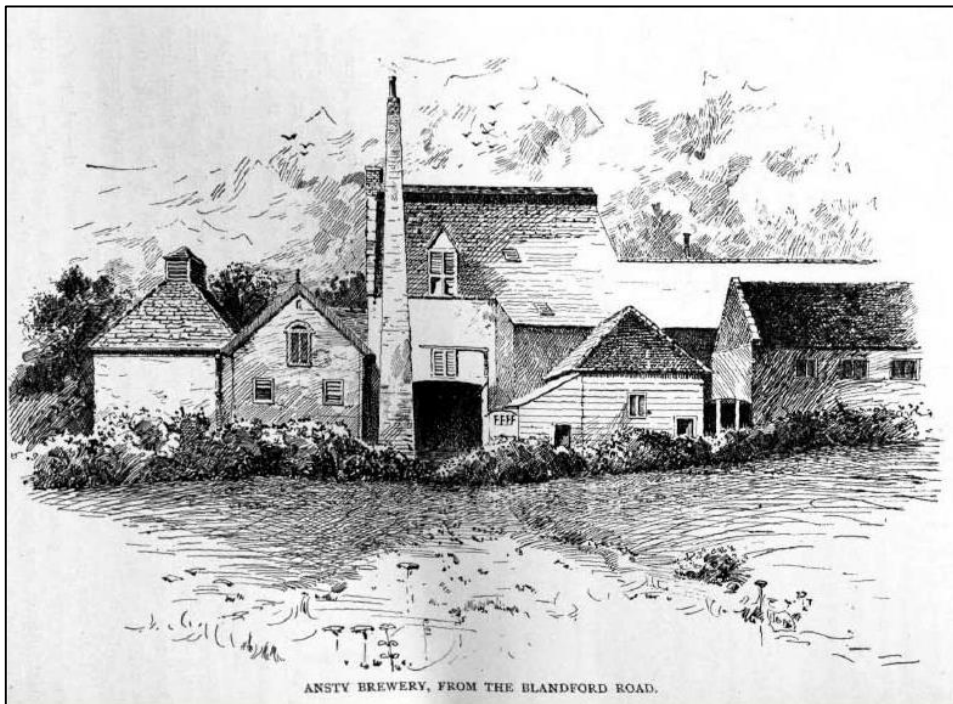


HALL & WOODHOUSE, Blandford St. Mary, Blandford Forum

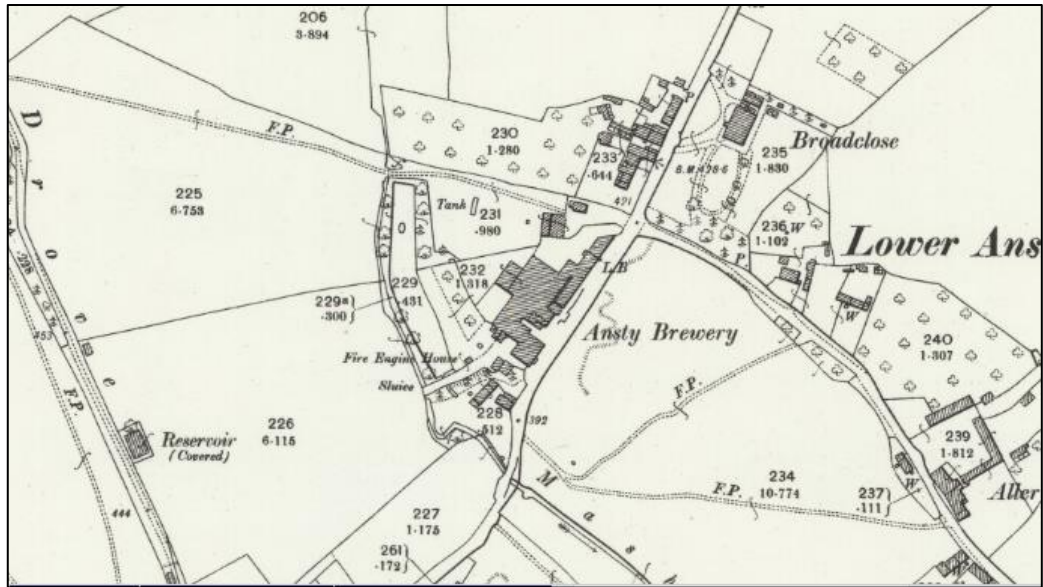
In seven years time, the Blandford Brewery of Hall and Woodhouse will, hopefully, celebrate 250 years of brewing in Dorset. Many people in the South of England will be familiar with the term “Badger Beer” for the firm – still controlled by the Woodhouse family – owns over 250 pubs, in Dorset, Wiltshire, Devon, Somerset, London, Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Kent and Oxfordshire.

The story began in 1777 when Charles Hall began brewing at Lower Ansty, Ansty, Dorset. Charles, born in 1752, was the son of William Hall, a brewer at Dewlish. William continued his brewery to 1782 when Charles and his youngest son, Thomas took over. But Charles’ main brewery was at Ansty, where he was later assisted by son, Robert, born in 1786. His trade was boosted by a Government contract to supply thirsty soldiers at their camp near Weymouth. They were stationed there in readiness for a French invasion, which never came. The Dewlish Brewery was to be sold in 1843 to Mr Syme and came to an end in 1859, when it was destroyed by fire, with an unfortunate loss of life.



Ansty Brewery - from Barnard's Noted Breweries

Robert Hall inherited the Ansty business on the death of his father in 1827. He did not marry. Around 1838, George Edward Illingworth Woodhouse, born in 1821, went to work at the brewery and after 2 years, he spent some time in the USA and Canada before returning to England in 1843. In 1847, he married Robert Hall’s niece, Hannah Dodge, the marriage certificate describing him as a brewer. As a wedding gift, Robert Hall admitted him to the partnership. So began the firm of Hall and Woodhouse.



Location of Ansty Brewery 1900

Robert died in 1859 and although the brewery and other property including an outlet called *The Fox Inn*, passed to his nephew, Charles Thomas Hall, Robert had suggested that his share in the brewery should be transferred to Edward Woodhouse. Thus the Hall family's involvement in the Ansty Brewery (and the firm of Hall & Woodhouse) came to an end.

The brewery was extended under Edward Woodhouse's proprietorship and on his death in 1875, the business passed to his two sons, (George) Edward Woodhouse and Alfred Charles Woodhouse. George Woodhouse married Alice Groves, daughter of Sir John Groves, proprietor of the Hope Brewery, Weymouth.

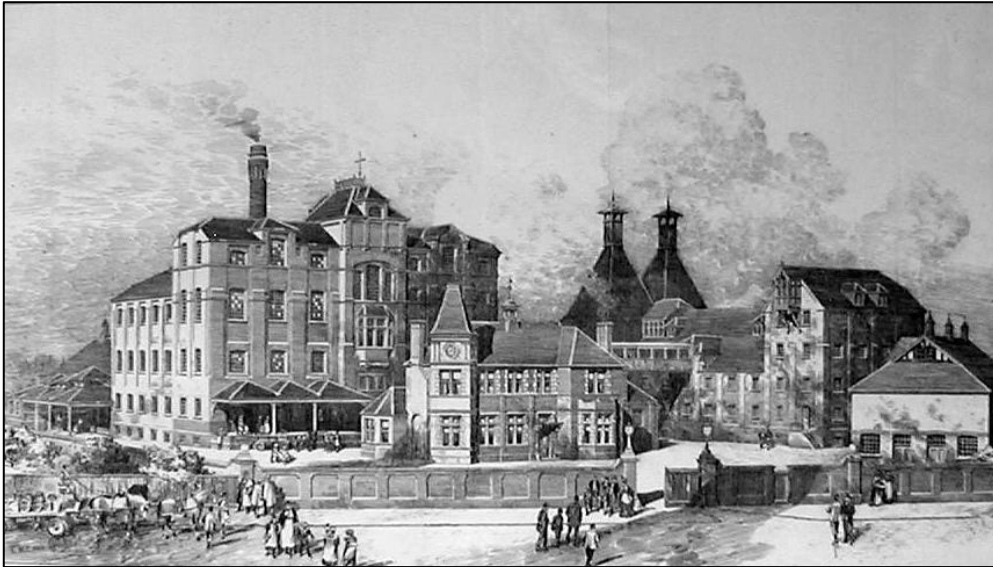
In 1875, the brewery first used the badger as their symbol, although this led to litigation at the turn of the century, when Joseph Topham Verity, manufacturer of mineral waters of Pateley Bridge, Yorkshire complained that the badger infringed their trade mark.

In 1882, they acquired Neame & Trew (late John Hector) of Blandford St Mary (see below). Both the Ansty and Blandford St. Mary breweries were operated until a major fire at the former Hector's Brewery on 14 August 1900, causing some £8000 worth of damage, and all production was then switched to the Ansty Brewery. Fortunately, because of concerns about possible flooding from the River Stour, in 1899 the firm had already begun construction of a new brewery of red brick, situated to the south east of Hector's Brewery, and this was completed at Blandford soon after in 1900. This comprised two 25 quarter plants, was built to the designs of Arthur Kinder & Sons at a cost of £28,000, with equipment by Robert Morton of Burton-on-Trent. The first brew from the new brewery was put through on 16 October 1900.

A limited company had been registered on 8 June 1898 to acquire Hall & Woodhouse Ltd. of Ansty and Blandford and Godwin Brothers, Durweston, with a total of 105 houses. George Edward Woodhouse became Chairman and served to 1916. Alfred Woodhouse was a director and served to 1915 and Frank Woodhouse was also a director, becoming Chairman in 1916 and serving to 1952. A fourth brother, Walter Woodhouse, a solicitor, was a director between 1914 and 1934.

In 1890, at the time of the visit of Alfred Barnard to the Ansty and Blandford Breweries, the draught beers being produced included *Bitter Beer*, *XXX Mild* and *XXXX Old Ale* – which Barnard described as “simply perfection”. But an advertisement for the company at the time

also listed *X Mild*, *XX Mild*, *Invalid Stout AKA* and *India Pale Ale*. Barnard revealed that 40 persons were employed at Ansty Brewery and 30 at Blandford, with the company supplying upwards of 50 tied houses and more than 5,000 customers. The head brewer then was George Collis.



The new brewery 1900

Following the opening of the new brewery at Blandford St. Mary, the Ansty Brewery was closed, although the site was used as a distribution centre. The malt houses remained in use until 1937. The site is now used as the Village Hall.

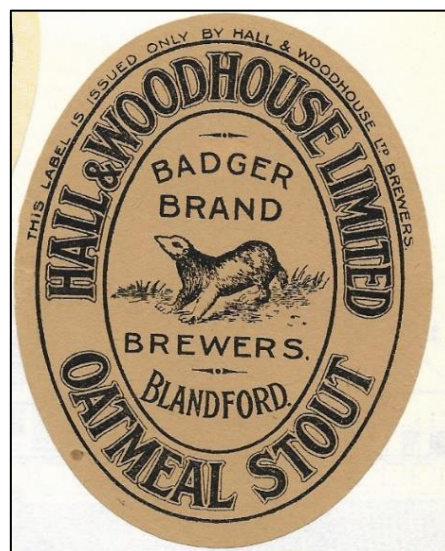
Bottled beers produced in the 1930s/1940s included –

Oatmeal Stout
XXXX

Nourishing No 1 Stout
Nourishing No 2 Stout
Light Dinner Ale

Badger Brown Ale

Popular Ale (introduced 1934).



In the 1950s, *Forum Pale Ale* was launched as well as a *Coronation Ale* in 1953. In 1977, to commemorate 200 years of brewing, *Bicentenary Ale* was brewed and bottled and a *Royal*

Wedding Ale followed in 1981. Other commemorative beers have been brewed since. The company had first brewed a lager, called *Brock Lager*, showing an image of Corfe Castle, in 1959.



Beer labels in use in the 1930s & 1940s

Hall & Woodhouse Acquisitions

A considerable number of purchases of other firms has been made over the years:

1860 – Susan Beasant, White Hart Brewery, High East Street, Dorchester

The brewery had been established in 1792.

1867 – J. Bruncker, Lytchett Minster

The brewery was probably located at *The St. Peters Finger*

1875 – Mary Shittler, Hazelbury Bryan Brewery, Antelope P.H. with 3 pubs

c1880 – Edmund Bound, Malcolmbe Horsay

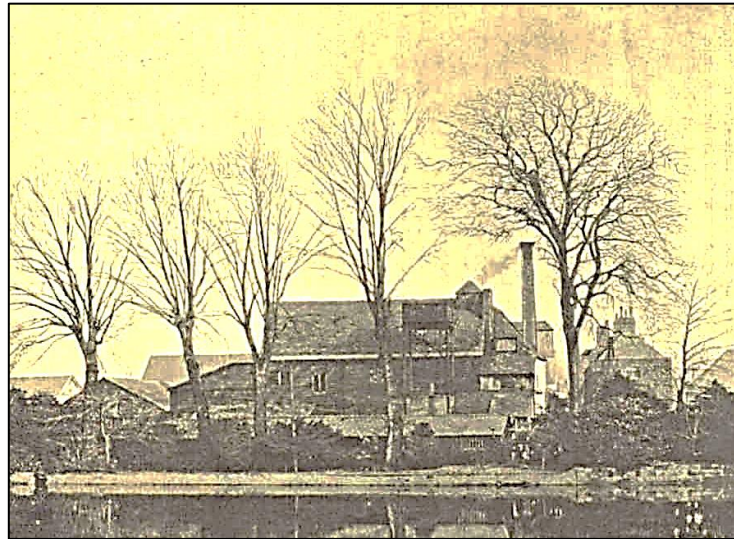
1882 - Neame & Trew (late John Hector) of Blandford St Mary with 12 pubs.

The brewery was in existence in 1789, when the tenant was William Clapcott. He went into partnership with Henry Snell in 1799 and in 1802, Snell became the sole proprietor but then took James Barrow Storey as a partner, In 1826, John Hector bought the lease

and ran the brewery with his two sons to 1879, when Horace Baydon Neame - a Kentish farmer and hop grower whose family brewery was Shepherd Neame of Faversham – and Thomas Godfrey Cock, took over the business.

The brewery had bought S. Bragg at Winterborne Strickland in 1832 and H.W. Smith at Blandford in 1882.

When Alfred Barnard visited after Hall & Woodhouse had bought the brewery, he described the location as “most delightfully situated on the bank of the Stour”.



Hector's Brewery

1898 – [Godwin Brothers, Durweston](#) with 26 pubs

Founded 1753. Brewing ceased on the retirement of Henry Godwin.



Former Durweston Brewery

c1900 – [Edward Bound, Malcolmbre Horsay Brewery](#)

c1900 – [John Brown, Crown Inn Brewery, Tolpuddle](#)

1900 – Fleur-de-Lys Brewery, Cranborne (home brewed pub)

William John Tuck had brewed between 1875 and 1880.

c1910 – Harry Richard Chapman & Son, White Hart Brewery, Market Place, Sturminster Newton

1900 – Malt Shovel Brewery, Piddletrenthide

1904 – A. & T. Sibeth, Crown Brewery, Fontmell Magna

Hall & Woodhouse's own history refers to this purchase, but it appears that they only purchased 3 of the 19 tied houses, the others being shared amongst seven other local brewers.

The brewery had been founded in 1780 and previously owned by the Flowers family – a famous name in brewing circles. Sibeth's ceased brewing on 14 December 1904.

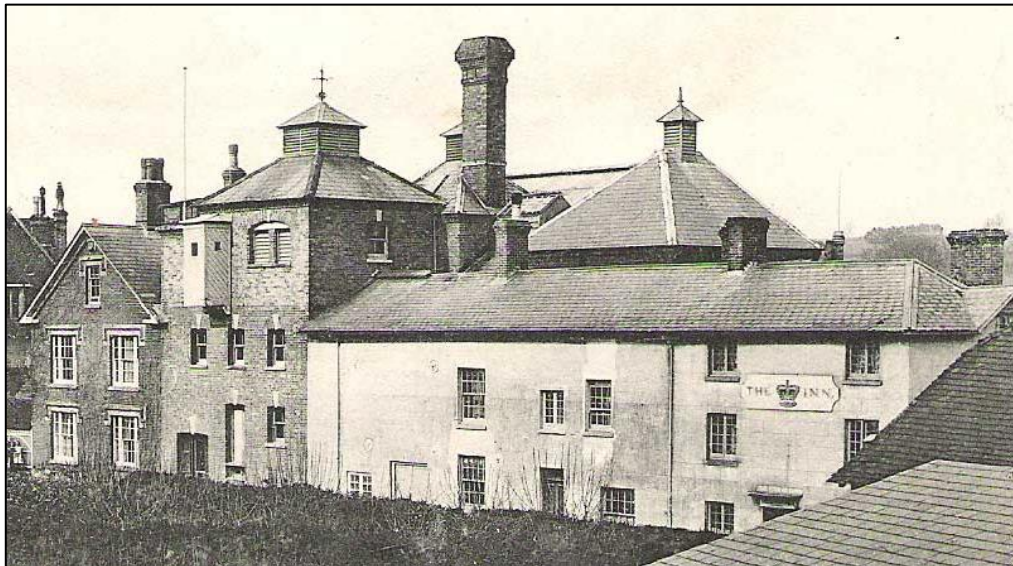
The following pubs came to Hall & Woodhouse –

Crown Inn, Fontmell Magna (Brewery Tap)

Union Arms, Child Okeford

Seymer Arms, Shillingstone

although a former pub owned by the brewery had earlier been bought by Hall & Woodhouse (*New Inn*, Okeford Fitzpaine).



Fontmell Magna Brewery

1905 – Chamen & Richards, Blandford (wine merchants)

1920 – F.C. Reed, Blandford (wine and spirit merchants)

1923 – Richard Deansely, Wincanton (wine and spirit merchant)

1935 – Lease of 5 pubs from Marnhull Brewery and purchase in 1935

1935 - Charles E. Ellis, Town Brewery, Mill Lane, Wimborne with 15 pubs

The brewery was established by Charles and Edward Ellis around 1823 at the rear of Millbank House. Charles was a brewer, maltster and miller and Edward a wine and spirit merchant. By 1830, Charles Ellis was running the concern and by 1859, his son, Charles Ellis Jnr., had taken over the business, with Frederick Ellis. The 1881 Census showed Charles Edward Ellis, aged 36, owner of the *Eastborough Brewery*, brewer and wine merchant. In 1895, the brewery was trading as C Ellis & Son.

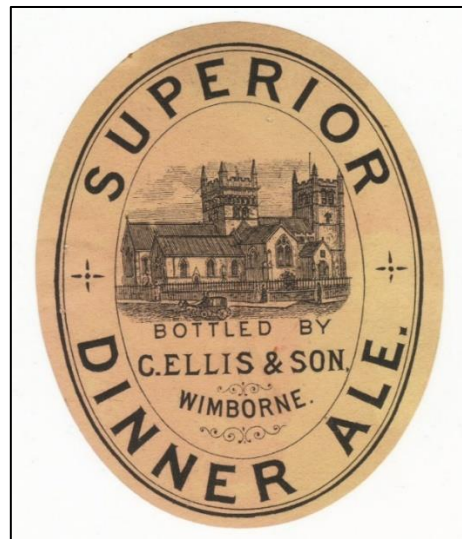
The Town Brewery had the following pubs in Wimborne -

Kings Head Hotel
Crown Hotel
Green Man
Beehive

Kings Head Tap
Crown Hotel Tap
Dorset House
Oddfellows

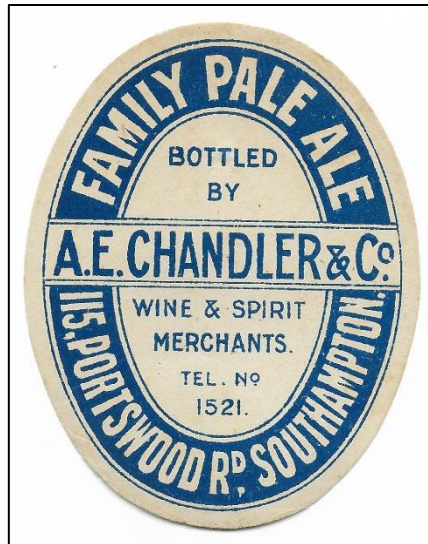
Off Licence (& Office), The Square

Brewing ceased in 1935. Bottled beer included *Superior Dinner Ale* and *Superior Nourishing Stout*. Guinness was also bottled.



1953 – [A.E. Chandler & Co., 115 Portswood Road, Southampton](#) (wine and spirit merchants) with 5 off-licences.

Chandlers also bottled beer as the label below shows.



1963 - [Matthews & Co., Wyke Brewery, Wyke, Gillingham](#) with 61 pubs

The brewery was founded behind *The Drum & Monkey* in 1750 by the Matthews family and traded as H.J. Matthews in 1840; Joseph Matthews in 1848; and Matthews & Co. in 1865. John Dinnes of *The Ship*, West Stour (a home brewed pub) was acquired in 1870 and John Goldsborough, *The Phoenix*, Gillingham (another home brewed pub) was bought in 1878. S. Campbell, Star Brewery, Shaftesbury was bought in 1903 and J.C. Higham, Ship Brewery, Shaftesbury in 1916 followed by R.R. Browning (formerly Borley), Grosvenor Brewery, Shaftesbury with 4 other pubs in 1924.

Hall & Woodhouse had first attempted to purchase the brewery in 1930 but negotiations came to nothing. On acquisition in 1963, Franey Matthews joined the Hall & Woodhouse board.



After being used for a few years for the production of a near-beer called *Skona* and then as a bottling plant, the distinctive stone-built brewery building (shown above) was converted into residential accommodation.



Three early Matthews bottle labels

2000 - [King & Barnes Ltd.](#), [Horsham Brewery](#), [The Bishopric](#), [Horsham](#), [West Sussex](#) with 55 pubs.

James King had started as a maltster in Horsham and in 1862, merged his business with Satchell's North Parade Brewery, with brewing transferred to The Bishopric. Around 1890, James King & Son acquired the wine and spirit business of W. Holden in Carfax – the premises were the former Fountain & Cock Brewery to 1852.

King & Son merged with the East Street Brewery of G.H. Barnes & Co. in 1906 to form King & Barnes Ltd.



Horsham Brewery before rebuilding

The Woodhouse family have, over the years, maintained their involvement with the brewery. Harold and Rex, sons of Edward Woodhouse, were directors from 1914 to 1943 and 1926 to 1952, respectively. Charles Woodhouse – son of Alfred – was a director from 1919 to his death in 1962, being Chairman for the last 10 years. Ralph Woodhouse – son of Walter – served as a director between 1934 and 1969.

The fourth generation of the family were Edward, son of Harold, who was Chairman in 1962, having joined the Board in 1952; his brother John, who was Head Brewer and a director from 1952, and J. M. (Jock) – son of Charles, who joined the Board in 1962. David Woodhouse, of the fifth generation, was Managing Director until his sad death in 2009, aged only 48. His younger brother Anthony was then appointed MD, with Mark Woodhouse serving as Chairman.

The company produced soft drinks under the Panda label until 2005, when that part of the business was sold. The empty Panda buildings were let to various firms, including Homebase, and on one corner of the site, a new brewhouse by Hall & Woodhouse was built in 2012, at a cost of £5 million. The equipment within the brewhouse was fabricated and built in England by Musk Engineering to a specification “that will meet Hall & Woodhouse’s brewing requirements now and for the next 100 years”. Toby Heasman, Head Brewer from 2010, led the project.

Planning permission was secured for the conversion of the old brewhouse to residential use.



New brewery 2012

The new brewery was producing, in 2012, a wide range of draught and bottled beers. The biggest brand in cask was *First Gold* at 4%, with *Tanglefoot* – which was first brewed in the 1980s - at 5%. Other draught beers include *Hopping Hare*, *Fursty Ferret* and *Pickled Partridge*, and the bottled range includes *Golden Champion*, *Golden Glory*, *Poachers Choice*, *Blandford Fly* and *First Gold*.

Keith Osborne 2020

Sources

The Noted Breweries of Great Britain & Ireland (Alfred Barnard)

Hall & Woodhouse 1777-1977 (Hurford James)

Brewery Manuals and Almanacks

Brewery History Society

Mr. Badger Gets a New Brewhouse (Roger Putman)