

From: David J. Simonds D.L.

Telephone: Compton (0635) 578510

Bloreng House
Ashampstead
Reading
Berkshire
RG8 8RT

14th October 2006

Frederick Adolphus (Eric) Simonds 1881-1953

A personal appreciation

Eric Simonds was a great friend of my Father, Maurice Simonds, who used to say that they were distant enough cousins to be good friends! Cousin Eric was my godfather. I was fortunate that, in 1948, after my two years National Service, I was invited to join the Brewery in Reading, H & G Simonds Ltd, in Bridge Street. As my Father was still Local Director of Barclays Bank, King Street, I soon found I had many connections with the business world of the County Town.

I spent two years learning the art of Brewing and the craft of selling beer and running pubs, at the time when most pubs were under tenancy. It was a great experience in which I learnt a lot about people. I also learnt how "Mr. Eric", as he was universally known, managed men and the Brewery.

In January 1952 he celebrated his Jubilee, 50 years service in the Brewery, There are not many people who can claim to have worked their whole life in one business ending as "the Boss" and being feted nationally as a Brewer, a Prince of "The Trade" This Jubilee expressed FAS' motivation in life - to leave his family firm a major cog in the whole Brewing "engine".

It was a memorable moment, with his beloved wife, Amy at his side and his two sons, Duncan and Kenneth following in his footsteps. The respect and affection expressed at this time by all members of the Firm, and "The Trade" generally left a lasting impression on me, the new boy.

But what sort of a man was he? First of all, dedicated to the Firm and its success, to its employees and tenants, many of whom he had known, man and boy, father and son.. He was firm but fair: he had the ability to put his finger on the one thing the manager hoped he would miss! But he gave credit where it was due, and made it clear that his managers were his representatives.

The sales side of the Brewery was based on a network of branches, consisting of a depot with transport, run by a manager who had full local responsibility for sales and the economical delivery of goods. This gave opportunity for initiative and good management. The quality of the management was impressive.

FAS was a recognised leader of the Industry, elected Chairman of the Brewers Society in 1933, and in the two World wars was chairman of the Beer for the Troops committee, persuading brewers to share their restricted output with those fighting, at home and abroad. He was President of the Licensed Victuallers School in Slough, President of the Royal Warrant Holders Association in 1937 and 1945 - he was proud of the Royal Warrant. He was High Sheriff of Berkshire in 1928 and President of the Reading Conservative Association for many years.

He was the epitome of an Edwardian - a carnation in his button hole every day, who enjoyed parties, was a marvellous host and knew how to spoil his lady guests! At the same time he loved his shooting parties at Audleys Wood, with his friends, but was never very happy when a guest brought his wife to the shooting lunch! Racing was probably his main recreation, and he justified it by obtaining the beer orders for most of the Racecourses in the Simonds trading area.

He was a larger than life figure, a hard worker who enjoyed life, supported at all times by a marvellous wife. He died, as was his due, in harness, aged **84**, and was mourned by all.