

# 'Victory Tea Company' Kidderminster

1931 to 1965

Proprietor Ernest Hill

Prepared by Bob Millward from documents donated to the  
Kidderminster & District Archaeological & Historical Society.

## 1950

### 'Carry on Trading'

This is not a spin-off resumé about a Frankie Howerd comedy film but an account of the of the Victory Tea Company as it stood in 1950 when it had been trading, more or less, at the same level for the past two or three years,

Tea was the main income stream for the Company and the amount purchased had changed little over the past four years: **13,400 lbs** in both 1950 and 1949, **14,000 lbs** in 1948 and **13,000 lbs** in 1947. **Pure ground coffee** supplies had been reduced by about 28% since 1947: **1,100 lbs** in 1947: **920 lbs** in 1948, **620 lbs** in 1949 and **784 lbs** in 1950. The fall in the amount of **Coffee & Chicory** products was more dramatic: the record high spend of **£332** in 1947 fell to just **£66** in 1950. On the 'flip side of the coin' expenditure on **Confectioneries** (Sweets and Chocolate) was increasing year by year: from **£510** in 1947 to **£940** in 1950.

As in 1949, the suppliers of Ground Coffee were: **James Ashby & Sons Ltd.**, **Barber's Teas (Estab. 1797) Ltd.** and **The "Priory" Tea & Coffee Co. Ltd.** - but this year "Priory" Tea over took from Barber's Teas as the main provider by far.


Barber's Teas sent out a **Price List** dated March 1950 with this attractive cover page (right). On the back were the prices for their range of **Pure Ground Coffees and Coffee Chicory extracts**. Prices of **Pure coffee** in heat sealed "FLAV-O-TAINER" bags ranged from 2/4d to 3/1d per lb. Kinka vacuum packs were priced as below.



Tins of vacuum packed pure ground coffee were more expensive.


**KINKA VACUUM PACKS**

Packed by special process which ensures absolute freshness upon the tin being opened.




Retail  
**3/10d.** per lb.

Wholesale  
**3/3d.** per lb.



Not packed at present time.

<b>SYMBOL BISCUITS LIMITED</b>		SUNYA HOUSE WILLESDEN, N.W.10 <small>PHONE: LADBROKE 1181-5 WIRE: SYMBOLBIS, LONDON</small>	<b>INVOICE</b> <small>QUICKSALVAGE</small>  <b>SYMBOL BISCUITS</b>
Victory Tea Co. 83.4.247 Mr. E. Hill Prop Holman Street, Kidderminster		NORTHERN FACTORY DEVONSHIRE ROAD, BLACKPOOL <small>PHONE 23505-7 (3 lines) WIRE: BISCUITS, B'POOL</small>	
DATE	REFERENCE No.	<b>TERMS NETT</b> THIS INVOICE IS SUBJECT TO 1½% CASH DISCOUNT IF PAID IN 28 DAYS	
12.10.50	3044		
Parcels	TINS	NAME OF BISCUIT	WEIGHT AND NETT PRICE
1/2's	Large		
		TOTAL £ s. d.	

**John Bromley & Sons Ltd.** of Leeds were the only suppliers of Coffee & Chicory this year and there were no orders placed with **Clarks Optimus Coffee Extract, Ltd.**, of Worcester who had been selling significant quantities of this product to Hill since 1947.

One of the three companies furnishing confectioneries to Hill, **BeeBee Biscuits Ltd.**, of Blackpool,





Hill was still exclusively buying bulk loose tea in chests and therefore necessarily had to pack his own tea. Indeed, we know from past years that he employed a tea packer.

He also needed teabags such as that illustrated below. This bag had been sent to **The Berkshire Printing Co Ltd.** of Reading for a quotation for producing something similar. It was returned with a comparable sample of what they could do.



However, he must have had adequate tea bags in stock to cover his tea packing for 1950 because he didn't buy any from any of his suppliers this year. But he did buy 13,000 bags from **Smith Brothers Whitehaven Ltd.** but they were for packing biscuits.

In 1948 Hill had acquired a second hand tea weighing machine from Barber's Teas but seems to be trying to discard this in 1950. The Sales Department of a business called **SELL, 18-21 Cowcross St, Smithfield, London** wrote on 21<sup>st</sup> April: "*We regret we are not interested in purchasing the Tea packing machine you have for disposal.*"

No. 6091

**Borough of Kidderminster.**

**Certificate of Verification.**

*I hereby certify that the undermentioned Weights, Measures, Measuring and Weighing Instruments have been verified as stated below for*

*of* Victory Tea Co. Holman St *28th March* 1950

Weights	50 lbs.	20 lbs.	10 lbs.	5 lbs.	56 lbs.	28 lbs.	14 lbs.	7 lbs.	4 lbs.	2 lbs.	1 lb.	8 ozs.	4 ozs.	2 ozs.	1 oz.	8 drs.	4 drs.	2 drs.	1 dr.	1/2 dr.	Total Avoir.	Troy	Apoth.	Grain	Metric	Grand Total	Total Fees		
Verified									1	1	1	1	1	1							6						£	s.	d.
Stamped									1												1								2
Rejected (Submitted Unstamped)																													3
Fee	6d.	4d.	4d.	2d.	6d.	6d.	4d.	4d.	2d.	2d.	2d.	1d.	1d.	1d.	1d.	1d.	1d.	1d.	1d.	1d.									
Adjusted									1												1								
Fee	6d.	6d.	3d.	3d.	6d.	6d.	3d.	3d.	3d.	3d.	3d.	2d.	2d.	2d.	1d.	1d.	1d.	1d.	1d.	1d.									
Rejected																													

Measures :—Length . Metric . Metal . Earthenware . Glass . Apoth . Dry . Measuring Instruments

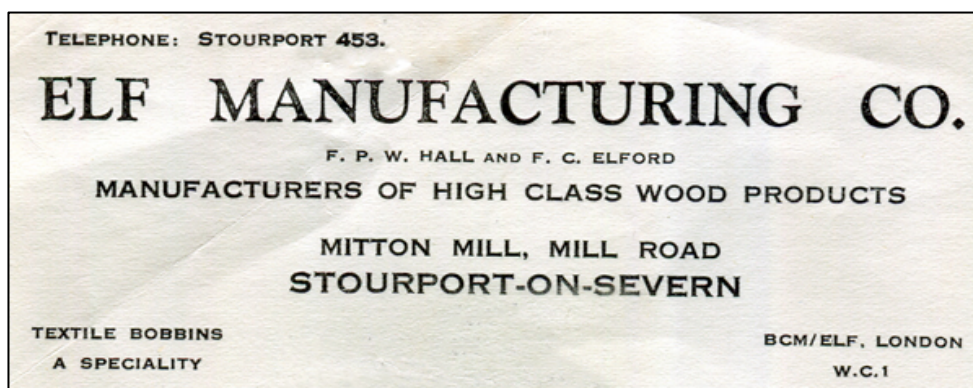
However, he did keep up his beam scales and weights up to scratch and had them checked annually by the **Weights and Measures Office, Mill Street.** The certificate issued by this office shows that the total fee for this service was 5d for adjusting and stamping one 4 lb weight.

Of course, Hill is only buying and packing tea so that he can sell it at a profit; this is, after all, his livelihood. As in previous years, customers include local businesses such a Brintons Canteen, Mrs Everton at the off licence in Arley, Mr Bridgwater's shop in Hagley and Mr Saunders at the Central Café in Bewdley. Because the information comes from just 31 individuals sending in notes, letters or postcards about deliveries and coupons but not quantities of tea, we cannot know how much tea is sold to private customers or, indeed how many there were. However, we do know that in 1950 deliveries were being made to people living in: *Arley, Bewdley, Bromsgrove, Cookley, Dudley, Kinver, Ledbury, Malvern Link, Rednal, Redditch, Shrawley, Stourport-on-Severn, Stourbridge, Worcester and Wolverhampton*. The list of places pinpointed as Hill's delivery to areas varies from year to year depending on who happened to write in to the Victory Tea Company.

**Rationing** of tea was still a problem for Hill and his customers and the constant need to supply tea permits to his suppliers in order to buy tea, to secure permits from his business customers to supply them, and to get ration coupons off private customers must have been really wearing. The large number of documents related to such issues even as late as 1950 bears testament to this.

One commodity that wasn't rationed was tea chests and Hill must have constantly been receiving a supply of these non-returnable items. He was quite prepared to sell these but this seems to have been getting more difficult in recent years. However, **Willingsworth Sawmills Ltd** of Wednesbury asked in a letter of 6<sup>th</sup> October for details of tea chests Hill had for disposal. They explained that they "*re-sell these for cheap packing purposes*".

Sales of carpets and rugs as a sideline seemed to have stalled and **W.H. Brooks Carpets & Rugs** of Coventry was still stringing Hill along with unfulfilled promises. Nevertheless, a local company **Elf Manufacturing Co.** of Stourport-on-Severn showed interested in what Hill could supply.



A letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> April from F. C. Elford read: "*I am interested in the rugs etc., Please give me a ring next week. I am usually in Stourport at 12.30 and 2.30 p.m.*"

The order for a new **Ford Prefect Saloon** placed 14<sup>th</sup> June 1949 with **Kidderminster Motors** had not been fulfilled by the end of 1950 for whatever reason. But Hill soldiered on with his **Morris 8 Series E car** and **Fordson Van**. Kidderminster motors serviced his van (GNP 347) throughout the year. It also gave the Morris 8 Series E (DAB 448) a service in September and fitted an Exide battery in December at a cost of £5.7.8d. Otherwise the Morris was serviced by **TBC (Tenbury Baths Co. Ltd.)**, in May and June.

We continue to be able to track **petrol prices** during 1950, courtesy receipted account sheets from **Foley Park Garage** where Hill was still sourcing most of his petrol. The price per gallon which had been 2/3½d stayed at that figure until 19<sup>th</sup> April when it shot up to 3/0½d followed by a further increase to 3/1¼d on 1<sup>st</sup> June. A tidying up adjustment to 3/1½d following on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, presumably to eliminate the use of the farthing. To put these increases in perspective, the price per gallon in 1939 had begun at 1/5d in January and increased to 1/9d in December of that year.

Back in 1945 Hill had purchased a fire extinguisher from **Minimax Ltd**, of Feltham, Middlesex. On 26<sup>th</sup> July 1950 he was invoiced for a smaller Minimax extinguisher, the "D" Minor Nickel plated model shown here. The cost was £2.12.6d.





**THE SLONSAL**  
**"ENGINEERS" SACK TRUCK**

Designed for the heaviest work for which a sack truck can be made and constructed with heavy gauge steel tubular frame and specially reinforced shoe.

It is mounted on 10 in. diameter heavy duty rubber tyred wheels which incorporate self-lubricating bearings. This wheel equipment ensures minimum rolling friction under the heaviest loads and absence of bearing wear even after prolonged use.

The truck is particularly intended for use in Engineering Workshops, in warehouses handling heavy packing cases and wherever loads of the order of  $\frac{1}{2}$  ton have to be handled.

In spite of its great strength, the truck is neither heavy nor cumbersome but handles easily and smoothly.

**DIMENSIONS**

Height	...	...	4' 3"
Shoe width	...	...	1' 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Shoe projection	...	...	6"
Width over handles	...	...	1' 7"
Width over wheel guards	...	...	1' 8"
Weight	...	...	47 lbs.

**PRICE**  
**£5 18 0**  
 Carriage Paid

**WILLIAMS & DICKINSON**  
 (LONDON) LTD.  
 47 KNIGHTSBRIDGE, LONDON, S.W.1  
 TELEPHONE SLOANE 8921



Hill was also interested in purchasing a sack truck. On 21<sup>st</sup> April, **Williams & Dickinson (London) Ltd.** replied to an enquiry by Hill and included in its letter this leaflet. A follow up letter in June arrived after they had not received an order.

We know from many documents in the collection that Ernest Hill was a member of the **Conservative party** and the **Conservative Club** situated on Park Butts. One of those documents was the **Notice of the Club AGM** to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1950. The notice included a list of Club Officers and the Management Committee serving for the year 1949/1950.

**OFFICERS AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, 1949/50.**

**OFFICERS.**

		Meetings Summoned	Meetings Attended
President	Mr. G. H. Thomas	11	10
Chairman	Mr. R. Tolley	11	10
Vice-Chairman	Mr. J. M. Grant	11	10
Treasurer	Mr. J. R. Gledhill	11	11
Secretary	Mr. D. H. Wigg	11	11
Assistant Secretary	Miss M. Wheeler	11	6
Trustees	Rev. J. E. Grosvenor	—	—
	Mr. G. S. Tomkinson	—	—
	Lt.-Col. F. D. H. Burcher	—	—

**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Mrs. E. Gethin	11	9
Mrs. H. W. Griffiths	11	10
Mrs. E. M. Pugh	11	10
Miss C. C. Scott	11	6
Mrs. E. Walters	11	9
Mr. F. C. Adams	11	5
Mr. C. H. Andrews	11	5
Mr. W. G. Jacobs	11	10
Mr. H. G. Woodward	11	10
Mr. R. G. Wright	11	7
Mr. E. T. C. Brinton	11	3
Mr. F. Martin	11	8

The documentation for the **Duchess of Portland Appeal for Tuberculosis** arrived towards the end of October, as it had for the previous two years. As usual there was another decorative design of the stamp/seals they were offering.

A **Grand National Steeple Chase Prize Draw** ticket supporting the **Royal Artillery Association**, Kidderminster Branch Fund, is shown below. Presumably, Hill did not win.

No. 818

**ROYAL ARTILLERY ASSOC.**  
 Kidderminster Branch Fund

**GRAND NATIONAL S'CHASE PRIZE DRAW**

Members Only Run—Saturday, March 25th. 1950

**PRIZES**

First	Second	Third	Fourth
£5	£3	£1	10s.

Tickets 6d. each . . . . Book of Eleven 5/-

It must be understood that the money received for this Ticket is a voluntary contribution to the above fund. Winners notified by Post.

No. 4310

**Worcestershire & Herefordshire Association for the Deaf**

**Presidents** { THE LORD BISHOP OF WORCESTER  
 THE LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD

Hon. Treasurer:— J. PASCO, ESQ., Lloyds Bank, Kidderminster.  
 Chaplain:— Rev. L. CRELLIN, 305, Omberley Road, Worcester. Tel. 4883.  
 Official Collector:— E. HARTLEY, 89, Gilmore Crescent, Worcester.

Dec 11 1950

Received from *Vivian Jen Co*

the sum of *Two* Pounds *Two* Shillings and *Six* Pence

being Subscription for the year 1950 *Edward Hartley*

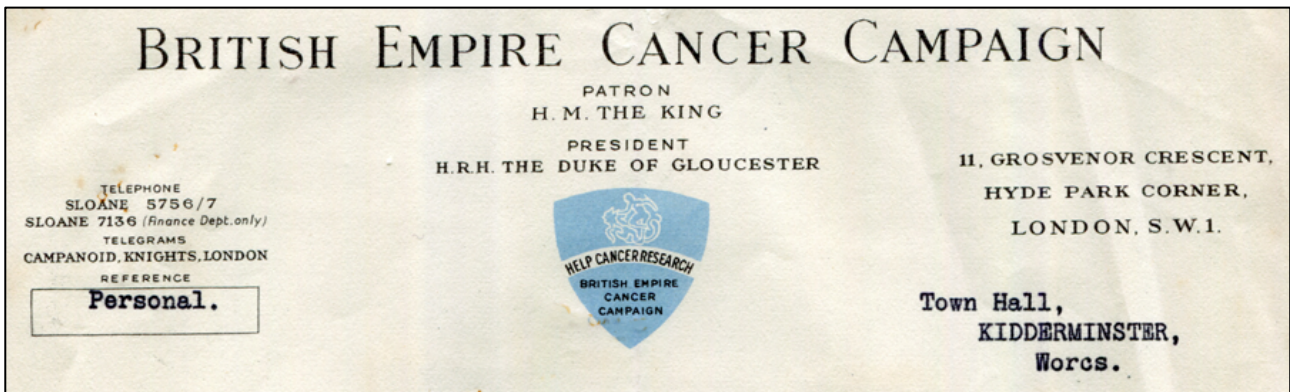
£ : 2 : 6

The **Worcestershire & Herefordshire Mission for the Deaf** (in earlier years 'for the Deaf and Dumb') sent this receipt dated 4<sup>th</sup> December (shown above right) acknowledging a donation of 2/6d.



The final charitable appeal reference found amongst the 1950 documents was for the **British Empire Cancer Campaign**, 11 Grosvenor Crescent, Hyde Park Corner, London SW1.

It came with a letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> March from **J Ferguson, Mayor of Kidderminster**, asking for support for this Charity. Cheques payable to British Empire Cancer Campaign.



Other letters were about him standing in to play the organ at weddings and about a proposal to form an **Organists' and Choirmasters' Association**. Related to his status as a respected organist was a copy received of the Choirs' News Letter No. 3, issued by **The Royal School of Church Music, Archdeaconry of Dudley**, Price 3d (or 1/- per annum, Groups could purchase at 2/9d per doz.).

Besides Hill's musical interest he was also a keen supporter of **Kidderminster Harriers** and held four shares at 10/- each in the recently formed Company.





Details of the Directors, Auditors and Secretary of the Company were given on the Notice (19<sup>th</sup> Oct 1950) of Statuary Meeting of Kidderminster Harriers Football Club Limited at its formation.

**DIRECTORS.**

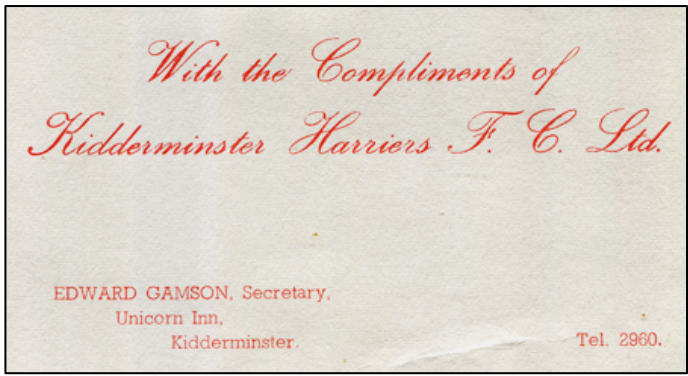
Sir George Eddy, O.B.E., J.P., The Platts, Kidderminster, Chemical Manufacturer.  
 Eric Oliver Savery, D.S.C., Bank Buildings, Kidderminster, Solicitor.  
 James Tipper, 230, Hoo Road, Kidderminster, Engineer.  
 William Alfred Bennett, 6, Aggborough Crescent, Kidderminster, Carpet Finisher.  
 Alfred Lees, 6, Mill Street, Kidderminster, Clerk.  
 Beatrice May Pearsall, 19, Adam Street, Kidderminster, Spinster.  
 Thomas Benjamin Morris, 69, St. John's Avenue, Kidderminster, Motor Coach Proprietor.  
 Trevor Morgan, Windrush, Wolverley Road, Franche, Kidderminster, P.O. Engineer.  
 Charles Wilson, The Raven Inn, Kidderminster, Licensed Victualler.  
 Albert John Cawley, 54, Connaught Avenue, Kidderminster, Maintenance Engineer.

**Auditors.**

Johnstone & Co., 13, Church Street, Kidderminster, Incorporated Accountants.

**Secretary.**

Edward Gamson, Unicorn Inn, Broad Street, Kidderminster, Licensed Victualler.



And it seems that Ernie Hill was **Vice President** of the Harrier's Supporter's Club.

**BOOK M. & M.**

**RADIO  
LUXURY  
COACHES**

FOR YOUR  
**Football Excursions  
Outings  
Trips and Tours**  
AND  
**ENJOY EVERY COMFORT  
WHEN TRAVELLING.**

Head Office :  
FRANCHE,  
KIDDERMINSTER.

Phone :  
3870 and  
2637.

**VICE PRESIDENT  
KIDDERMINSTER HARRIERS'  
ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL  
SUPPORTERS' CLUB**

♦ 372

President .. .. . Mr. T. B. MORRIS  
 Chairman .. .. . Mr. J. H. R. HAY  
 Hon. Treasurer .. .. . Mr. E. R. RUSSELL  
 Gen. Secretary .. .. . Mr. A. WALTERS  
 104, Park Lane, Kidderminster.  
 Comp. Secretary .. .. . Mr. P. J. CONNOLLY  
 10, Marlpool Place, Kidderminster.  
 Reg. Secretary .. .. . Mr. G. W. DULLFORCE  
 "Chalmar," 3, St. John's Avenue, Kidderminster.

*Committee :*  
 Messrs. B. Knowles, A. Pearce, H. C. Kent, W. G. Southerton, A. Cox, A. Vaughan, Mrs. T. Morgan, L. Goodman, M. C. Denning, P. Whitehouse, W. J. Pearce, S. Howard, (Last six named serve for one year, remainder for two years).

**SEASON 1950/51.**

♦  
**Member's Card.**

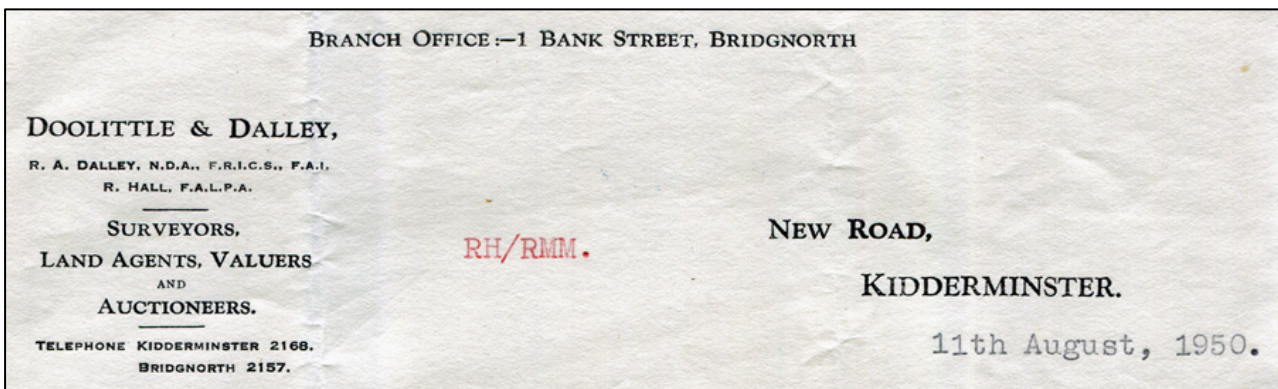
MEMBER'S NAME *Ernie Hill*  
 This Card is the Official Receipt for your subscription.



A typed note from **Sebright School** gave suggestions for contributions to the Annual, but undated, school **Fête**.

<u>Produce Stall</u>	<u>Gifts Stall</u>	<u>Household Stall</u>
Cakes	China, Glass	Dusters
Jam	Cushions	Pots & Pans
Vegetables	Trays	Brushes
Tinned foods	Leather goods	Cleaning materials
Eggs	Lamp shades	Boot polish etc.
Bottled fruits	Baskets	Clothes pegs. Matches
Sweets	Ash trays	
Chocolate	Tea & Tray cloths	
Flowers	Table napkins	
	Cotton. Tape. Buttons	
	Tennis & Golf balls	
	Notebooks. Pencils	

Finally, how can we better finish the 1950 Victory Tea story than with a **family holiday**. And where better to go than to Fairbourne just down the coast from Barmouth in North Wales.



Hill booked a house there for between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> September through **Doolittle & Dalley, Bridgnorth Branch**. Raymond Dalley wrote two letters about this booking on 11<sup>th</sup> August and 8<sup>th</sup> September. In the latter he writes: "*Thank you for confirming the letting of 'The Green House' 18<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> Sept. Mr & Mrs Beams will be leaving on the 12.30 p.m. train on Monday so that you can take over the house after that time. We have asked Mr Beams to leave the key with Mrs Jones at 21 Beech Road. A **supply of coal** has been left in the house for Mr Beams and he has promised to replace whatever he has used during his fortnight and perhaps you could do the same.*"



**View from Fairbourne Beach looking across the Mawddach Estuary towards Barmouth**