsmouth's last season in the Second Division and their 5—0 victory was their biggest success over Reading.

The new premises of the Central Portsmouth Conservative Club in Fratton Road were opened in December by Capt. G. Couzens. The members expressed satisfaction at the lay-out of the building and appreciation of arrangements for billiards, darts, table tennis, etc., and among those present were Mr. J. J. Williams (Club Chairman), Mrs. Coward, Mr. Lloyd-Evans, Councillor and Mrs. W. Clements and Councillor and Mrs. G. Wallis. Many new members were enrolled.

A large number of members were present at the Sarisbury and District Working Men's Club when the new additional room was opened. The ceremony was performed by the President (Mr. G. E. Packer, O.B.E., J.P., C.C.) who warmly congratulated all concerned on having such additional accommodation and said they should feel grateful to the committee for making such provision, particularly mentioning Mr. A. Toulson, their popular chairman, Mr. F. Crockford, hon. treasurer, and Mr. A. Knapp, the energetic secretary. Mr. Letheren, vice-president, and all the members of the committee were present at the function.

A concert by the Southsea Revellers followed.

THE ROEBUCK TAP, OXFORD.

The fact that it stands in two parishes is not the only unique thing about the Roebuck Vaults.

The landlord, Mr. W. J. Harvey, is believed to be the youngest licensee in the country, for he was granted the licence at the age of 22.

He is the son of a family well known in Oxford, for his father, the late Mr. W. J. Harvey, was also in the licensed trade, and his mother, who died in the summer, preceded her son at the "Roebuck."



[Reproduced by kind permission of "The Oxford Mail."]

The newly-constructed Roebuck Tap Inn now stands in two Oxford parishes. Customers are seen toasting each other in two parishes in the same room—St. Michael-at-the-North Gate and St. Martin and All Saints.

MALTA.

(Reprinted from *The Daily Malta Chronicle*)—

"We regret to announce the death of Mr. Henry Harding, late Chief Clerk of Messrs. H. & G. Simonds, Ltd., which occurred early yesterday morning. A gentleman of sterling qualities, an

exemplary husband and father, he will be missed by all. He leaves to mourn his loss, his wife, Henrietta, his children, Dr. Henry Harding, M.D., Violet, wife of Dr. S. Debono, M.D., Walter M. Harding, Secretary, Simonds-Farsons, Ltd., and Judge William D. Harding, B.Lit., LL.D., besides a host of grandchildren and friends."

In sending us the above announcement, Mr. Harding's son writes :—

"My father wished to be buried with his father in the crypt of St. Paul's Church, at C. Vecchia, the old capital of Malta. Strange to say it is hard to obtain permission to be buried in a church nowadays, but his father during his wanderings succeeded in purchasing a grave in a crypt of St. Paul's, which is a right of the family now. How my grandfather became interested in an old crypt of a very old church so out of the way as C. Vecchia we never discovered. We made his funeral strictly private but many of his friends came all the way to the church. Mr. Tench was kind enough to come as well."

BRISTOL.

It is with the deepest regret that we record the passing of two of our most respected Bristol tenants during the past month. Their places will be difficult to fill.

Mr. Ernest Morgan had been the licensee of the Knowle Hotel for over thirty years, and his sterling qualities endeared him to a wide circle of friends. The Knowle Hotel had for many years been a model for others to follow; a place where everyone felt they were a welcome part of the establishment—in fact more of a social centre than a licensed house. Unfortunately, for the past two years Mr. Morgan, owing to ill health, had not been able to take an active part in its administration, but the spirit of the house remained, and will remain, thanks to his labours. Our sincerest sympathies are extended to his family in their bereavement.

Mr. Sidney Smart of the Mayor's Arms had only been with us for just over two years, but during that short period he had made many new Hop Leaf friends, had firmly established himself as a type of licensee who gave unstinting service, and was always ready to help a good cause. He will be much missed, and we deeply sympathize with his wife (who helped him so unselfishly throughout) and his family, in their sorrow.

FUNERAL OF MR. W. LLOYD.

LIFETIME AT STAINES BREWERY.

In a grave at Staines Cemetery beside that of Mr. R. Fox Warner (Manager and Director of the firm, who died last year), there was buried on Friday, December 29th, a very old servant of Ashby's Staines Brewery. He was Mr. William Lloyd, who during a life-time at the Brewery rose progressively to the position of Head Brewer, with control of the whole of the outside staff.

Mr. Lloyd's career was one of success built up on hard work. His father before him had worked at the Brewery and after leaving the National Church School in London Road Mr. Lloyd went there in a very humble capacity. He remained there until his retirement some time after the amalgamation of the firm with Messrs. H. & G. Simonds, of Reading. His position then was that of Head Brewer, and he had proved himself an excellent manager of working men, even during the difficult years of the last war. For some years in succession he was chosen as one of the judges for the annual Brewers' Exhibition in London, a fact that was a compliment to his ability.

He was a Freemason and a Past Master of the Staines Lodge. He and his widow were for many years workers for St. Mary's Church, Mr. Lloyd being at one time Churchwarden and Treasurer. He was a keen churchman. He used to be a member of the Bowling Club.

Some years ago Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd left Staines, where they lived in Bridge Street, and they went to reside at Ingleneuk, York Road, Weybridge, where Mr. Lloyd died on Christmas morning at the age of 72.

At the funeral on Friday the principal mourners were deceased's two brothers, Messrs. Herbert and Charles Lloyd. The Rev. J. R. James (Vicar) officiated, and Mr. A. E. Beach (a colleague at the Brewery) read the lesson in the church. Mr. H. N. Deane (Surveyor) represented the firm, and other members of the staff present in addition to Mr. Beach included Messrs. F. J. Jones and H. B. Webb.

Among the floral tributes were some from the Directors of Messrs. H. & G. Simonds and Mr. Lloyd's former colleagues at the Brewery.—*From the "Staines and Egham News."*

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