

THE STORY OF
WHITBREAD PLC

1742 - 1990

By

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INTRODUCTION

'The Story of Whitbread's 1742-1992' is a factual record of the Company's development over the last 250 years. It contains much new information about the business that has not been published before. In particular, the years 1860 to 1930 have received here more attention than any of the previously published booklets have attempted. And of course, the complex changes of the last 20 years are recorded for the first time.

The Whitbread Archive, in which all the Company's surviving historic records are now properly preserved and catalogued, has been an essential and invaluable source of information for the text. The illustrations have also come from the Archive collection.

My thanks go to those people who read the book in manuscript form and suggested a number of improvements. I am grateful especially to Sam Whitbread, Sir Charles Tidbury, Charles Strickland and Chris Hughes.

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1742-1750 The Goat Brewhouse

In 1736 the first step towards the founding of a great family business was taken when the widow of a Bedfordshire farmer paid £300 for her younger son to be apprenticed to a London brewer, John Wightman, then Master of the Brewers' Company.

As Samuel Whitbread himself described it, at the end of his long and active life, in a letter to his son:-

'Your Father has raised it, from a very small beginning and by great assiduity in a very large course of years ... and with the highest credit in every View by honest and fair dealings ... And the Beer universally approved.'

'There never was the like before, nor probably ever will be again, in the Brewing Trade.'

Samuel was born, the second of the three children of Elizabeth Winch, his father Henry's second wife, on 20th August 1720, at Cardington, near Bedford.

There were six children from his father's first marriage. Of these five were living when Samuel was born, and the youngest, Ive, was 20 years old. His father, who like his father before him was Receiver-General of the Taxes for Bedfordshire, died when Samuel was only seven.

One of Samuel Whitbread's aunts married the grandfather of John Howard, the celebrated prison reformer. Howard, left motherless at an early age, was sent by his father to be brought up on a farm he owned at Cardington. There his neighbours were the Whitbread children, and he and Samuel became lifelong friends.

In 1732 Whitbread's mother sent him to a clergyman in Northamptonshire to be educated. Two years later he came to London, possibly staying with his step-brother Ive, a merchant in the City, before finally making up his mind to learn 'the great mystery of brewing'.

Whitbread spent over 6 years studying at Wightman's Gilport Street Brewery at Pye Corner, Clerkenwell. Then, seven months before the end of his seven year apprenticeship, he left and set up in business with two partners.

Although this was an irregular procedure, examination of the Minutes of the Brewers' Company shows that several breweries were founded when the partners were not Freemen of the Company. Whitbread was admitted a Freeman on 8th July 1743. Curiously, Abraham Rees (Cyclopaedia 1819) writes: 'and after the expiration of that period (i.e. apprenticeship) he remained for some time unsettled, as he was cautious in commencing business on his own account.'

He invested his £2,000 patrimony: another £600 was raised by selling 'the small estate at Sodbury in Gloucestershire which came by my mother'. The value of the partnership was £14,116, with debts of £9,405. The agreement signed on 22nd January 1743 took effect from 11th December 1742. Stock items listed included 18 horses, 1933 butts, 149 pipes, 293 punshions (sic), 142 half hogsheads, 200 kilderkins and 179 firkins. There were 5036 feet of stillioning.

The business in which he now had a share was on two sites. At the larger, the Goat Brewhouse, on the corner of Old Street and Upper Whitecross Street, the partners brewed porter and small beer. Strong beer, or porter as it was generally called (Faulkner's 1741 edition of Swift's works calls Stout 'a cant word for strong beer'.) was brewed from grain malt only, and this led to the name Entire or Intire Butt. The use of dark sugars and the blending of pale malts with the brown was practised by some brewers, but was never allowed in the Goat Brewhouse or later in Chiswell Street. Small beer was a weaker extract of strong beer. Across Old Street, in Brick Lane (now Central Street), stood a small brewhouse which produced pale and amber beers. These beers, the equivalent of bitter, were brewed to meet a limited demand and were known as Table Beer.

This area, then on the very outskirts of London, was popular with brewers, attracted by the supplies of good water. In 1746 there were three large breweries in Golden Lane, two in Upper Whitecross Street, one in Beech Lane, two in Lower Whitecross Street, one in Redcross Street and several more in Clerkenwell, including Wightman's.

Samuel's partners were two brothers, Godfrey and Thomas Shewell. Godfrey left the partnership after a few years and joined another brewer, Edwards. He is not mentioned in Company records after April 1748. He married Mary Caslon, daughter of the famous printer who lived in Chiswell Street. Whitbread and Thomas Shewell continued together until 1761 when the latter retired.

Brewing was restricted to the months between autumn and spring. Production in the first year 'was 18,000 barrels and the prospects were good'. From the start Whitbread insisted on having the best materials irrespective of their source. Surviving records show that the partners bought malt and in some cases grain for horses from some 79 different sources during the 1740s. Regular supplies came direct from Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, while East Anglian and Kentish malts were bought through the corn markets. Rees (Cyclopaedia 1819) describes Whitbread thus:- 'simple in his manners, he was accustomed to appear at the Corn-Market in Mark Lane, with a white apron as the emblem of his occupation'.

Trade expanded rapidly with beer being sent by sea to the north of England and Scotland; and from 1745 exported to Gibraltar, Jamaica and New York. By 1747 there was a growing need to move to larger premises. They had insufficient space for horses and drays; and although there were cellars under the Goat Brewhouse, the partners had been obliged to hire cellars in 54 different locations, some as far away as Hoxton.

But the main reason behind the decision to move was the realisation that porter represented an unrivalled market awaiting exploitation. Demand for this beer, which was first brewed in 1722 by Ralph Horwood, was growing enormously. It needed to be matured for up to a year and was especially suitable for large scale commercial brewing. Whitbread and Shewell decided to build a big new brewery capable of mass producing porter.

In 1749 they began buying tenements along the south side of Chiswell Street. This included the King's Head Brewhouse. This little brewhouse is marked on Roque's map of 1746. The present King's Head pub (previously the King's Head Taphouse) is close to the site. Then came the historic step. 'In the year 1750 my partner Thomas Shewell and myself moved out trade from the Brewhouse in Old Street to the Brewhouse in Chiswell Street which at that time was shut up and no trade to it'. The King's Head Brewhouse and 'many houses and other old buildings' were pulled down and a new brewery built.

By the end of 1750 porter and small beer was being brewed in Chiswell Street. A new era had begun. The Goat Brewhouse was closed, although the Brick Lane premises continued to brew amber and pale beers for some years.

1750 - 1796 Chiswell Street

Although he had some financial help from his cousin, John Howard, these early years were hard going. Hard work and rigid personal abstinence were the order of the day. His daughter Harriot described how 'in the early part of his trade he sat up four nights a week by his Brewhouse copper' only retiring 'when the state of the boiling permitted it'.

He would not allow any aspect of his private life to prejudice the development of the business. Every penny of profit was needed to pay for the new brewery he had just built, and which would continue to be expanded and improved. He was laying the foundation of 'a superstructure of fortune and reputation which has had few parallels in the history of commerce'.
(Rees.op.cit.)

In 1761 Thomas Shewell retired and Whitbread acquired his share of the business. This imposed a further financial burden. Whitbread undertook the discharge of £32,570 worth of debts; agreed to pay back in instalments between 1763 and 1765 the £10,000 which Shewell had advanced; and to pay in instalments (all with interest) from 1765 to 1770 the £30,000 which was Shewell's share in the business.

For the next 35 years Whitbread was sole proprietor at Chiswell Street. As he wrote in 1794 'and yet more extraordinary I have had no partner since Mr. Shewell my good friend declined the Trade at Midi' 1761'. Kent's and Baldwin's Directories list 'Shewells and Whitebread Chiswell Street' from 1754 to 1761. The Universal Director for 1763 has 'Whitebread and Shewell, Porter Brewers, Chiswell Street'. Kent and Baldwin in 1763 both list for the first time 'Samuel Whitbread, Chiswell Street'. Around this time he introduced the name Hind's Head Brewery after the device on the family coat of arms.

Meanwhile the development of the Brewery continued. 'Advancing with sure but rapid progress the brewhouse in Chiswell Street became a spacious quadrangle ... with every kind of convenience for habitation and business'. (Rees.op.cit.) He acquired additional property as it became available, moving to the north side of the road in 1758 when the buildings around the North Yard were erected. The 1780s saw substantial developments at the south side.

A disastrous fire in 1773, commemorated on a Sundial in the North Yard, necessitating much rebuilding, was one of a number of setbacks. A newspaper report in 1776 recalls that 'in the night one of the main beams at Whitbread's brewhouse gave way and let down a store vat containing 700 barrels of porter, 300 of which only were saved. The loss is reckoned at near £500'. In 1794 'a large vat of porter suddenly burst and the contents (about 1000 barrels) all ran out. Hundreds of rats perished by the singular deluge. They were taken up by pailfulls in an intoxicated state'.

In 1784 Whitbread wrote to his son, then travelling in Northern Europe: 'I have since been in town to see how the Brewhouse affairs go on which is very rapidly. The walls to the yard are got up and look very handsome. The coppers are setting and there will be a noble stage for the mash tuns. The whole place will be very capital when finished and bespeaks you for a master'. Between 1750 and 1786 £42,500 was spent on repairs, building and rebuilding. Further extensions northwards took place in the 1790s, and it was here that Whitbread built his last and largest building, the group of vat houses, whose enormous vats became one of the sights of 19th century London.

The steady increase in capital invested (£116,000 in 1762, £266,218 in 1792) was matched by a steady increase in annual production (63,408 barrels in 1760, 178,000 barrels in 1792). Whitbread brewed more barrels than any other brewer in London from 1787 onwards. Pennant lists for the year ending Midsummer 1787 Whitbread first with 150,280 barrels. His nearest rival, Felix Calvert, brewed 131,043 barrels.

In 1796 he became the first brewer to exceed an annual production of 200,000 barrels, with 202,006 barrels brewed. His beers were sent around the world to America, South Africa, India, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand. By any yardstick, Samuel Whitbread's achievements were remarkable.

Whitbread had been quick to recognise the potential that steam power offered. The first steam engine to be installed in a brewery was at Henry Goodwyn's Red Lion Brewery, St. Katherine's. This was in operation in August 1784. The Chiswell Street steam engine followed a year later. It was installed in 1785 by 'a Mr. Watt who has connected himself with Boulton of Birmingham'. One of his assistants was John Rennie, then aged 24, who had obtained a position with Watt at Birmingham the previous year. He went on to become one of the greatest civil engineers of his time. The engine worked on the sun and planet principle. This was necessary as Watt was prevented by competitors' patents from using a simple crank movement to give rotary motion to the flywheel.

James Watt's steam engine 'the best piece of mechanism I think I ever saw' as Joseph Delafield, one of Whitbread's assistants called it, was an immediate success. He reckoned in 1786 that he was saving 24 mill horses which almost covered in a single year the engine's erection cost of £1000. Originally of 35 h.p., in 1795 it 'was altered to make it equal to the power of 70 horses'. By 1793 Watt engines had been installed in 12 breweries.

One feature of this great 18th century brewery which survives is the Porter Tun Room, originally called the Great Storehouse. It was begun in 1774. A stone is preserved in the basement marked 'SW Junr: 1774' presumably placed there by his 10 year old son Samuel. The building was extended in 1782 and completed by 1784. Nearly 170 feet long it is notable for its fine timber roof, a good example of king post architecture, and is especially remarkable for an unsupported span of some 65 feet. Its huge slate vats, removed after brewing ceased in 1976, had a total capacity of 5,700 barrels.

The building of the Porter Tun Room gave Whitbread the idea of filling the vaults below with beer instead of storing it in wooden casks or vats. Consulting John Smeaton and others he succeeded eventually in making them waterproof. Seven cisterns were built between 1775 and 1786. The two largest held 3700 and 3800 barrels of porter.

As well as saving money, Whitbread found they had an additional advantage. 'The quality of the beer kept in them has proved to be so superior to that kept in Butts as they preserve its flavour and spirit, and it always falls transparently light on which account the victuallers very much commended it.'

News of the engineering wonders of Whitbread's Brewery spread. In 1786 Delafield wrote 'the Brewhouse as the possession of an individual is and will be when finished still more so, the wonder of everybody, by which means our pride is become very troublesome, being almost daily resorted to by Visitors'.

The most famous visitors, King George III and Queen Charlotte, came on May 24th 1787. Preparations were made by Whitbread's daughter, Harriot. Everyone had new clothes, passages were matted and the vaults were lighted with patent lamps. The result 'exhibited a very extraordinary and pleasing effect'. The Royal party were impressed by 'the magnitude and order of the place of which they had not any conception'. (Joseph Delafield) The King was wonderfully pleased with the great steam engine. The Queen and Princesses insisted on climbing into one of the large cisterns 'through a small hole with much difficulty and some disorder'. After the tour they went to the dwelling house for a 'magnificent cold collation' at which there was porter 'poured from a bottle that was very large, but as may be thought, with better stimulants than mere size to recommend it'. (London Chronicle). The visit was a great success. The Royal party 'by their agreeable and easy manners and conduct showed themselves to be highly entertained and afforded high honour and pleasure to all who attended them'. (Joseph Delafield)

The visit inspired one of the satirical poets of the day, Dr. John Wolcot, who wrote under the pseudonym of 'Peter Pindar', to produce his 'Instructions to a Celebrated Laureat alias Mr. Whitbread's Brewery' lampooning the brewer and his royal visitors.

In his private life Samuel Whitbread was less fortunate. His older brother Henry had died at the age of 24 in April 1742 while Samuel was still apprenticed. His mother, who had started him on his way, never lived to see her son's phenomenal success. She died aged 59 in 1746. Samuel was so involved in building up his business that he was 38 before he married Harriot Hayton of Ivinghoe in 1758. She bore him two daughters, and on the 18th January 1764 a son, Samuel. A few weeks later on 22nd April she died aged only 29. The motherless baby son and heir was brought up by his mother's mother and her unmarried daughter. In August 1769 Whitbread married again, this time Lady Mary, daughter of the Earl Cornwallis. A newspaper reported that year that 'Samuel Whitbread Esq and his newly married lady were presented to their Majesties at St. James's for the first time since their marriage and were most graciously received'. Mary's brother Charles was the general who surrendered at Yorktown in 1781 and later had a distinguished career in India. Her uncle Frederick was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1768 to 1783. In December 1770 she died in childbed of a daughter who survived her. Samuel never married again.

Meanwhile the Brewery 'became a mine of wealth, and an immense source of supply for purchases of land and houses, donations and bequests that have given distinguished celebrity to the name of Whitbread.' (Rees.op.cit.)

'The first property I bought in land was in Cardington in 1761 after I had been near 20 years in Trade,' he wrote. It cost him £4450. He borrowed all the money 'as I could not spare it to be taken out of Trade'. In 1788 he noted that 'it is a plain truth that this estate at Cardington has been 27 years collecting and improving and has cost me full Fifty thousand pounds ... I bought at Cardington because it was the place of my birth and inheritance of my Father's ... It is remarkable that I do not possess any Lands by inheritance but I have bought the whole that I have'.

In 1765 he bought Bedwell Park, a large estate near Essendon in Hertfordshire for £8000. 'I was very desirous of having it.' Bedwell was to be his home for 30 years, during which time he spent a further £12000 improving it. His daughter Harriot wrote of Bedwell: 'the age of the house, its pointed roof, old staircase and window, old yew and fir trees hanging over it as you drove in at the gate, through a double avenue of oak, on a summer evening from London, had most captivating charm'. The estate was sold in 1807. The house, much altered, still stands. He also owned a house in London, first in Westminster, later moving to Portman Square.

It may have been his private misfortunes that persuaded Whitbread, a devout man, to devote himself more and more to public life and charitable work. He was MP for Bedford Town from 1768 to 1790 when he gave way to his son. From 1791 until his death he stood for Steyning in Sussex. He became Director of the New River Company which supplied water from Hertfordshire to Islington by aqueduct. From 1794 he was a Trustee of the Lea Navigation which enabled barges to supply bulky stores such as roasted malt for porter to London.

Throughout his life he did all in his power to better the lot of the poor. He was influenced by the new humanitarian spirit showing itself in the founding of hospitals and charity schools. He gave substantial financial support to the schemes of John Howard, the great prison reformer. He was a steady and ardent advocate for the abolition of the then still extensive and profitable slave trade. Harriot his daughter said 'he really was the first man who mentioned the slave trade in the House of Commons'.

One particularly notable act, among many, was his decision in 1792 'to found a ward in the Middlesex Hospital for the reception of cancerous patients who were never to be discharged'. This arose after 'a beggar who was dumb from cancer in the tongue and had been discharged from a London hospital as 'incurable' arrived one day at Bedwell'. There is still a Whitbread ward at the Middlesex Hospital dealing with cancer patients.

Contemporary accounts describe Samuel Whitbread as a good man. His dedication to the development of his business is referred to on many occasions in letters written by members of his family. Perhaps influenced by his years with the Northamptonshire rector he was unashamedly devout, motivated by a rigid, even puritanical, code of moral conduct. Severity and melancholy were blended in his upbringing. His daughter described how in the early years 'he would retire for 2 hours to his closet reading the scriptures and devotional exercises'. He never 'suffered the Sabbath to be broken into either in his Counting-house, the Yard, by travelling or dissipation'. His well-thumbed copy of Dr. Johnson's 'Prayers and Meditations' published in 1785 survives. In 1791 he advised his children against 'waste of time especially in bed as incompatible with duty to God and man'.

Roger Fulford writes of Whitbread: 'He had no background of the classics: his mind had not been broadened by foreign travel, his characteristics were rather practical and patriarchal ... he was uneducated but yet possessed a mind endowed with great resources'.

The last 10 years of his life were a period of unhappy relationship with his son Samuel Whitbread II, and concern about the future of his business. The son who had travelled extensively around Europe was a well-educated man. In 1788 he married Elizabeth Grey, the daughter of an aristocratic Whig. His interest lay in politics. His father, who naturally had hoped his son would follow him, was obliged to realise that his heart was not in the business. He wrote to him 'You have no inducement to continue the Trade ... therefore ... don't think of continuing it but sell it.' In 1795 old Whitbread bought the estate of Southill in Bedfordshire because he thought it sensible to increase his son's ownership of land if he was not going to apply himself to 'the Trade'.

He had written to Samuel 'And so very clear I am that you should not have any thought of continuing the Trade, I intend to dispose of it myself'. A newspaper in 1791 reported: 'Mr. Whitbread who has for many years offered a present of ten thousand pounds to any person purchasing his brewery at a fair estimation, has at length found customers for it. A company of persons have bought it, at the price of four hundred and fifty thousand pounds.' But this seems to have fallen through. Other prospective purchasers included the Harvey family of Norwich. But all the negotiations in progress came to nothing when on 11th June 1796 Samuel Whitbread died at Bedwell Park.

The Gentleman's Magazine reporting his death described him as a man 'whose abilities, integrity, benevolence and public spirit will transmit his character with respect to the latest posterity'. He was 'worth a million at least'. His extensive establishments in the Brewery 'were long unrivalled and perhaps to a certain point remain so still'.

Samuel Whitbread was buried on 18th June in Cardington Church, close to where his two wives lay. Three years later his son erected a handsome monument by John Bacon and composed the inscription:-

'By the indefatigable exertions of honest Industry, he acquired an ample Fortune, which his large but discriminating Generosity rendered serviceable to the encouragement of Virtue, the diffusion of Knowledge and the relief of the Afflicted. He was humane without Weakness, liberal without Prodigality and religious without Bigotry or Ostentation. He endeavoured to live as all Men, when they are about to die, would wish they had done: and died in the earnest Hope and firm Belief of a Resurrection to Eternal-Life.'

II 1796-1889 - THE PERIOD OF PARTNERSHIPS

After his father's death, Whitbread continued the business of the Brewery single-handed, although with considerable help from the clerks Yallowley and Sangster, as his father had recommended.

'As you are a perfect stranger to the whole, you will on such occasion ask some advice, and nobody can give you so good as them that understand it thoroughly and these are your own clerks.'

Whitbread's will ran to 126 sheets. The Gentleman's Magazine (July 1796) commented: 'the many legacies left to old acquaintances, friends, rectors, curates and tenants and distant relations are almost incredible'.

In a codicil, Whitbread added 'in case my son shall be desirous to sell and dispose of the trade and property thereto belonging (which I recommend him to do)' he was to allow his clerks to purchase shares and lend them money to do so.

In 1799 he took his father's advice, and entered into partnership with Yallowley and Sangster (who in effect carried on the control at the Brewery that they had increasingly been exercising in the years before old Whitbread's death), and Timothy Brown, a partner in the banking firm of Brown, Cobb & Co., whose democratic views earned him the nickname 'Equality Brown'. The capital of the partnership was £300,000 of which Whitbread held four-ninths. Under the terms of the partnership he freed himself from the necessity of attending personally to the business, but retained for his own exclusive use 'two rooms over the counting house, the strong room now used as an evidence room and the vaults used for the storage of wine'. (It was then distributed as required to Southill or his house in Dover Street, London.) It was arranged that Brown and Sangster should share the dwelling-house in the Brewery and Yallowley should live in the dwelling house by the cooperage in Whitecross Street.

This transition to a series of partnerships that were to last until 1889 came partly in response to the personal wish of Whitbread. As has already been pointed out his real interests and career lay elsewhere (see note 1) and are outside the scope of this book. There is plenty of evidence that he was prepared, though reluctantly, to abandon Chiswell Street if that was essential to service in the Government. In 1806 writing to Grey that the Brewery was not a thing to be disposed of in a moment he adds 'I wish it was!'. He made the mistake of thinking that he could cling to the Brewery without really working there. He thought it would be 'a tolerably easy source of income without making too many demands on my time'.

Note 1: For full details of Whitbread's parliamentary career and his involvement with the rebuilding of the Drury Lane Theatre, see Samuel Whitbread 1764-1815: A Study in Opposition. Roger Fulford 1967.

In the event it was the financing of the Brewery rather than the running of it which was to prove his greatest anxiety. His income fluctuated sharply with the varying fortunes of Chiswell Street. Fulford calls Whitbread's decision to retain the Brewery 'a mistake of magnitude'.

The other pressure that led Whitbread to enter a partnership arose from the changing economic condition of the trade and the country as a whole. Private capital was falling away in the crisis years 1797-1801 and the growing amount of property owned by the Brewery with the increasing amount of money out on loan to publicans (£38,000 by 1799) meant a need for capital in such large quantities that it could now only come from wealthy partners.

In 1800 three additional partners joined the firm - Benjamin Hobhouse, Whitbread's cousin Jacob Whitbread and Joseph Godman. Each partner was allowed eight guineas a week for expenses and was provided with free coal and candles.

During these early years Whitbread was busy at Southill Park, perhaps his greatest legacy. He employed Henry Holland to rebuild the house, spending over £53,000 on it between 1796 and 1801. It has been splendidly preserved by the family ever since. Pevsner calls it 'so refined and reticent ... one of the most exquisite English understatements'.

Thomas Creevey in his diary describes a visit there in 1809: 'Just had a happy time at Southill with Whitbread and Lady Elizabeth, as they were delighted to see us. Whitbread, though rough in his manners and almost entirely destitute of all taste and talent for conversation, and though apparently almost tyrannical in his deportment to his inferiors, is a man of the strictest integrity, with the most generous kind and feeling heart'.

Meanwhile, the Chiswell Street Brewery was regarded as 'really one of London's most important sights'. A description of it appeared in The Union Magazine and Imperial Register for 1802: 'whether the great size or ingenuity of contrivance is considered, this brewery is one of the greatest curiosities that is to be seen anywhere.' There were 80 horses of a very large size. 'One was lately killed, being diseased, whose four shoes weighed 24lb.' The great Vat House with its 49 huge oak vats, some holding 3,500 barrels is described. These same vats impressed Johanna Schopenhauer in 1805. 'If Diogenes had had the good fortune to live in a barrel of such size, the philosopher could easily have entertained twelve people at a round table and still had room for a pretty little boudoir for himself ... The famous barrel at Heidelberg would lose its place of honour in this Company.'

A few months later the Grand Duchess Catherine of Russia and her suite visited the Brewery. The Globe reported: 'She was conducted through these extensive premises by Mr. Whitbread, Lady Elizabeth and the gentlemen belonging to the concern'. Whitbread had visited St. Petersburg in 1784 and was probably present at one of the court functions of Catherine the Great.

Despite its fame, however, all was not well at the Brewery. After its peak of 202,000 barrels in 1796 production fell back rapidly. In fact between 1797 and 1852 barrels brewed exceeded 200,000 in only four years, 1823-26. By 1801 production was down to 157,950 and it continued to decline. In 1804 it was 102,687 and in 1809 down to only 100,275. In that same year Barclay Perkins brewed 205,328 barrels. A fire in 1807 did not help matters. This threatened 'extensive destruction owing to the great scarcity of water. The engines however were supplied from a large vat containing nearly 4000 barrels of porter, in consequence of which the fire was soon extinguished'.

The root of the problem was management. Whitbread's energies were directed elsewhere. Yallowley had died in 1802 ('Poor Yallowley is a very great loss indeed' wrote Whitbread. He is buried in Bunhill Fields, near the Brewery), and Sangster was growing old.

In 1808 Richard Meux had proposed his son Henry to join the partnership, but nothing came of this. The choice of Timothy Brown as a partner was unfortunate and made matters much worse. Brown, who Fulford calls 'noisy, opinionated and quarrelsome, rich and radical' had the largest shareholding after Whitbread and he made his presence felt proportionately. He quarrelled with his partners from 1802 onwards. In 1806 he complained of the treatment he had received and sought retirement from the partnership. This he then withdrew. The matter culminated in 1810 when Brown finally retired taking £50,000, the balance of his capital, but not before he had raised an objection to the final balance in the Rest Book for that year. (A bust of Brown done by Chantrey in 1814 was presented to the Company by his descendants in 1977.)

At the end of each year a Rest (or Stocktaking) Book was written up, showing the state of the business and its profit or loss. The last page of each Rest Book was left blank for the partners to add their signatures as proof that they agreed with the figures set out in this abstract of trading.

The Rest Books survive for the years 1799-1918. An entry in 1799 is for 'the Brew House Clock, with one stone and one copper dial plate, one bell, cupola and all the woodwork used in fixing the clock £48'. This clock built by Aynsworth Thwaites in 1749 remained in continuous use until 1912 when it was reconstructed; in 1935 the original works were removed and an electric movement installed. It is still in the South Yard.

Another item of interest records the Company's muskets, for years mistakenly believed to have been purchased in 1780 to deal with the Gordon Riots. In fact the 64 muskets were acquired in 1808 at a time of growing unrest at home as well as the threat of Napoleon across the Channel. Most of them were disposed of in the 1890s, but a handful still survive today.

One of the debts listed in the 1814 Rest Book is for 'Oxford, Earl of, Wandering in Europe £22.10s'.

After the removal of Brown, there was an attempt to get Hobhouse's partner in his bank, Daniel Clutterbuck, to take over, but as Peter Mathias points out in *The Brewing Industry in England 1700-1830* 'replacing an unreliable managing partner with a reliable inactive partner' did not solve the problem. New blood was needed to save the business.

In the dispute with Brown, Whitbread had been assisted by John Martineau, one of the partners in the family business which had been brewing porter at their King's Arms Stairs Brewery in Lambeth since 1783. Martineau was well known and well respected in the trade. Negotiations about amalgamating the two businesses began in August 1811. Although Martineau's brewery was smaller than Whitbread's they had thirty eight tied public houses, their own maltings in Norwich, and most important, John Martineau had a son to succeed him as an active partner. Sangster was in favour of the idea '... the disproportion is great, but perhaps in the present instance, that is of small consequence when it is considered that it is young blood that they bring into the concern'.

The two businesses were amalgamated in 1812 and a new partnership bringing in John Martineau, his son Joseph Martineau and Michael Bland (who had been a partner at Lambeth for a year) was established.

For the common benefit of the two partners it was agreed that the business should be carried on at Chiswell Street. The Lambeth Brewery was closed and 1091 butts and £635 worth of horses were taken to Chiswell Street. Of the machinery and utensils at Lambeth which were valued at £10,907, about £5000 worth was transferred and the rest written off.

Attempts were made to sell the King's Arms Stairs Brewery but without success. 'All hope of disposing of the premises at Lambeth given up' (September 3 1812). The old premises fell vacant and were eventually sold in 1816, and occupied by Blake and Mann.

Back at Chiswell Street, the managing partners were Sangster (who retired in 1815), Bland, John and Joseph Martineau. The capital of the partnership was increased to £375,000, the increase representing the value of the additional business brought from Lambeth.

At this time almost all the trade was in the form of free accounts. The 1799 Rest Book records 392 licensed victuallers who were served in London and 200 in the country, including Ireland. There were also 29 leasehold houses. The addition of Martineau and Bland's trade increased the number of free accounts and added a further thirty eight leaseholds, making a total of ninety one leases in all.

The new arrangements were immediately successful. Efficient management was restored and the business began to recover. By 1815 brewing was up to 161,672 barrels, an improvement but still well behind the industry leaders Barclay & Perkins who produced 337,621 barrels that year.

In 1815 the burden of Whitbread's many anxieties was sufficient to drive him to take his own life. He was found by a servant, who concerned that he was not opening his door peeped in the window 'and beheld with terror the body of their lamented master weltering in his blood. The witness instantly burst in the window and entered the room, where he found the deceased with his throat cut from ear to ear, and the vital spark completely extinguished. Medical aid, though called in, was quite useless. Perhaps, no instance of self-destruction was ever more complete. A razor with which he effected the dreadful act, was found by his side on the floor.'

The fourth partnership dates from 1816 when following the death of Samuel Whitbread the previous year, William Wilshere and John Farquhar joined. Bland, John and Joseph Martineau were managing partners. For the first three years of this partnership no Whitbread was a partner. One clause of the agreement reads: 'The firm to be Whitbread & Co. until it shall become necessary or deemed proper or expedient by the said co-partners to relinquish the use of such firm and then and in that case under the firm of John Martineau'. The clause was never put into effect. In 1819 William Henry Whitbread and Samuel Charles Whitbread, both sons of Samuel Whitbread II, joined the partnership bringing the family back into active association with the enterprise. The business was styled Whitbread, Martineau & Co. until the mid 1840s.

One visitor to Chiswell Street at this time was Thomas Creevey, who had dinner there in 1823. "We sat down 22, I think. The entertainment of the day to me was going over the Brewery after dinner by gaslight. (Whitbread made its own gas from around this date for at least 20 years. A fire in 1842 in the building making the apparatus caused considerable damage.) A stable, brilliantly illuminated, containing 90 horses, worth 50 to 60 guineas apiece, upon an average, is a sight to be seen nowhere but in this tight little island. The beauty and amiability of the horses was quite affecting, such as were lying down we favoured with sitting upon, four or five of us upon a horse.' The horses Creevey refers to were among the 160 accommodated in the South Yard at Chiswell Street, some on the first floor with a sloping ramp leading up to their quarters.

Another visitor shown round the Brewery in 1818 was impressed by the well, around 120 feet deep; "the water is peculiarly pellucid and the supply inexhaustible". This well was supplemented by the sinking of a new well begun in March 1831, reaching water in January 1832 at 125 feet deep. It was deepened to 186 feet in 1840, and again to 200 feet in 1851. The New Brewery well was last used about 1918. The Old Brewery well continued in use until 1933. It was dug to a depth of 180 feet and then bored 147 feet making a total of 327 feet. Both wells were infilled, in 1935.

During this partnership there were some important additions to the Norwich malt houses brought in by Martineau. In 1821 and 1822 malthouses were purchased from Edmund Lacon in South Town (Yarmouth), two more were built in Yarmouth itself, and 'two freehold malt houses at Whittington near Stoke Ferry were erected by us'. These acquisitions enabled Whitbread's to draw their malt direct from Norfolk, a county with a reputation for the finest quality of malt.

Malt also came from Hertfordshire, brought in by wherry on the River Lee and the Regent's Canal. In 1844 Whitbread & Co. had a wharf on the Regent's Canal, according to Robson's Commercial Directory.

The fifth partnership was entered into in 1827 but apart from the death of Clutterbuck, Wilshere and Farquhar the partners were the same as in 1819. In 1828 Richard Martineau entered as junior partner and came with his wife to live in the Brewery dwelling house. Richard's daughter in 'Memories of Lenton' calls it 'a large commodious house, but very noisy and very smoky'. Their drawing room later became the Board Room. Harriet Martineau, the well known writer and social reformer, a relation of Richard Martineau, stayed at the Brewery for three weeks.

In 1830 the capital was reduced by 15% from £450,000 to £382,500 owing to the First Beerhouse Act and 'an annual loss of £5,000 due to bad and desperate debts'. Two years later the capital was increased: Bland at the same time retiring from the partnership.

John Cam Hobhouse, later Lord Broughton, the son of Benjamin Hobhouse, became a partner in 1831. He is known to posterity not only as a prominent politician, but as the intimate friend and executor of Lord Byron, the poet.

In 1834 old John Martineau, whose amalgamation with Whitbread in 1812 had helped to save the business, was found dead in a yeast trough in the vat room at the Brewery. A newspaper reported: 'It is supposed that he was suddenly overtaken by a fit, as the trough, though about five or six feet deep, contained yeast to the depth of only about two feet and a half; he would therefore have been enabled to call for assistance, if he had not been afflicted by apoplexy'. The jury later returned a verdict of 'Died by the visitation of God'.

For over ninety years the only beverages produced by the firm had been porter and stout. In 1834 a departure was made from this long tradition by the brewing of ale. However, it was some time before demand for ale made much impression on porter sales. In 1836-37 85% of Whitbread's total production was still porter. This fell to 64% by 1855.

Public taste in the 1850s began to favour bitter pale ale more extensively. The main reason for this was the increased competition from the newly arrived excellent Burton Ales in London brought by the improving railway network. Another reason may have been that with drinking glasses replacing pewter pots customers preferred a less cloudy beverage. Porter sales began to fall, but it was 1875 before ale production at Chiswell Street exceeded porter production.

Changes in drinking habits were to continue for the next half century. Lager was increasingly popular in the 1870s. Beer was becoming weaker. In 1879 the Country Brewers' Gazette noted that 'the demand for the strong heady beer of fifty years ago is dying out'. Even so, the same journal in 1882 said 'not many gentlemen would venture to drink more than a pint in the middle of the day if he had any headwork to do in the afternoon', so the beer was still strong by today's standards. Brewers also wanted to reduce the proportion of hops used, especially after the disastrous hop harvests in the early 1880s. A commentator in 1895 wrote 'The past 10 years have seen a remarkable change in the taste of the beer drinking public'.

Returning to the partnerships, a new agreement was entered into in 1840 with John Manning-Needham, who had joined the previous partners in 1837, and Charles Shaw-Lefevre, being the new partners. Two years later Philip Worsley joined them. Lefevre had married Emma, daughter of Samuel Whitbread II. He entered Parliament in 1830 and was elected Speaker of the House of Commons in 1839. This office he held until his retirement in 1857 'having served longer than any other Speaker except Onslow'. (Arthur Onslow (1691-1768) was Speaker for 33 years from 1728 to 1761.) On his retirement Lefevre was raised to the peerage as Viscount Eversley. It is to him that Whitbread's owes the privilege of providing horses for the historic Speaker's Coach on State occasions. It is not known what was the first occasion on which Brewery horses served in this way. The Speakers Coach is one of the oldest vehicles in existence. It was built in 1697 in the Netherlands. From 1978 the Coach was housed at the Brewery, and since 1986 in the new Speakers Coach House there opened by Bernard Weatherill, Speaker of the House of Commons.

Notable State occasions when Whitbread's horsed the Coach were when in 1871 Speaker Denison drove to St. Paul's Cathedral for the Thanksgiving Service for the recovery of the Prince of Wales from typhoid fever; in 1897 when Speaker Gully drove to Buckingham Palace to present the Diamond Jubilee Congratulatory Address to Queen Victoria; in 1902 and 1911 at the Coronations of King Edward VII and King George V. It was then not seen again on the streets of London until 1935 and the Silver Jubilee Procession of King George V. For this occasion the Brewery supplied the coachman and two footmen as well as a pair of horses, and this precedent was followed for the Coronations of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. The coach was last seen at Queen Elizabeth's Jubilee in 1977.

The 1840 partnership ran the full twenty years. In the succeeding partnership Richard Temple Godman and Frederick du Cane Godman, grandsons of the original Joseph Godman and sons of Joseph Godman junior, who had become a partner in 1813, together with William Whitbread were admitted into the partnership. Frederick du Cane Godman is remembered as joint author of *Biologia Centrali-Americana*, a monumental work of 63 volumes. A tablet to his memory was unveiled at the Natural History Museum Kensington in 1923. In 1866 John Martineau and Richard Worsley became partners. The next year, following the death of William Henry Whitbread, Samuel Whitbread III joined in his place. Although from 1768 until 1910, with brief intervals, one member of the Whitbread family sat in the House of Commons, only Samuel Whitbread III achieved office. He was Civil Lord of the Admiralty in Lord Palmerston's last Administration.

In 1869 the eighth and final partnership was entered into. Lord Broughton had died, but the other members were unchanged. In 1875 Edgar Lubbock joined and in 1885 Henry William (Harry) Whitbread became a partner. For the first time no mention is made of the necessity of a managing partner living at the Brewery.

Between 1830 and 1860 there had been little new building or construction at the Brewery. One addition was the Boulton & Watt 30 hp side lever, boat type engine ordered in 1841. It had a 15 feet diameter fly wheel. Barnard seeing it in 1889 noted that it 'still does its work famously'. New plant was not necessary when ale brewing began, for the same mash tuns, coppers and fermenting vessels could be used for either ale or porter.

In 1861 the freeholds of a number of leasehold sites in the Brewery were bought from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for £35,500.

However, between 1866, the year Whitbread's began to brew pale ale, and 1875, there was a considerable amount of rebuilding amounting to a value of nearly £50,000. A large part of this was for better and more ample storage space, as pale ale required longer to mature. It was also the result of the conscious decision of the partners who had met in July 1866 to consider 'whether we shall continue the policy of the last few years and extend our trade or whether we should return to the practice of many years previous and confine our transactions to much smaller limits. Another very serious objection to putting a sudden check on the increase of business is viz, that it produces an idea in the mind of every person in our employ that we do not want any more business and that there is no necessity for them to exert themselves. In fact it produces an indifference and a general slackness that is most detrimental to the interests of the business and that it might be very difficult to remedy thereafter.'

It was decided to expand, particularly 'as the trade is still about 60,000 barrels short of what might be done in the Brewery, and it seems to us a most unnecessary waste to leave a large plant idle when we have substantial men who are ready to do business with us'. In 1867 a new tun room was built and in 1873 the original mash tun stage was rebuilt. A third tun room was built in 1887, being followed by two more, required for increased production, in 1892. Reconstruction of the North side began in 1866, rebuilding the vaults, cooperage, shops and brewers' house. A tunnel was constructed under Chiswell Street. A new malt store was completed by 1882. Another boiler house was built in 1885 which made possible the reconstruction of the original boiler house and its replacement by a building which would house a new engine. Watt's engine, which in 1887 had been dismantled and sent to Australia, is now at the Power House Museum in Sydney. In 1985 it operated in steam again to celebrate its 200th birthday.

An excellent description of the brewery at this time appears in Barnard's 'Noted Breweries' published in 1889 when it covered 'upwards of four acres of ground' with nearly as much again underground in the vast cellars.

It was during this period of rebuilding and expansion that the production of bottled beer began, a landmark in the Company's development. Although the repeal of the tax on glass in 1834 made bottled beer a more economic proposition, it was not until 1868 that Whitbread started to sell its beers in bottles. Frederick Manning-Needham, who joined the partnership in 1863, was mainly responsible for starting the Bottling Stores 'in face of great opposition' along with William Whitbread. If Needham got too enthusiastic on the matter, Whitbread would say humorously 'It is all very well for you Manning - it isn't your name that will be on all these new bottles, it is mine'.

Small premises were taken for this purpose at 26 Worship Street, near Finsbury Square and Robert Baker was appointed sole agent, it having been decided that draught and bottled beer should be run as separate enterprises. Whitbread's was the only big London brewery which bottled its own beer; usually bottling was done by a bottling firm. Only Cooper and Extra Stout were bottled at Worship Street. All the beer there was lifted upstairs by a hand-lift and stacked in bins, some on boards, and some lying down similar to wine. The Extra Stout was always stacked lying down. No trace remains of the Worship Street warehouse. William Reeve who joined there in 1868 and said that he had helped to bottle the first bottle of beer sent out, recollected in 1927, when he retired after 58½ years' service, the narrow escape they had when the flywheel, owing to a flaw in the axle, came crashing down the shaft into the basement. No one was hurt.

Bottled beer proved popular and within twelve months Worship Street was too small. Vacant premises were acquired at 277 Gray's Inn Road. The necessary alterations were quickly carried out and the business moved there at Easter in 1870.

Near the site of the building a 1799 map shows 'Site of Big Dust Heap'. The building which became the depot was erected in the 1820s as a horse repository. In 1829 part of it was occupied by Robert Owen's 'Exchange and Cooperative Bazaar', in 1832 it became the headquarters of the "Irvingites", a religious sect which followed the teaching of the Rev. Edward Irving 1792-1834. Madame Tussaud's Waxworks Show moved there in 1833 from Blackheath, then it was a theatre and assembly rooms, the North London Carriage Depot and the North London Depository for Goods, in which form it continued until Whitbread acquired it in 1869.

Here beer from the Brewery arrived in butts (108 gallon casks) which were put on to massive stillions. Bottles were corked, initially by hand by 'boot and flogger'. The bottle was placed in a leather boot or cup between the operator's knees, the cork put in the bottle neck and driven home by means of a wooden 'flogger'. One man could do 288 dozens in a day. Then came hand-corking machines and in the 1880s a power machine driven by gas. The screw stopper appeared in 1885 but did not entirely replace corking which continued until around 1910. The crown cork appeared about 1908. In the 1880s the first steam vertical boiler was installed for the bottle washing machine. Previously the motive power of the wash machines was supplied by a foot treadle.

The bottles were labelled from the start of operations at Gray's Inn Road. Some difficulties were experienced with forged labels. Eventually 'Whitbread's celebrated London Stout having suffered severely from forgery of their labels have adopted the Hinds Head trade mark'. The registration was recorded in the Trade Marks Journal in December 1876. These early labels carried the instruction 'Observe that the cork in this bottle is branded Whitbread & Co'. By the 1880s another instruction had been added 'When empty please destroy the label'. This was to prevent the bottle being refilled with inferior ale and sold again as Whitbread's. The Aerated Water Journal and Bottlers' Record in 1885 described how: 'After corking, the bottles are labelled by means of a clever mechanical contrivance, with the firm's well-known orange-coloured label, bearing their trade mark of a hind's head, printed and lettered in chocolate'. The bottles also carried the Hind's Head and Company name raised in the glass, and were of the distinctive shoulder type.

Screw stoppers created a need for the security strap label which prevented the stopper from being removed until the customer opened the bottle. By the summer of 1886 trade was 9000 dozen a week, all sent out from Gray's Inn Road. The total number of the staff at that time was nine. In 1889 additional cellars were built in nearby Britannia Street. Here bottling into gallon and half-gallon jars, then in great request, took place. When demand for jars gradually died away, the cellars were used mainly for bottling Bass and Guinness. The Britannia Street cellars ceased to be used for bottling around 1900.

In September 1871 the great French scientist Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) visited Chiswell Street. He spent some time studying beer ferments to assist him in his researches undertaken to improve wine production; and to help him in his experiments the firm contrived a number of special small fermenting vessels. At his suggestion, a microscope was purchased for the study of yeast. This instrument is carefully preserved in the Company's Archival Museum. A copy of his book 'Etudes sur le Vin' inscribed and presented by Pasteur to the Company is held in the Archive Library.

In the years prior to 1889, Whitbread's employed very few clerical staff. An employee, who retired in 1918 after fifty three years' service, said that in 1865 when he started work 'there were only four of us in the Counting House'. Here, under the eyes of the managing partners, the clerks kept accounts. The system of a large number of separate ledgers controlled by the Private Ledger was replaced in 1868 by the double entry system of bookkeeping. From this date an accountant was employed to keep the books. In 1922 Walter Sharpe at the 30 Year Service Dinner recalled the day in 1870, when he first joined as a junior clerk: 'The staff in the office consisted of seven ... in the Partner's Room we see the head of the firm Mr. Samuel Charles Whitbread sitting at his table in the left hand corner, a gentleman of the old school, with his shaggy grey hair, white choker round his neck, black coat cut away at the hips, black trousers to his ankles, showing his white stockings and low shoes ... Mr. John Manning-Needham, in wintertime, standing in front of the fire warming his big silk bandana handkerchief'.

In 1871 there were eight clerks, in 1889, nine. When that year the firm became incorporated a Secretary and a Registrar were appointed. The total number of people employed at the Brewery was considerable. The Brewers' Journal August 1885 reports the Company's annual outing when '600 members of the staff enjoyed a day's pleasure at the Crystal Palace'. It is worth noting that as early as 1866 Whitbread started a scheme for free medical attendance and half wages to their men when sick, replacing an earlier contributory sickness and burial fund.

The last partnership ended in 1889 when the business became a limited company. The eight partnerships with a total of thirty partners had spanned ninety years.

Now times were changing and the Company had to change with them to survive. A new phase was beginning.

III WHITBREAD & CO. LTD. - PRIVATE LIMITED COMPANY 1889 - 1948

1889-1914

To understand the development of the Company in the 1890s it is necessary to realise just why the partners had decided to go for incorporation in 1889.

Until 1885 Whitbread's, like most London brewers, had shown little interest in owning public houses in London. In fact the Rest Books show a continually diminishing number of public houses owned. In the 1830s Whitbread's had maintained that a brewery supported by licensed houses was likely to brew inferior beer. Houses were only acquired when the landlords went bankrupt, and were then usually disposed of as quickly as possible.

Brewers secured the trade of a public house by making a loan to the publican. It was not really a tie as a loan could be paid off at 24 hours' notice by another brewer to whom the publican would then transfer his custom.

The scale of loans grew steadily. Whitbread's brewed slightly less beer in 1879 than in 1869 but loans to publicans grew from £450,000 to £600,000. Sales in 1889 were a third greater than in 1879, but loans increased by a half. An old Ledger shows that in 1869 20 beerhouse keepers borrowed £3,117, and 207 publicans borrowed £282,678. In 1888 on virtually the same properties, 24 beerhouse keepers borrowed £12,243 and 201 publicans borrowed £578,756.

Some of the increase in loans can be explained by the large number of licensed houses that were rebuilt and improved in the period 1860 to 1890 to meet changing customer expectations.

Matters were not helped by the trade depression in the 1880s when beer consumption fell partly due to the rising Temperance movement, and partly to a growing preference for tea and coffee. (Inland Revenue Report 1882 'The Influence of Religious Revivals, Salvation Army, Blue Ribbon Army and the Coffee Palace Movement'.) At the same time prices remained unaltered.

The price to publicans was reduced when the Beer Tax was cut in 1830 from 45/- a barrel to 33/- a barrel. Apart from an increase in tax during the Crimean War, prices remained unchanged until 1887.

Despite the growing burden of loans, there was as yet no move to purchase houses outright. Even in 1884 when the law of limited liability was changed, and many London breweries became incorporated, the capital they raised through debenture and share offers was used, not for purchasing public houses, but to make larger loans on mortgage to licensees.

Whitbread's had been reluctant to increase loans during the 1870s and 1880s, but had been compelled to do so to maintain their existing trade. They had recourse to temporary bank overdrafts, but until 1889 the extra capital was provided by the partners, already stretched by the major rebuilding programme that had been going on at the Brewery since 1866 and which would continue for some years.

The partners knew that such expansion of loans on top of existing commitments could not be financed either out of profits or by their own capital. They also feared that they might be at a disadvantage if they remained a partnership when so many other breweries were already incorporated. (Between 1886 and 1900 some 260 brewery concerns went public.) It was thus to finance their loans rather than to purchase public houses or other firms, although they soon were doing both of these, that the partners decided in 1889 to convert to a limited liability company.

They picked a good moment. Money was plentiful and brewery shares still enjoyed popularity following Guinness's successful incorporation in 1886. Samuel Allsopp & Sons Ltd.'s incorporation in 1887 was to prove a disaster, but this was not yet apparent.

It was in the same year, 1889, that the new system of public house purchases as an alternative to loans made its appearance and began to spread, but quite slowly at first. By 1892 only 48% of London public houses belonged to owners of two or more public houses. By 1893 the situation was beginning to cause anxiety to Whitbread's as well as to brewers as a whole, and by 1895 it had become clear that the acquisition of tied houses was essential to their survival. 'Outlet after outlet vanished from their books till it looked as if the old fashioned London brewers were going to be brewers without a means of selling their beer. So they had to join in the race for tied houses and get what houses they could at what prices they could.'

Since 1887 the Company had been retaining houses that fell into their hands as mortgagees in possession. By 1889 they had 60 houses, of which 10 were freehold, 21 leasehold and 29 in which the partners were mortgagees in possession.

To finance the further investment in public houses now needed, the directors increased capital in 1895, 1897, 1899, 1901 and 1904. The amount of capital invested in the retail trade by Whitbread's per barrel sold doubled between 1885 and 1905.

One way of increasing the number of public houses owned was by the acquisition of suburban breweries. Indeed, as Edgar Lubbock pointed out in 1896 buying a brewery complete with public houses was more economical than purchasing houses singly. There were other benefits. The prevalence of tied houses in the suburbs meant that hitherto London beers had been excluded from them. Their acquisition resulted in an extension of trade. Also these suburban houses were in areas destined to see considerable population increases in the years ahead.

Between 1891 and 1902 Whitbread & Co. Ltd. acquired five brewery businesses with total annual sales of 110,000 barrels.

The first of these was H & V Nicholls' Anchor Brewery. This was acquired in 1891, and that year the premises became Lewisham Depot. The Bell Brewery in Tottenham was purchased from Gripper Brothers and Co in 1896. After much work and many alterations the premises were opened as Tottenham Bottling Stores in 1897. In 1898 the Abridge Brewery in Essex was acquired from Hurdle and Wileman. In 1900 the premises were converted into a Bottled Beer Store (at a cost of £1301-1-7) which operated until its closure in 1922. Matthews and Canning's Anchor Brewery in Chelsea was bought in 1899. The Anchor Brewery continued in operation brewing ale and making deliveries from there. Stout was brewed at Chiswell Street and sent to Chelsea for despatch. This arrangement continued until 1907, when the brewery was closed, demolished and a new bottling store, Chelsea Depot, erected on the site and opened in 1909. The final acquisition came in 1901 with the purchase of the Bromley Steam Brewery from J.A.S. Jones's executors. The two freehold houses, six leasehold houses, the Brewery, Tap House and stables cost £10,900.

As a result of these acquisitions the value of the Company's leasehold and freehold licensed property grew from £26,000 in 1887 to nearly £2 million in 1907.

Annual barrellage from Chiswell Street rose from 381,026 in 1890 to 671,579 in 1900 and 778,152 in 1905. Output had exceeded 300,000 barrels per annum for the first time in 1884 with 330,769.

Building development at Chiswell Street continued. In 1891 the Staircase block of offices was erected, and the room over the main entrance arch constructed. In 1892 the Haberdasher Square site (purchased in 1870) was covered with the Milton Street stables; and the bridge built over the South Yard.

Influenced by a seriously destructive fire at Courage's Brewery in London in 1891, the Company formed its own Fire Brigade in 1892 to help safeguard the by now extensive premises. The Brewery was at much risk from fires in the numerous warehouses that pressed in on all sides. Serious fires at the Brewery and adjoining buildings were dealt with in 1893, 1897, 1901, 1905, 1911 and 1913.

However, the scramble for tied houses did not stop loans to publicans from continuing to rise. Whitbread's loans exceeded £1 million in 1890-91 and £2 million in 1897-98. They did not fall below £2 million again until the second half of 1906.

The expansion of the business meant more staff were needed. Counting House staff increased to twelve in 1889 after incorporation. The sharp increase in licensed properties brought in with the Tottenham Brewery in 1896 took this to seventeen and by stages it climbed to twenty four in 1903. In the same period the number of surveyors rose from one to five. One advantage of these increases was that it made it easier to form a cricket team. The Hind's Head Cricket Club was established in 1893. It became the Whitbread Social and Sports Club in 1935.

Meanwhile by 1904 investment in public houses was beginning to ease off through saturation and lack of capital. Sales having risen during the 1890s were beginning to fall again. Austen Chamberlain said the fall in beer consumption was caused by the changing habits of the people, their growing interest in outdoor games, the music halls and railway excursions. The 1904 Licensing Act began a slump in public house prices. Increased amounts were set aside for depreciation which meant dividends were reduced. The coming to power of the Liberal Party in 1905 with a programme of Temperance reform made matters worse. These were indeed difficult times. In 'Seventy Rolling Years' Sir Sydney Nevile recalling Cecil Lubbock in 1919 said 'he had experienced difficulties in those lean years around 1900 and these had made him somewhat pessimistic and unduly cautious'.

By 1907 the Board 'were doing their utmost to effect economies in all directions'.

But it was not enough. In 1908 'the largest ordinary shareholders of the Company, who were all Partners in the old Firm, being impressed by the bad state of the brewing trade, made a voluntary sacrifice'. The capital of the Company was reduced by £300,000, and the Company's licensed properties were written down by that amount. The Directors' Minute Book speaks of 'a period of commercial depression in London, exodus from the Centre, wave of temperance and feeling of insecurity pervading the Licensed Trade'.

Difficulties persisted. Insolvent loans rose from 28% of the money lent in 1903 to 40% in 1912, while the rate of interest actually received in the same period fell from 3.6% to 2.7%. Bad debts which averaged £23,000 p.a. from 1901 to 1907 were averaging £80,000 from 1908 to 1910.

Further losses in the values of licensed properties caused by the duties imposed by the Finance Act of 1910 led to another £300,000 being written off in 1913.

All brewing companies were affected; not all survived. There had been 11,364 breweries in 1890. By 1914 only 3,746 remained.

However, one aspect of the Company's business enjoyed considerable success in this otherwise difficult period, and that was bottled beer.

Since 1870 all bottled beer had been produced at Gray's Inn Road, and distributed from there using road and rail transport. Leeds customers, for example, received their beer in heavy closed three dozen cases sent up on the railways. Trade increased steadily, although prohibitive charges on the railways tended to seriously check the country trade (until 1892 when new rates were agreed). Even with the bottling cellars opened in 1889 in Britannia Street, it was becoming essential to ease the pressure on Gray's Inn Road.

In 1891 the first branch depot was opened in Lewisham at the Nicholls' Anchor Brewery premises.

The opening of this Depot marked the beginning of an immense expansion into 'the greatest bottled beer business in the world' with a network of stores and bottling depots established across the country, in Belgium and in France. In the 23 years from 1891 to 1914 depots were opened in no fewer than 48 places. In several cases the original premises had to be enlarged, or moved to entirely new purpose-built premises. The bulk beer for bottling was sent out from London, usually by rail (although Norwich was supplied by steamer to Great Yarmouth and then by lighter or wherry to the depot) to meet the growing demand.

The Caterer wrote in 1894: 'As an indication of the enormous output of bottled beers by this firm, we may mention that the last order for paper capsules, which protect all bottles sent forth from being tampered with, was for no less a number than 40,000,000. This protective capsule is very necessary, for the reputation of this bottler is one much envied.'

In 1900 a site was bought in Britannia Street where offices were built for administrative staff, who transferred there from Gray's Inn Road. The building included what were known as the Britannia Street Stables. Here horses for nearby Weston Street Depot were kept and young horses were trained by the Head Horsekeeper before being sent to other depots.

Transport for local deliveries from Chiswell Street was at first exclusively horse-drawn. The numbers of horses used increased steadily from the 1880s. In 1886 26% of wage earning employees were draymen. New stables were built in Garrett Street in 1897 with horses accommodated on three floors. 1912 was the peak year for horse transport at Whitbread's, with over 400 horses in full employment at the Brewery and the various bottling stores.

Light vans and trotters were introduced for the bottled beer trade in 1904 replacing heavy carthorses. There were thirteen at the start, increased to fifty. Some of them could trot smartly up to 14 miles an hour.

In 1903 Chiswell Street acquired a steam wagon to do the journey between the Brewery and Abridge Depot. It carried 4 tons of beer at 5 miles an hour. The wagon however was not always reliable and its services were dispensed with after it 'had to be retrieved from the basement of a house in Southgate Road'.

The Bottling Stores were ahead of the Brewery when it came to acquiring motor transport, owing to the greater distances that had to be covered. The first petrol lorry was purchased in 1909 for Kingston Depot. It did 6½ miles to the gallon. Newport, Isle of Wight was the first provincial depot to get one, in 1914.

Some Depots contracted out their town deliveries with country orders going by rail. This was the case at, for example, Brighton, which did not introduce its own motor transport until 1920.

By 1914 there were 45 bottling stores in operation (two had been closed and one was requisitioned) located as follows: in London nine (not including Gray's Inn Road), twenty six in England, two in Wales, three in Scotland, four in Belgium and one in France.

The two men most responsible for this rapid and successful growth were Robert Baker and Walter Sharpe. Mention should also be made of Arthur Dixon, the Company's Architect and Surveyor who built 29 of the depots. By the outbreak of war in 1914 bottled beer sales accounted for 58% of Whitbread's total beer sales. Through the network of depots Whitbread's name and products were known nationally. Truly it could be said that 'there was scarcely a town or village in the British Isles where our bottled beers are not easily obtainable'.

This is the full record of one of the most remarkable periods of progress in the Company's history:

1891 Lewisham opened.
1892 Birmingham opened.
Leeds opened.
Barnsley opened (store only)
1893 Barnsley. Bottling started.
Liverpool opened.
Sheffield opened (store only).
1894 Weston Street (renamed Weston Rise in 1932) opened.
Cardiff opened.
1895 Manchester opened (store only).
Birmingham, additional premises acquired.
1896 Newcastle opened.
Manchester extended. Bottling started.
1897 Tottenham opened.
Poole opened.
Hull opened (store only).
1898 Pancras Road opened (store only).
Brighton opened (store only).
Bradford opened (by this date, possibly earlier) (store only).
Nottingham opened.
Manchester extended again.
1899 Leicester opened (store only).
1900 Abridge opened (store only).
Kingston opened.
Birmingham moved to new premises.
Hull moved to new premises. Bottling started.
1901 Leicester moved to new premises. Bottling started.
Newport IOW opened.
Sheffield, moved to new premises.
1902 Barnsley, bottling closed. Retained as store.
Brighton moved to new premises (actually in Hove).
Bottling started.
Sheffield, bottling started.
1903 Hull moved to new premises.
Newport IOW extended.
Poole extended.
1904 Pancras Road. Bottling started.
Brussels opened.
1905 Willesden opened.
Newport (Mon) opened.
Glasgow opened (store only).
Bradford, bottling started around this date.
1906 Ilford opened. By 1907 generally known as Manor Park.
Newport IOW extended again.
Southend opened.
Antwerp opened.
Brighton extension completed.

- 1907 Leicester, original premises (1899) closed.
 Northampton opened.
 Norwich opened.
 Preston opened.
 Ramsgate opened.
 Glasgow, moved to new premises. Bottling started.
- 1908 Croydon opened. By 1909 generally known as Thornton
 Heath.
 Exeter opened.
 Middlesbrough opened.
 Rusholme opened.
 Brussels moved to new premises.
 Barnsley store closed around this date.
- 1909 Pancras Road closed as depot: premises retained.
 Chelsea opened.
 Nottingham moved to new premises.
- 1910 Birkenhead opened.
 Dundee opened.
 Liege opened.
- 1911 Preston extended.
- 1912 Leicester. Land bought for new depot (but not opened
 until 1920).
 Portsmouth opened.
 Leith opened.
 Paris opened.
 Bristol opened.
- 1913 Longton opened.
 Ghent opened.
- 1914 Chiswick completed and requisitioned (eventually opened
 1921).
 Plymouth opened.
 Antwerp moved to new premises.

One other venture of these Edwardian days deserves a mention. In 1904 Whitbread's set up the Central Catering Company to supply food. This was prepared at premises in Theobalds Road and delivered by vans to Whitbread's houses. By 1905 about 400 meals were being served daily. But there were difficulties. Publicans had not managed to make staff savings, many preferred to do their own cooking, and punctuality of delivery was hard to achieve.

Some houses ordered 'cheap half-penny articles' that were uneconomic to deliver. Others, particularly in the East End, bought most of their food very cheaply from the costermongers, who were usually good customers to the publican. Income fell well short of what was needed to run without loss, and at the end of 1906 this now forgotten little business was wound up, and the Theobalds Road property disposed of the following year.

1914-1948

Whitbread's, along with the rest of the brewing industry, was significantly affected by the substantial economic and social changes brought about by the First World War. With the outbreak of war all the country depots were rationed, and the drastic restrictions imposed put an end to the steady growth of trade previously everywhere in progress. Pint bottles of ale were out of stock by the end of 1914. The newly completed Chiswick depot was requisitioned almost immediately by the Government and was used for storing furniture of all kinds removed from West End hotels. It was not returned until 1921. Longton and Rusholme Depots were closed for part of the war period. As many as 118 of the Company's best horses were commandeered. None ever returned. One pair of greys from Whitbread's was regularly seen on the Menin Road near Ypres in 1916. Whitbread's owned a number of licensed houses in Bournemouth and Eastbourne which were supplied with beer via the South Western Railway. When however the War Office forbade beer from being carried on the railway, in order to have more room for ammunition and troops, the houses had to be sold. Demands for men at the front steadily reduced the workforce. In all 1,071 staff and employees enlisted, of whom 95 were killed or died of wounds.

It was regarded as in the national interest to reduce consumption and increase price. The price of beer rose sharply as a result of higher raw material prices and increases in duty which went from 7/9 in 1914 to 25/- in 1918. Production at Chiswell Street fell from 900,636 barrels in 1914 to 413,112 barrels in 1918. The impact of these reductions was eased by reducing the original gravity.

Lloyd George in November 1914 said that 'the gravity of the beer has been lightened and the public has become accustomed gradually to drinking lighter and less alcoholic and much more salubrious beverages'.

By 1917 the authorities were urging the Trade to brew the largest possible amount of beer from the available material so the beer grew weaker and weaker. The effect of all this meant that a pint of beer which in 1914 with an alcoholic content of 5% cost 2d, by 1920 with the alcoholic content reduced to 3% cost 6d. The Central Control Board set up during the War limited the hours available for drinking. It was abolished in 1921, but its restrictions on hours, although considerably modified, remained. It was 1988 before afternoon drinking was permitted again. The threat to the Nation's food supply became so great as the U-Boat blockade tightened, that it appeared that brewing might have to stop altogether. The possibility was raised of the State's purchase of the whole brewing and licensed trade; but conditions improved and the proposal was shelved.

The Brewery faced other dangers. In 1916 the Board had debated whether to insure against loss of profits which might have resulted from damage to the Brewery by enemy aircraft. Many of the cellars were used as air raid shelters for both staff and people living in neighbouring streets. In an air raid on July 7 1917 a bomb, which fortunately did not explode, fell in the centre of the North Yard gate. It was preserved for many years as a memento. But overall the Brewery buildings escaped damage during the War. Almost the only mark, on a wall in Whitecross Street, was caused by an anti-aircraft shell, a dud fired from Barnes Common. The stables in Garrett Street were less fortunate; they were badly damaged by a direct hit.

In 1916 at the Battle of Jutland 16 year old Boy Seaman Jack Cornwell, who for a short time before joining the Navy was a Whitbread's van boy at Manor Park Depot, won fame when mortally wounded, he refused to leave his post beside a six-inch gun aboard the cruiser Chester, until the ship went out of action. Just before he died, he said 'we carried on, all right'. Cornwell was awarded the VC, believed to be the only one awarded to a member of the Company.

The Company appeared briefly in the limelight in January 1915 when 150 cellarmen at Chiswell Street went on strike about overtime pay. The Daily Graphic describing Whitbread's as 'having a very high reputation as employers' forecast that this 'storm in a beer jug' as they dubbed it, would soon be over, and they were correct. Each of the sixty staff members who 'adorned with aprons and clogs and rolling beer barrels as if they were tennis balls' had tackled the cellarmens' work during the dispute, received a letter of thanks from the Chairman, Samuel Whitbread III.

That same year Samuel Whitbread died. He had been a partner of 'the old Firm' since 1867, and Chairman of the limited company since incorporation. He was succeeded by his eldest son Samuel Howard Whitbread whose tenure as Chairman was to last until his death in the Second World War, in 1944.

In the years from incorporation to the Second World War nearly all the directors of the Company were members of the same families who had run it during the period of partnerships in the 19th Century.

The only instance of a man being brought in from outside was Sydney (later Sir Sydney) Nevile. He joined in 1919 - 'of all the Breweries in the country Whitbread's although not the largest enjoyed the greatest prestige' he wrote - and for the next 25 years he was to be the dominant figure in the Company's fortunes. He told the full story of his long and remarkable life in the Trade in his autobiography 'Seventy Rolling Years' published in 1958.

Almost his first job was to be involved with Cecil Lubbock in the purchase of the Hop Farm at Paddock Wood in 1919. The previous owner, White, who had recently died, had supplied hops to Whitbread's for many years. When the garden was put up for sale it was feared that first claim on the hops might pass into other hands, and it was decided to buy the property.

The beautifully preserved oasthouses look as picturesque today as when Siegfried Sassoon described them in *Memoirs of a Foxhunting Man*: 'It was unusual to find more than two hop kilns on a farm, but there was one which had twenty and its company of white cows was clearly visible from our house on the hill; I would count them over and over again and Dixon would agree it was a wonderful sight. I felt that almost anything might happen in a world which could show me twenty hop kilns neatly arranged in a field'. Every year up to five thousand men, women and children, coming mainly from South and East London, worked on the farm during the picking season harvesting the crop, a practice that declined steadily in the 1950s and 1960s as mechanisation gradually took over.

A few months earlier a farming and horse breeding business had been acquired at Theydon Hall Farm in Theydon Bois, Essex.

Nevile had long campaigned for better public houses, believing that a general improvement in their tone and conduct would promote sobriety and diminish the hostility of many social reformers. After the War there was still opposition to better pubs from prohibitionists, social reformers and justices who feared that they would popularise the trade. Nevile argued that improvement could be good business. An improved house would appeal to a wider section of the community. Any loss of alcohol sales would be offset by increased sales of soft drinks and refreshments.

In 1920 Whitbread's established a separate company, the Improved Public House Company Ltd., to operate the new large houses it was beginning to build, mainly in the London suburbs. These included the Welcome Inn Eltham, the Robin Hood Becontree, and the White Hart Tottenham. A new era in public house design had been ushered in.

That same year saw the acquisition of shares in F.S. Stowell Ltd. of Ealing which gave the Company a controlling interest in six off-licences. The objective was to keep in closer touch with the retail off-licence trade. The purchase of Whitbread's products by Stowells rose from £3,000 in 1919 to £11,000 by 1921.

Another area that Sydney Nevile turned his attention to was that of transport, which at Chiswell Street was still all horse-drawn.

The space taken up by stabling in the South Yard was urgently in demand for other purposes. Nevile, concerned that the draymen might have difficulties in adjusting to the greater speeds of petrol lorries, recommended the purchase of a fleet of electric vehicles. The first one set out in June 1920. It was 1923 before the first petrol lorry was introduced at Chiswell Street, but the restrictions on horse traffic, particularly in the Oxford Street area meant the replacement of the horse was inevitable. There were exceptions. Chelsea Depot still had five pair horse vans and two singles in 1925, and at Weston Street, where the confined streets made 'horse transport indispensable' the trotters continued in use until May 1938. In 1925 there were several petrol lorries as well as 15 electric vehicles. Horse strength was down to 141 and continued to fall in ensuing years. By 1939 there were only 53 horses in the stables.

The conversion to mechanical transport at the provincial Bottling Stores who as already mentioned were well ahead of Chiswell Street was steady and rapid. Steam wagons were also used at a number of Depots. By 1939 there were 168 lorries in the Bottling Stores fleet covering over 2½ million miles a year.

In 1925 the colours of the drays and lorries were changed from green and white to brown and gold. The House of Whitbread magazine in 1927 noted 'our standard colours and letters are gradually asserting themselves and becoming familiar in the new sign boards'.

Yet another of Nevile's innovations was the launch of the House of Whitbread Magazine. His initial tour of the stores and depots convinced him of the value of a house magazine, a practice then very much in its infancy, as a means of keeping staff informed about the Company they worked in. The first issue appeared in December 1920. The magazine (renamed The Whitbread Magazine in January 1964) continued until 1965 and became widely regarded as one of the best examples of its kind.

The end of the War brought some relief to Whitbread's, but although beer consumption per head improved, pre-war levels were never again achieved. Annual barrellage at Chiswell Street between 1920 and 1940 never exceeded 600,000 barrels. The decrease in consumption and the years of the Depression including the General Strike of 1926 increased the pressures towards rationalisation in the industry.

The contraction which had been in progress since 1890 continued. The 2,914 brewing concerns in 1920 had fallen to 1,418 by 1930 and were down to only 840 in 1940. By merger and acquisition Whitbread's, like other companies, sought to expand their estate and use more fully their under utilised production facilities.

Negotiations early in 1920 to acquire another brewery had fallen through. Then in June the 80 tied houses of the Notting Hill Brewery were purchased for £252,500.

The acquisition of the Forest Hill Brewery in South London in 1923 led to an important development. Until this date all Whitbread's beer had been naturally matured in glass. The Forest Hill Brewery was a pioneer in carbonating techniques whereby beer was matured and filtered before bottling. Whitbread's used the Forest Hill Brewery name to market a brightly filtered beer. It was decided to do this as 'the process was in the nature of an experiment, and in view of the fact that the Company's reputation for bottled beer had been built up on the 'naturally matured' article, it was advisable for the present to keep the two articles quite distinct'. Forest Ale and Stout continued to be bottled at Forest Hill and sold under the Forest Hill Brewery Co. Ltd. name until the end of 1926.

It soon became apparent that the public, in London at least, preferred the bright beers.

Gray's Inn Road in 1926 was considered to be a good place to begin bottling the new 'Clear Beer'. The premises had almost fallen out of use as the process of decentralisation driven by the increase in trade had continued. In fact in 1919 Gray's Inn Road was offered for sale, but property in the district not being in great demand was withdrawn. It was retained as a bottling store and general factory for a while, beer finally ceasing to be sold from there at the end of June 1923. The depot continued in use for experimental purposes, especially considering different methods of bottling. It was found that the structure was not capable of carrying the heavy weight of modern machinery and in 1927 the premises were entirely reconstructed on a steel framework standing independently inside the old walls. Production of the new beers was transferred to the new factory, and the Forest Hill Brewery premises disposed of.

Production of naturally matured beer was gradually discontinued as demand fell.

By 1928 Gray's Inn Road was supplying clear beer to Brighton, Portsmouth, Ramsgate and Southend. A new factory was opened in Chiswick, and later one at Glasgow. Gradually the new beers (advertised as 'bright to the last drop') were extended around the country, until by the end of 1931 the three Clear Beer depots were supplying all the depots; England and Wales from London, Scotland from Glasgow.

By 1933 Gray's Inn Road, which a few years before had looked as if it was going completely out of use had been revived and had become the busiest bottling centre in the organisation. The House of Whitbread magazine called this transformation one of the romantic chapters in the history of the Company. 'Just as in 1869 we put our beer in bottle under the best conditions of those days and thereby built up what was then the greatest bottled beer business in the world, so now, when the public taste has changed, we have in the same premises at Gray's Inn Road an installation of the most modern machinery, a successful application of scientific management and the devoted industry of a large staff, which together continue to produce an article that has deservedly earned the reputation not only in England, but throughout the world, of being the best in the market'.

That same year the premises were visited by H.R.H Prince George the Duke of Kent.

In 1928 the new beer Double Brown launched in March 1927 had pushed its trade, with help of a £5,000 special advertising campaign, from 60 barrels per week to 230. Double Brown was the only chilled and filtered beer on general sale in London comparable in strength and quality with Bass Worthington and Guinness.

The inter war period saw continuing changes to the depot network as a result of technical progress and growing trade.

Chiswick Depot, returned after Government requisitioning, was opened in 1921, new premises were built for Sheffield Depot in 1924, and the Depots at Cardiff and Newport were replaced by a new building in Penarth Road, Cardiff, in 1932. In 1936 a new Depot opened in Belfast. Several depots were closed. Abridge 1922, Willesden 1923 (replaced by Chiswick), Longton 1926, Chelsea and Thornton Heath 1927, and Northampton in 1930. Newcastle's Orchard Street Depot closed in the early 1930s, and the area was then serviced by Middlesbrough until a new depot was opened at Stockbridge in 1940. Ramsgate Depot was taken over in 1929 by Mackeson & Co who continued to operate it until the Second World War.

In Belgium the depots at Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent gradually got going again at the end of the War. A brand new 'depot de luxe' was opened at Liege in 1918. Paris Depot was discontinued after the War on account of the prohibitive import duties then imposed on English beers.

Two years later in 1935 to mark the Silver Jubilee of George V a plaque designed by Albert Richardson was erected on the wall of the Dwelling House in Chiswell Street commemorating the visit of King George III and Queen Charlotte in 1787.

The granting of the Royal Appointment of Whitbread's beers to the Prince of Wales (held from 1922 to 1936) led to discussion as to whether his feathers should appear on Company advertisements. When Temple Godman died in 1936 it was recalled that 'he took an almost old-fashioned pride in the traditions of Whitbread & Co. and took exception in 1922 to the placing of the Prince of Wales' feathers on the Company's vans as a concession to the modern craze for propaganda and display'.

Following the purchase of the Forest Hill Brewery, the Company continued to look for further acquisitions. Negotiations took place with the Rock Brewery in Brighton during 1926 and 1927 but they fell through, and the Rock was acquired by Brickwoods; and talks with Smithers & Sons of Brighton also came to nothing: they were taken over by Tamplins in 1929.

Despite all these developments, the period was not without its problems. In 1923 Sydney Nevile had reported to the Board on 'the recent trouble with the draught and bottled beers'. This was despite the opening that year of the first purpose built laboratory at Chiswell Street. Dr. (later Prof.) Moritz was called in to try and track down the source of infection. Moritz worked at the Brewery during 1924 and produced a report in April 1925.

Improvements had been made to the plant and the indications seemed encouraging, 'although of course it would be unsafe to attempt to prophesy as to the results of these efforts until we had passed through the Summer'. By October 1927 it was reported that 'the difficulties with the beer have been largely surmounted and steady progress is being made'.

However, trouble with the beer was only one aspect of a worsening trade situation. Between 1920 and 1926 Whitbread's draught trade decreased by 34%; if the trade bought during that time was added in, by 40%: Bottled beer trade had decreased by 20%. Taking the country as a whole trade in that period was down 16.5%: Whitbread's trade had fallen by 232,376 barrels, a decrease of 34%. 'The seriousness of these figures will convince everyone that the time has come for drastic action. The only remedy which will have a far reaching effect is an amalgamation'.

In October 1927 Neville set down the reasons for this great decrease in trade. Apart from the beer troubles, these were:-

'The Company's houses in London are not situated in such a good trading position as those of other Companies who plunged more boldly during the boom of the nineties.

There has been a great migration of people from the districts where Whitbread's houses are situated to the outlying districts of London in which other brewers' houses and not Whitbread's are situated.

A large proportion of our free bottled beer trade has disappeared. Whereas in old days Whitbread's was one of the few leading brewers who supplied bottled beer, practically all firms are now putting their own brands on the market, and as they supply their own bottled beers they gradually shut Whitbread's out of their houses and are further continually buying up the free houses that Whitbread's previously supplied.

The public is steadily diminishing its demand for draught beer and taking bottled beer in its place, which is one reason why sales of draught beer have declined to a greater extent than those of bottled beer.'

Neville was not confident that the new filtered beers could be successfully introduced into country districts remote from London. He did not believe either that 'a prolonged period of even exceptionally good beer' would regain the draught beer output.

His conclusion was 'that if the prosperity of Whitbread's is to be maintained and developed, it will be necessary to acquire additional channels for distribution. Whitbread's have acquired less new trade than any of the large London breweries, whereas in view of the large proportion of free trade which is steadily and surely being closed to us, and the migration of people from our houses, our need to acquire new trade has been greater than any'.

On the same day he wrote this, the Board approved the purchase of Frederick Leney & Sons of Wateringbury in Kent. The acquisition of this concern brought Whitbread's an important increase of tied houses in the rural districts of mid-Kent, the Chatham area and the coastal area around Hastings.

The idea of amalgamation with another brewery was taken up. In December 1927 negotiations were in hand with two concerns who between them had between 600 and 700 outlets. By March 1928 conversations had taken place with the Cannon Brewery Co. based in St John Street, London EC1 'with a view to arriving at some form of cooperation or working arrangement which might in the future lead to closer association or fusion between the two Companies'.

Negotiations continued during the year, during which however, trade began to improve. In October the results of the previous quarter's trading was described as 'satisfactory', and the discussions with the Cannon Brewery were reported to be 'definitely at an end'. Whitbread's had survived as an independent company. (The Cannon Brewery was taken over by Taylor Walker & Co. Ltd. in 1930.)

The search for new outlets continued. In 1928 plans to acquire Isherwood, Foster & Stacey Ltd. of Maidstone fell through. The following year they were acquired by Fremlins.

In 1929 Jude Hanbury, originally of Watlington (they had moved their brewing to Canterbury in 1924 after taking over Ash & Co.'s Dane John Brewery) was acquired, as was the Mackeson & Co. Brewery at Hythe which had been sold to H. & G. Simonds of Reading in 1920. Mackeson's in 1907 had brewed a stout with lactose, or milk sugar, which they sold as Mackesons Milk Stout. The output of this product in 1929 was small and local, and there was some doubt as to whether to continue it. Sydney Nevile, however, believed there could be a market. The product was improved and tried out in Sheffield. It was such a success that it was decided to produce on a larger scale. In 1935 it was decided to push Jude's Pale Ale in place of Mackeson's, leaving the Mackeson name to be associated with Stout only. With the help of an advertising campaign, and backed by the efforts of Sydney Nevile and later by Colonel W.H. Whitbread, Mackeson became a national product. The word 'milk' was dropped in 1942, although the milk churn remained on the label until 1968 when it was replaced with the new Corporate Symbol, a hind's head on a tankard.

William Henry Whitbread, son of Harry Whitbread, joined the Company in 1923. He was appointed a managing director in 1927. He worked closely with Sydney Nevile during the inter war years and always acknowledged his debt to him. In 1931 Jack Martineau was appointed a managing director, continuing the long tradition of his family's involvement with the business.

The 1930s began badly when in the Economy Budget in 1931 the tax on beer was increased by Chancellor Snowden by 31/- a standard barrel. The next eighteen months saw the consequences of this; the public could not afford to buy the same quality beer; consumption itself decreased rapidly and the producers of materials and all other allied trades suffered correspondingly. Neville Chamberlain realising that his revenue, both from Beer Duty and from all the trades connected with the brewing industry was steadily dwindling, reduced Beer Duty in his April 1933 budget. In so doing he changed the method of calculating the tax which had applied since Gladstone introduced it in 1880.

Meanwhile improved methods of distribution had enabled brewers to extend their markets. Free trade assumed a growing importance; the number of registered clubs doubled. Consumers' continuing preference for ales meant that by the 1930s old style porter had ceased to be of any significance. The most important development was the increase in the consumption of bottled beer. As competition between brewers intensified, so expenditure on advertising increased.

Back in 1928 the Board were concerned to advertise Stout and India Pale Ale as well as Double Brown, and expected to spend £20,000 over 2 years. Advertising the Company's beers at railway stations had started before the First World War. During the 1920s almost every railway station in the country had Whitbread's Ale and Stout enamelled iron advertisements.

In 1934 when Whitbread's Pale Ale was becoming recognised as being superior to most, if not all, competing brands, it was still proving difficult to persuade large customers, such as Railway companies, to buy, owing to the cut prices at which many competitors were prepared to supply. The only way an order could be obtained with one Railway Company without unduly cutting Whitbread's price was by suggesting that the Railway should charge 1d a bottle more for Whitbread's than for the competing brands. Sydney Nevile advocated some expenditure 'in the hope of getting it recognised that Whitbread's Pale Ale was worth a higher price than that at which the competing brands were sold'. By 1936 enormous advertisements bearing the words 'Whitbread's Ale and Stout' could be seen at major Railway Stations in London. At Victoria Station there was the additional slogan 'Britain's Best Beer - Always in Perfect Condition'.

Whitbread's launched a campaign in 1934 of colour advertisements in the illustrated weekly journals featuring celebrated people dining at well known restaurants and with a bottle of Whitbread beer on the table. The first one showed Gertrude Lawrence and Ronald Squire. This campaign was initiated by Sydney Nevile, and in his words aimed 'to advance our beer several rungs up the social ladder, on to the sideboards and tables of the middle classes and on to restaurant tables'. Nevile was also behind the industry 'Beer is Best' campaign which appeared at this time.

H. Douglas Thomson was appointed Head of Publicity in 1935, and with Nevile, commissioned four distinguished artists of the day in 1937 to paint pictures that could be reproduced in Whitbread's houses.

The paintings 'The North Yard of Whitbread's Brewery' by A.J. (later Sir Alfred) Munnings, 'The Woolpack Inn, Yalding' by Stanhope Forbes, 'The Oasthouses, Beltring' by Algernon Talmage and 'Hop Picking at Whitbread's Hop Farm' by T.C. Dugdale were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1938, and formed part of an exhibition organised by the Company at the New Burlington Galleries. They were reproduced and appeared in many of the Company's houses. This is believed to be the first time that pictures by living artists had been reproduced and exhibited in licensed houses.

The first calendar also appeared in 1938 with four paintings of scenes from the Company's history by the Belgian artist, Mark Severin.

But once again war threatened. As early as April 1939 the Board had decided that if war should break out the Company's offices would be moved to the Saracen's Head Hotel in Beaconsfield, Bucks. The idea of moving the Brewery was dismissed as impracticable, but the Counting House staff were evacuated to Beaconsfield in August 1939 where they stayed until May 1945. Major W.H. Whitbread and Flying Officer J.E. Martineau joined up in September 1939. The running of the Brewery was left in the hands of Sydney Nevile (knighted in 1942), Cecil Lubbock and Gilbert Dunning, supported by Harry Whitbread, then in his eighties.

It was Harry Whitbread who had pressed for the establishment of the Company Fire Brigade in 1892 and he had supported and encouraged them ever since. He was to live to see their finest hour, when on the night of December 29/30 1940 in the great incendiary raid on the City, the men of the Fire Brigade, by their heroic courage, saved the Brewery from destruction, when on all sides nearly everything was lost. When the ruins were eventually cleared, the Brewery was almost the only building left standing. The House of Whitbread Bulletin wrote in January 1942 'To those of the Forces who have been away a year or more we would say they will hardly know the old place now. At any rate they will have no difficulty in finding the Brewery. You can see it a mile off'.

The Brewery was involved in nine other air raid incidents between September 1940 and May 1941, although on none of these did it sustain any serious damage. A steel look out cabin constructed on top of the Malt Tower in 1938 proved its worth many times over.

Production and delivery was interrupted only once during the whole War, and that was by the December 1940 incendiary raid. 'We could not deliver beer for two days and were unable to brew for four days, but we mashed on January 2nd and our serving members can be assured that we have by now resumed full activity'.

This was just as well because although raw material shortages had led to the substitution of inferior materials and the dilution of beer, as in the First World War, unlike that War output had increased helped by the shortage of other consumer goods. Production at Chiswell Street rose from 577,318 barrels in 1940 to 914,648 in 1945, the highest annual figure achieved at the Brewery in all its long history.

In 1941 a special consignment of 35 tons of beer was sent, in conjunction with Watney, Combe Reid & Co., to the beleaguered British forces at Tobruk, for their Christmas festivities. The beer duly arrived and many letters of appreciation were later received by the Company.

In 1942 the Bi-Centenary of the Firm was celebrated. The staff at the Brewery gave the Board two engravings - portraits of former members of the Whitbread family - and the management and permanent staff of the Bottling Stores gave some silver - a coffee pot, salver, salt cellars and pepper castors - each piece stamped with the London hall-mark of 1742. The Directors accepted these gifts as an expression of 'the spirit of friendly co-operation in which all work together for the Company of which we are proud to be members'.

1,176 Whitbread men and women served in the three Fighting Services and the Merchant Navy during the Second World War. In addition many hundreds served in the Auxiliary Forces, Home Guard, Civil Defence, Nursing Services, National Fire Service and Women's Land Army. 54 members were killed, 38 on active service and 16 as a result of enemy action. In 1953 a plaque to their memory was erected under the arch to the South Yard at Chiswell Street.

In 1944 the Chairman, Samuel Howard Whitbread died. He was succeeded by his nephew Colonel Bill Whitbread. On the 24th April 1945 he chaired his first meeting as Chairman of the Company. The task that lay ahead was daunting, but in Colonel Whitbread the Company had a leader who would rise to the challenge and take Whitbread's into a new era.

Transport throughout this period was difficult. History had repeated itself at the outbreak of war when thirty two brand new lorries just due for delivery were commandeered by the War Office. Worse still, during the war itself only seventeen others were delivered owing to the demand for army vehicles, and five of these merely replaced vehicles which had been scrapped. With damaged roads, petrol rationing and shortages of tyres, timber and paint, all kinds of improvisation were necessary to keep the elderly lorries in good condition and to make the maximum number of deliveries possible. The speed of loading and deliveries was hampered in the winters by the blackout. Special permission had to be obtained from the Ministry of War to operate the 15 ton vehicles. The strain on the drivers, always considerable, worsened during the flying bomb period when the noise of the engine made it impossible for them to hear the approach of a V1. In 1946 the Royal Brewery, Stockport, which had been leased since 1943, was acquired to ease distribution problems to trade in the north of England.

In the aftermath of war the task ahead was certainly a daunting one. In the Blitz on London 565 of the Company's licensed houses were damaged, 29 were destroyed and 49 so badly damaged that trading ceased.

In the V1 rocket attacks 377 houses were damaged of which 22 were badly blitzed. 172 houses were damaged in V2 attacks, 14 of them seriously. Over 90% of Whitbread's properties were affected in one way or another. The Bottling Stores were damaged on over 250 occasions between July 1940 (at Plymouth) and February 1945 (at Gray's Inn Road).

Restrictions imposed in 1939 prevented Whitbread's from spending money repairing their damaged properties, restrictions that were not finally lifted until November 1954. In the meantime pre-fabricated houses were erected which 'proved most popular and supplied a public need that might otherwise have remained unsatisfied for many years ... they can be made both attractive and comfortable'.

Colonel Whitbread's father, Harry Whitbread died in 1947. Born in 1861 he was the last surviving member of the final partnership of Whitbread & Co., and had been a Managing Director of Whitbread & Co. Ltd. from its incorporation in 1889 until 31st December 1938. He was succeeded by F.O.A.G. (Alex) Bennett, appointed a Managing Director in early 1949.

There were other personnel changes at this time. Charles Harry Adams died suddenly in December 1944. Adams, the Company's longest serving Secretary, was in his thirty ninth year as Secretary, having taken up his post in 1905, and in his fiftieth year of service. In 1946 Cecil Lubbock retired after 42 years as a Managing Director and 28 years as Deputy Chairman. He had played a leading part in dealing with the pre First World War vicissitudes.

In 1948 Sir Sydney Nevile retired as a Managing Director, although he continued as a Director of the Company. When he finally resigned in 1968, Colonel Whitbread wrote of him: 'I think I can say with confidence that Sir Sydney Nevile has been the greatest man in the trade in my lifetime. Besides his vast technical knowledge, he has a very strong sense of the social responsibility of the trade to the country, and the better conditions in public houses since the First World War are very largely due to his influence. His contribution to the Industry and to this Company would be impossible to overestimate.' Sir Sydney died in September 1969 at the great age of 96.

IV WHITBREAD & CO. LTD. PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY 1948 - 1990

1948 - 1971

Trading conditions from 1946 onwards were particularly demanding. Inflation was pushing up the cost of all commodities month by month. Colonel Whitbread realised that the Company had to expand to have a chance of surviving. For this purpose increased capital was required.

In 1948 an important event in the history of the Company took place when part of the Ordinary Stock of the Company was offered for sale to the public and the whole of the Company's Stock was dealt in on the Stock Exchange. The following year the Company's Share and Loan Capital was drastically reorganised to make it more representative of the scope of the Company's business, the value of its properties and the capital employed in it.

Around this time a number of minor brewing companies were purchased. Flitton's Stotfold Brewery in 1948, Amey's of Petersfield in 1951 and Dale & Co. of Cambridge in 1955 had added a small number of outlets in areas not well represented. The acquisition of the Scarsdale Brewery in Chesterfield in 1958 took Whitbread's influence farther north.

These developments were supported by investment in new and improved depots. Existing locations were replaced by new premises at Newcastle and Exeter in 1954, and Plymouth 1956. New premises were opened in 1952 in Willow Street, Leicester to allow a bigger bottling programme in Jewry Wall Street Depot. Meanwhile in 1949 new bottling plant had been installed at Cardiff to meet increased South Wales trade. Much of Birmingham Depot was rebuilt in 1954 following serious wartime damage. New depots were opened at Aberdeen 1949, Ashton-under-Lyne 1950 (replacing Rusholme which eventually closed in 1957), Macclesfield 1952 (closed 1962), Llandudno 1953 and Carmarthen 1955. In 1955 bottling started at the Kirkstall Brewery site (acquired 1954) replacing the old Whitbread Leeds Depot. When the brewing plant there came into operation in 1957, the Company had, for the first time, premises where newly brewed beer could flow direct to bottling plant.

Meanwhile bottling ceased at a number of depots which became distribution points only, for example, Kingston 1948, Poole 1952, Brighton 1955 and Newport (Isle of Wight), also in 1955.

In 1950 around one thirtieth of all the beer brewed in the U.K. was produced here. Customs and Excise duty was paid at an average rate of £800,000 a month. The site extended to 5 acres 2 roods 23 poles 13 1/4 square yards or nearly a quarter of a million square feet. The cellar area amounted to over 200,000 square feet. Until the early 1960s, when the construction of the Barbican began, the Brewery buildings still stood alone among the levelled remains of blitzed buildings and streets.

Although beer was brewed at Wateringbury, Stockport and Hythe the main brewery remained at Chiswell Street.

Flat demand for beer in the 1940s and early 1950s, high taxation and undervalued licensed property led to share prices of breweries being depressed. Businessmen, in particular E.P. Taylor, Chairman of Canadian Breweries, saw the potential for takeovers. A number of hostile bids for breweries were launched. As a result a period of vigorous defensive mergers and acquisitions took place throughout the industry peaking in 1960 and with sustained activity from 1959 to 1962. Over 550 brewing concerns in 1950 dwindled to around 200 by 1969.

Whitbread's, however, adopted a different approach to the rest of the industry. As Colonel Whitbread expressed it in 1958 in his often quoted remark:- 'For the last ten years it has been my conviction that the brewing industry must integrate or it will disintegrate'. The need to expand was recognised early on. Developing the traditional Company policy of informal trading associations with other brewery companies, Whitbread's began to take protective minority financial interests, small at first, in other companies. One such was the Cheltenham and Hereford Brewery, threatened with takeover in 1955 by a financial group. They requested Whitbread's intervention, and a reasonable interest was acquired sufficient 'to ensure the continuity of the Company'.

By 1956 these arrangements had been concluded with Strong & Co. of Romsey Ltd, Morland & Co. of Abingdon, Norman & Pring Ltd., Tennant Brothers Ltd., Cheltenham and Hereford Breweries Ltd. Dutton's Blackburn Brewery Ltd., Marston Thompson & Evershed Ltd., Stroud Brewery Ltd. and Ruddles. In all cases these were friendly associations. The associated Companies retained their independence and control of their own trading. They had the benefit of Whitbread's assistance if they wished and the commercial advantages of selling Whitbread's products on favourable terms. However, the cost to Whitbread's of these investments was high at a time when money was needed for new houses and bottling stores. In 1956 the Whitbread Investment Company was formed and most of the investments were transferred to it in return for cash.

As more small brewers sought the protection of Whitbread's, the number of holdings was extended and increased. More were transferred to the Whitbread Investment Company in 1960. The associated companies themselves continued to expand, even while under what became known as the Whitbread Umbrella. Tennant Brothers Ltd. bought Clarkson's Old Brewery in Barnsley in 1956 and the Worksop and Retford Brewery Co. Ltd. in 1958. Also in 1958 Cheltenham & Hereford Breweries Ltd. combined with Stroud Brewery Co. Ltd. to form West Country Brewery Holdings Ltd., which then acquired Spreckley Brothers of Worcester. In 1959 Dutton's Blackburn Brewery Ltd. acquired the Crown Brewing Co. Ltd. and Glasson's Penrith Breweries Ltd.; and Rhymney Breweries Ltd. merged with the Ely Brewery Co. Ltd. in Cardiff. In 1962 Whitbread's bought the Stroud Brewery from West Country Breweries to provide extra production.

With these holdings in other companies and their outlets secured, Whitbread's initially saw no need to acquire other breweries. But as the threat to the umbrella companies grew from competitors, so the holdings in them were increased, and eventually many of them were absorbed. Thus it was 1961, just as the merger and takeover fever in the rest of the industry was easing, before Whitbread's made its first major acquisition, with Tennants of Sheffield whose Board had decided 'the time had come for them to merge with a larger unit'. In this merger for the first time in history, Whitbread & Co. shares were issued in exchange for the Company's equity. Tennants incidentally brought with them their Barley Wine, Gold Label, first brewed at Sheffield in 1951. It soon had a place in the Guinness Book of Records as 'the strongest regularly brewed nationally distributed beer'. In the next 10 years a further 22 brewing companies approached Whitbread's seeking a merger.

Of the breweries who joined, many had long and distinguished histories of their own, which there is not space here to tell. Nearly all of them had taken over other concerns (Strongs for example absorbed 22 companies between 1890 and 1965) and these, after Brickwoods joined in 1971, totalled over 400 names.

The full list of the direct acquisitions by Whitbread & Co. between 1961 and 1971 is as follows:-

- 1961 - Tennant Brothers Ltd., Sheffield.
- John R. Fielder & Son Ltd., Titchfield.

- 1962 - Norman & Pring Ltd., Exeter.
- Starkey Knight & Ford Ltd., Bridgwater.
- Flowers Breweries Ltd., Luton. (J. W. Green Ltd and Flower & Sons Ltd).

- 1963 - J. Nimmo & Son Ltd., Castle Eden.
- West Country Brewery Holdings Ltd., Cheltenham. (Cheltenham & Hereford Breweries Ltd, Stroud Brewery Co Ltd and Spreckley Brothers Ltd).

- 1964 - Dutton's Blackburn Brewery Ltd., Blackburn.

- 1965 - E. Lacon & Co. Ltd., Great Yarmouth.

- 1966 - James Thompson & Co. Ltd., Barrow-in-Furness.
- Rhymney Breweries Ltd., Rhymney.

- 1967 - Isaac Tucker & Co. Ltd., Gateshead.
- Archibald Campbell, Hope & King Ltd., Edinburgh.
- Threlfalls Chesters Ltd., Liverpool.
- Evan Evans, Bevan Ltd., Neath.
- Fremlins Ltd., Maidstone.

- 1968 - Bentley's Yorkshire Breweries Ltd., Woodlesford.
- Richard Whitaker & Sons Ltd., Halifax.
- John Young & Co. Ltd., Musselburgh.
- Cobb & Co. Ltd., Margate.
- Combined Breweries (Holdings) Ltd., Ramsgate. (Tomson & Wotton Ltd and Gardner & Co Ltd).
- Strong & Co. of Romsey Ltd., Romsey.

- 1971 - Brickwoods Ltd., Portsmouth.

With these acquisitions Whitbread's gained 10,282 extra outlets in eleven years. Total Group production from all its breweries rose from around 1,280,000 barrels in 1961 to 4,500,000 in 1971, each merger bringing an increase in capacity and turnover.

Whitbread's emerged in 1971 as the third largest British brewing company when measured by the size of the tied estate, behind only Bass and Allied Breweries. In 15 years the Company had undergone a much greater transformation in activities than perhaps any other comparable brewery company. It had changed from being largely a London based concern with extensive free trade throughout the country, and by 1971 it had achieved national coverage in both tied and free trade, although still not well represented in all areas. In 1948 20% of the business had been tied and 80% free. Now in 1971 60% was tied and 40% free, still a high free trade proportion compared with competitors.

With each merger came, as well as a brewery and outlets, bottling stores, distribution depots and other premises. By 1963 the need for rationalisation was clear. Production and distribution was concentrated at selected sites, either new or modernised, and the rest were closed.

The 1960s were a time of difficulties caused by the Government's imposition of price controls, increased taxes, reference of the industry to the Prices and Incomes Board, and involvement of the Monopolies Commission. Colonel Whitbread wrote in 1970 'The Labour Government increased the duty on beer three times, on spirits four times, and on wines five times, during their period of office. They also imposed Selective Employment Tax, and put us before the Monopolies Commission which, after 2½ years, involving many of our Directors, accountants and lawyers in intensive work, produced a nil report. In addition, we have twice been before the Prices and Incomes Board, which has also given our executives further work in order to produce the facts and figures required by the Board, and there has been a general interference in industry and a desire to pry into other people's affairs'.

Price control led to a cash shortage and meant the rate of rationalisation had to be speeded up. Bottling ceased at Leicester, Jewry Wall Street and Cardiff in 1963 and at Gray's Inn Road in 1965. The old Whitbread Depot at Weston Rise closed in 1962 and those in Sheffield and Nottingham in 1963. There were many others. Overall between 1960 and 1971, 15 breweries, 24 bottling stores and keg racking plants and 54 distribution depots were closed.

The process peaked between 1966 and 1969, during which period the following plants were closed:

Breweries:

Birkenhead	1968 (Birkenhead Brewery Co Ltd)
Exeter	1966 (Norman & Pring Ltd)
Gateshead	1968 (Isaac Tucker & Co Ltd)
Halifax	1969 (Richard Whitaker & Sons Ltd)
Hythe	1968 (Mackeson & Co Ltd)
Luton (Park Street)	1968 (J W Green Ltd)
Margate	1968 (Cobb & Co Ltd)
Musselburgh	1969 (John Young & Co Ltd)
Ramsgate	1968 (Tomson & Wotton Ltd)
Stockport	1966 (Royal Brewery)
Stratford-upon-Avon	1969 (Flower & Sons Ltd)
Stroud	1967 (Stroud Brewery Co Ltd)
Yarmouth	1968 (E Lacon & Co Ltd)

Bottling Factories:

Ashton-under-Lyne	1966 (and Keg Racking 1968)
Barrow-in-Furness	1968 (James Thompson & Co Ltd)
Camberwell	1968 (Fremlins Ltd)
Chiswick	1967 (Whitbread & Co)
Exeter	1967 (Whitbread & Co)
Gateshead	1968 (Isaac Tucker & Co Ltd)
Halifax	1969 (Richard Whitaker & Sons Ltd)
Hythe	1968 (Mackeson & Co Ltd)
Kirkstall	1968 (Kirkstall Brewery Co Ltd)
Luton (Park Street)	1966 (J. W. Green Ltd)
Margate	1968 (Cobb & Co Ltd)
Neath	1969 (Evan Evans, Bevan Ltd)
Newcastle	1967 (Whitbread & Co)
Ramsgate	1968 (Tomson & Wotton Ltd)
Stratford upon Avon	1967 (Flower & Sons Ltd)
Stroud	1968 (Stroud Brewery, Salmon Springs)
Yarmouth	1968 (E. Lacon & Co Ltd)

Distribution Depots:

Bangor	1969
Barnet	1969
Barnstaple	1967
Bridgwater	1967
Brighton	1968
Bristol	1968
Camberwell	1969
Cambridge	1967
Cardiff	1967
Chepstow	1967
Dover	1968
Dundee	1966
Exeter, Pinhoe Street	1967
Gateshead	1968
Grantham	1967
Guildford	1969
Halifax	1969

Hayes, remote store	1966
Highbridge	1967
Hull	1968
Kingston	1969
Leeds, Neville Street	1966
Luton, Park Street	1966
Margate	1968
Middlesbrough	1966
Newcastle	1967
Norwich	1966
Nottingham, St James' St	1967
Paignton	1967
Plymouth, Millbay Rd	1969
Plymouth, Union St	1967
Preston	1967
Ramsgate	1968
Rochester	1968
Shrewsbury	1968
Stratford-upon-Avon	1969
Worcester	1968

However, this high rate of rationalisation did enable inflationary and cost pressures to be contained.

The merging of so many companies with local affinities meant that Whitbread's had to supply a great number of different products in small quantities for local consumption. This soon caused production problems, and the number of local beers was reduced.

On the modernisation side, between 1960 and 1971 the Company improved and enlarged ten breweries and opened new depots at Loughborough 1960, Wednesbury 1961 and Rutherglen, Glasgow in 1971. As part of the rationalisation process Flower's Reading Depot came under the control of Whitbread's in 1963.

It also invested in a new bottling and distribution centre opened in 1967 at Luton. This cost £2 million and had a planned daily output of 1,500 barrels equivalent to 900,000 half-pint bottles. In early 1969 the new Luton Brewery came into full production, and was officially opened by Major Simon Whitbread. Colonel Whitbread's great aspiration 'All my life, I have wanted to build a brewery' had been realised. It was the first brewery of its size to be built on a completely new site in Britain for many years, and had a capacity of over one million barrels a year. It is interesting to note that Colonel Whitbread's comment: 'This is the most modern brewery in the world today, so that we are having a constant stream of visitors from abroad who wish to see it. This is a slight embarrassment in our first summer of full production' almost exactly echoes Joseph Delafield's remarks of Samuel Whitbread's new Brewhouse at Chiswell Street in 1786.

In 1969 Whitbread's formed jointly with Trafalgar House Investments Ltd. a company called Whitbread Trafalgar Properties Ltd. to deal with the development of the Company's properties. At the end of that year plans were drawn up for the development of the property owned by the Company on both sides of Chiswell Street, although it was to be several years before anything came of this.

Other investments moved the Company towards the hotel business. In 1970/71 Whitbread's purchased from Trust House Forte their share of Severnside Hotels in Wales, and formed a joint company with J. Lyons, called Whitly Inns, through which it was planned to develop hotels and acquire new sites. At this time the Company operated over one hundred restaurants, a field in which it was intended to develop further.

At the end of 1967 Colonel Whitbread retired as Managing Director, having served in that capacity for 40 years. He was appointed Chairman and Alex Bennett was appointed Chief Executive. Other key men of this period, apart from those already mentioned, included Captain Mason Scott appointed a Managing Director in 1953, Carl Wootton, who joined in 1922 became Technical Manager, and was made a Technical Director in 1957, Bill Lasman, who joined in 1924 as Junior Brewer, appointed an Assistant Director in 1965 and Guy Rudgard appointed a Managing Director in 1968. Jack Martineau retired as a Managing Director in 1963, but remained on the Board as a Director until 1977.

In 1968 the Group was reorganised into three trading regions - North, South and West, with Scotland as a separate entity. Each region had a separate Board. 'The future of this Group seems to me so exciting' wrote Colonel Whitbread 'that I only wish I was a few years younger, so as to be able to take an active and direct part in these new developments'.

Until the mid 1950s the Company had taken only a comparatively small interest in the sale of wines and spirits. From about 1955 this began to change as it became evident that the profits on beer alone were not sufficient to pay a reasonable return on the cost of the essential rebuilding and improvement of the Company's properties. By 1957 a policy of bulk buying with the associated companies was developed, as was the creation of certain profitable lines, whose proprietary names were owned, to be sold by the Group throughout the country. Squires Gin was launched that year and its sales handled by an independent company Squires Gin Ltd. A straw-coloured gin - Cornhill - was added in 1960.

The management of F.S. Stowell Ltd. was reorganised in 1960. But with the steady addition of other businesses, either through the associated company mergers or acquired separately, such as Wiley & Co. in 1961, Thresher & Co. in 1962, Wine Cellars Ltd. in 1966 and Mackies Wine Co. in 1967, further restructuring was necessary.

In 1968 the wholesale wine and spirit interests were reorganised and given a national identity and marketing platform under the name of Stowells of Chelsea. Soon after, Corrida, a range of branded Spanish table wines, was launched by Stowells of Chelsea.

Investments were also made in other parts of the trade, such as the Wine Trader's Consortium, J.R. Phillips & Co. Ltd. and William Grant (Standfast) Ltd.

On the soft drinks side the Company had acquired the Chislehurst Mineral Waters Co. in 1949. This later became the Chandy Bottling Co. which flourished for a number of years. As with wines and spirits the increasing number of businesses acquired through the mergers meant a need for rationalisation. In 1964-5 Brearley's Stratford factory was transferred to the re-equipped Arnold Perrett's bottling factory near Gloucester.

Whitbread's bought the equity of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company (Oxford) Ltd. which held the franchise for the bottling and marketing of Coca-Cola and Fanta in that part of England. In 1969, following the purchase of R. White & Sons, a Soft Drinks Division was formed incorporating the above businesses as well as Chandy and Moorhouses of Birkenhead. By 1970 Whites' Barking factory had been sold and a large new factory was planned at Beckton.

There were also considerable developments on the export side. Trade in Belgium was re-established soon after the war, where demand for bottled beer continued to grow and to such an extent that in 1954 a road tanker service was introduced running overnight on the Dover-Dunkirk ferry. Previously beer had gone in cask by sea and up the Scheldt Estuary to Brussels. The service was expanded in 1958 and each week six 80 barrel road tankers left London for Brussels: the beer then being bottled in Belgium.

Whitbread's was the only British company to have its own bottling depots there. Increases in productivity meant the closure of Liege and Ghent depots. The old Antwerp depot was closed in 1959 and replaced with a new development at nearby Mortsel. Between 1960 and 1962 Whitbread's Belgian trade increased by over 50%. The Brussels bottling stores were enlarged and a small Belgian brewery, Dendria in Onkerzele, was purchased in 1963 for its bottling capacity only, until a new plant being built at Mechelen was ready. This duly opened in 1964, the highlight of Whitbread's jubilee year in Belgium and heralded the introduction of a modern high speed bottling plant. Mechelen lifted the Company's Belgian bottling capacity to 2.5 million a week.

In 1965 Onkerzele was closed and its bottling transferred to Mechelen. Mortsel closed in 1969. By 1970 the high cost of trunking beer over from England led to local brewing. Onkerzele reopened in 1970 as a brewery brewing Stout and Campbell's Scotch.

Sales in other parts of Europe were more modest. Small quantities of beer from Belgium and the U.K. were exported to France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland and Italy. A depot was opened in Amiens in 1964 and by 1969 fourteen British pubs had been established in France with the help of the Artois Brewery in Belgium.

The Group's beers, sold at Whitbread's portable pub The Britannia, were a popular feature of British Weeks and trade fairs. The pub appeared in Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, France and Hong Kong. During British Week in Copenhagen in 1964 the Britannia remained open for a month and attracted more than half a million customers. This success led to the formation of a new subsidiary Whitbread (Scandinavia) A/S.

The Ships' Stores Department started in 1958, redesignated the Aircraft and Ships' Stores Department in 1965, supplied the Company's products to the Royal and Merchant Navies and to the airlines. By 1965 it was selling over half a million gallons annually. Just over ten years later the unit became Duty Free Division.

On the wider international scene, the world export trade had been growing since the 1930s. In 1957 Whitbread's was trading in 63 countries around the world and in 68 by 1966. Mackeson became increasingly popular especially in the West Indies where for example sales increased 40% in the year 1968/69.

A subsidiary, Sterling Importers Inc., handled sales in the United States, principally in New York, where Whitbread Tankard in the mid 1960s was the only non-bottled beer sold in cocktail bars.

In Africa, an interest was taken in the City Brewery Nairobi in 1962. In 1964 Whitbread (South Africa) Pty Ltd. was formed in partnership with Heineken's to build a brewery at Alberton, Johannesburg. It was completed in two years and in August 1966 the first consignment of beer, a lager called 'Gold Crest' was being delivered to bars and hotels in South Africa. However, the venture was not as successful as had been anticipated and a 50% interest in the brewery was sold to South African Breweries in 1969. But this arrangement still did not produce the results hoped for and in 1970 in a further agreement Whitbread's sold their brewery interests to South African Breweries and formed a joint company with them to market the Company's products.

Meanwhile, in 1967 a new organisation, Whitbread International Ltd., was formed 'to improve the administration and marketing of export operations'. By 1970 the investments in Belgium and South Africa were brought under its control.

While this tremendous growth and expansion was taking place, there were a number of changes in the industry which were to have important effects on the Company's future direction.

The growth of the bottled beer trade continued after the war and by 1948 it accounted for 80% of Whitbread's production. By 1955 Whitbread's bottled beers were stocked and sold in over half the licensed houses in the country. Bottled Mackeson was a particular success, in fact it would be hard to overstate the importance of Mackeson to the Company's fortunes. Widespread publicity (in 1957 60% of the advertising budget of £850,000 was spent on Mackeson) took Mackeson sales from 103,000 barrels in 1948 to 425,000 in 1961. By 1959 Mackeson accounted for nearly half Whitbread's total trade, and over half the home trade. Up to 1955 Whitbread's had bottled all its own beers. Now it became necessary, under the supervision of Whitbread's technicians, to contract bottling out first to some of the associated companies, then as demand rose to many other brewers and bottlers. By 1957 20% of Mackeson output was being bottled by other Brewers. 'If we had bottled this 20% ourselves, it might have required a capital expenditure of some £600,000'.

In 1955 a Dutch firm began making the prize-winning Mackeson commercial television advertisements. These highly imaginative and innovative films featured animated bottles in a wide variety of scenes. 'For sheer comical ingenuity the Mackeson's team of footballing beer bottles is hard to beat' wrote a Daily Telegraph correspondent in 1956. Three Mackeson TV commercials won international awards at Milan in 1958. In 1963 Lindsay Anderson, the stage and film director directed Bernard Miles in a new series of Mackeson TV films. The slogan 'It looks good, it tastes good, and by golly it does you good' became famous. These promotions played a significant part in the product's success. Films were also produced for Pale Ale, and the Whitbread Pale Ale TV commercial 'Picnic' won first prize in its category at the Advertising Film Festival in France in 1968.

From the mid 1950s onwards bottled beer began to give way to draught beer, with a clear trend downwards emerging by 1959. At just the right moment Whitbread's had launched, in 1957, Whitbread Tankard, the Company's first entry into the field of container beer. Delivered in pressurised metal containers connected to a small cylinder of CO₂ it was ideal for use where sales were irregular because it had a much longer shelf life than cask beer, was always in prime condition and needed no expert attention. The new beer was a great success. 'Whitbread Tankard', wrote Colonel Whitbread in 1961, 'has astounded us by its popularity and progress'. By 1969 with the main swing towards draught beer at the expense of bottled beer continuing, Tankard and Trophy Bitter were both doing well. By 1971 draught beer accounted for 70% of Whitbread's production.

Another new trend appearing in this period was the introduction of beer in cans. Since 1935 the Company had been researching into the problems of maintaining beer quality in cans. In the 1950s Whitbread's started can production. But by 1959 only 1% of Whitbread's barrellage was sold in cans. However, there was a succession of improvements to can design and by 1970 sales were growing steadily.

Lager also began to make an appearance. It was estimated to have under 3% of the beer sold in this country in 1959. Whitbread's, who had sold Stella in selected pubs in the early 1930s, now had a trading agreement with the Artois Brewery of Belgium to sell Stella, and an arrangement with Ind Coope to sell Skol.

In 1961 Whitbread's agreed to sell Heineken lager from the Netherlands in this country in return for technical advice in developing breweries overseas. In 1968 agreement was reached to brew Heineken under licence in Britain. In 1969 Heineken production was moved to the new Luton brewery and Colonel Whitbread noted: 'we are now brewing Heineken under their technical control at Luton and selling large quantities of this excellent continental lager which, I have the greatest confidence, will gain a substantial share of the market'. By 1971 Heineken had 20% of the England and Wales lager market.

Times were also changing in the pubs. 'Many years ago a man was content to stand up in a bar with sawdust on the floor and drink large quantities of cheap strong beer. In 1954, however, a man and his wife expect to drink their beer under the most hygienic and in comfortable and even luxurious surroundings'. With the restrictions on public house building lifted that year, a programme of renovation and rebuilding began, and continued throughout the 1960s as resources permitted. The cost was high. Increased borrowings were necessary and several Debenture issues were made to raise more money.

In 1967 for example 22 new houses were opened at a cost of over £600,000. 11 more new houses were being constructed. 96 major alterations were completed at a cost of £500,000, with a further 24 substantial alterations in hand which would cost when completed £250,000. As the rationalisation programme proceeded large numbers of houses were disposed of. For example in 1970-71 258 were closed, 193 voluntarily, the remainder compulsorily acquired. Property sales that year raised £3.5 million.

Off-sales also grew. A considerable quantity of beer was already consumed in the home by the mid-1950s, and the increasing spread of television accelerated the trend.

One interesting feature of Whitbread's public house design in this period was the Theme Pub. The first, the Nags Head in Covent Garden, opened in 1950. Several more followed, including the Printer's Devil, The Gilbert and Sullivan and in 1959 the Sherlock Holmes.

In 1958 the Samuel Whitbread, on a prime site in Leicester Square, was opened 'a most audacious undertaking' at a net cost of about £150,000.

Douglas Thomson had been involved in the idea of the theme pubs, and he was behind the reintroduction of the Whitbread calendar in 1947 which continued every year until 1989. The work of many well known artists was featured over the years. In 1947 the first of a series of small books on the Company and the Industry called the Whitbread Library appeared. The eleventh and final book appeared in 1953. The books are now sought after by collectors as are the series of 50 miniature inn signs produced on aluminium and later on card between 1949 and 1954 which were very successful and popular at the time. Special issues appeared between 1951 and 1958.

In December 1962 a monthly company newspaper, 'The Whitbread News' was introduced, bringing up to date information on the Group's activities to the increasing numbers of staff and employees.

It was in order to establish a family image throughout a rapidly growing Group that in 1967 a new livery was adopted based on a new housemark, the Hind's Head Tankard symbol. The new livery was soon introduced across the country displayed at depots, on pubs and vehicles as well as on posters, labels, stationery and display material. By this means it was intended that 'the name of Whitbread should be echoed far and wide and as often as possible'.

One completely new aspect of these post war years initiated by Colonel Whitbread was sponsorship. He had always been interested in horses and horse racing. He rode his own horse Ben Cruchan in two Grand Nationals, 1925 and 1926, falling, remounting and finishing in both. He rode in many other steeplechases in the 1920s, and had several wins including the Stanley Cup at Sandown in 1925.

In 1956 he proposed to the National Hunt Committee, not then amalgamated with the Jockey Club, that Whitbread's would put up the prize money for a steeplechase at Sandown in April, a few weeks after the Grand National. This was accepted and in 1957 the Whitbread Gold Cup Steeplechase, the first ever commercially sponsored steeplechase, ran for the first time and has continued each year since then. The trophy is a replica of the Stanley Cup that Colonel Whitbread had won 32 years earlier at the same course. In 1960 the Mackeson Gold Cup Steeplechase was established at Cheltenham. Whitbread's sponsorship of the Badminton Three Day Event which had started in 1949, began in 1960. Sponsorship of other areas of sport followed, and also of the theatre, the arts, literature and music. This was an aspect of the Company that would continue to develop in the years ahead.

A notable association of the 1960s was with the famous yachtsman Francis (later Sir Francis) Chichester. Whitbread's helped, and supplied beer for most of his record breaking voyages. His third crossing of the Atlantic in the 1964 single-handed trans-Atlantic Yacht Race was the subject of a Whitbread film 'Atlantic Adventure' premiered in 1965. When he set out in 1966 on his lone round-the-world voyage he took a supply of bottled Mackeson and Gold Label, and a specially-designed Tankard container. In 1968 the rebuilt Crown and Anchor in Plymouth was renamed the Sir Francis Chichester in his honour.

The film 'Atlantic Adventure' was one of a number of colour films produced by the Company. Other topics included the Story of Whitbread's, the Hop Farm, the horses, show jumping, fishing and the rebuilding of the City. 'Badminton Horse Trials' won a silver medal in 1963 at the International Sports Film Festival at Cortina D'Ampezzo. The collection known as the Whitbread Film Library, was available on loan free of charge. They were shown on television, in clubs, in the Company's cinema at Chiswell Street and abroad. The very first film, called 'Through Ten Reigns', the story of the House of Whitbread, was made in 1950 in black and white to show to the increasing numbers of Whitbread staff. Its impact was so powerful that it was not long before more films followed.

In 1964 the first Whitbread Newsreel was produced, an annual record of events in the Company and the forerunner of today's videos.

One other custom began in this period that has continued ever since. In 1955 for the first time Whitbread horses pulled the Lord Mayor's Coach in the annual November Procession in the City of London. The Coach was housed at the Brewery from 1961 to 1976.

Colonel Whitbread stepped down as Chairman on 31st December 1971, and was elected by the Board President of the Company. This was an appropriate gesture to a man who for 27 years had successfully led Whitbread's through difficult and challenging times. In 1948 the Company's assets had been £9 million, now in 1971-72 they were £241 million. Colonel Whitbread finally retired from the Board in September 1979 after 56 years with the Company.

Whitbread's had become a national company with international interests. By his vision and enterprise he had dominated and transformed the Company. As such it was fitting that in 1962 Queen Elizabeth II and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother paid a private visit to Col. Whitbread at Chiswell Street, 175 years after their respective forebears had met at the same place.

Colonel Whitbread was the creator of the modern Company. Perhaps the best and simplest tribute to him came from his successor Alex Bennett. In 1972 he wrote: 'Bill Whitbread's greatest interest in life has always been the good of the business'.

1972 - 1984

Alex Bennett's appointment as Chairman in 1972 meant a break with tradition. For the first time since incorporation in 1889 the man heading the business was not a member of the Whitbread family. But despite this, Bennett had a lifetime of experience in the Company. Joining as a pupil brewer at Watlington in 1935, he was posted to Chiswell Street in 1938. After the war he was appointed a managing director in 1949, Deputy Chairman in 1959 and Chief Executive in 1968. After five years as Chairman he stood down in December 1977. He was succeeded by Charles (later Sir Charles) Tidbury, who first joined the Company in 1952 as a trainee at the Mackeson Brewery at Hythe. He became an assistant director in 1957, and a managing director in 1959. He was appointed Deputy Chief Executive of Whitbread in 1972 and Chief Executive in 1974.

This period saw a continuation of the policy of 'disinvestment and reinvestment'. The emphasis in the seventies was very much on investment. A £20 million investment programme to modernise the distribution function was concluded by 1977. Palletisation, handling and delivery systems were all streamlined. New vehicles were introduced. The commissioning of the new £2 million Distribution Centre at Ipswich Road in Cardiff in May 1976 completed a three year programme of building ten new depots, which together with major extensions and improvements at many other depots, established a first class modern depot network. The other locations opened were Shadsworth, Tinsley, Hornsey, London Colney, Hoddesdon, Nailsea, Gloucester, Upton (near Poole) and Truro, the latter replacing an existing depot. In April 1977 a depot opened at Lancing replacing the old Brickwood's depot at Hove. In 1982 distribution in parts of the south was contracted out to Bar Delivery Services.

The same approach was adopted on the production side. The trends of the 1950s and 1960s were continuing with the growing shift from bottled to draught beer, rising sales of canned beer, and lager increasing its share of the market. The popularity of lager and the then limited number of brands meant mass production was possible and economics of scale could be realised. Breweries could be located farther away from their markets as communications improved. Storage and transport of lager and keg beer, which are filtered and pasteurised, was much easier than for draught beer.

By 1978 £120 million had been invested to meet the growing demand for lager. In 1977/78 alone nearly £50 million was invested in the business with production of lager and distribution taking the lion's share. In 1972 Europe's largest stainless steel fermenting vessels were installed at Luton to meet the Heineken expansion. The ten millionth barrel of Heineken was produced in 1976. Another giant brewery at Samlesbury near Preston in Lancashire, costing £5 million and taking only 16 months to build, came into production in 1972, with further expansion and investment taking place there in succeeding years. In its first ten years Samlesbury brewed 10 million barrels. A third giant brewery was established at Magor in South Wales, costing £51 million and opening at the end of 1979. By this point lager accounted for around 30% of the British market.

Heineken, available at first only in bottles, took time to get going. But the launch of Heineken on draught turned the tide. However what really brought the product to the public's attention was a series of highly successful advertising campaigns. These began in 1963 with 'Hi! Heineken! The World's Most Imported Beer'. Then came the Terrific Draught campaign which ran from 1969 to 1973. 'There's a Terrific Draught Blowing Your Way' and 'There's a Terrific Draught in Here'. This was succeeded in 1974 by the now famous line 'Heineken Refreshes the Parts other Beers cannot reach' which ran for 15 years before being replaced by the associated slogan 'only Heineken can do this'.

In 1979 the lagers Heldenbrau and Kaltenberg were introduced.

In a generally declining ale market (national beer sales fell 12% 1979-1983) local beers were not neglected and indeed performed well. Fremlins, Pompey Royal, Strong Country, Wethered, Chesters, Welsh, Castle Eden and Flowers were all launched in this period.

Mackeson continued to do well. In June 1975 a new £200,000 TV campaign began based on the slogan made famous by Bernard Miles, 'It looks good, tastes good and by golly it is good'.

Meanwhile the growing tendency to drink at home was met with the formation in 1974 of Take Home Division, a separate force of specialist salesmen calling on multiple grocers and supermarkets. The full range of brands was available in cans to support this venture which was highly successful. In 1978 Take Home Division moved from Chiswell Street to separate offices at Dorking.

All these investments took place against a background of severe economic difficulties at national level particularly during the 1970s. Price freezes, rent freezes, high inflation, rapidly increasing building costs, bottle shortages, even threats to nationalise the industry made the running of the business extremely difficult. In June 1975 Alex Bennett wrote 'We are still faced with the worst inflationary crisis of our history unsolved, the value of the pound diminishing daily, and the Government apparently unable or unwilling as yet to show the leadership that the country needs and wants, while time is rapidly running out. Under such conditions of uncertainty for the country, it is obviously impossible to forecast the future of any industry or company without the strongest reservations'. Industrial relations worsened. 'In January and February 1977 we had the unhappy experience of suffering the worst industrial dispute in the Company's history, at a cost of well over £1m.' The dispute was concerned with the introduction of new and improved distribution methods. The poor record of industrial relations at the Luton Brewery over many years led to its eventual closure in June 1984.

The recession continued into the 1980s necessitating a major cost cutting exercise. 'By September 1980 it was apparent that the recession was biting more deeply than we had at first anticipated, and that costs would have to be further reduced and other economies effected' wrote Charles Tidbury. 'This is a painful business and has inevitably resulted in heavy cost cutting and redundancies.'

In June 1981 Charles Tidbury wrote: 'For over six months or so, we have been experiencing the most difficult trading conditions that any of us can remember.' Turnover had increased 8.6%, profits by 7.4%, but with inflation at 17% the Company was losing ground.

The rationalisation programme and locational adjustments of the 1970s led to a number of closures. Neath closed, and Woodlesford and Maidstone stopped brewing in 1972. Rhymney and Blackburn breweries closed in 1978. The recession in the early 1980s led to more closures as the need to cut costs became overwhelming. Between 1981 and 1984 breweries at Tiverton, Wateringbury, Ely, Liverpool and Kirkstall closed, brewing stopped at Romsey and Portsmouth, and a number of other processing locations and depots closed including Tottenham in September 1981 and Lewisham depot which closed in March 1984.

Reinvestment and modernisation also took place in the fields of wines and spirits, and soft drinks. Stowells of Chelsea moved their headquarters and main production unit to new premises at Hatfield in 1973. James Hawker of Plymouth was acquired in 1977 for its Pedlars Sloe Gin brand. In 1978 Stowells celebrated its centenary. In 100 years it had grown from a single shop in Ealing to being one of the largest wine and spirit wholesalers in the U.K. 1981 saw the launch by Stowells of the Wine Box, an important new development in wine packaging. This market leader was a tremendous success, the two millionth box being produced in May 1982.

Threshers, the off-licence chain acquired in 1962 (Threshers were taken over by Flowers Breweries in 1957), joined Stowells at Hatfield in 1977 enabling its Chelsea offices to be closed. Following Stowells' plan to close Hatfield, Threshers moved to new offices in Welwyn Garden City in 1982. The off-licence chain expanded steadily during this period. It absorbed the off-licences acquired from the brewery merger programme, and made acquisitions in its own right. These included Mackies Wine Co. in 1967 and Ashe and Nephew in 1983. The latter in particular gave Threshers national coverage.

On the soft drinks side R. White's new depot at Beckton, built on a 6½ acre site for £3.8 million, opened in 1972. In 1980 the Company's soft drinks interests were merged with Bass and a new company, Britannia Soft Drinks, formed. This was managed by Bass as major partner.

Even Chiswell Street was not excluded from all the changes and developments taking place. It was impossible to convert the place to lager brewing. At the same time the transporting out of the beer was becoming increasingly difficult as road traffic grew, and with the Barbican development of residential properties on many sides it made the decision to stop brewing inevitable. But it was a sad occasion for all when the traditions of 226 years finally came to an end on 13th April 1976.

Planning permission to redevelop the Chiswell Street site received in March 1976 was the culmination of six years' work. Demolition of the site south of the Porter Tun Room began that year. Two blocks totalling 400,000 square feet were begun in 1978, and let to BP who began moving in in 1981.

The lower part of the Porter Tun Room was re-equipped to house the 272 feet long Overlord Embroidery. This had been commissioned by Lord Dulverton, and donated to the nation by him in 1973. It was designed by Miss Sandra Lawrence and took the Royal School of Needlework five years to complete. It was opened on 6th June 1978, the 34th anniversary of Operation Overlord, the Allied D-Day landings in Normandy, by Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. 60,000 visitors a year came to see it. In May 1984 the Embroidery was dismantled and moved to the new D-Day Museum in Portsmouth.

By 1979 the upper part of the Porter Tun Room had been developed to provide banqueting and conference facilities and proved a popular venue. The whole development won the City's Heritage Award that year. The retained part of the Brewery buildings were refitted to provide offices for the Board and senior management and these were completed by 1980. In 1981/2 additional facilities for receptions, conferences and the banqueting market were opened in the Cellars, known as Smeaton's Vaults and the James Watt Room, and the following year the renovated Sugar Room opened for luncheons and dinners for up to 80 people.

Meanwhile on the north side of the road 138 local authority flats for Islington, a Safeways supermarket and other shops and stores for local traders were constructed and completed by 1982, as was the Squash and Recreation Club in Lambs Passage. The net cash flow of the Chiswell Street development to Whitbread's between 1980 and 1982 was around £25 million.

With aspirations for growth in its traditional market limited, the Company increasingly looked to the retail sector for expansion at home, and at the overseas market. In fact it was these two areas that saw real growth in the 1970s and early 1980s.

On the brewing side Whitbread International continued to expand. Whitbread's offered its technical knowledge to foreign brewers and built factories for them, often in exchange for some of the Company's stock. Licensing operations were expanded. Jamaica and Trinidad brewed Mackeson under licence from 1973, the Leopard Brewery Ltd. in New Zealand launched Whitbread Premium Draught under licence in 1975, Singapore started brewing under licence in 1978 and so did the West African Brewery in Nigeria in 1979. This latter operation was wound up in 1984.

Whitbread Technical Services was formed in 1980 to look after these licensing operations and to undertake project management and constructional tasks around the world. In October 1982 it was renamed Whitbread International Trading Ltd.

In Europe the Belgian trade continued. In 1976 Whitbread's acquired 50% of Merchtem Brewery transferring bottling operations there from Brussels. Onkerzele Brewery closed in 1977 and Mechelen in 1978 with their activities transferring to Merchtem. Thus by 1980 all brewing and bottling was handled by Merchtem with distribution only from Brussels.

In 1973 Whitbread's purchased 88% of the share capital of Langenbach G.m.b.H., who at their vineyards at Worms produced and bottled German wines as they had done since 1852 for the U.K. trade, Europe and the United States. In 1974 Whitbread in partnership with Heineken N.V. acquired Birra Dreher S.p.A., the second largest brewer in Italy. But the Italians were reluctant to drink beer and after two poor summers Whitbread's withdrew from the partnership in 1978. In 1975 Whitbread Zug G.m.b.H. of West Germany was set up to market beer there.

In June 1979 Royal Kaltenberg lager was launched on draught and as a Diat pils in bottle. This had been developed with the Royal Bavarian Brewery.

Calvet S.A. based at Beaune, one of the leading wine houses of Bordeaux and Burgundy, had been established for over 160 years when Whitbread's acquired it in August 1982. From 1983 a working relationship was developed with Antinori handling their wines in the U.S.A. through Julius Wile.

To aid the Company's objective of increasing its interests overseas, Whitbread's bought Long John International Ltd. in 1975 for £18.4 million. Their main brand, Long John, sold in over one hundred countries being particularly strong in Europe. 70% of Long John's profits came from outside the U.K., and the development of these whisky markets was planned to complement the development of beer markets around the world. The acquisition of Long John therefore fitted in well with the Company's determined intentions to push up profits from outside this country.

Long John International dated back to 1805 when as Seager, Evans & Co. it was established in Millbank. It had absorbed a number of historic distilleries over the years. When Whitbread's acquired it, it owned five distilleries in Scotland (Laphroaig, Tormore, Glenugie, Kinclaith and Strathclyde). Apart from Long John, the main brands were Islay Mist and Black Bottle, and the malts Tormore and Laphroaig. It also owned two brands of gin, Plymouth (from the Black Friars Distillery - previously Coates & Co. at Plymouth) and Seagers. In 1981 Long John bought the Ben Nevis Distillery which after major renovation, opened in 1984. At the time of the takeover Strathclyde was in the process of being completely rebuilt. This was completed in 1978 making it one of the most modern and sophisticated grain distilleries in the world.

Throughout the 1970s exports to the U.S.A. had been on an upward trend. In early 1979 Whitbread's acquired 55% in Highland Distillers Corporation of California. This company owned Scoresby Rare Scotch whisky, the leading brand of scotch in California and other western States of America for which Long John International supplied the blend from its Scottish distilleries. By this acquisition Whitbread's hoped to increase export sales, secure supply to an increasingly important whisky customer, and give Long John a significant investment opportunity in the U.S.A.

The search for suitable overseas business continued with the objective of 'increasing the proportion of our earnings from overseas to a level of approximately 30%' as Charles Tidbury noted in June 1981. 49% of All Brand Importers, importers to and agents for America was acquired in 1982. In October 1982 Julius Wile was purchased. In 1983 the United States business was reorganised, the product range rationalised, brand marketing strategies restructured and long range business plans developed.

The other major area of new growth came on the retail side. In 1973 Alex Bennett noted that 'the development of various kinds of catering has been the largest factor in our progress in managed houses over the last two years, and there is still much more to be achieved'. The various chains of steakhouses, Trophy Taverns in the west, Duttons Grillhouses in the north, and the new Beefeater Steakhouses were brought under one management with the establishment of Beefeater Steakhouses Ltd. in 1979. In that year the 25th Beefeater was opened. The chain grew to 100 in 1982 and 150 in 1984. To support this new development a Retail Division was set up in 1981, becoming Whitbread Retail Division in 1983. The Division expanded rapidly as the number of Beefeater Steakhouses increased.

New ideas were developed such as Roast Inns carveries, and the Hungry Fisherman fish and chip shops, both starting in 1982. The latter was discontinued in 1983 but the Roast Inns thrived and by 1984, seventeen outlets were operating. A joint venture with PepsiCo in Pizza Hut (U.K.) was signed in 1982. By 1984 there were forty Pizza Hut Restaurants trading. Another joint venture was signed in 1984 with GB-Inno (Belgium) to help develop retailing in continental Europe.

All these acquisitions, supplemented by the purchase of Henekey's in April 1984, meant the Company was well placed to take advantage of the growing eating-out market.

Retail Division, to which the growing Threshers off-licence chain was transferred, increased its involvement in the leisure market with the acquisition of Rank Discos in 1983. It was also responsible for hotel developments. In 1973 the Company had acquired a substantial interest in the Ashton Court Country Club near Bristol. Ashton Court also owned the St. Pierre Golf and Country Club at Chepstow. By 1984 the St. Pierre was one of six hotels managed and owned by Whitbread in partnership with the JT Group.

In the same year a small specialist Budget Hotel organisation was formed to exploit existing Whitbread's hotel properties and to expand into that sector of the market.

The result of all these developments at home and abroad had a dramatic effect on the size and nature of the Company and its business. 3,000 jobs were lost in production and distribution between 1979 and 1984, while in the three years to 1984, 5,000 new jobs were created in retailing, as Charles Tidbury emphasised that year. 'Retailing is one of the main thrusts of Whitbread's business expansion' he said 'and now provides 40% of the Company's profits'. Another 20% came from wines and spirits wholesaling, mainly abroad, while the U.K. beer business yielded just 40%. By 1983 Whitbread's total assets exceeded £1,000 million for the first time.

To deal with the challenges of these new developments the Company undertook a number of major reorganisations.

These began in 1970 with the formation of three main regions, each administered by a Regional Managing Director with a small staff responsible to a newly-formed Whitbread Home Board.

In 1972 these Regional Boards and the Home Board were replaced. Instead at the centre an Executive Committee of ten people, responsible to the Main Board, controlled the Company's operations, working directly to the ten main companies in the Group. The Operating Companies later became Trading Companies and then in 1982 came the next big change. The U.K. Operations Committee was set up at the centre to control four regions, South West, South East, West Pennines and East Pennines & Scotland.

With all the changes in the market place it was appropriate to change the Corporate Identity. The Tankard device of the old housemark was replaced in 1982 with a newly designed hind's head and the words Estd 1742.

1984 saw a further reorganisation of the Company, this time into Divisions, "a change designed to shape up to fast changing market place conditions and to increase our market penetration". There were six divisions: Breweries, Trading, Inns, Retail, Wines and Spirits and Whitbread North America.

On the 1st February 1982 the Company was re-registered as a public company, pursuant to the Companies Act 1980, under the name Whitbread and Company, Public Limited Company, abbreviated to Whitbread and Company, PLC.

With so many changes taking place, good training became even more essential. 'We put great emphasis on training and self development' Charles Tidbury said. Whitbread's was one of the first companies to be involved in training in a big way. It began in the mid 1970s with John Adair's Action Centred Leadership programme, then run through John Garnet, Director of the Industrial Society. Coverdale was introduced in 1976 followed by the Coverdale Leadership Programme and in 1980 McAlinden courses began. In 1984 the Whitbread Leadership Programme was established. Through these training programmes 'we have created a team of people that has always done its best for Whitbread' Tidbury noted in 1984.

One other important feature of the 1972 to 1984 period was the Company's growing involvement in sponsorship. The first Whitbread Round the World Yacht Race started in September 1973 and became a regular event every four years.

Other sporting sponsorships included the Stella Artois Grass Court Championships and the Whitbread Village Cricket Series established in 1979. By 1983 nearly 700 teams entered the latter. Among sponsorships on the arts and literature side were the Stowells Trophy Award begun in 1969. This was regarded as the premier event of its kind in Britain, with as many as 40 art colleges entering by the early 1980s. The Whitbread Literary Award began in 1971, and from 1980 included an overall Book of the Year Award.

Charles Tidbury wrote in 1982: 'It has been our policy over many years to try to associate our name with the most prestigious events in their particular field, and I am satisfied that the Whitbread Round the World Yacht Race, together with the Whitbread Trophy at the Badminton Three Day Event, and the Whitbread Gold Cup at Sandown Park come into that category, and successfully promote the name of the Company, both in this country and around the world'.

Tidbury added later that all these innovative promotions 'with the very high quality of product and research and development enabled us to keep pace with larger and more powerful competitors'.

Under Alex Bennett and Charles Tidbury Whitbread's had not only survived these difficult years but had emerged stronger and well placed to deal with the new challenges of the second half of the 1980s. The Company owes much to the leadership and guidance of both men, and for the experience, innovation and spirit of enterprise that characterised their rule.

Alex Bennett had had the task of consolidating the business and restructuring its management following the decade of acquisitions in the 1960s. Under his guidance the newly created companies were merged smoothly into a management structure that provided a large degree of local and regional autonomy. He was the principal architect of the reorganisation of the Company. During his five years as Chairman the Company steadily expanded increasing its turnover from £219.6 million in 1972 to £518.5 million in 1977.

Charles Tidbury brought tremendous energy to his role during his six and a half years as Chairman, travelling extensively round the Company meeting people and hearing their views, and always with the feeling that 'because we're not the biggest, we have to try to be the best. We have to be better than the competition in terms of products and quality'. Summing up his period of office he said 'we now have a team of people in Whitbread with a far broader spread of skills and have seen the Company develop rapidly away from just beer and wholesaling. Whitbread's has achieved a broader base to its business and the total business, despite inflation and recession, has grown significantly.'

The period 1972 to 1984 had witnessed tremendous changes. But in Charles Tidbury's words: 'We must never be afraid of change. Not all the things we change will be successful, but as long as most of them are, and the company keeps to its principles of providing quality products and service then it will thrive in the future, and will always be one of the big names in British business'.

Charles Tidbury retired in 1984 and was succeeded as Chairman by Samuel Charles Whitbread.

1984 - February 1990

The Company that Sam Whitbread took over as Chairman in August 1984 was a vastly different enterprise to that bequeathed by his great great great great grandfather in 1796, and during the next six years was to change still further. He wrote in 1987: 'I should like to emphasise the increasingly diverse nature of the Company's business. Whitbread's is no longer just a British brewer. It is an international company producing and marketing all types of drinks ... It is equally committed to the retailing of drinks and food through Threshers, Beefeater Restaurants, Roast Inns and the Pizza Hut chain'. By 1989 the three main areas of the Company's business were Leisure Retailing, Beer and Wines & Spirits. Of these Leisure Retailing was 'the fastest growing area in terms of turnover, investment and long term profit growth, in the U.K. and overseas', and produced bigger profits than any other stream of business in the last six months of the year 1988/89.

Development in the Company during this period may be conveniently summarised by each of the divisions established in 1984.

For Breweries Division the closure of Luton Brewery in June 1984 led to immediate steps to realign Group production capacity. Additional fermentation and maturation plant was added to Magor and Faversham. The Gold Label Barley Wine bottling line was relocated at Sheffield. A new kegging line was installed at Magor and a bottling line for 2 litre plastic bottles installed at Samlesbury. All these changes were completed by May 1985. The creation of a national brewing division led to dramatic improvements in quality, efficiency and supply. In 1988 Whitbread White Label, the first national low-alcohol bitter brand was launched, being brewed at Castle Eden and Cheltenham.

Capital investment in production facilities continued at around £20 million a year. In 1987/88 this money went to a new brewhouse at Samlesbury, refurbishment at Sheffield and a new cask racking facility at Cheltenham. However, the trend to lager and take-home trade meant that facilities had to be reviewed again. During 1987 packaging ceased at Romsey, and in 1988 brewing stopped at Salford and Marlow. Brewing continued at Samlesbury, Magor, Castle Eden, Sheffield, Cheltenham and Faversham.

In March 1988 Whitbread secured the exclusive UK distribution rights for Murphy's Irish Stout.

In October 1989 Whitbread's acquired for £50.7 million the brewing interests of Boddington's Strangeways Brewery in Manchester. The deal included Higson's Brewery in Liverpool that Boddington had bought in 1985. Also included were the Oldham brands. Boddington's bought the Oldham Brewery Co Ltd in 1982.

Whitbread Trading Division, with responsibility for 4,600 tenanted pubs, for sales to the free on-trade and for the distribution of beers, wines, spirits and soft drinks to all outlets stocking the Company's products, was the largest business unit. It also handled all the Whitbread take home trade mainly to off-licences and supermarkets, and the duty free trade. In 1987 Whitbread Trading South announced that it was closing down its operations at Romsey and Portsmouth and moving to a new site near Southampton. The £10 million Hedge End development described as 'the best equipped depot within Whitbread' was officially opened by the Princess Royal in October 1989. Lancing Depot closed in May 1989, and was replaced by Burgess Hill, operating as a satellite depot from Maidstone.

In 1988 Whitbread National Sales Division was established to handle Whitbread Take Home, Duty Free Trade, National on Trade and other Brewers Trade.

In 1988 Whitbread's acquired Homark Associates, one of the country's leading manufacturers of beer dispense equipment. Homark was then integrated with Trading Division's Inntec Services which supplied and installed dispense equipment, to Whitbread's and other companies.

On the beer wholesaling side All Brand Importers continued to import into the U.S.A. and distribute products such as Whitbread, Mackeson, Moosehead, Pilsner Urquell, Fosters and so on until February 1990 when it was sold for £6.1 million to Guinness. 1989 saw the closure of Company operations in Belgium, known as Whitbread Belgium to 1987 and International Beer Operations thereafter. In 1984 the St Sixtus Brewery at Watou and in 1986 the Eylenbosch Brewery at Schepdaal had been acquired, but were then disposed of in 1989. Agreement was reached in 1989 with Interbrew whereby Interbrew would brew, distribute and market Whitbread's beers in Belgium and six other European countries. Brussels depot finally closed in January 1990, bringing to an end 85 years of involvement in that country.

Whitbread Inns Division was established to retail beer through around 1,600 managed houses from a head office in Luton and with ten locally based companies. During this period a whole range of new developments were tested, several of them proving very successful.

Brewers Fayre, a waitress-service pub-restaurant concept which originated in the North West was extended to 75 houses during 1986/87. By 1989 there were 100 such outlets. Roast Inns, moved back from Retail Division, were also successful. 45 outlets in 1987/88 had grown to 50 by 1988/89. A totally different concept was provided by Henry's, a chain of continental-style cafe-bars. There were 5 around the country by 1989.

Whitbread Inns Division was also responsible for machine services. PCM, the amusement machine company, continued to grow, expanding into non-Whitbread outlets and absorbing other businesses. On the manufacturing side, a partnership was established with JPM Holdings of Cardiff in 1987. In 1989 PCM was put up for sale and sold to Bass in January 1990.

Whitbread Retail Division traded through a wide variety of businesses, steadily expanding existing ones, while testing and adding new concepts. In the restaurant business Beefeater Steak Houses achieved and held market dominance in their sector. In 1987 the first Beefeater opened in Scotland to be followed by several others. By 1989 210 of these highly successful restaurants had been opened in the U.K. Profits remained well ahead despite greatly increased competition. The acquisition in December 1987 of Weinkruger Weinbau-Weinkellerei GmbH, a German restaurant chain based at Deidesheim in West Germany, provided 16 restaurant sites and was seen as a base for expanding Beefeater Restaurants into that country. By the end of 1988 the first one had been opened. However difficulties with planning permission ensued. One further site, a Denver in Frankfurt, was opened and then Weinkruger and the remaining sites were sold in November 1988.

Also in West Germany in 1987, Retail Division signed a joint venture agreement with Schwaga Holding GmbH & Co for 50% of Denver Steak and Lunch, a high street restaurant business. By early 1990 eleven restaurants, renamed Steak and Seafood were trading.

Whitbread's became the biggest steakhouse owner in West Germany with the acquisition at the end of December 1989 of Churrasco Steak-Restaurant GmbH, with its twenty nine restaurants in nineteen major cities, including Berlin.

During 1989 an additional Beefeater Restaurant acquired separately, had been opened at Bergisch Gladbach.

In March 1990 the two German Beefeaters were consolidated under the Churrasco name. One was closed; the other despite initial plans to convert to a Denver, seems likely to be disposed of as well. Following a rebranding of Churrasco, about half the Denver restaurants will convert to Churrasco, with the remainder following early in 1991.

Pizza Hut (U.K.), the joint Whitbread and PepsiCo venture, accelerated during 1986. Forty new restaurants were opened taking the total to 115. By 1989 there were 170, with the operation trebling its profits in the previous two years and having over one third market share of the sector. Pizza Hut U.K.'s success was acknowledged when the American brand owner chose it as International Franchisee of 1988.

Other Pizza Hut developments included Pizza Hut Belgium, a joint venture with GB-Inno. Two were opened in Belgium in 1985 and this had increased to fifteen by 1988. In 1989 a new company was formed with GB-Inno to develop Pizza Hut in the Netherlands. Another agreement was concluded with PepsiCo Food Service International to develop Pizza Hut in France.

A separate joint venture with GB-Inno involved the opening of two Quick Hamburger restaurants in London in 1985. In 1986 the acquisition of the Wendy sites provided the opportunity to expand the chain, and by 1987 there were five restaurants. Although they traded well it was decided not to stay in this market, and the chain, then of eight restaurants, was sold in 1988.

In October 1987 Whitbread acquired The Keg, a chain of 75 steak and seafood restaurants in Canada and in Seattle, U.S.A. Rationalisation of the business swiftly followed acquisition and with this and improved marketing The Keg was achieving excellent results by 1989. Expansion continued with the acquisition in 1989 of seventeen restaurants in Washington State, Oregon and Colorado, from Seattle-based Sea Galley Stores Inc. Also in 1989 thirteen Denny's restaurants and four development sites on the eastern seaboard in Australia were acquired from Ansett Transport Industries. It was planned that they should be converted into the style of The Keg and known as Keg Australia. The Australian Business was managed by Whitbread Restaurants (Australia) Ltd.

In 1985 Whitbread's signed a franchise agreement with T.G.I. Friday (U.S.A.). The first U.K. restaurant was opened in Birmingham in March 1986, followed by Covent Garden, London in April 1987, Fareham in Hampshire in 1988, Reading and Cardiff in 1989. In its first full calendar year the Covent Garden branch broke the world record for sales in any TGI Friday's restaurant.

The various discos that had been purchased were brought together in 1985 under one management using the trading name of Aureon Entertainments. By 1986 Aureon was the second largest discotheque operator in the U.K. But during 1987 it was decided that discos were too volatile an area to grow into a national chain, and in September that year Aureon Entertainments and its 39 discotheques was sold.

As well as restaurants and discos Retail Division was responsible for the hotel sector. The year 1984/85 was one of consolidation and planning. All the 22 Group hotels were placed under one management structure. A new concept 'Whitbread Coaching Inns' emerged. The seven units that year grew to 24 by early 1987 with a further seven hotels due to be converted to Coaching Inns during the year. The number rose to 35 by 1988 and 38 by 1989. In the latter year the name of the operation was changed to Lansbury Hotels.

The expansion of the budget hotel sector led to further investment in Travel Inns, a motel-type concept situated adjacent to Beefeater Steak Houses. The first ones opened in 1987 at Basildon and Nuneaton, and were very successful. By 1989 there were twelve in operation.

Country Club Hotels, the venture jointly run with JT, also continued to expand and improve their facilities. There were five hotels by 1986, and seven by 1989 with a further three under construction or redevelopment.

On the off-licence side in the period 1984 to 1990 there was a steady acquisition of new units through company or site acquisitions. Among the former were Whittals Wines, Patens Wines, Gough Brothers and Julian Flook. In 1985 it was decided to convert all off-licences to the Thresher name. Numbers rose from 800 in 1985 to nearly 1,000 in 1989, of which around 700 were traditional off-licences and 300 specialist wine shops. A new concept, Wine Rack, was launched in July 1989 offering customers a wine cellar environment. By the end of 1990 it is expected that 50 will have opened. In addition to the Wine Rack, Thresher have developed two separate concepts, Wine Shops and Off-Licences, with Wine Shops offering a greater selection of wine than the more traditional Off-Licences. By early 1990 Thresher's had transferred its staff from Welwyn Garden City and relocated at its northern headquarters at Huyton, Liverpool.

The remaining area of the Company's business, Wines, Spirits and Soft Drinks, includes the operation in the U.S.A. In 1984/85 the Buckingham Corporation (acquired in October 1984 for £92 million) was integrated with Julius Wile to form the Buckingham Wile Company. This along with the Fleischmann Distilling Company formed a separate operating division called Whitbread North America. At the same time the outstanding 45% of Highland Distillers of California was acquired. In 1986 and 1987 came a new area of investment with the acquisition of a major vineyard property in Napa Valley, California. A joint venture with several Napa Valley growers came to fruition in September 1987 with the launch of three premium Napa Valley varietal wines under the Julius Wile & Sons name. Another project was the development of a super premium wine at Atlas Peak Vineyards.

Trading conditions in North America in 1986 and 1987 were not easy. The 20% Federal Excise Tax increase in October 1985 led to heavy price competition and a reduction in inventories as sales fell. Marketing had to be increased and margins were reduced. In April 1988 it was decided to concentrate on premium imported spirit brands and premium imported and domestic wines. Fleischmann Distilling Company with its range of U.S. produced products was disposed of, although in the deal Whitbread's retained the supply of Scotch whisky for the successful Scoresby brand.

The wines, spirits and soft drinks operations all saw major organisational change during these years. In 1986 Whitbread's European wine interests, Langenbach and Calvet, and the U.K. wines and spirits wholesaling arm, Stowells of Chelsea, were merged with the Grants of St. James's subsidiary of Allied-Lyons to form a new joint venture company European Cellars. From this new company it was planned to market wine brands internationally, something that neither partner believed could be achieved from their existing business bases. European Cellars became the largest wholesaler of wine in the U.K. with a market share of over 15%. The Stowells of Chelsea Wine Box was accounting for half the branded wine box market in the U.K. by 1989 with over one million cases sold a year.

J.R. Phillips & Co. Ltd. was jointly owned with Allied-Lyons. In 1989 Phillips was distributing in the U.K. well known brands such as Courvoisier, Grant's Whisky, Glenfiddich, Harvey's sherries and Cockburn's ports.

Links also continued with Antinori, one of Italy's leading wine companies. In 1989 Whitbread's were continuing to market their products in the U.S.A., and had formed a joint venture for distribution in the U.K. This increased its turnover by 20% in the year to 1990. At the same time Antinori's diversification programme moved forward with the acquisition of Alfredo Prunotto, a Piedmont-based company with a good reputation for its Barolo and Barbaresco wines.

1986-1987 saw a transformation of the soft drinks business. Britannia Soft Drinks, in which Whitbread's had 35%, managed by Bass and trading as Canada Dry Rawlings, was joined in March 1986 by Britvic. In January 1987 the Beecham Soft Drinks Company was acquired for £120 million. At the same time, the new Company, now called Britvic Corona, acquired a long-term contract for the distribution of the Pepsi Cola brand in the U.K., and PepsiCo became a significant shareholder. Whitbread's share of the new Company stood at 22.5%. By 1988 over £25 million had been spent enlarging and improving the Company's production units. Beckton became the largest soft drinks plant in Europe with ten bottling and canning lines. By 1989 Britvic Corona held almost one-fifth of the U.K. soft drinks market. A new high-speed canning line was installed at the Rugby factory, which will enable Britvic to fill more than 1 billion cans of soft drinks in 1990.

On the spirits side, Long John International continued to perform well in a sometimes difficult market, increasing volume and market share, especially for the Laphroaig brand. By 1987 there were three distilleries in operation, at Laphroaig, Strathclyde and Tormore. Glenugie had been closed in the early 1980s. Ben Nevis Distillery, re-acquired in 1981, came back into production in 1984. But production ceased in 1986 and it was sold in 1989.

In 1987 Whitbread's made the largest acquisition in its history when it purchased the family gin distilling business of James Burrough PLC, the owners of Beefeater Gin, for £174.5 million. 'The acquisition is extremely exciting for us' said Sam Whitbread 'For a long time we have been seeking to build a premium spirits business and James Burrough, one of the few major independent spirits companies in the UK was certainly the one we wanted most'. The acquisition provided Whitbread's with a strong foothold in the huge US market for 'light spirits'. Beefeater Gin ranked as the second best imported selling gin there. In March 1988 James Burrough and Long John International were merged to form James Burrough Distillers. It was decided in 1988 to move the bottling of Burrough's brands to the Long John plant at Westthorn, Glasgow, the Beefeater Gin Distillery and the Company's head office remaining at Kennington in London.

The full integration of the two companies was completed by 1989. The Company's gin-bottling, warehousing and administration was concentrated at Westthorn where an £8 million investment programme was put in place.

During the period of Sam Whitbread's chairmanship the Company continued to promote its image and products through the same high-quality sponsorships as before. In November 1984 Whitbread's received an award from the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts for the Whitbread Literary Awards, then in their fifteenth year. The largest sponsorship remained the Whitbread Round the World Yacht Race, the fifth one of which set sail in September 1989.

One particular feature of these years was Whitbread's growing involvement in the Community. As Sam Whitbread expressed it in 1985 'By donations, secondment or other forms of assistance to relevant local projects we benefit the health and prosperity of the community.'

The Company has always, and continues today, to do a great deal to ensure that a responsible attitude is taken to alcohol. Back in 1979 with widespread publicity about pub violence the Company set up a research project into contemporary violence. It was carried out by the Contemporary Violence Research Centre at Oxford. In 1986 Whitbread Inns commissioned an investigation of violent incidents during the year. This led to a training programme with a pilot scheme launched in July 1987 to assist managers. From this came in 1989 the winning of a National Training Award for the Company's Conflict Avoidance Programme. Whitbread's was also instrumental in establishing Pub Watch Schemes around the country. In 1988 information on the subject was published in a booklet 'Alcohol: Use and Misuse'.

In 1984/85 the Community Programme was redefined. The main elements consisted of support for Local Enterprise Agencies, the London Enterprise Agency and Business in the Community. Together with the London Enterprise Agency, Focus, a company with redundancy counselling and job search facilities was established. The Youth Training Scheme continued and remained the largest section in the Whitbread Community Programme. Run from six centres, it trained 240 young people a year, while 40 more from the North East and the inner-city areas of London received on-the-job training.

In 1986 Whitbread's became one of the founder members of the Per Cent Club, an association of large companies pledged to try and give at least half of one per cent of their pre-tax profits to community projects. Whitbread's also launched its Community Care Award Scheme. In 1987 this attracted over 1,500 nominations. The London Education Business Partnership was set up to provide a link between business and education, and soon became an important part of the programme.

By 1989 the Company had become widely recognised as a leader in the field of partnerships between business, the community and the public sector.

In 1985 it was decided to set up a Company Archive to preserve properly the surviving ledgers and other records of its long history. By 1990 the Whitbread Archive, with some 10,000 volumes and many other important documents and artefacts, had become the largest organised collection of historic brewing industry material in the country.

In March 1989 the Monopolies and Mergers Commission published their report after a three year investigation into the brewing industry. Although the original recommendations were modified, the consequences, particularly the Order that from November 1992 no UK brewer could tie more than 2000 owned public houses plus half the number above 2000, were and continue to be far reaching.

While the MMC investigation was in progress the Company carried out an extensive strategic review of its operations. It was decided that Whitbread's would continue as a major UK brewer, a significant owner and manager of public houses, and an operator of expanding chain leisure retail companies.

But with the realisation that the enormous investment necessary to enable Whitbread's to become a leading international company in wines and spirits could not be made, James Burrough Distillers in the UK and Buckingham Wile Co and the Napa Valley Vineyards in the USA were put up for sale. The decision to sell was 'extremely difficult' especially as the Spirits Division had produced its best ever results. 'But I have no doubt whatever' wrote Peter Jarvis 'that the decision was the right one for Whitbread's'. They were acquired by Allied-Lyons Plc in February 1990. Whitbread's realised £542 million from the sale, the largest disposal in the Company's history.

March 1990 onwards

From 1st March 1990 Sam Whitbread became Non-Executive Chairman of the Company, and Peter Jarvis was appointed Group Chief Executive. Peter Jarvis had joined Whitbread's as sales and marketing director with Long John in 1976, became Whitbread marketing director in 1978, joined the Main Board in 1979, and was appointed Group Managing Director in 1985.

At the same time a new organisation was put in place to accommodate the Company's strategic change of direction. The new divisions were the Beer Company, Pub Partnerships (responsible for tenancies), Leisure (hotels and retail), Inns, Restaurants and Property.

'We are now in excellent shape for the future' wrote Peter Jarvis 'clearly focussed in three strategic areas where we are already leaders - beer brewing and marketing; the management of public houses; and the development of leisure retail businesses.'

'This is a plan to ensure continued progress through the 1990s' he said. 'I am very excited about the coming decade'.

Development and investment in the UK continued. A £50 million programme of developing retail operations in Scotland was unveiled at the beginning of the year.

Two major Country Club Hotels were opened: the £10 million Breadsall Priory, near Derby and the £12 million flagship hotel at Dalmahoy on the outskirts of Edinburgh. The highly successful TGI Friday chain continued to grow with new restaurants opening at Kingston, Manchester and Cheltenham, the three amounting to a £5 million investment. The £4 million restored Georgian mansion Coombe Lodge near Croydon opened in August as the flagship in the Beefeater Steakhouse chain, and the Brewers' Fayre chain was in line for 126 outlets by the end of the year.

Building on the success of Henry's, (there were eleven by September 1990), further new ventures were launched such as Hanrahan's, Palio, Cafe Matisse, Mallards and Mulligans.

On the Beer Company side the cask ale portfolio already enhanced by the national distribution deal for Pedigree Bitter signed with brewer Marston, Thompson and Evershed in 1988 and the acquisition of Boddington's Bitter in October 1989, was further strengthened by agreements for Brakspear's Bitter in May, Brains Dark and Bitter in June and Fuller's Chiswick Bitter in July.

In September 1990 the completion of the final stage of the five year, £17 million investment at Exchange Brewery, Sheffield was celebrated. Sheffield has become the third largest production centre, after Magor and Samlesbury and the biggest cask ale producer.

A £1.7 million development plan for the Hop Farm at Beltring was unveiled in January.

As part of the reorganisation Whitbread Inns planned to reduce the number of its local companies from ten to seven closing its local headquarters in North London, Kirkstall and Romsey. The Roast Inns carvery chain was brought within the seven local companies, rather than operating as a separate national organisation as previously.

Higson's Brewery in Liverpool was closed in April 1990, and Faversham Brewery followed in May as part of the continuing drive to reduce costs. Production was transferred from the two breweries to Sheffield and Cheltenham.

By May 1990 after a series of transactions JPM Holdings Ltd, in which Whitbread's already held a 50% interest, became a wholly owned subsidiary. JPM (Automatic Machines) Ltd, a subsidiary of JPM Holdings Ltd is one of the UK's leading game machine manufacturers.

In September the drinks dispense business Homark Associates was offered for sale, as no longer fitting the core businesses.

In August Whitbread's sold its 50% share of European Cellars to Allied-Lyons PLC.

The Company's sponsorship of sports continued. Mr Fisk won the Whitbread Gold Cup at Sandown in April, Brian Moore was named Whitbread Best Bitter Rugby World Player of the Year in May, Ivan Lendl won the Stella Artois championship at Queens in June, and Tony Johnstone won the Murphy's Cup in August. Even as Peter Blake came to Chiswell Street to collect the Whitbread Trophy from the Chairman and the Duke and Duchess of Kent for his memorable win in the 1989-90 Whitbread Round the World Yacht Race, preparations were in hand for the next race in four years time.

During 1990 the Community Care Awards were renamed the Whitbread Volunteer Action Awards, while the Youth Training Scheme became the Skills Development Programme.

Plans were announced during 1990 for the modernisation of the Chiswell Street offices. Staff would be concentrated on the historic south side of the road, and the vacated North Yard offices would be sold or leased. Many Chiswell Street staff were transferred to Luton. Also at Luton a long term lease was signed in April for a new headquarters, named Porter Tun House, for Whitbread Beer Company at Capability Green on the outskirts of the town. The building was officially opened by Sam Whitbread in September. The offices at Dorking, first occupied in 1978, were closed in September 1990

Abroad, The Keg bought six restaurants from Detroit-based Little Caesar's Company in June 1990 in a deal worth one million Canadian dollars. All were planned to be converted into Keg Restaurants. The Keg, a major success story for Whitbread had by this time built a chain of nearly 100 retail steak and seafood restaurants in Canada, Australia and the United States.

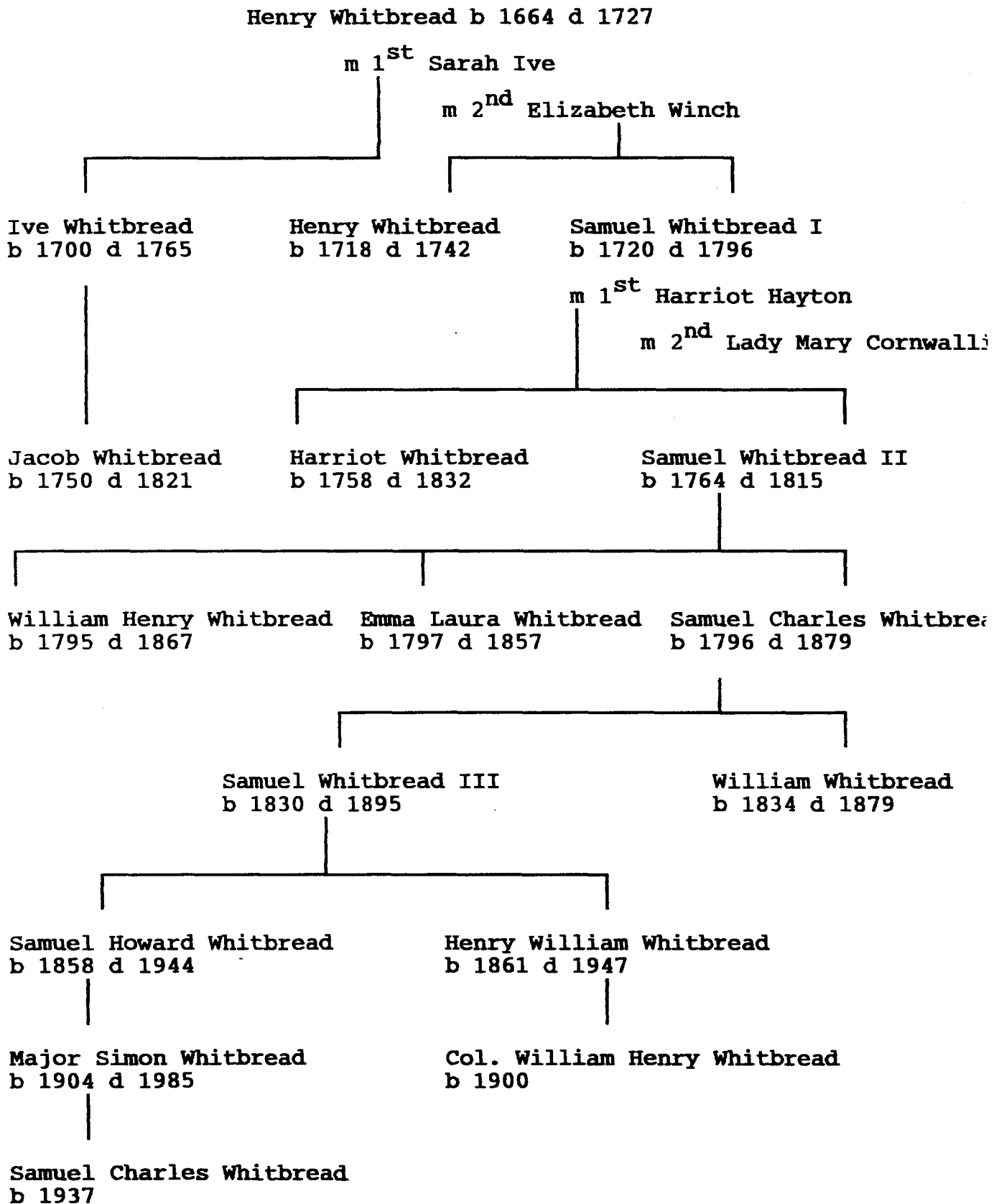
Meanwhile Pizza Hut, with sixteen restaurants in Belgium and another 10 there in the pipeline expanded into the Netherlands and France. In September 1990 a Pizza Hut was opened in Moscow.

The great enterprise of Whitbread's has come a long way since the young Samuel Whitbread started in the Goat Brewhouse in December 1742. Whitbread's the brewer has become Whitbread's the beer, food and leisure group.

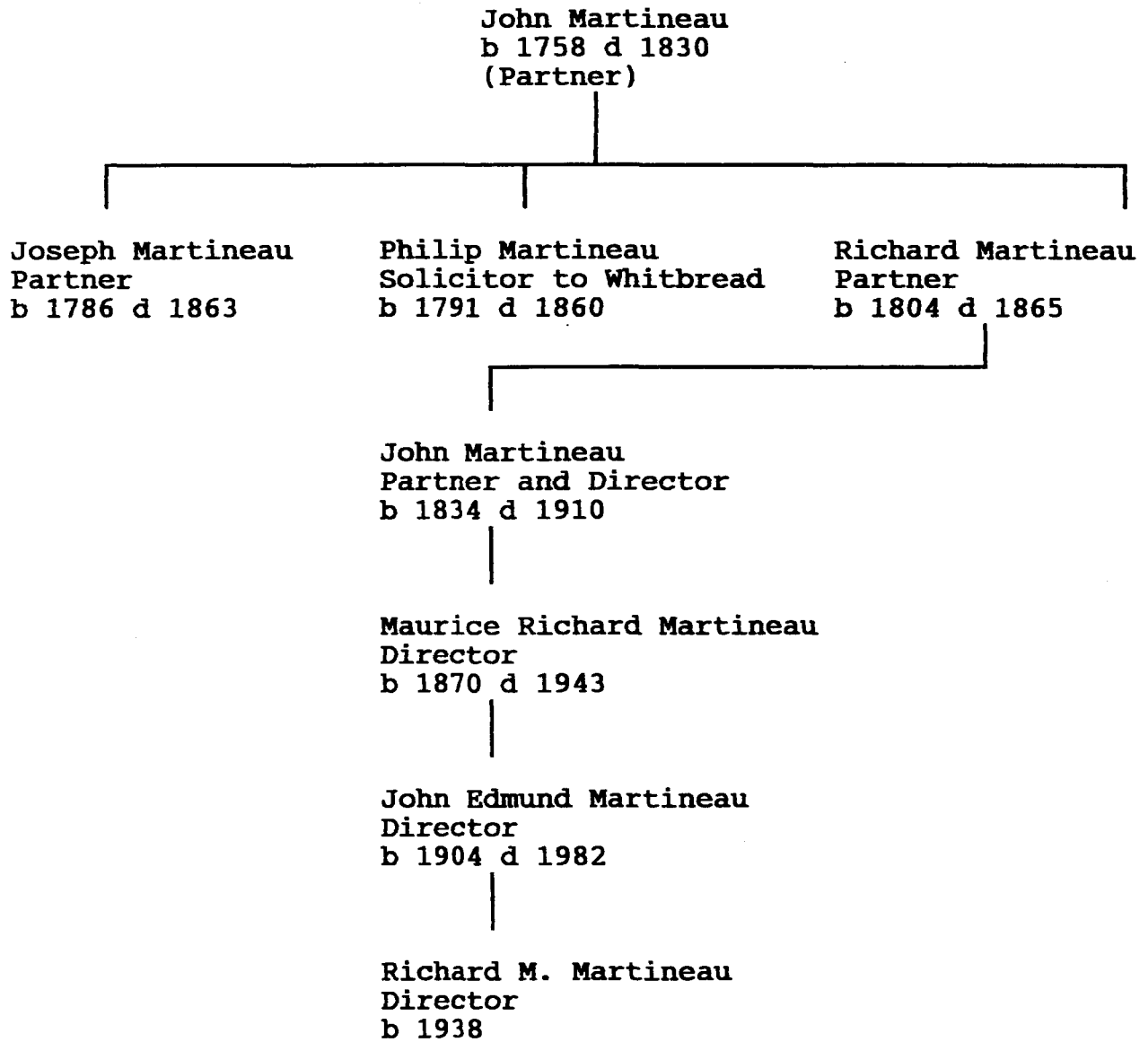
'We are an old established Company but we are also a new Company' wrote Sam Whitbread in June. To reinforce this point the Company will change its name in March 1991 from Whitbread & Co PLC to Whitbread PLC.

With the advent of the single European market in 1992 Whitbread's enters an exciting and challenging new phase, but it faces this with the same spirit of adventure and enterprise that it has faced the many challenges in its long history. Through all the vicissitudes of 250 years Whitbread's has found a way forward, and has grown and prospered in the process.

Simplified Family Tree - WHITBREAD family
 (Including all members of the family mentioned in the text)



Simplified family tree of the MARTINEAUS



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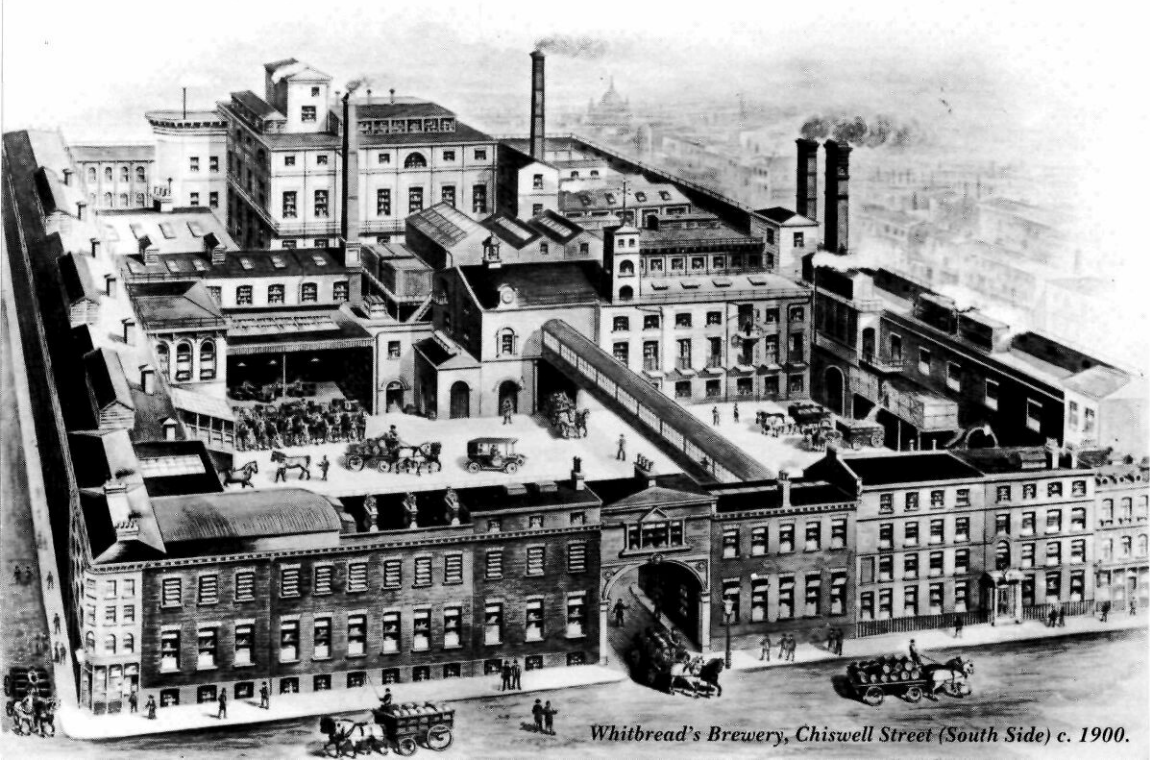
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ERRATA, CORRIGENDA et ADDENDA

p26	line 28	delete entire line
p26	line 49	for 'bottling started' read 'opened'
p27	line 14	delete 'as depot: premises retained'
p33	line 10	for '1940' read '1944'
	line 18	delete 'Two years later'
	line 33	for 'Brickwoods' read 'Portsmouth United Breweries'
p37	line 1	for 'also appeared in 1938 with' read 'appeared in 1932 or earlier. The 1938 calendar featured.'
p38	line 21	for 'Company' read 'Board'
p40	line 40	for 'here' read 'Chiswell Street'
p46	line 9-10	for 'was appointed' read 'continued as'
p49	line 17	for '1957' read '1955'
p71	line 18	for 'Fisk' read 'Frisk'
Index	p3	Add 'Campbell's Scotch Ale, 47'
Index	p10	Add 'Portsmouth United Breweries, 33'



Whitbread's Brewery, Chiswell Street (South Side) c. 1900.



THE WHITBREAD ARCHIVE

*The Whitbread Archive is located at the Company's headquarters at
Chiswell Street, London.*

Old records from Whitbread and many other businesses have been gathered together and are available for research by students, the media and members of the public. With over 10,000 ledgers, a library of 2,000 books and many photographs, the Whitbread Archive is the largest organised collection of historic brewing industry material in the country.

There is also a small Archive Museum which houses a diverse collection of artefacts from many different companies. The Museum may be viewed by prior arrangement with the Archivist.

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