

A BRIEF HISTORY OF POLLARD'S

1892 - 1971



ARTHUR WHITING POLLARD.

Arthur Whiting Pollard was born on August 5th 1860. A son of Alfred Whiting Pollard, a prominent Quaker, he was a man typical of his time. A late Victorian - or if you prefer, Edwardian - he had all that entrepreneurial drive which had made Great Britain the World's leading industrial nation.

He was also a kindly man, a good paterfamilias with two daughters and three sons, Albury, Andrew and Geoffrey. As a young man he had trained for a short time with Sutton's Seeds Ltd., and Dickson's of Chester. He then went to work in France for a time and the frequent use of french phrases is noteable in his letters.

Finally he went into the tobacco trade. However, this did not provide sufficient profitable scope for an energetic man in his early thirties and so it was that he came to buy in 1892 a tiny nursery - about $\frac{1}{2}$ acres - at Longfield Lane, Cheshunt - which was growing cucumbers and mushrooms.

Growing under glass had developed phenomenally during Victorian times. Much of the basic husbandry was already to hand in the conservatories of the great houses, and such produce was limited to the wealthy few at the beginning of that era.

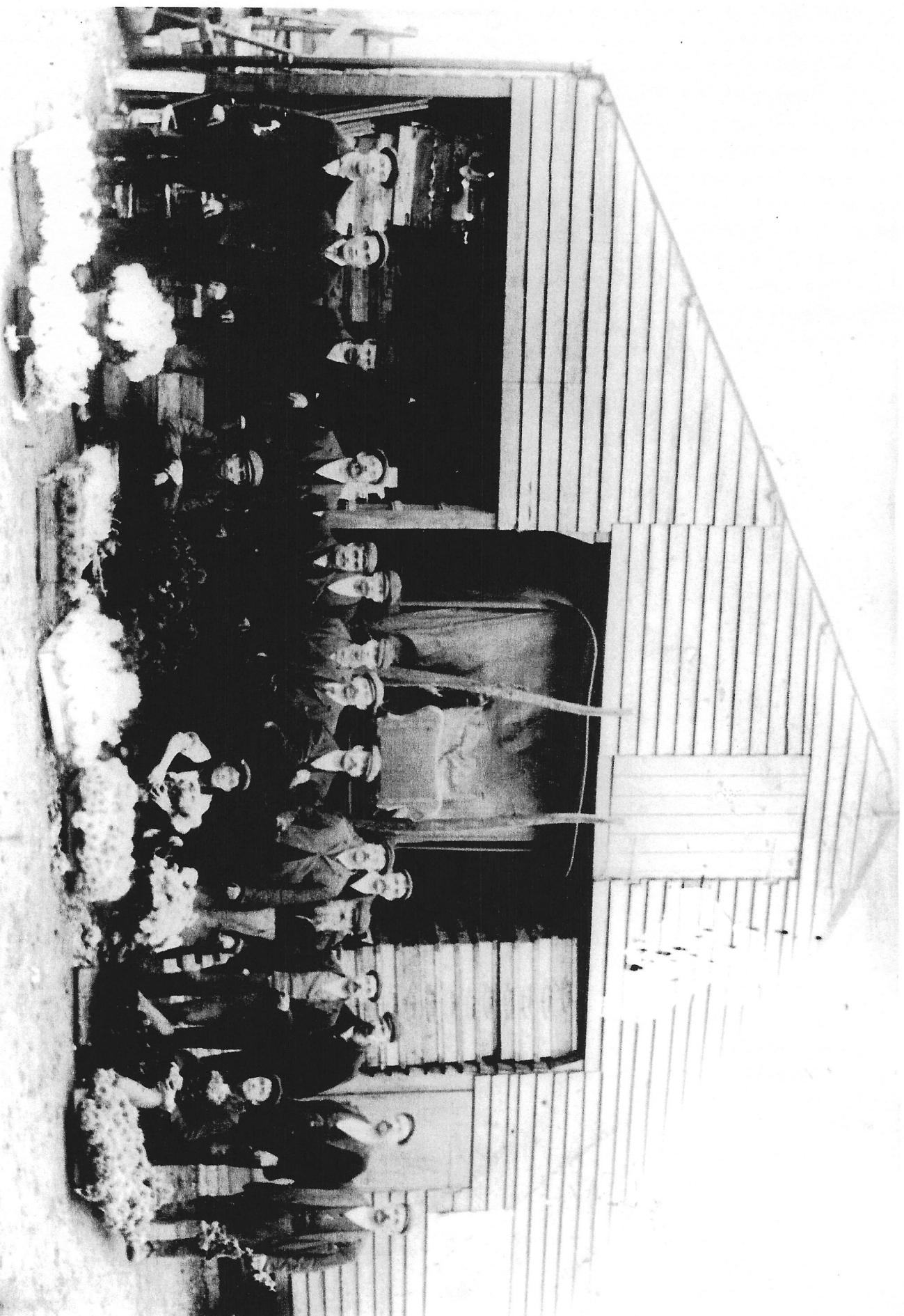
Then came the great explosion of the Victorian middle classes following the Industrial Revolution. There was money to spare for fruit and vegetables - out of season, or not normally available in England. Labour and coal were cheap and land readily available near to the great cities: the railways were there to take the produce to centres further afield.

It was during this time that most of the well-known family businesses were established. Headed by men of drive and vision they grew from small beginnings into thriving businesses with tens of acres of glass.

About 1894, finding the nursery too small to be economic he started to build more glasshouses. He was also seeking to sell his tobacco business and also a rubber stamp factory in the City which he also owned. The last he did succeed in selling but despite persistent efforts he was unable to get a reasonable price for the two tobacco shops in Eastbourne where he lived.

Thus he found himself in severe financial straits and during 1895 and 1896, with a young family to feed he was struggling desperately to make ends meet and seemed to be often on the verge of bankruptcy, all his property and even life assurance policies being mortgaged up to the hilt. The many hundreds of letters he wrote in his own hand, like that shown opposite, are a testimony to the terrible strain he bore during this period and his dogged persistence in doubling the size of the nursery (to a full acre) despite all obstacles.

In fact during this period he was forced to borrow from his Father who could ill afford it and was in failing health. He was also plagued with bad debts and then the sudden death of one large debtor. He wrote literally hundreds of letters discounting bills, pressing debtors, placating creditors, cajoling his Bank Manager. Then there were all the advertisements for partners, mortgagers, and purchasers for the tobacco business. He was continually rushing between his tobacco shops, the City, Cheshunt; meeting



This shed served as Office, Garage and for packing (Ca 1900).

C. Tulley centre (arms akimbo); Foreman Plaistow, 4th from left
J. Beeley, (long beard); D. Rapley, 2nd from right.

people --- negotiating --- arguing --- persuading.

Yet during the most critical times he was planning and scheming to increase his glass area - to expand his way out of trouble. Even though at the darkest moments a despairing note sometimes crept into his letters he never for one moment considered throwing up the sponge at Cheshunt. Had he done so this story, and indeed his grandchildren, would have been quite different !

By 1897, although financial troubles continued and were to do so for many years thereafter, a new note of confidence can be detected. He completed another $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of glass. Then in 1898 he completed a further $\frac{2}{3}$ of acre making 1-9 acres in all. The close of the Century saw his profits which had been nothing (or worse) rise to about £1,000 per annum. Everything he could possibly spare went back into the business.

He then had to mark time on new building because of lack of finance but was continually bargaining for, and buying, extra land for future expansion.

In 1902 he managed at last to raise a private mortgage for £6,300 to enable him to expand further. By 1905, his profits were averaging £2,000 p.a. and in 1906 he talks of 5-6 acres of glass. At this time he at last managed to sell his tobacco business thus making more money available and also enabling him to move to Cheshunt. The house he bought was called "Ferndene", and had a minute nursery adjoining, comprising one glasshouse. Mr. Pollards Wife, Annie, was a redoubtable lady, with a keen business instinct; she took over the running of this, with a hand named Dave Rapley: apart from supplying the house, she sent produce to market thus augmenting her housekeeping allowance !

In the early years Mr. Pollard used to travel up from Eastbourne and stay part of the week at the Green Dragon Hotel, which still stands opposite Cheshunt Church. However, this intermittent surveillance and an unsatisfactory manager added to his problems, particularly the control of labour. Thus it came about that in 1899 he appointed a young mushroom grower Mr. Charles Tulley, who had first started with him in 1895, to manage the men. With this new impetus and final sale of the tobacco business expansion began to get under way in earnest. By the outbreak of war in 1914, the total area of glass had reached about 15 acres. During this time the crops were diversified to include tomatoes, roses and chrysanthemums: and, a little later, carnations. For short periods strawberries and grapes were grown, the latter being even exported to France !

At this point a backward glance at the conditions of that nursery makes an interesting contrast with our modern nursery, of the same size, at Barnham. Firstly, it employed about twice as many men per acre there being none of the now familiar labour-saving aids: similarly the level of skill, particularly mechanical, was of an altogether lower order. The men of those days earned about 18/- basic wage per week plus overtime: the Foreman earned only 25/- and no extra for overtime. The hours were from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., or 5 p.m. on Saturdays, Sunday being the only day off. There was a $\frac{1}{2}$ hour break for breakfast and 1 hour for lunch.

Although these hours seem excessive by to-days standards the pace was probably more leisurely. Conditions were healthy compared with so many other industries and the men seem to have been for the most part contented enough with their simple uncomplicated existence. They must have regarded Mr. Tulley with a

mixture of love and fear: he was a tough but fair manager endowed with a card-index memory. He knew every detail of all the men under him (later numbering 400 or more), including all their personal circumstances. While he had a ready ear for any genuine distress, woe betide any man who tried to 'pull the wool' over his eyes !

His Son Jim Tulley, who came into the business after the 1914-1918 War, was shown no favouritism and tells an amusing anecdote of how he once took a week's holiday including two weekends, going off on a Friday evening. On the Monday morning of his return, his Father wagged a stern finger at him "Look here m'lad, there aren's two Saturdays in a week" !

About the only thing that has not changed is the glass and even there the old nursery used a much smaller size. The frames were of timber which required regular repainting. The houses were small-span and low. Each black had to have its sunken boiler, open to the elements, and with a great pile of coal alongside: this was necessary because the hot water flow through the cast iron pipes in the houses was entirely by natural convection. Jim Tulley recalls the joys of stoking, knee-deep in water on a snowy night!.

He also recalls his occasional encounters as a boy of 8 with Mr. Pollard: who although of a short stature held himself with dignity. If the weather permitted he would often walk to the nursery rather than have Bowman drive him up in the coach. Young Jim would see his rather portly figure coming along, immaculate in flock coat and top hat, swinging a silver-knobbed malacca cane. As like as not the great man would stop: "Ah hello, young Tulley, here's tuppence for you" ! This was riches indeed, being equivalent to about two shillings for a modern child !

Another revealing anecdote should be viewed in the context of those Edwardian times. Mr. Pollard was an inveterate smoker of cigars, of which he would commonly smoke half or less before disposing of (or forgetting to pick up) the butt. The old timekeeper John Beeley was no fool and noted that Mr. Pollard, after calling at the washroom on the nursery, would frequently light up a new one after coming out. Some of the men in the nearer houses had been intrigued to note that old John used always to pop into the washroom after Mr. Pollard, they also noted the rich aroma from John's old clay pipe following such occasions. Thereafter, John was heard to complain bitterly about the reversal of his fortunes that followed, and the relatively remoteness of the office where he was based. But heaven smiled once more: fat cigar butts also started to appear in the office waste paper basket ! 'Noblesse oblige' perhaps by today's standards but in terms of those days, a fair alternative to condescending charity and favouritism.

With the outbreak of the War, Albury Pollard joined the Army, followed by the two younger brothers Andrew and Geoffrey, although only in their teens. Andrew went into the Royal Flying Corps, seeing much action first in balloons and then in aeroplanes and was one of the few who survived.

The war must have been a blow to Mr. Pollard because Albury had already done his apprenticeship at Sparks Nursery with a view to joining Pollards.

Sadly, Mr. Pollard became seriously ill soon after and died in February 1915. The nursery being largely turned over to food production, it was necessary to arrange the recall of the eldest Son. One can well imagine the feelings of

of the young man, suddenly plunged into all the complexities of the business administration of the, now large, nursery. Fortunately, a firm partnership and mutual understanding quickly developed between him and the now experienced General Manager, Mr. Tulley. Fortunately too, Albury was endowed with a sound business sense and the ambition and vision to carry on where his Father left off. He also had a natural aptitude for all the technical aspects of horticulture.

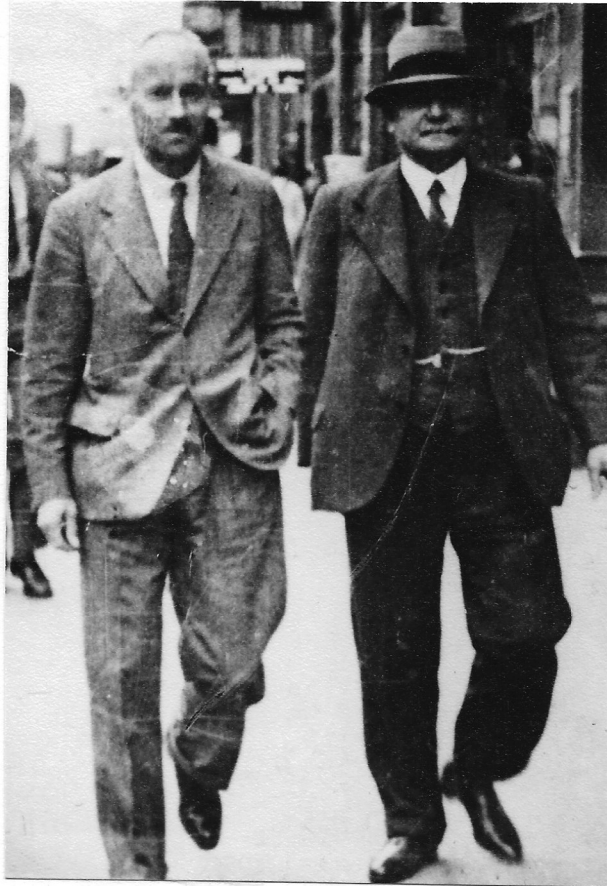
Thus was inaugurated a new phase of steady expansion. In 1920 a 2½ acre nursery was acquired at Stockwell, adjoining the main nursery. During the 1920's and early '30's this was expanded finally to about 8 acres. Jim Tulley was made Manager about 1930.

Soon after the War, Geoffrey came out of the Army and joined the business thus completing the trio in whose capable hands the fortune of the business was largely to rest for decades to come. Geoffrey's business and technical ability mirrored those of Albury and when Park Lane, a nursery which was finally built-up to about 10 acres, was acquired, Geoffrey was given the Managership. He was made a Director of Pollards at about this time.

At about this time Turnford, a nursery of about 8 acres was bought and was expanded eventually to almost 12 acres.

In 1925, after he had been in the saddle for 10 years, Albury gave an interview to Parsons Fortnightly Review. The Reporter, who was clearly a man of great knowledge of the horticultural industry, was obviously deeply impressed by the expertise with which the whole enterprise was run. He speaks of the modern equipment, the high quality of the husbandry and the crops produced. Pollards are categorised as one of the pioneering establishments of the Lea Valley as well as being one of the largest and most important. The Reporter also shrewdly appraises the two senior executives:- "Seated opposite to Mr. A. Albury Pollard, with Mr. Charles Tulley by my side, I was much interested to note the widely different characteristics of the two men who supply the brain power and genius so necessary for the successful conduct of such a large undertaking as Pollard's Nurseries Ltd. Mr. Albury Pollard, a proprietor and Secretary of the firm, impressed me immediately as a thinker. I gathered that he had a large amount of the scientist in his composition - a man who would never be so well interested as when engaged in the solution of some involved problem connected with the control of pests, or intricate other details of administration. On the other hand, Mr. Tulley, General Manager and a Director of the firm, is a practical grower to his finger-tips. He is a born fighter and the sort of man who could be relied upon to bring his crops through the most difficult season with credit to the nursery and himself. As a controller of labour he is without equal. The nurseries spell home to Chas. Tulley, and upon the plants grown there he cherishes a father's care and affection."

From this article many other interesting points emerge: roses had already become a predominant crop again after the temporary eclipse necessitated by the War. One of the most successful varieties was Mabel Chatenay, which was even being exported to Paris. Other important varieties were Butterfly, Ophelia, Richmond and Mrs. Aaron Ward. Incidentally, none of these varieties are grown at Pollard's today.



ALBURY POLLARD AND CHARLES TULLEY
(taken between the Wars)

Of tomatoes mainly Ailsa Craig and Buckley were grown, and of cucumbers, Butcher's Disease Resistant. At this time some Arum lilies were also grown.

On the technical and equipment front the picture was one of consolidation rather than far-reaching change. The glasshouses and sunken boilers were not much different from 30 years previously. The nurseries were now entirely self-sufficient as regards water; from artesian wells up to 400ft deep. The water was pumped up by reciprocating pumps placed deep down in the well with long connecting rods to the surface. These were driven by great single cylinder gas or Crossley oil engines with enormous flywheels and hot tube ignition.

Most of the haulage of coal from the station and produce to Covent Garden was still done by carts drawn by fine shire horses. One horse would pull 25 cwt or two in a team 50 cwt - of coal, the long uphill haul from Cheshunt Station.

Carters would leave the nursery in the early evening with a full load of produce: they would arrive at Covent Garden around midnight. The horse would then be fed while the master would slake his thirst at one of the all-night pubs. They would start their return journey in the small hours and Jim Tulley relates a frequent and typical happening: the carter would be liable to dose off and a policeman to teach him a lesson would turn the horse round and head him back to London. The horse however was used to this trick and had no wish to have his journey prolonged. So after a few hundred yards would turn back again in the right direction - all this, as like as not, without the carter even waking up!

After several weeks of such hard work the horses would begin to lose condition and would be put to grass for a fortnight at Taylor's Hatfield Farm.

In the later 1920's the first Commer lorry was bought and Geoffrey took the wheel for the inaugural drive. By about 1930 lorries - 8 or 9 in all - were mainly used for the longer hauls, and included also A.E.C.'s and Leylands.

In almost every family business, however successful, some dissension arises sooner or later and it must be recorded that Pollard's is no exception.

Around 1930, the third brother Andrew, who had already acquired some experience on his own, Stevenage Nursery, joined the firm. Besides having charm and bonhomie he was a man of undoubted flair and energy but he was by temperament very different from Albury and Geoffrey. Subsequently, it was wisely decided that he should have his own establishment and a nursery of 8 acres was built in 1935 at Henlow in Bedfordshire. This developed successfully, particularly in the earlier years but a certain amount of friction soon became evident although it was not to erupt seriously until after the War.

1941.

Steaming
See next Page.

FEB. 21. LL. Cues 186-199 set out.

S. 23+4 tons set out.

" 24 S. 54-8 finishing setting out & starting planting tons.

S. 43-8 tons are planted, 43 harvest.

25 Henlow. All A. Block planted Tons - hardish & look well,
also cues in B 18-22. C. Tons set out.

3 MARCH. PL. G, I set out last week started in 15th about 700 Carlin p. w. 155.
Mushrooms to 28 Feb. T. 13,128 lbs. March 2084, Total 15,212 lbs @ 2/4 3/4 net £1,700
L.L. beans on rose shed 1228 lbs.

5. " 60-5 Cues set out. 101-6 Tons planted. 42-44 A lettuce planted 17/18th growing well.

4. " Return. Lk. 2 horses, expect 4 June 22 1/2 Wheat & potatoes. Stock 20^{day} hay.

T. 1 horse, 4 June & Potatoes. 6 tons hay.

S. 2 1/2 lettuce catch crop.

PL & SV. 2 horses. 38 fowls. expect 4 June 1 1/2 Wheat, 4 1/2 Cabs, 2 3/4 Potatoes. Stock 20^{day} hay

8 " Sat. night, incendiary in 9 Peckers Lane (Brasley) & some on nursery: many Barney Bites

15 " Stockwell 10-15 ready to plant. Rose Mary Hart in 37-42 looks well: yellow spot 42 to side.

T. Hygeanic (from J.A. Waugh) 6 1/2 tons in about 200' of No. 82.

19. LL. Planting tons, small pots 162-9. making cue beds 156-161.

20 MAR. First Cues LL, SV & H. Roses S. Lettuce L.L.

13 APRIL Easter Sunday.

17. " 78-82 Tons recently planted, 83 to do, exc. boxes, 74 rows, 78-82 are 22 across 81 is 20, 82 is 21
30 Block 6 rows x 197 plants = 1182 P. house = 14,770 P. accu
= about 17,300 P. accu. 83-20
Planting lettuce

16th First 6 lbs. tons T.

Part of Albury's meticulous diary - later kept by Geoffrey.

1941.

APRIL 17. Planting Majestic Potatoes P.S.C. cricket ground.

T. Dent sowing "Victory" Oats' Hoat Island, Leather Bottle & lower part Burton G. field.
AREAS. T. Dent says sown areas are - Crater-Hoat Island over $4\frac{1}{2}$ ac.
part leather bottle 2 ac. 24-5 April. My Safe drilled open.

19th Henlow - barley drilled in south part of field, but not W of C. Block.
No. 97 Toms - both sides & south part of middle, planted out of boxes.

5 MAY. Last patch potatoes - by Burton Grange - planted. 3-4 May 12° frost.
Turnford - all crops very good indeed.

8-9 May. H.E. in College Rd. Incenseburns around Turner's Hill: Sage & inside burnt.

15-16 " Burgled again - all three safes opened by keys.

10-11 " Big blitz on London - Worley's

12 " Henlow, also S.N. Cues reached $\frac{1}{2}$ flat.

21. " War Damage Act 1941 (part II). To 15 June £15,000 @ 10% £75 premium.

23 & 24 Planted outdoor toms on site of 84 & 5 - about 4000

25 Sunday night a good rain after some showers - much needed. still cold.

26 Planting toms between 30 Bl. & L. Lane.

Continuing work installation elec. motor for old 9' deep well pump.
Formaldehyde
a steam Winter STEAMING ^{LI} 120-128 (120 formal. fruit), 112-8 (not 112) 163-9
(112-5 lightly)

148-55, 101-III, 170-199. 27-38: Formal. 72-7, 86-9, 120 & then steamed
Outside TOMS, planting finished P.L. 27th, L.L. 29th, S. 31st

T. W. Dent Dec 1940 - 25 Apr. 1941. Drag harrow @ 5/- Discing @ 7/-
drilling @ 8/- Harrow in @ 3/- plough @ 18/-

P.L. 11 ac £12.13.0. 6 ac £9.18.0. L.L. 11 ac £11. 3½ ac £6.6.0. P.S.C. £4.7.-
renew 4 ac £2.4.0

Total £46.8.0.

The early 1930's were a time of general economic depression to be followed by the gathering clouds of impending war. However, by 1939 Pollard's had expanded to its maximum size of nearly 60 acres of glass together with a considerable acreage of open land. There were also some 60 dwelling houses which were let to the key workers. Pollard's even boasted its own football clubs and a clubhouse was put up in 1937. Alas, both this and the field were requisitioned by the Army in 1939.

On the outbreak of war the Nurseries and any spare land were once again turned over almost wholly to food production, a quarter of a million tons of tomatoes apart from other crops being produced over the period. Geoffrey, the youngest brother who had been a private flier, volunteered for the R.A.F. and was concerned with training and navigation.

After the end of the War in 1945 a period of unparalleled prosperity ensued; this was partly due to the large total size of the nurseries combined with good management; and partly to the controlled prices which had been fixed so that the smaller and less efficient nurseries would be viable. Furthermore foreign imports were restricted.

It is notable that the acreage of glass at this time (almost 60 acres) was some four times that of our sole remaining nursery at Barnham. Thus after more than half a century of steady expansion the business was soon to undergo a phase of contraction which would eliminate it from the Lee Valley entirely, and concentrate it as a relatively small unit on the South Coast with its attendant climatic and economic advantages.

This period was marred by the sad death of Charles Tulley in 1948 after an illness lasting some months, although 78 he remained fully active till the end having served the firm faithfully and vigourously for 54 years - latterly as a Director. His Son Jim had shown similar qualities to his father, and had been Manager of Stockwell since 1931. It was fitting that the cloak of General Manager should fall on his shoulders and he was appointed a Director in 1948* (PN Ltd) Further, as if to ensure the succession, Jim's Son Ian joined the firm first in 1951; but soon interrupted by National Service.+

In 1950, the Park Lane Nursery which suffered from its siting on a northerly slope was sold.

A census taken in 1952 after Park Lane had been sold yields the following figures:-

* Director of PN Ltd Ca 1945.

+ Ian - Director of PN Ltd 1964; PH Ltd 1966.



JIM TULLEY.

430 glasshouses covering a total area of nearly 50 acres.
Smallest house 8' x 46', largest 42' x 250'. There are five separate nurseries:-

Longfield Lane	19.1)
Stockwell	8.2) 27.3
Turnford	11.85	
Henlow	7.85	
South Villa	2.4	

49.4 acres

CROP	AREA	1952 THOUSANDS 1952 OF PLANTS APPROX.	CROP 1951
Tomatoes	29.0	450	1,266 tons
Roses	12.7	300	357 thousand dozens
Cucumbers	6.3	19	23 thousand flats
Carnations	1.2	84	25 thousand dozens
Chrysanthemums	-	15	4,300 cases
Mushrooms	.25	-	7 tons (1952)

TOMATOES

Variety most grown, Naftel and other Potentates; others include Single X, Baby Lea, Potential and Ailsa Carig. Seedlings are pricked off December onwards into soil blocks of J.I. compost. Fruit picked end of April to November. Graded by Nursery Trades "Waltham X" and "Naxeing" machines which handle 500 or 160 12-lb boxes per hour.

Troubles: Cladisproum, red spider mite and white fly.

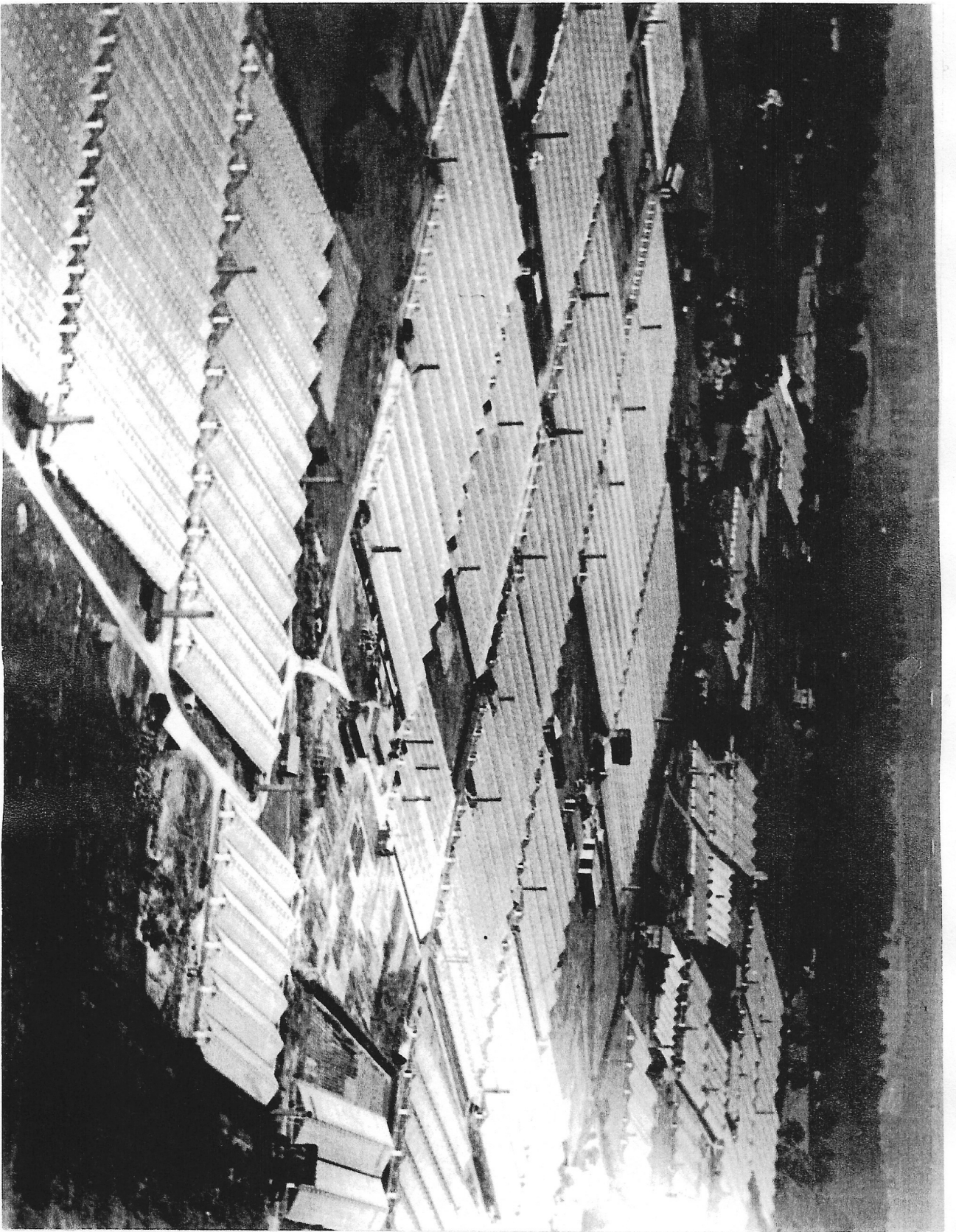
ROSES

Grafted ourselves on canina stocks imported from Holland. Cropping is staggered so that we cut roses all but 2/3 weeks of each year in January/February. Pruning November/February. They give from 4/6 crops a year according to variety and season.

Varieties

Yellow:	Roselandia, Golden Ophelia and Speks Yellow.
Pink:	Lady Sylvia.
Salmon:	Kathleen Pechtold.
Dark Pink:	Henrietta Pechtold.
Red:	Hoosier Beauty, Hens Verschuren, Poinsettia and Happiness.

Troubles: Red spider mite, mildew and green fly aphid.



Aerial view: Part of Pollard's Nurseries (and some others).

CARNATIONS

Cuttings taken October onwards, planted around February and cropped for two seasons continuously.

Varieties

White: Puritan, William Sim and Olivetta.
Pink: Ashington Pink and Crowley Sim.
Scarlet: William Sim.
Crimson: Clayton Crimson and Topsy.

Grow in raised beds with 7" J.I.P.111 compost.

North half of house 106 grown in gravel by sub-irrigation.
Basic design of growing beds conceived by Sparkes at Angmering.
Storage tanks hold 14,000 gallons solution and the 10 H.P. 2,500 gallon a minute pump takes $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes to fill the beds.
Immediately the solution is returned to the storage tank.
Pumping takes place $\frac{1}{3}$ times a day according to the transpiration of the plant. The system is automatic.

Troubles

Both in soil and soilless, botrytis, fusarium, verticillium, greenfly and rust (not gravel).

CUCUMBERS

Seeds sown from mid-December. Cutting March to November.

Variety

B.D.R.

Troubles: Mildew, white fly aphid and red spider mite.

MUSHROOMS

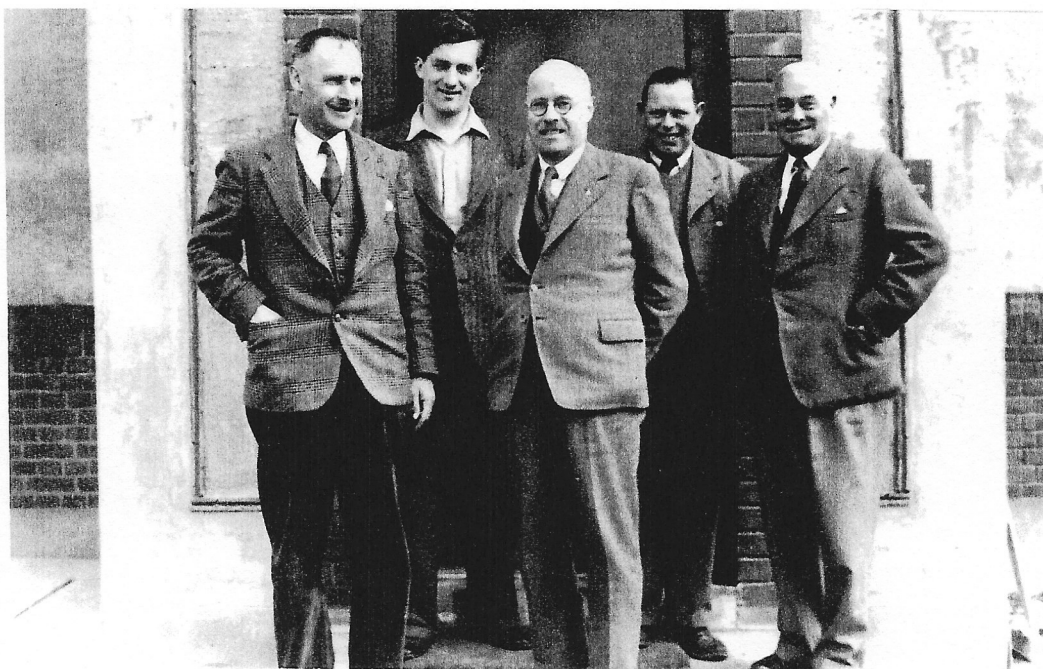
Grown in greenhouses on ground beds. Cropping December to mid-March.

CHRYANTHEMUMS

Grown in pots. Cuttings January and February.
In the field May/September, flowering November to January.

All produce sent direct to Salesmen in London and some provincial towns.

Water is pumped from six deep wells by an air lift and five submersible pumps with a total of 60,000 gallons per hour.
Consumption for the year is in excess of 50M gallons.



(L to R) Front: Geoffrey, Albury and Andrew. Back: Stuart & Jim.



POLLARD'S NURSERIES LTD., LONGFIELD LANE, CHESHUNT.

POLLARD'S NURSERIES.

Staff about 300 men and women.

Fuel consumption is about the equivalent of 10,000 tons per annum anthracite for heating and steam sterilising.

Sterilising by "Hoddesdon" grids, using 4 x 20 h.p. and 1 x 35 h.p. boilers. All tomato, cucumbers and carnation soil is steamed.

Heating on $44\frac{1}{2}$ acres is by conventional 4" hot water pipes, the other five acres (next year seven) by low pressure steam from one central boiler house. Steam output 18M B.T.U.'s. Soft coal fed through worm underfoot stokers, pressure on boilers 10-20 lbs per square inch. The system is almost automatic.

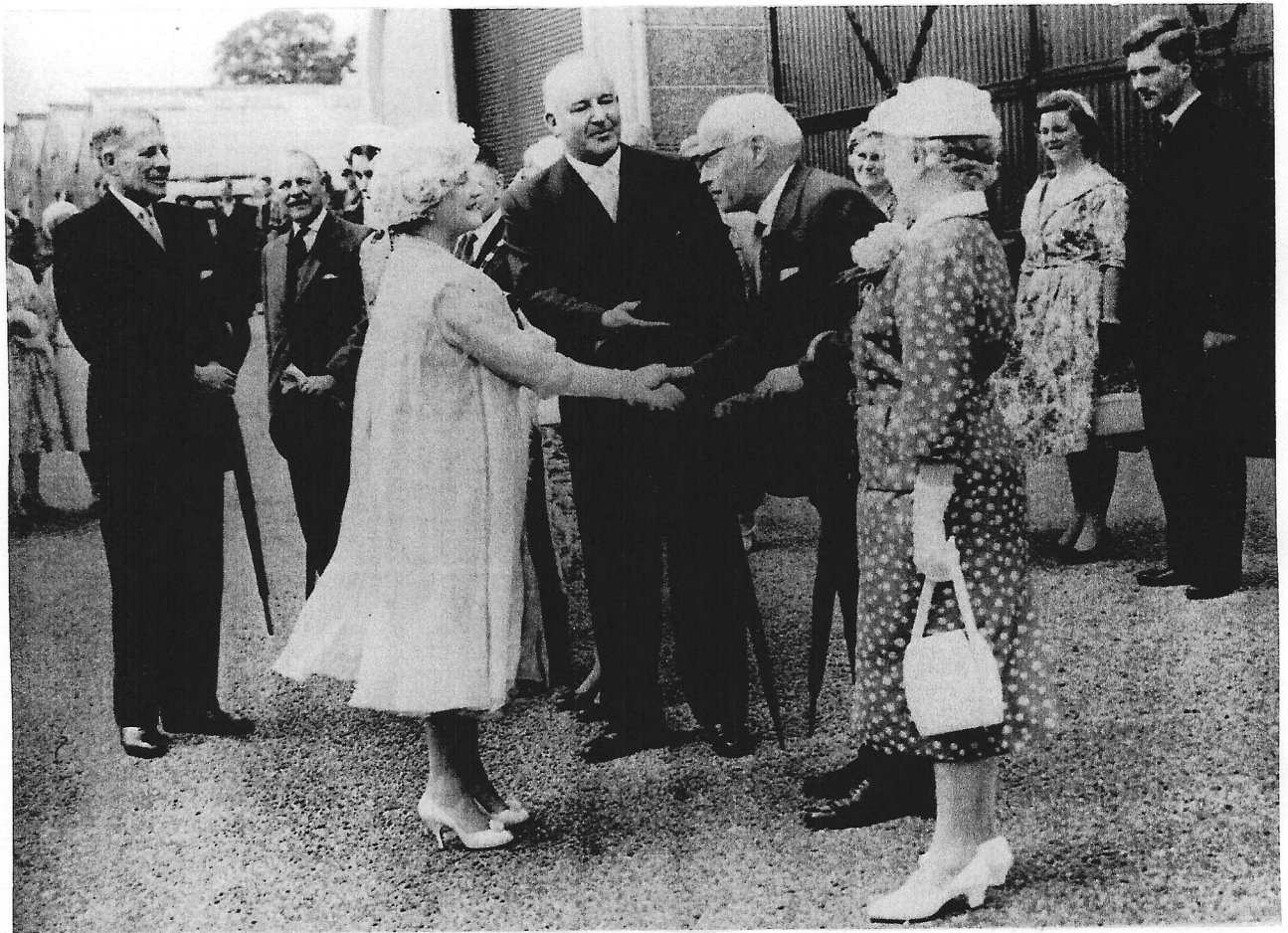
During the next decade the physical size of the nurseries remained almost static but considerable changes in cropping policy and technical innovations were made. The most important of these was the gradual conversion, from the mid 50's onwards, from coal to oil firing. Not only was heavy residual fuel oil now effectively cheaper than coal, but labour was reduced and flexibility and automatic control much facilitated.

Because of the severe squeeze on profits tomatoes acreage was reduced and rose acreage increased. Cucumbers continued to be an important crop.

Stuart Pollard, Son of Andrew Pollard, who joined the business after the War (1946), became a Director in 1955* and provided the impetus behind many of the technical innovations. He acquired a considerable insight into plant physiology and the use of chemical pest control agents. He also inaugurated the use of hydroponics for carnation growing, and kept Pollard's abreast of developments in the U.S.A. and on the Continent.

It must be mentioned here that the differences between Albury and Geoffrey on the one hand and Andrew on the other finally came to a head. Andrew had always had business interests beyond Pollard's Nurseries, and the conflict of interest finally became irreconcilable, exacerbated as they were by opposing temperaments. At a Board Meeting in 1954 Andrew resigned from Pollard's. Following this the Henlow Nursery was sold soon after.

* PN Ltd : PH Ltd, 1959.



Queen Mother's visit, during the 1950's, to Longfield Lane. Albury and his Wife, Gladys (greeting). Right; Stuart and his Sister, Angela.

It is a pre-requisite for any successful business, or indeed industry, that it must have the flexibility to adapt itself to changing conditions: to expand, contract, or even resite itself accordingly. Apart from the squeeze on profits the Lee Valley was now far from ideal for horticulture and improved transport had reduced the need for nurseries to be near City Centres. Not only had the expansion of London and atmospheric pollution reduced the light value but it had brought industries to the area which competed strongly for labour. Further, the nurseries, although always well-maintained, were becoming obsolescent in many respects.

Pollard's have never lacked for courage and realism, and it was in this spirit that the Director's at that time, Albury, Geoffrey, Stuart and Jim, confronted this bleak situation.

Fortunately, the same factors had also made the nursery sites more attractive as building land: it was resolved progressively to sell the Lee Valley Nurseries and to start the development of a new Nursery on the most modern lines, on the South Coast, where light values are the best in the Country and labour conditions easier.

But who was to manage this brave new venture? Ian Tulley had shown the qualities of drive and leadership which one would expect of his name and had already been made Deputy Manager of Longfield. He went down to an empty site at Barnham in 1960 to take charge of the building and management of a Nursery, new from the grass roots up. Initially, 4 acres were to be built and the nursery was most carefully planned in conjunction with Geoffrey and Stuart with allowance for further expansion. Albury, of course, presided over, and encouraged, all these developments although he was now in partial retirement.

It was obvious that the 60's would be a time of great change: in fact sadness and turmoil beyond all expectation lay ahead. In April 1966 Geoffrey died in a tragic accident: mechanical perfectionist that he was, he had climbed a water-tower ladder evidently to inspect the level control gear which had been erratic, nobody else being about. Sometime later he was found at the foot of the ladder having almost certainly died instantly.

Thus, was lost to Pollard's at the age of 66 the younger of their two brothers - a grower of solid merit and great experience. A most conscientious man, who gave meticulous attention to detail, he often displayed a surprising originality of approach, especially regarding new equipment and techniques.

On the human side he was a Good Friend to all, showing, as occasion demanded, now, a kindly gravitas and, now, a quizzical sense of humour. He served on various committees of the Lee Valley Growers Association and latterly represented them on a section of the N.F.U.

Geoffrey had latterly shouldered the main administration load and this was now taken over by Stuart.

Meantime, the sale of the Longfield Lane site was being negotiated with the Greater London Council and it had been decided to offer Turnford for sale. This signalled the virtual end of the Lee Valley Nurseries - except for the small one at South Villa - and a protracted discourse was in progress amongst the Directors and their financial advisers about the whole future of Pollard's in the light of changing circumstances in the industry.

Here, some mention must be made of the increasingly important part played since the early days of the firm by the Accountancy firm James Worley & Sons several of whose partners have been involved at one time or another. To mention only a few, Sidney Worley and Stanley Thompson rendered signal services in the earlier days. The latter had instigated the formation of a Holding Company, probably envisaging the proliferation of operating companies although this was never implemented. In fact it was to prove providential for the shareholders.

Another partner Gordon Tilley had been concerned with Pollard's affairs in more recent years and, as James Worley was looking forward to retirement, Gordon Tilley was appointed Financial Adviser to the Board. Space forbids a detailed description of all the work and painstaking analysis by these two men over the years: suffice it to say that their mature guidance and wisdom have been of vital importance in the best solution of the firms financial, fiscal and organisation problems. The ensuing benefits to the shareholders are self-evident.

The key question was, of course, how much^{of} the assets realised by the sale of the Lee Valley sites should be re-invested in new glass and how much should be paid out to the shareholders. Barnham was already well established but less than half of the



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site had been built on: standing on its own it was neither an economically viable unit nor on the other hand would it realise more than a fraction of its cost if sold.

The decision was made to complete the major part of the Barnham site, but not to build for the time being on another site in the neighbourhood, which had been acquired. This would release a major part of the monies realised, for payment to the shareholders - and to the Inland Revenue.

These decisions were promulgated at an A.G.M. of shareholders dated February 1st 1967, it being projected that £14 per share (on the 30,000 ordinary shares) would be paid out. The preference shares were to be repaid at par.

It was obvious that Barnham by itself would provide insufficient scope for all the executive talent which had been built up and some tensions and apprehensions about the future were already discernible amongst the Management.

At this juncture a second tragic blow fell. Albury had a heart attack and died soon after at the age of 78, on June 17th 1967. He had some ten years earlier suffered a major abdominal operation which would have disabled a lesser man. With typical courage he pursued his life as before, putting in much overseas travel - his abiding passion. He continued with his special hobby - colour cinematography - and the many excellent films he took will live on for him. He lived his life with zest and cheerfulness to the end. Amongst other things he was for many years a Justice of the Peace at Cheshunt; Hon Treasurer, and for a short time Chairman of the Lea Valley Growers Association. He was also a Director of Nursery Trades and the Cheshunt Building Society.

He will be remembered particularly for his dry sense of humour and unobtrusive kindness, which as a keen Rotarian he extended to many people from all over the World, regardless of race or colour.

Thus departed in consecutive years, the two family Directors who had been central to the stable and efficient management of the firm for more than four decades.

There now remained Jim Tulley, the seasoned and experienced grower, and the two younger Directors - Stuart Pollard, sensitive and thoughtful and Ian Tulley, the tough man of action, whose talents and experience were in many respects complementary provided they could work together. Another young and able grower, Barry Clare was waiting, as it were, in the wings: he had already shown his mettle as Manager of Longfield Lane and had been promised promotion. Apart from these two Growers a relatively young accountant, Tony Briggs, had been appointed as Company Secretary in 1967: he had already had many formative years in works

accountancy and cost control methods in Industry. The importance of introducing such methods to the Nursery business was already obvious and has subsequently become ever more pressing.

This team should have been more than adequate for the management of Barnham, and indeed seemed rather top heavy unless further expansion was envisaged.

The sale of Lonfield Lane to the G.L.C. was finally completed early in 1968, and the Directors were all thrown together at Barnham. The incipient tensions previously referred to soon came to a head and it became clear that there was little hope of the Management working smoothly together. This was underlined by a loss for the year of £86,000 which was only partly attributable to a difficult final year at Turnford, and the newly planted acres at Barnham.

Towards the end of 1968 a serious management crisis arose culminating in a direct appeal by Stuart to the shareholders to enable him to acquire the Company: this was in the face of the majority of the Board of the Holding Company. These events are fully recorded in the Minutes of the Company and also the letters of appeal by Stuart to the shareholders dated January 3rd 1969.

Suffice it to say, that after a period of deadlock Stuart Pollard resigned from both Companies on January 9th; his father Andrew Pollard, who had been reappointed to the Holding Company in 1967, also resigned at the same time. Thus they enabled this damaging crisis to be resolved while in no way recanting their convictions. A sad outcome, certainly, but the situation had gone beyond possibility of a workable compromise.

One factor in this crisis was the clearance by the Inland Revenue to a scheme prepared by the Directors in conjunction with Rothschilds Bank for the liquidation of the Holding Company, thus enabling a large amount of surplus cash to be distributed as capital (rather than income) to the shareholders. The Nursery Company could then be restructured as the sole and sufficient embodiment of the firm.

Subsequently, Barry Clare and Tony Briggs joined Ian and Jim Tulley as Directors of the Nursery Company, and David Randall was appointed part-time Chairman; a grandson of the Founder and a Chartered Engineer, he had been appointed a non-executive Director of Pollard's Holdings early in 1966, and had been involved in policy decisions from that time.

The Turnford sale to Wimpey's had been finally completed in February 1969, and at an A.G.M. of shareholders of the Holding Company on March 31st 1969, it was resolved to put that Company only,

into voluntary liquidation for the purposes already outlined and Mr. Gordon Tilley was appointed Liquidator. At the time of writing, this process is still not quite complete, but it is anticipated that the final total paid out as cash will amount to £26/27 per share or some £800,000 in all.

The Barnham Nursery is, of course, still owned by the shareholders who have received two shares in the reconstructed Nursery Company, for each share in the Holding Company. For these substantial benefits the shareholders have to thank in the first place the pertinacity of the Founder and those Directors, now mostly dead, who built up and expanded the Company: in particular Albury and Geoffrey Pollard who weathered the storms of the "Fifties" which enabled advantage to be taken of the great rise in the value of the land, during the "Sixties". The decision of the shareholders to reserve a minor part of the proceeds for a moderate expansion of Barnham must of course await, the final verdict of history. At least it is clear that the present size of Barnham is at the lower limit of economic viability.

Pollard's now faces the challenge of the '70's, in a spirit of sober confidence ! Firstly, they have an experienced, resourceful and relatively youthful team. Secondly; the most modern rose-growing Nursery in Europe, located in the best climatic area of this Country. Thirdly; a special relationship with the World-renowned rose breeders, Meilland of France. Incidentally, this collaboration sprang from an initial contact between M. Rene Royon of that firm, and Geoffrey Pollard shortly before the latter died. M. Alain Meilland, is a frequent visitor to Barnham.

On the debit side it must be said that their most serious problem is the market situation. Britain has easily the lowest cut flower consumption per capita of any major country in Europe, and also an antiquated marketing set-up, from wholesaler's to florists. These factors keep prices unreasonably low in face of rapidly rising production costs. This state of affairs threatens the rewards which should come from their ability to extract maximum production, even through the winter, from their carefully selected stock of roses.

Now methods of stimulating consumption and also of direct marketing, are being urgently studied or tested in conjunction with other interests. These will show results during the next few years.

Then, of course, there is the challenge of the Common Market which may well incorporate our Country in a few year's time. Many insular and less efficient growers may well view this prospect with trepidation. However, access to European Markets could more than offset the greater competition here at home, provided better export marketing can be developed.

One thing is certain: in any Industry there must always be good scope for the most enterprising and efficient firms.