

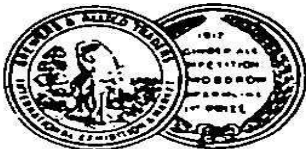
Dunfermline's Industrial Past

James Woodrow & Sons, Aerated Water Manufacturer

Abbey Works, 37 Rolland Street, Dunfermline

Also at Carnock Road & Pitreavie Industrial Estate

GOLD MEDAL



TELEPHONE NO. 223.

LONDON 1912

37 Rolland Street,
Dunfermline, *Nov.* 19*32*.

SPECIALITY: GOLD MEDAL DRY GINGER ALE.

Mr Cowan.

17 Kirkgate.

TO JAMES WOODROW.
Bottler, Aerated Water Manufacturer, &c.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE MONTHLY. TERMS NETT.

Born and brought up in Edinburgh, James Woodrow spent much of his early working life employed as a lemonade bottler in the City. He moved to a similar job in Leven around 1890, where he went on to become manager of an aerated water works for some 18 years, probably that of A. Hutchison, Parkhill Works, Leven.

Having worked in the aerated water business for some 20 years, it seemed a natural progression for him to start in the business for himself, and, in 1908, he achieved this when he acquired the aerated water business of Frank Danks, at 37 Rolland Street, Dunfermline.

The Rolland Street premises had been occupied by Frank Danks from around 1890, having previously been operated by another aerated water manufacturer, Messrs Hardy and Ramsey. Robert Ramsey's son, James, founded the well known egg merchants firm in Cowdenbeath which bore his name.

There is the likelihood that Messrs Hardy & Ramsey were not the original manufacturers on the Rolland Street site, as a house adjacent to Woodrow's office premises bore the date 1864. It is believed, still to be confirmed, that the house was built on the site of a burned-out cottage, and that the manufacture of aerated water had been carried on there before the 1864 house was built.

On another historical note, the Rolland Street Hall, used as a place for social gatherings by the people of the area, and later used as a store by Messrs Woodrow, once housed the Lancastrian School, or occupied the site of the school, attended by Andrew Carnegie.

When James Woodrow came to Rolland Street in 1908, he had a work force of 10 or 11 people. In 1960, by which time much of the manufacturing process had become automated in order to multiply by many times the output of each individual, and such had been the tremendous growth in the popularity of soft drinks, that some 30 employees were

then in place at the factory.

From an early date Woodrow's premises were known as Abbey Works. This title probably pre-dated the arrival of James Woodrow however, as Frank Danks had used the title 'Abbey Brand' for his products.



C.1915 – Charles Woodrow with one of the firm's early forms of transport.

During the early 1900's James Woodrow was joined in the business by his sons, James Jnr., Andrew, George and Charles. A fifth son, Robert, who had also probably worked for his father, was killed in action in France in September, 1918, during the First World War. He was just 24 years of age.

Members of the Woodrow family/s appear to have resided at 33/35 Rolland Street, this being the aforementioned house built in 1864. So, like their contemporaries, the Rae's and the Mitchell's, the Woodrow family lived more-or-less on the job, at least during the early days.



C.1920 – Charles Woodrow with the firm's new Albion motor lorry

Such was the quality of Woodrow's products that in 1912, at the Breweries and Allied Trades Exhibition, in London, they won the gold medal for Ginger Ale. This achievement led to the design on Woodrow's bottle labels, which would exist for many years, of an image of Dunfermline Abbey alongside the gold medal.



C. 1930 – Charles Woodrow at the wheel of his Crossley motor car with, probably, his father and mother

On the death of James Woodrow Snr. in March, 1938, his three surviving sons (Andrew had died in 1936) continued to run, what was by then a well established business, with customers the length and breadth of Fife. By then Messrs Woodrow, in addition to manufacturing aerated waters, were heavily involved in bottling the beers of George Younger & Co., Guinness, Bass and also Bulmer's Cider. These drinks would arrive at Rolland Street in wooden hogshead casks, each containing 52 gallons.



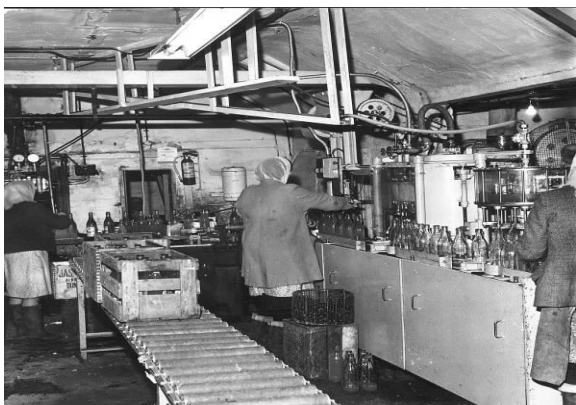
C. 1950 – Woodrow's Office Building at Rolland Street



C. 1960 – The narrow entrance to the works at Rolland Street

Over the years a large part of Woodrow's business centred on the licensed trade throughout Fife and Kinross. The many ex-servicemens' and miners' registered clubs throughout Fife during the middle part of the 20th century also provided good business for Woodrow's products. Indeed, during the 1970s it was a common event for a fully laden lorry to leave Woodrow's factory to satisfy the needs of just one registered club.

James Woodrow Jnr. died in 1950, whilst George died in 1966, leaving younger brother Charles in charge of the firm. Charles' two sons, James and Charles Robert (Roy), had by this time joined their father in the firm. Charles only survived another three years, dying in 1969. This left Roy and James, the third generation of the Woodrows, to run the firm. Roy, the younger of the brothers, became Managing Director on the death of his father, and a few years later James left the business to take up other employment.



C. 1965 – A new bottling line is introduced at Rolland Street. Note the syrup lines from the floor above
By this time Messrs Woodrow had taken over

the business of one of their main competitors in Dunfermline, that of John Bissett who had traded in Pittencrieff Street from the early 1900s. This take-over, in 1965, would prove to be the first of many that Woodrow would undertake in the years to come.



C.1965 – The exit from Rolland Street onto Nethertown Broad Street.

At that time Woodrow's had eight lorries on the road, their distribution area extending as far east as Leven, as far north as Glenfarg, and as far west as Stirling. In order to accommodate the increasing comings and goings of the delivery vehicles at Rolland Street, Woodrow's created a 'through road' from Rolland Street to Nethertown Broad Street, by acquiring and demolishing derelict property on Nethertown Broad Street

Around that time it had become obvious that conditions at the Rolland Street premises were becoming increasingly cramped as the business expanded. The first move to alleviate this problem took place in 1966 when a warehouse at Milesmark, Dunfermline, formerly occupied by the brewers, Tennants of Glasgow, was acquired as a storage depot (now, in 2010, occupied by Abbey Cars). Soon after Woodrow's bought land and the old railway line adjacent to these premises with the intention of creating a new factory at Milesmark. However, problems regarding security and the general administration of these separate premises caused Messrs Woodrow to realise that the answer might lie elsewhere.



C. 1966 – Roy Woodrow and Andrew Gillies outside the Milesmark Depot

Prior to this however, another important appointment was made when Andrew Gillies, who had served his motor engineering apprenticeship with the Fife Motor Company where Woodrow's vehicles were maintained, was appointed transport manager at Rolland Street. Andrew recalled that conditions at Rolland Street were not ideal for the proper maintenance of the vehicles. In addition to looking after the delivery lorries, Andrew was also responsible for the engineering side of the bottling plant, which by this time had seen better days. However, some progress was being made around this time when the first fork-lift truck to operate in Dunfermline was taken into use at Rolland Street.

In 1974, Roy Woodrow took the decision to purchase ground at Pitreavie Industrial Estate, on the south side of Dunfermline, and build a new purpose-built factory there. The result was a warehouse and offices of some 20,000 square feet; a production hall of 5,000 square feet and an outside enclosed yard of a further 20,000 square feet. The latest type of automated machinery and production line layout was installed and the move from Rolland Street to Pitreavie was made in October, 1974. As it turned out the move was made not a moment too soon when, on the evening following the move, severe gales were experienced in Dunfermline which resulted in a high wall being blown down at Rolland Street and demolishing a large part of the former lemonade works.



1974 -Woodrow's new premises at Pitreavie



1974 – The production line at Pitreavie



1974 – Woodrow's fleet of lorries at the time of the move to Pitreavie

A feature in the Dunfermline Press of 14th November, 1975, described Woodrow's new Pitreavie plant as follow:-

The warehouse at Pitreavie has 20,000 square feet of floor space, and the production hall 5000 square feet of floor space, while the outside yard covers an area of 20,000 square feet. From the outside yard, the thousands of bottles used daily are brought into the bottling hall on wooden pallets. Then, in Indian file, they proceed from process to process, virtually untouched by human hand. Every process is automated, except that of picking out from the moving line bottles seen to be defective. On the first stage of their journey the bottles are de-capped. The caps are shot into a waste bin, a new cap being fitted each time a bottle is issued. The de-capped bottles enter a washing machine to go through a five-stage process in which the old labels are removed and the bottles rinsed and sterilised. As they leave the washing machine, they pass through a sight-glass where any cracks or other defects are detected. The defective bottles are rejected by the operator. Formerly, carbonated water and the flavouring syrup of soft drinks were poured into the bottle separately. Now, an automatic mixer machine mixes the ingredients before they are injected into the sterilised bottle. This ensures that the mixture is exactly right, and remains of stable, high quality in the bottle. The mixture is electrically pumped from the mixer into the filler, as the bottles pass in line under the filler nozzle. An improved capping process has also been introduced at Woodrow's. Formerly, caps were already threaded before they were fitted to the bottles. Now, caps are plain pieces of metal, and an ingenious machine threads the cap as it comes down on the bottle. The cap is so firmly secured that no leakage can occur, even if the bottle is held upside down for a lengthy period. Before the capping the bottles pass under one of two fillers. One filler is for beers and ciders. The other is for carbonated soft drinks, cordials and squashes. Then onward go the bottles to be capped or crowned. Split (or small) bottles of soft drinks are crowned; large bottles, capped. To each bottle is attached its appropriate brightly coloured, well designed label, before being gently but firmly gripped by the neck by another ingenious ma-

chine and popped into its allotted compartment in a royal blue plastic case. The plastic cases are also subjected to the cleaning and sterilising process each time they were used.

This article also indicated that at that time, Woodrow's not only make the clear lemonade so favoured in hotels and public bars by people who like to dilute their whisky, but no fewer than 17 different varieties of soft drink. These include their very popular "Glenora" orange drink; "Abbey Cola", an American type drink; and "Blue Moon", that blue coloured lemonade so favoured by children. They also make their own brands of cordials and squashes – lemon, lime, blackcurrant and peppermint concentrates, which require to be diluted before being consumed. They also fill siphons of their own soda water, and bottle Guinness Stout and Bulmer cider. They are also wholesalers for numerous well-known beers, and of Schweppes, Coca Cola, Britvic and Babycham. They also wholesale glassware, crisps and sundries to the licensed trade. The throughput of the Woodrow's factory is 350 dozen large bottles an hour or 600 dozen small bottles.

In order to process the throughput of the factory in 1974, Woodrow's found it necessary to install a Burroughs computer in their office premises at Pitreavie. It was used not only for invoicing and stock control, but for the storage and instant recovery of all information concerning the firm.



1974 - The loading bay at Pitreavie



1974 - The warehouse at Pitreavie



1974 – The ‘new bottle’ stock at Pitreavie

By 1974, Woodrow’s were operated 18 delivery vehicles taking supplies to the whole of Fife, Lothian and Central Regions. The firm also had its own vehicle workshop at Pitreavie, under the charge of John Kram, for the maintenance of the delivery vehicles and the salesmen’s seven cars. In total, they had a work-force of 75 at that time.

The move to Pitreavie coincided with the firm becoming a public liability company with Roy Woodrow as managing director, his wife Joan, brother Jim, and Andrew Gillies all becoming directors. At the same time the company name changed from James Woodrow & Sons to Woodrow’s of Dunfermline Limited. The following year Jim Woodrow left the company to pursue other business interests.

After settling in at Pitreavie for a few years,

Roy Woodrow and Andrew Gillies set out during the early 1980’s to acquire other like businesses throughout Scotland, mainly with a view to increasing their customer base.

These take-overs were as follows:-

June 1981 – Woodrow’s acquired the Musselburgh soft drinks company of G. Leith & Company, then owned by the Pelosi family.

March 1983 – Acquired the business of Carnegie Wines of Dunfermline, a relatively young firm owned by David McIntyre and Ross Muir. This gave Woodrow’s a foothold in the wine market.

April, 1984 – Acquired the business of Trical Wines of Glasgow, allowing for expansion in the wine trade into the West of Scotland.

June, 1984 – Acquired the old established business of soft drinks company, Aitken’s of Dunbar, providing Woodrow’s with a customer base in the Dunbar and North Berwick.

November, 1984 – Acquired the premises and business of Strathmore Springs Ltd., Forfar, formerly owned by House of Fraser, and providing Woodrow’s with bases in Oban, and Fort William.



The Strathmore Springs premises and vehicles.

January, 1985 – Acquired the long established business of J. Wilson, Bottling Company, of St. Andrews, which opened up the north of Fife area for the company and providing it with another 350 customers.

April, 1987 – Acquired the bottling factory and long established soft drinks business of

James Duncan & Co, Drip Road, Stirling, when the owner retired.

November, 1987 – Acquired the business only of Crieff Aerated Waters, a small business but providing Woodrow's with a customer base in the Crieff and Abefeldy areas.

September, 1988 – Acquired the business of D. Kelly & Co. of Edinburgh, a large firm owned by Dunns, providing a further customer base in Edinburgh and West Lothian.

April, 1990 – Acquired the business of Plummers of Burntisland (had by that time moved to Cowdenbeath). This firm had outlets for its products at over 100 chemist's shops throughout Central Scotland.

May, 1992 – Acquired a controlling interest in Dunfermline Athletic Football Club with Roy Woodrow becoming chairman and Andrew Gillies a director.

March 1993 – Acquired the business of local competitor, W N Mitchell & Sons, of Dunfermline.

July 1997 – Acquired the business of Purezza Spring Water, a Manchester based firm started by two young men who produced spring water in unique square shaped bottles and who had managed to sell the product through the outlets of Boots the Chemist.

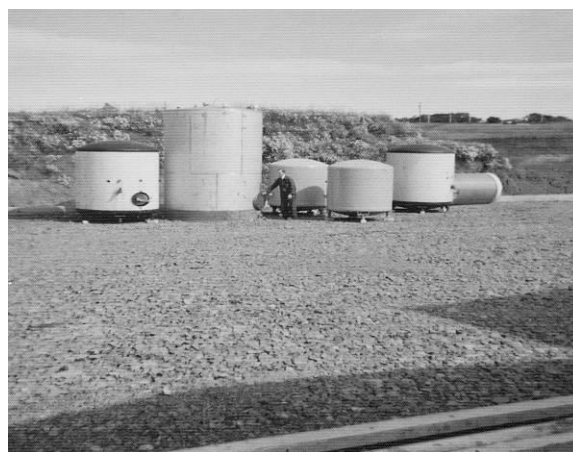
April, 2001 – Acquired the 158 year old family business and premises of William Hay & Sons, (Aberdeen) Soft Drinks Manufacturer, with depots at Inverurie, Inverness and Brechin, providing Woodrow's with a large customer base in these areas. Woodrow's soon replaced the Inverurie depot with a £1 million investment at Kintore, Aberdeenshire, where a new distribution depot and sales office was built. Woodrow's and Hay had enjoyed a close working relationship for many years, with Woodrow's manufacturing some of Hay's soft drinks.

These take-overs meant that Woodrow's had progressed from being very much a provincial firm in the middle part of the century to becoming one of the major independent drinks companies in Scotland at the end of it.

This progress had required not only substantial financial outlay at the acquisition stage but also ensured the concentration of minds to maintain the quality of the product and the service to customers.

To this end, in 1985, the floor space at Pitreavie was substantially increased by the purchase of the adjacent factory premises, formerly occupied by Lawson's of Dyce. This housed a further bottling plant (designed for recently introduced plastic bottles) along with a properly equipped garage for maintaining the ever increasing vehicle fleet. The new bottling plant allowed the company to increase its output to 1200 dozen bottles per hour.

The new bottling area also contained a tank room with a capacity of 20,000 gallons. The tank room was used primarily for Bulmer and Coates Gaymer's ciders which were delivered by road tanker prior to bottling. The high-tech nature of the new production hall meant that it could be operated by the existing staff of just 18.



C 1984 – New bulk tanks awaiting installation at Pitreavie.

At that stage the company operated some 40 delivery trucks with sales vehicles bring the total up to 75. Two mechanics were employed full-time to maintain the fleet.

Also at that time the company employed 15 sales personnel plus six tele-sales operators.

Another success story for Woodrow's was the introduction, in 1975, of the 'Tops' dispensing systems which were installed in the bars of

public houses, hotels, hospitals and sports clubs, to provide a range of products such as the traditional mixers, cordials and both red and white wines. The products were supplied in 10 litre boxes which were installed in the bar or drinks dispensing area for ease of provision. Woodrow's soon had responsibility for the supply, installation and maintenance of over 1000 of these systems. This development involved Woodrow's in the recruitment, training and mobilisation of a team of field service engineers to fulfil this requirement. The 'Tops' systems provided Woodrow's with very good business and they could also boast of 'world-wide' consumption of their products as four nuclear submarines were fitted with the company's machines and products.

In 1989, Roy Woodrow's son, John, was appointed a director and became the fourth generation of the Woodrow family to become involved with the firm.

An article on the development of the Woodrow Group in the magazine 'Scotland Business' in the Spring of 2000, is worthy of inclusion here:-

Woodrow's commenced trading as a family-owned and operated organisation in 1908 as the manufacturer of lemonade under the direct control of Mr James Woodrow.

To their great credit the family involvement has been maintained and the fourth generation of the Woodrow family has recently been appointed to the board of directors.

Needless to say the manufacture of lemonade has also been a consistent contributor to the company's commercial stability. However, as one might expect, beyond the longevity of the Woodrow's family guidance and the undiminished popularity of the lemonade, there is a remarkable example of how a very professional business has evolved.

During the course of its 92 year history, to date, the company has developed from a single product, family-owned business, trading in a fairly restricted locality, to become a major supplier of a wide range of beverages across the whole of Scotland, as well as being a supplier throughout the United Kingdom

and Ireland of a number of soft drinks to some of Britain's largest High Street retailers.

Whilst the original lemonade has been the product that the general public has most readily associated with the Woodrow name, the company has for many years also been a bottler and distributor of beer and cider to the licensed trade in Scotland.

Historically, most of Scotland's licensed premises were also family-owned individual businesses and this may in part explain the strong and long established relationships between the Woodrow's and that client base. However, as the ownership of hotels and public houses became more centralised, the marketing emphasis had to be adjusted and is now extremely sophisticated and in line with the purchasing requirements of the major hotel and catering groups.

Much of this change has been observed and in many cases initiated by Mr Andrew Gillies who is now the managing director, but who joined the company 30 years ago as the transport manager. He acknowledges the transformation of the company and the influences that were involved: "We realised that we had to grow larger and expand the range of products that we sold. We understand that instead of supplying individually owned and mainly local clients, with whom we had developed a close commercial relationship over a long period of time, we were now doing business with very large organisations who had outlets across the whole of Scotland, but who often has centralised purchasing organisations with whom it was more difficult to establish such an amicable association. It was quite obvious that the large groups of companies that now owned hotel, restaurants and public houses would not only rationalise the numbers of their suppliers, they would transact their business in a more corporate style rather than the various ways of the individuals to whom we had previously sold our products. It was equally obvious that if we wanted to keep their business, which we did, then we had to be a large enough organisation to meet their requirements and demands." The growth was in part achieved by acquisition. Over the years Woodrow's has taken over 12 soft drinks manufacturers, bottlers and distributors, each of which had a strong

local presence and individual product lines and from this series of take-overs have created a cohesive group of companies which has a strong marketing history throughout Scotland. One of the benefits to materialise from the take-over programme was a large distribution centre at Oban, which now serves the western areas of Scotland.

Dunfermline of course is ideally located for the distribution of all the company's products throughout central, eastern and southern Scotland, and in consequence is why the company moved from its original location to a large site on the Pitreavie Industrial Estate upon which has been developed a very modern head office building, production unit and bottling plant.

In total the company now employs over 130 people and operates a delivery fleet of 30 vehicles.

Andrew Gillies acknowledges the contribution made by the work-force: "We have built up a very capable and loyal group of employees. The market conditions under which we operate are extremely stressful and every member of our team has played a vital part in our success so far, many of them over a long period of time."

Incidentally, to ease the demands on the Scottish delivery service, the contracts to supply products to the major clients with their headquarters and retail outlets located throughout England, have been out-sourced to national carriers.

Having established the necessary size of manufacturing and distribution facilities the other outstanding achievement of the Woodrow's Group has been to diversify the product range with some very creative and innovative products.

One of the fastest growing diversifications is flavoured bottle water, known as 'Puressa', which is proving particularly successful when marketed by the major High Street retailers in the form of small bottles of less than 500 ml capacity which can be purchased alongside a lunch-time snack and easily held in the hand. Another product to be directed at the retail and trade markets is 'Shark', which is an energy stimulant type of drink.

During any brief analysis of a company's growth it is easy to create the impression that the expansion has been effortless and entirely free from doubt or deliberation. As Andrew Gillies quickly points out, it didn't happen quite that easily: "As you know, one of our corporate clichés stresses the need to get things right first time, because you don't often get a second chance. This has been particularly true of our acquisition and capital investment programme, at every stage the sums involved were such that we could not afford to make mistakes. We had to get it right. That will continue to be the case. The cost factors involved in developing new products and extending the production and bottling facilities demand this type of approach."

When Andrew Gillies was interviewed in 2000 for the above article it probably wasn't in his mind that he would retire from the business in 2006.

In 2008, when the firm was due to celebrate its centenary, production stopped at Pitreavie and two months later the business and premises were sold to the soft drinks company of Wallace Express Ltd., based at Ayr.

Thus saw the demise of the last, the largest, and the longest running of the aerated water manufacturers to operate in Dunfermline.

Note 1 – James Woodrow was born on 27th September, 1865, at Stobsmills, Parish of Borthwick, Edinburgh, the son of James Woodrow, a coal miner. He married Lily Smith, (22), Domestic Servant, at 4 Ingliston Street, Edinburgh (home of Lily), on 27th January, 1888. The couple had ten of a family, three of whom died in infancy at Leven. James Woodrow died on 31st March, 1938, aged 72 years, at 33 Rolland Street, Dunfermline. He was pre-deceased by his wife, Lily, who died on 9th February, 1928, aged 62, also at 33 Rolland Street, after suffering a cerebral haemorrhage.



James Woodrow Snr., wife Lily, and son, Charles

Note 2 – James Woodrow, Jnr., was born on 5th March, 1890 at 21 Blair Street, Edinburgh. His father's occupation at that time was given as Lemonade Bottler. On 12th June, 1914, at Carnegie Street, Dunfermline, James, then 24, and described as an aerated water bottler, married Helen Sharp, (22), a domestic servant from Albany Street, Dunfermline. James died on 24th November, 1950 at his home, 47 Blake Street, Dunfermline. His occupation at that time was given as Aerated Water Manufacturer. The death was registered by his daughter, Margaret Rotheram, Cherrybank, Dunfermline. His wife, Helen, had died a year earlier, on 2nd July, 1949, at the Fever Hospital, Dunfermline, after suffering bronchopneumonia.

Note 3 – Andrew Woodrow was born on 25th October, 1892, at 1 Mount Pleasant, Leven. Andrew married Winifred Williams. He died on 18th January, 1936, at 33 Rolland Street, Dunfermline, aged 43 years. His occupation was given as Clerk and he was pre-deceased by his wife, Winifred..

Note 4 - George Woodrow was born on 3rd

April, 1897 at 3 Glebe Park, Leven. On 4th January, 1929, at Grieve Street, Dunfermline, George married Margaret Paton Lamond or Strachan (29) Widow/Housekeeper, of 226 Pittencrieff Street, Dunfermline. The witnesses were Charles Woodrow and Jessie Lamond. George died on 24th December, 1966, at 33 Rolland Street, Dunfermline, aged 69 years. His occupation was given as Aerated Water Manufacturer. His wife, Margaret, died, aged 95 years, on 16th March, 1995, at Matthew Fyffe Residential Home, Dunfermline. George's life's interest appeared to centre on his work, although in his younger days he had been a keen follower of Dunfermline Athletic.

Note 5 - Charles Woodrow was born at 3 Glebe Street, Leven, on 22nd September, 1903. He married Janet Hunter Robertson, at the Co-op Hall, Townhill, on 27th August, 1930. Charles and Janet had three of a family, James, Isobel and Charles (Roy). Charles died on 24th August, 1969, at 67 Garvock Terrace, Dunfermline, aged 65 years. His occupation was given as Aerated Water Manufacturer. His wife Janet died on 29th December, 1998, aged 93 years, at Queen Margaret Hospital, Dunfermline. Charles was a keen supporter of Dunfermline Athletic and was a patron of the club for many years. He was an elder of St. Leonard's Church, Dunfermline, and was Honorary President of the Northern Bowling Club.

Note 6 – James Woodrow was born.....

Note 7 – Charles Robert (Roy) Woodrow was born on.....



Andrew Gillies