



THE NEWSPAPER OF THE OWEN OWEN GROUP

Scene

CHRISTMAS 1975



COMPANY EXPANDS

Artist at Work



Hamilton & Bell, Kidderminster

More stores join the Group

Eight department stores and two smaller shops from the Maple Macowards group of stores have become part of the Owen Owen organisation.

Formal contracts between the two companies were signed on November 8, after three months negotiation.

Mr. J. A. H. Norman, Chairman of the Owen Owen group, expressed his satisfaction at the successful outcome of the negotiations.

"A business like ours cannot survive by standing still," he says, "it has to expand."

"After absorbing the three Colmer stores in 1973, this year we felt ready to take another step forward, and Maple Macowards Limited have provided the ideal opportunity,"

Bell' stores, in Kidderminster and Evesham.

Mr. Mariner, Southern regional director, will take on responsibility for 'Reynolds' of Hereford, 'Hamilton and Bell' of Newport and 'Wades' in Brighton.

In the North, Mr. Simpkin's province, are 'Maddox' of Shrewsbury and 'Woods' of Colwyn Bay.

In addition there are two much smaller 'Tablemates' shops at Evesham and Uxbridge, which stock mainly china and small gifts.

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Fit-in well

The new stores fit well into the geographical pattern of existing Owen Owen stores.

In the Midlands area, the responsibility of regional director Mr. Eric Hodges, are 'Stringers' of Stourbridge, and two 'Hamilton and

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Medium Size

Seven of the new stores are medium sized—comparable with the Owen Owen stores in Preston, Wolverhampton and Weston-super-Mare. The other one in Hereford is

A Very Happy Christmas to all our Readers



Miss Gina Newall, a hair stylist in the salon at the Coventry store, puts the finishing touches to the kind of hairdo that has won her two prizes in the National Federation of Hairdressing competition.

Gina gained the highest number of points in the Coventry section of the contest, and also first prize in the ladies modern hairdressing section.

Her model in the picture is Miss L. Byrne, secretary to Mr. E. Hodges, Midlands Regional Director.

Free Trip

Mrs. Mary Jones, who spent two weeks in Ibiza this autumn—free.

Mrs. Jones, wig consultant in the store at Weston-super-Mare, was amongst the winners of a national sales competition for staff of 'Ahead of Hair' boutiques.

Her prize was a free holiday in the sun.



Stringers, Stourbridge

smaller, and sells only women's fashions.

For some time before the actual takeover, the Computer Centre Stafford House in Liverpool, had been standing by ready to include the new stores in its programming procedures. The Buying office has also been making plans for adjusting Spring buying.

Which has helped to make Monday, November 10 just another working day for the staff in our now enlarged group.



INTO BOATS AFTER 'SENIOR SERVICE'

Planning a floating retirement is Mr. Herbert Butler, who has recently left the company, after 37 years service.

Because now Mr. Butler will be able to spend more time aboard the sailing boat in which he has a share. He joined Clayton Square as a supervisor in 1938 and after war-time service, came back to the store in charge of mail order services.

To Seaside

In 1947 came a move to Blackpool as D.M. for Fashions. Then Mr. Butler went into buying as buyer of Carpets and Linos.

A leading member of the Royal Artillery Association, Mr. Butler is one of their welfare officers. This means visiting sick members, and sorting out all sorts of problems for others. It's almost a full time job in itself.

The Personnel Touch



Clayton Square's personnel manager since 1967, Miss Christine McDearmid has retired after 40 years with Owen Owen.

Miss McDearmid came to the Liverpool store in 1936, and became a secretary in the Staff Office shortly afterwards.

In 1960, she was appointed staff controller, and then took charge of the personnel department seven years later.

Miss McDearmid has been responsible for initially training many of the personnel managers now working in the other stores.

Secret Slants

Character analysis from a specimen of handwriting has a fascination for most people.

And the handwriting analysis computer at Clayton Square at 20p a 'go' has proved irresistible to customers and staff alike.

The client signs a card which is fed into the computer and from the sample of handwriting—the curves, slants, loops etc—a graph is produced showing tendencies towards certain character traits. Apparently, if your handwriting slopes backwards you tend to be shy and introverted.

BUSINESS REVIEW

A GOOD FIRST HALF

The group had an excellent first half year, with profits before tax in the six months ending July 1975 up from £294,000 to nearly double at £585,000. However, more than half of this profit was immediately taken in taxation and £341,000 will be paid over in the ensuing months to the Inland Revenue.

U.K. STORES

Sales showed an increase of nearly one-third over the same period in 1974, with especially large increases in March and April as customers spent in advance of the increased rates of VAT. Increases of this magnitude can only come from a tremendous team effort and they reflect the greatest credit on all sides of the business—buying, selling and the supporting stockrooms,

offices, transport and service sections. Particularly good progress was made by Bath and Weston-super-Mare.

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CANADA

In Canada, too, the first six months showed a good increase on 1974. Sales did not increase as much as in the U.K. (but the rate of

inflation is not as great there), but the four stores achieved an increased profit as compared with the previous years.

The new St. Catherines store opened at the end of September and has got off to an excellent start.

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PLUMB CONTRACTS

Plumb's has been having a very difficult time. The current economic climate in the U.K. has led to many of their regular clients cutting back or cancelling their development programmes, and orders have been hard to come by.

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THE SECOND SIX MONTHS

The Canadian stores are set for a successful second half year. At Plumb Contracts, conditions remain very difficult.

In the U.K., there is increasing evidence that inflation is biting into our customers' purchasing power. Sales in August suffered from the extremely hot weather but we also failed to reach our targets in both September and October by a small margin.

This start to the second half year will mean an even greater effort to recoup the sales shortfall in the vital Christmas weeks and in the January sales. The full year's profitability will depend on the vital three months of November, December and January.

Life had its Ups and Downs



Miss Dorothy Emma Rowe, sales manager of the Accessories departments at Clayton Square, has retired after nearly 40 years.

Miss Rowe joined the Liverpool store as an assistant on Baby Linen—earning £1.00 a week. But her first two weeks were in fact spent operating a lift. "When I went to bed at night, I could feel the room moving up and down!", she remembers.

In the Picture

Representatives of store and company management wish Miss Dorothy Rowe a happy retirement.

After the war, she became a department manager. In 1953 she was appointed Central Buyer of Handbags, then four years later Central Buyer of Jewellery.

A move to the London Buying office came in 1962, and then it was back to Liverpool a year later—this time to T. J. Hughes—as resident buyer of umbrellas, jewellery and stockings.

After periods spent as resident buyer of jackets and coats, rain-wear and suits, Miss Rowe came back to Clayton Square and back to selling in 1969.

Hair Clare



Looking gorgeous after her new hair-do is Clare Wicks of the Display department at Bath.

During a recent hairdressing promotion at the store, members of the display staff volunteered to be models . . . the results you can see for yourself.

STOP PRESS

As 'Scene' goes to press, the final stages of the negotiations for the purchase of the Maple Macowards stores are taking place. On November 10 they will become part of the Owen Owen organization and their results for the final quarter will also form part of the group result.

'Scene' awaits the outcome of this exciting development with great interest.

Take your bicycle round to the back door

Mr. George Versey, who started work for Owen Owen in Chester (The store was then known as Richard Jones) 47 years ago as a porter, retired last month.

When he began at Bridge Street at the age of 17, Mr. Versey took round deliveries on a bicycle or sometimes a handcart. He remembers that deliveries from the Eastgate store were made by six girls on bicycles.

After about two years, he graduated to a small van—an old T-type Ford.

Back Door

Deliveries in those days were always taken around to the back entrance of the customer's home, Mr. Versey recalls. "People had the money to employ housekeepers and butlers etc. then," he says. "We never saw the mistress of the house."

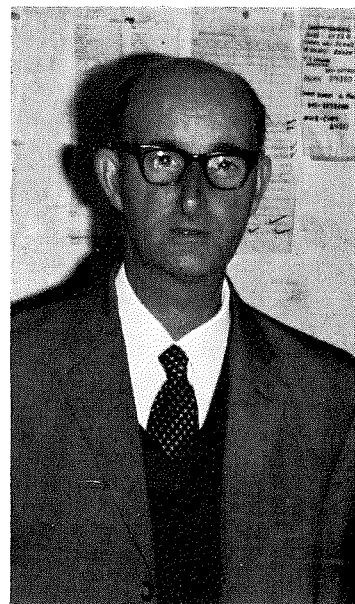
In 1934 Mr. Versey became Despatch and Receiving supervisor at

Eastgate, also in charge of Security. But after a few months he was given responsibility for both the Chester branches.

Just last year, he was transferred to the Vicars Cross warehouse.

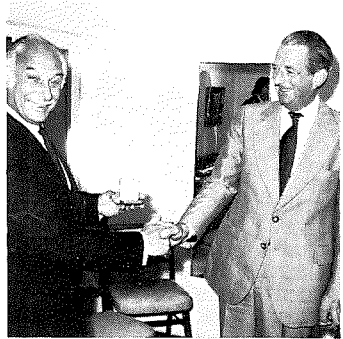
To all his friends at Owen Owen, Mr. Versey is known as 'Kem'. When he was asked why he had grown up with this nickname, he explained that the only reason he could think of was that his father had worked for the Duke of Westminster, and that he had been born while his father was at Kempton Races!

Anyway 'Kem' Versey is looking forward to spending more time in his retirement on caravanning and part-time farming—his two favourite spare time interests.



Timely Visit

During a timely visit to the Southampton store, the chairman, Mr. John Norman presented a fob watch to Mr. Ted King who had just completed 25 years service with the company.



Mr. King began his career with Owen Owen in the Funeral department. Southampton was the only one of our stores to have such a department when it was taken over.

After the Funeral section had been closed, Mr. King was appointed despatch manager. He went into the selling side of the business for two years as S.M. of D.I.Y., Toys and Books, and then became house manager.

Bootle Staff Sent to Risley

Fifty staff from T. J.'s Bootle Strand store were taken by coach to Risley Remand Centre recently.

A luxury coach, mind you—not the black kind with barred windows!

Party

The group were visiting Risley for a party organised by the Prison Officers' Social Club there. It was at the invitation of Gerry Henderson, one of the senior officers, whose wife Audrey is store detective at Bootle.

Lucky Gran

Mrs. Doris Moore, who works in the Central Stockrooms at Liverpool, has become a grandmother—three times over!

Triplets

Mrs. Moore's daughter gave birth to triplets in August—Christopher, Peter and James. Congratulations to Mum—and Grandma!

In this edition of 'Scene' we felt it was time to pay tribute to some of those people who have worked hard for the company for most or all of their working lives. So we asked each store to give us the name of its longest-serving member of staff—and here they are.

They're the Backbone



Mr. Lloyd George



Miss Peggy Pugh



Miss Sylvia Goddard



Mrs. Lucy McCrystal



Mrs. Cicely Lovell



Miss E. L. Shepherd



Miss Margaret Potheary



Mr. Nelson Brown

Mr. Lloyd Henry George has worked in the Coventry store since 1937. Mr. George has many happy memories of his time with Owen Owen—he even remembers the chairman visiting the store as a boy during his school holidays!

Miss Peggy Pugh works in the order room at Chester. She has been there 35 years now, and spent most of them as a van driver. She reckons to have logged more than 500,000 miles without a single accident.

Miss Sylvia Goddard, supervisor of the merchandise office at Clayton Square, who started work for the company as a cashier at the age of 14, completes 45 years service this month.

Mrs. Lucy McCrystal started work at the Doncaster store as a cleaner when it first opened in 1947. She still enjoys her job with Owen Owen and in the evenings works as a barmaid in a local club—where, although she pulls the pints, she doesn't drink herself.

Mrs. Cicely Lovell is about to retire from her job in the Jewellery department at Taunton 'after 35 happy years.'

Mrs. Lovell's son, Roger, has recently married Miss Pat Playfor, a member of the Taunton Invoice Office staff. So she will certainly be able to keep up with all the news after she has retired!

Miss E. L. Shepherd retired from her full time job as tailoress/alteration hand at Weston-super-Mare in 1972, but she still comes in part-time. Miss Shepherd retired in 1943 in the workroom actually making coats, dresses etc. and she was in charge of the department for many years.

Mrs. Margaret McDonald (or Miss Potheary as she is known in the store) works as part-time senior sales in Boyswear at Southampton. She joined the company as a school-leaver in 1950 as an assistant in Blouses and Knitwear.

Mr. Nelson Curry Brown has 44 years service to his credit. He joined T. J. Hughes, London Road in 1931 as a salesman on Hearth Furniture. He worked on various 'heavy' departments until 1963 when he joined the Security team. Now he is back on the selling floor as a Bedding salesman.

Mrs. Annie Clark is Finchley's longest-serving member of staff. She began in 1949 as a cleaner, then moved to Despatch and Packing. Now she is in the Receiving Room.

Mrs. Freda Baldwin joined the Bath store in 1945 as an apprentice in Millinery. She has worked her way through all the various departments in the store, and is now in Customer Accounts, where she enjoys "coming into contact with old and new customers."

Although **Miss Dorothy Holmes** only joined the Bootle Strand store in 1968, she has been with the company since 1955 when she left school. She started as a cashier at London Road, and since moving to the newest store has been working in the offices, eventually becoming office manager in 1972.

There at the opening of the Wolverhampton store six years ago, **Miss Kathleen Pritchard** is now A.S.M. of Ladies' Fashions. "Even though it's a fairly new



Mrs. Annie Clark



Mrs. Freda Baldwin



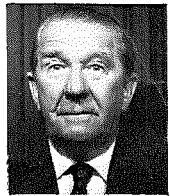
Miss Dorothy Holmes



Miss Kathleen Pritchard



Mrs. M. Bourne



Mr. Tom Coupe



Mr. Norman Austin

store, there has still been quite a few changes since I started. One thing that has never changed is the happy and friendly atmosphere.

Mrs. M. Bourne has worked at the Erdington store for twenty years in the China and Glass department. Now 67, she has worked on a part-time basis since her official retirement. Mrs. Bourne has a pat on the back for Owen Owen. "Things have much improved since they took over from W. M. Taylor and Sons."

Starting work as a dutyman in 1950, **Mr. Tom Coupe** is now Loading Bay supervisor at Preston. He's never late for work—he comes on his bike, "much more efficient than buses." In his younger days Mr. Coupe used to cycle all the way to Liverpool just for fun.

Officially due to retire from the London Buying office last year, **Mr. Norman Austin** is now staying on for another few years. He started work for Owen Owen Estates in 1959 as housekeeper for Kingsway House—and will carry on in the job until the lease on the property runs out in 1977.

Lakes Lunch

More than 140 Pensioners from T. J. Hughes, (London Road) and Audley House enjoyed a day out in the Lake District for this year's outing. The party, formed of many old friends, travelled by coach up to Lake Windermere, where an excellent lunch was served in a hotel overlooking the lake.

In the afternoon the party moved on—through the hills to Morecambe, where they spent an hour.

Married in Bath



Mr. Michael Walters (S.M. Kitchen Furniture) and Miss Christine Uncles (M.O.R. assistant) of the Bath store became Mr. and Mrs. Walters in September. Congratulations!

The Lighter Side

The Mayor and Mayoress of Sefton, visited Bootle New Strand for a 'walkabout' in May. When they came into the T. J. Hughes store the Mayoress was presented with a bouquet by Personnel Manager, Sue Ross but the *Bootle Times*, in reporting the incident said: "... the Mayoress was presented with a Miss Sue Ross on behalf of all the staff."

We hope they will all be happy together!

Some reasons for Customer Refunds and Credits:

- Pillows**—Smelled like ducks.
- Shoes**—Two left feet.
- Cake tin**—Wouldn't get in the oven.
- Evening stole**—Husband refused to take her out wearing it.
- Gardening tool**—Bought by accident.
- Divan**—Will not go upstairs, trying thinner one.
- Wool**—Bought as wool, obviously she can't tell the difference.

- Baby buggy**—Complaint of wheel balance.
- Wig**—Customer bent down to open oven door and frizzed front of wig.
- Washing-up bowl**—Hole in bottom.
- Beaded suit**—Label said "Dry Clean only" but beads melted.

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What about the wages clerk at Bath who turned up at the office in her gardening boots! In her haste to collect a few flowers for the office, she overlooked the time, and came in trailing mud from her plot.

Her solution? She bought a new pair of shoes. The lady wishes to remain anonymous.

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Customer: Could you tell me where the stimulated leather handbags are?

Sales Lady: (In utter confusion!!) Oh! you mean the simulated leather handbags.

It's food for thought

If the annual rate of inflation continues at a rate of 20 per cent, a person who presently earns £1,500 p.a. would need to earn £9,288 in 1985 and £57,507 in 1995 to maintain the value of his gross income. A frightening comparison is that a 1st class stamp which currently costs 8½p would cost, if the price does not rise, 53p in 1985 and £3.26 in 1995!

HE'S OUR MAN IN A SUITCASE

That's a fairly apt description of Mr. John Hoesli, Merchandise Director of Owen Owen (Stores) Limited. Constantly on the move, he sometimes finds himself quite literally living out of a suitcase.

To begin with, Mr. Hoesli has to divide his time between his London Office and company headquarters at Stafford House. "And I think I regard the Inter-City Train as my third home," he says.

Fashion

As merchandise director for the women's division, he deals mainly with fashion—and for fashion London is the centre. But then there are board meetings, management services meetings and merchandise meetings to attend in Liverpool.

And in addition to this, Mr. Hoesli has an overall responsibility for the Clayton Square store.

At the age of 31 Mr. Hoesli must be among the youngest directors the company has ever had.

His career with Owen Owen began in 1962 with a holiday job at T.J.'s.

"I was thinking of going into my father's importing and wholesale business at the time, but after a few weeks in the store, I found I liked retailing so much that I wanted to stay."

So he joined the company full time as a junior trainee at Clayton Square.

It was not long afterwards that he became a management trainee, and a series of moves and promotions followed. To Chester as S.M. of the Accessories departments, then to Preston as S.M. of Menswear and Shoes. Back to Liverpool to take charge of the Boyswear department, and later a move to the London Buying office as buyer of jewellery accessories etc.



Another series of moves around the stores culminated in Mr. Hoesli being appointed general manager of the Wolverhampton store when it first opened six years ago.

After seeing the new store safely 'on its feet', he moved to London as Buying Controller before his appointment to the board of Owen Owen Stores Ltd.

A bachelor, Mr Hoesli loves the roving life. His work for the company often takes him overseas looking out for new markets, new ideas—Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Thailand, Canada, West Africa and of course all over Europe.

"But one of the greatest kicks I get out of my job," he points out, "is being able to watch the growth of 'home-produced' talent."

"Three of our buyers first joined the company as buyers clerks—it's been marvellous to see how they have worked up towards becoming an integral part of the fashion buying team."

Swimmer

When he does have any spare time—and it's a thing that doesn't happen very often—Mr. Hoesli is a keen swimmer.

He is seriously thinking of moving North again now, where he plans to take up golf again. "I belong to Royal Birkdale Golf Club in Southport," he says. "The membership fees are astronomical, so I think it's about time I started making use of them!"

If he has the time.

**He's
the
Greatest!**



George Gilbody, the trainee accountant at Audley House, who last year won the British Amateur Featherweight Boxing Championship, has had another successful year on the boxing scene.

In the autumn, George captained the North West Counties Amateur Boxing Association team on a trip to Lower Saxony, Germany.

Broke Even

The team of eleven broke even on that occasion, with one win and one loss.

George was also in the ring at Manchester where he beat the young international fighter Karl Simmonett.

Another team match in October against the New York Golden Gloves was unsuccessful for the team as a whole—but George won his own individual fight.

What they want for Christmas

'Scene' thought it might be interesting to find out what our store general managers would most like for Christmas. It was, as you can see:

Mr. H. Cotton (Clayton Square)

'An even slimmer waistline.'

Mr. T. Brent (Chester)

'Someone to pay the bills.' Wouldn't we all!

Mr. T. Sansom (Finchley)

'A guarantee that my two children won't wake up before 9 o'clock on Christmas morning.'

Mr. F. Bassnett (Taunton)

'A body like Charles Atlas.'

Mr. B. Boycott (T.J.'s, Birkenhead)

'Two new front teeth.'

Mr. P. Brosgarth (Southampton)

'365 sets of china, cutlery, oven-to-tableware, pots and pans and plenty of sacks—so I won't have to wash a dish for one whole year.'

You can see he's not been married very long!

Mr. D. N. Ramage (Coventry)

'Raith Rovers promoted, and Scotland's qualifying group for the 1978 World Cup to include Outer Mongolia, Greenland and the Scilly Isles.'

Mr. P. Hussey (Bootle Strand)

'Many prosecutions, 9 o'clock queues, 8 brown bitters, 7 more to stop the jitters, 6 figure totals, 5 boot-proof doors, 4 smiling S.M.'s, 3 shining floors, 2 working lifts and a sell-out of Christmas stock.' He's going to need a big stocking.'

Mr. J. E. Herbert (Preston)

'At this merry time of Yule, J. E. Herbert is no fool'

His only wish is ever so weenie, An Aladdin's lamp with full-time genie!

Mr. A. Smith (Erdington)

'A new car that doesn't use petrol, runs on water—and is paid for by the company.'

Mr. P. Fleming (London Road)

'They say the G. M. at T.J.'s Will ask Father Christmas for ways To take more than the 'Square' Using foul means or fair— Next year we should know what he says.'

Mr. Peter Greig (Doncaster)

'A breadth of fresh hair!'

Mr. Robert Packer (Bath)

'It's all a dream. Two tickets to blue skies, palm trees and warm seas— while John Murden installs our new escalators.'

And finally a cry from the heart from:

Mrs. Pat Telkman (Wolverhampton)

'Oh please, for another woman G.M. So I'm not outnumbered when put with the men.'



Reg Retires

Mr. Reg Goodman has retired from his job in the Central Stockrooms after almost 50 years with the company.

Mr. Goodman joined T. J. Hughes in 1926 when it was still run by the Hughes family.

**First
to
reach
twenty-
five**

There were celebrations at T. J. Hughes in Birkenhead, when Jimmy Collin (Left) became the first member of staff to have completed 25 years service with the company.

Mr. Collin started work in the Whitechapel stockroom in 1950, then transferred to Owen Owen, Birkenhead, as dutyman in 1963.

Six years later he moved to London Road store for a few months, then back to T. J.'s in Birkenhead as a receiver.

The general manager of the store presented Mr. Collin with a gold sovereign to mark his 25 years, and there was a party in the staff canteen to follow.

Their store is one of the smallest—and relies on teamwork

IT'S WOLVERHAMPTON—OF COURSE!

If the lads in the loading bay are a bit pushed it's jackets off and sleeves up for the energetic young management team at Wolverhampton. Even Mrs. Pat Telkman, our only woman General Manager, is prepared to lend a hand!

And that goes for anywhere else in the store where some extra help is needed.

Team Work

Because being a small store, teamwork is everything. "You can't just sit behind a desk and keep things going at a distance," explains Mrs. Telkman. "You have to be prepared to physically involve yourself in the day to day emergencies which obviously must arise."

Mrs. Telkman moved to Wolverhampton in May, after working as Merchandise Manager in the Coventry store for several years.

Born and bred in the Midlands into a retailing family, she loves every aspect of the trade, and really enjoys her direct involvement with the Wolverhampton staff.

"We are a very close-knit community here," she says. "Which is probably why the store's social activities are always so well supported. We had a lovely outing to Weston-super-mare recently. Of course I went along!"



Our only woman general manager, Mrs. Pat Telkman.

Mrs. Pat Wycherley is Mrs. Telkman's secretary—and also secretary of the social club.

"At the moment we are making arrangements for 80 handicapped children to come here for tea to meet Father Christmas," she says. "The staff are providing all the food—and presents for everyone." The money for events like this come from socials held throughout the year. "Whenever we have a disco or dance, we have to turn people away—we can't get the tickets printed fast enough," says Pat.

* * *

The next big night on the agenda is the Christmas dance.

On the sports side, hockey is the burning topic. "We will definitely

beat Southampton next time," Pat insists. In fact the Wolverhampton team are already in practice, putting in two nights a week. Look out, Southampton!

Merchandise Manager, Ken Speddings moved from Bootle Strand when the Wolverhampton store first opened six years ago.

* * *

And he too likes the busy life the store gives him. He must enjoy being busy because when he goes home he faces what can sometimes be another hectic job.

With two girls of his own (5½ and 3½) he and Mrs. Speddings also give a foster home to other less fortunate children. "We have some for just a few days, and some stay for months. A lot of them are disturbed when they arrive, but we love having them."

John Barker, Office Manager is the newest member of the management team at Wolverhampton.

And his first few weeks in the store were quite an eye-opener. A graduate trainee John started his career at Stafford House where he was assistant to the Financial Controller for 2½ years.

Then came a move to Audley House as the Group Accountant's assistant.

* * *

Two very peaceful jobs compared with the work I'm doing now in the store. But I think I prefer the more hectic way of life."

Another one who was "thrown in at the deep end" is Mrs Jillian Nash, one of our Proficiency winners who is Senior Sales Assistant on Menswear.

Before she joined Owen Owen 18 months ago Jillian was in the photographing business. "I was stuck in a darkroom for most of the time, processing film, and I hardly ever saw anyone else.

"I was needing a change, and a job in retailing seemed to offer everything I had been missing.

"But it was rather terrifying, at first—I'd forgotten how to talk to people, and that is what selling is all about.

* * *

Jillian loves the work now though—her daily contact with the public soon brought back her confidence. Another Proficiency winner whose career is already well on the way is young Peter Evans. At 18, he is A.S.M. on bedding, Carpets, Electrical goods, Audio and Toys. And he was promoted to A.S.M. just before his 17th birthday.

The stockroom seems to be a "gold mine" of talent. Dianne Price (21) must be the only girl in any of our stores to belong to a brass band. Dianne, who doesn't look hefty enough to even lift a euphonium—it's a bit like a tuba—actually plays one.

The non-stop maintenance man, Kris Muszynski, stands in the centre. With him are members of the store's display team including Mr. Keith Woodall, display manager.



Stockroom staff gather round for a picture. Amongst them—twins Isabel and Elizabeth Bates with their rosettes and collection of antique dolls, and Dianne Price, with euphonium.

A member of the Wolverhampton Brass Band (heard on Radio Birmingham), Dianne has been playing the euphonium since the age of thirteen. It's a marvellous instrument," she claims. "If I ever get into a bad temper, I just blast out a few bars, and it makes me feel much better!"

How does a young girl become interested in joining a brass band, you may well ask.

"My father plays the trumpet," says Dianne. "My sister plays the clarinet and my brother is a trombonist, so you see we're a musical family."

Isabel goes on: "It all started when we found a doll of my grandmother's. Now we hunt them out at antique fairs and so on."

'Auntie Tom'—as Mrs. Doreen Thomas is generally known—has one of those indefinable jobs in the store.

She started work there as a relief telephonist, but things mushroomed and now she gives a hand anywhere she is needed. She has helped out with staff induction and on the selling floors.

Kris Muszynski is another one whose job seems to have widened since the store's opening.

Kris came as an electrician, but now he takes care of all store maintenance single handed. He's as handy with a spanner or hammer and nails as he is with a screw-driver.

Long Day

And it's a long day for Kris. He starts at 8.00 a.m. and often doesn't go home until 8.00 in the evening.

"I always like to have a job completed before I leave the store," he explains. "I hate to leave anything outstanding, so once I start something I stay till its done."

Maintenance is a never-ending job of course, but it also has its moments of drama. For instance, the store has been flooded three times. "Once on a Christmas Eve, and once on a Sunday night—the worst times you could think of."

Mr. John Hoesli was there with Kris to tackle the Christmas Eve disaster, and the second time everyone turned out to help.

Which brings us back to where we started. *Everyone* at Wolverhampton is prepared to put their hands to almost *everything*.

Maybe that's why this small store is doing so well, with sales figures soaring all the time. Once regarded as mainly a 'fashion store', Wolverhampton has broadened its horizons and other departments are coming into their own—Hardware, Electrical Goods and Carpets are all success stories.

There's only one conclusion to be drawn—adaptable people make for an adaptable store.



Merchandise manager Ken Speddings.

Store's Display Team



A relative newcomer—but John Barker prefers the "more hectic life."

Twins Elizabeth and Isabel Bates (21) work with Dianne in the stockroom and their special talent is horse-riding.

Between them the two girls have won about 150 rosettes and seven trophies.

They have been riding since they were six, and each has her own pony. So, when the store closes, it's a question of dashing home for tea and then out to see the animals.

Elizabeth and Isabel have another special interest—collecting antique dolls. "We have about 50 of them now," says Elizabeth. "And we think our collection must be worth a good deal of money. We paid £100 for one doll alone."

NEWS FROM CANADA



Linda, Margaret and Cheryl.

Three lovely girls from Burlington

Three lovely girls from the Burlington store who were chosen by their colleagues to represent Robinsons in the annual 'Miss Burlington Mall' contest.

Linda Coburn is a blue-eyed blonde who works in the Cosmetics department.

Cheryl Baker, just five foot tall, with dark brown hair and eyes, works in the 'In Gear' shop. The shop caters especially for young male fashions—and Cheryl could

be one reason why it is doing so well!

Margaret Thomas, an assistant in the Drug Sundries and Candy and Smoke shop, is fair with green eyes.

Congratulations to all three girls for being chosen to represent the store.

EASTGATE DRESSES UP —AND WINS A PRIZE

PICNIC
IN THE
SUN FOR
800

Staff from all the Canadian stores made the most of the warmer weather with a picnic. The job of organising the picnic—for about 800 staff and their friends and children—presented a marathon task for Mr. Harold Gater, the chairman of the combined social committees.

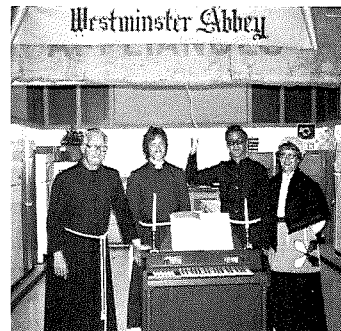
Hay-Rides

But plenty of help was forthcoming—some people got down to the basics of fund-raising, organising hay-rides, tugs-of-war, ice cream supplies etc. while others just prayed for good weather!

The hard work was well-rewarded with a marvellously hot day—and the swimming pool facilities were more than welcome.



Mrs. Bernie Gora, whose costume won 1st prize.



Large Appliances department staff—H. Gater, J. Harper, D. Culver and M. Florio—who gave their section the best theme during the festival.

The Eastgate store took on an international flavour for three days during a 'Market-on-the-Mall' celebration.

The general theme was British, but the staff turned out in all sorts of costumes and gave their departments various themes. Poland, Holland, South Africa, Hawaii, Mexico, Yugoslavia were all represented.

For the second year in succession, the Robinsons store received the trophy and gift certificate, from the management of Eastgate Square, for being the best-decorated store in the Mall.

Top Prize

Within the store itself, Mrs. Bernie Gora (Sales Audit) took 1st prize for the best costume, with Mrs. Joy Reestman (Children's Wear) as runner-up.

The Big Ticket (Large Appliances) department was judged to have thought up the best theme, and Fabrics took 2nd prize.

The department to have had the best sales increase over the year turned out to be Carpets, with the Dress department close on their heels.

Top Bowlers



Bowling fans from all the Canadian stores gathered together for a 'bowling banquet', with Robinsons' director, Mr. G. T. Horne, as guest-of-honour.

Trophies were handed out to winners of the various bowling events, and above we picture the Centre store's winning 10-pin bowling team—left to right—Winn Dunbar, Doug Sims (standing in for Sam Mahon), Larry McClung, Linda McKee, Mel Pattinson, Jim Rich (store manager, who presented the prizes), and Ann Vhelak (representing the store management).

old Down-Town Bowling Club trophy is Mrs. Ruth Butler, captain of the winning team.

Also in the picture are team members Irene Taylor, Valerie Miller, Tom Higgins—and on the right Mr. G. T. Horne (company director, who made the presentation) and Vivian Macdonald (president of the Bowling League). Another member of the winning team, Mr. Fred Easlick was unable to be at the presentation party.



MEET MR. DAVIDSON

VIP PARTY

The Down-Town social committee held a special V.I.P. (Very Important Pensioners!) party for about 50 retired staff.



Left to right—Mrs. F. Caskie (retired 1975), Miss E. Sanders (retired 1957) and Mrs. M. Lackey (retired 1960).

One of the highlights of the party was the presentation of a special birthday cake—in the shape of a paint brush—to retired painter Sammy Birdsall. Mr. Birdsall was to celebrate his 68th birthday shortly afterwards, and this unique cake was baked for him by Mrs. Violet Chamberse, the wife of the social committee chairman.

Mr. A. H. Davidson, Secretary-Treasurer of Robinsons, graduated from Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario in 1950 with a Bachelor of Commerce degree. After graduation Mr. Davidson worked for the Steel Company of Canada for six years and joined Robinsons in 1956.

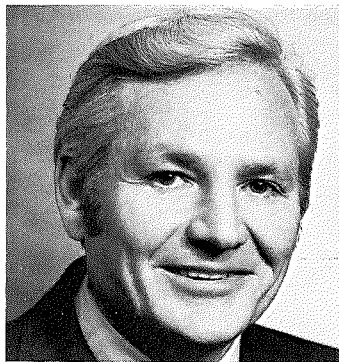
In 1967 he became a Director of the company. His responsibilities include the budgeting of profits, the control of operating expenses and the over-all financial control of the company, together with the President Mr. Dakin.

Computers

With the expansion of the Company, particularly since 1972, he has spent a considerable amount of time in the development of computerised systems and procedures, both on the merchandising and

operating sides of the business.

Mr. Davidson and his wife, Maisie, are well acquainted with the Arthursons, Flemings, Cottons and Reids all of whom worked in



Canada for a period of time and they were pleased to see them again when they visited the U.K. in May of this year. The Davidsons have four children and live in Burlington.

Evelyn hangs up after 18 years

She has sat in the same chair for the past 18 years, answering the telephone for three different firms—Henry Morgan's, Hudson's Bay and then G. W. Robinsons.

And now Mrs. Evelyn Wain, Centre store switchboard operator, has retired.

From the store's Staff Association, Mrs. Wain received a Dalton figurine to mark her retirement, and

was presented with a silver necklace and earring set by the company.

One hundred and four colleagues turned out for a retirement party, when Mr. J. Rich, Centre store manager, handed Mrs. Wain a painting on their behalf.

A keen horse-racing fan, Mrs. Wain will probably be spending at least some of her spare time at the racecourse.

We get the picture

We're getting the message across. 'Scene' wants pictures.

But this letter, which the Editor received from T. J. Hughes, Bootle Strand, shows that it's not all plain sailing.

"We wanted to be able to send pictures of our socials to 'Scene', so we counted our coppers, and had just about enough to buy an Instamatic. Since then the only thing that has gone wrong with Bootle's social events has been the camera!

Missing

"For instance we had a marvelous evening out on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. But someone forgot the camera.

"Then we had our big autumn ball at the Mons Hotel. The camera was there, but someone brought the wrong film!

"Anyway, watch out for plenty of pictures in the next edition. We've got the camera, films, flashbulbs—we're bound to find a photographer by then!"

CALL IT THE STREAMLINE

DEPARTMENT



Left to right—Alfred Rowley, Mrs. Elizabeth Geoghegan, Miss Barbara Tovee, Mrs. Joan Holstead and Management Services director Miss Ona Moulding.

Management Services. Does that sound a little vague? Hardly likely to affect the people who work at the counters in our stores?

Far from it. The Management Services department at Stafford House embraces every possible aspect of the business.

Miss Ona Moulding, who has recently been appointed to the Owen Owen (Stores) Board as Management Services director, explains: "Our aim is to streamline every procedure within the business to make the company more efficient, more profitable, and to see that the management information is fast and effective."

To put the matter in simple terms. The Management Services department wants to eliminate any unnecessary procedures—time-consuming paperwork, for instance, which may have become obsolete but is still continued as a matter of routine.

"Our biggest 'hate' is waste," says Miss Moulding. "Waste of time, waste of materials, waste of people."

"And it is in this area that store staff can help enormously.

"If anyone knows a better way of doing any operation—large or small—that will help us to sell more and waste less, he or she should tell the Manager immediately."

Miss Barbara Tovee, who works with Miss Moulding on management services, will be delighted to look at the idea and see if it has general application.

Saved £1,000's

Already, Management Services (which only came into being earlier this year) has saved the company £1,000's worth of unnecessary paperwork. And this achievement has been almost entirely due to acting upon information received from store management and staff.

The constant battle with inflation has made communication of this kind more essential than ever.

Another important factor in the streamlining of company procedures is the work of the computer department. Led by Mr. Alfred Rowley, electronic data processing controller, this department also comes under the wing of management services.

At present, the computer experts are deeply involved with their development programme on the new Honeywell computer, one of their many projects is the introduction of 'point of sale' electronic cash registers. In the spring, Clayton Square will become the first department store in Liverpool to have these electronic cash registers installed. They will supply informa-

tion directly onto a magnetic tape, which is fed into the computer at head office. A full sales analysis will be on the general manager's desk by the following morning—and there is no need to spell out the advantages of such a fast feedback of information.

Another aspect of the Management Services Department is Group Training. In this field, Miss Moulding relies upon Mrs. Joan Holstead, central trainer, who works on the organisation of management training programmes and mounts in-store training courses in co-operation with store trainers, and also keeps the system training updated. On this last task the streamlining of procedures is very close to her heart.

Secretary—and more

Miss Moulding's secretary, Mrs. Elizabeth Geoghegan, is busy arranging a variety of external training courses, including those where staff and management attend the manufacturers' technical knowledge courses on their products. She also takes care of all the administrative detail of the Stafford House courses, distributes commodity knowledge information to the stores and looks after the secretarial needs of the whole department.

"Before the department was instituted it was a question of each director having to research and improve the systems being used in his own particular sphere", says Miss Moulding. "Now, given the basic information, we can do that research for him and present a full, factual report with, hopefully, a workable solution."

You may think that, given time, the Management Services team will reach their ideal—and eliminate all the time-wasting, money-wasting systems which are such a drain on any company's resources.

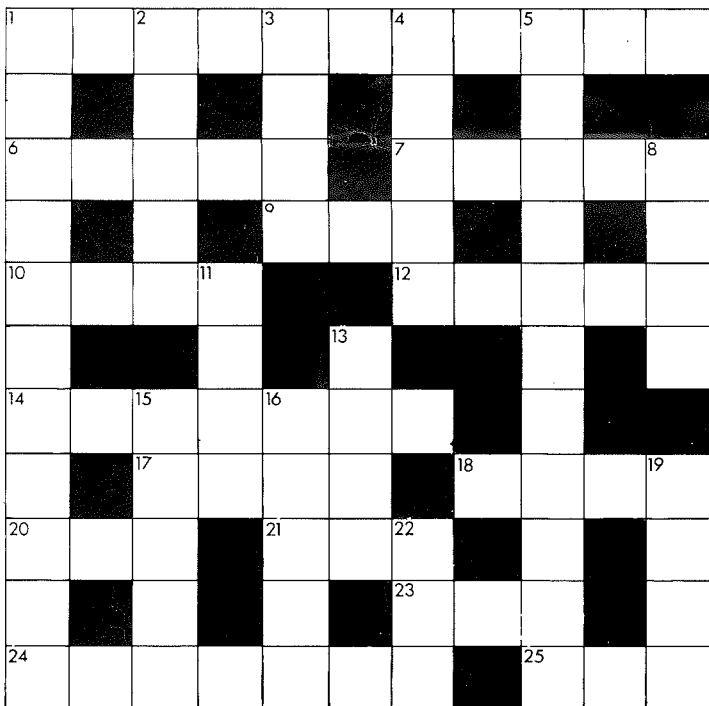
You would be wrong. "Ours is a constant job," Miss Moulding points out. "For example, our new stores will yield some interesting work, and new ideas."

"Retailing never stands still, and progress will always mean a re-appraisal of old methods and an investigation of new ones. We can only hope, with everyone's help, to get our company as near to the ideal as modern science and human capabilities will allow."

BEAT THIS!

The London Road store challenges the rest of the company to beat the fantastic record of its Menswear department, which has won the Banner Achievement Shield for three months running. The Menswear department staff led by Mr. Humphreys have earned the award through their friendly salesmanship and sheer hard work. We congratulate them on their achievement and say to all the other stores, "Can you beat this?"

SCENE CROSSWORD



CLUES

Across

- 1 Diving rates perhaps. Keeps us informed of what's for sale.
- 6 Val surrounds the military chief, it is said.
- 7 Fabric one lounged around in, maybe.
- 9 When it comes to a ward at sea, this is the sheltered one.
- 10 About average for a short chap.
- 12 Worth confused, so cast aside.
- 14 Cry of the plague stricken.
- 17 Famous Jean.
- 18 You'll find this state as you put a hat on.
- 20 Sounds like eggs on top.
- 21 Not only but also.
- 23 Possess.
- 24 He or she may well arouse suspicion.
- 25 The first word in getting a horse going.

Down

- 1 Our saved nut reorganised, describes explorers.
- 2 Six before the vehicle, found in church perhaps.
- 3 Stream water over pebbles, not north west resort.
- 4 Nest and I make a special section within the whole.
- 5 Absorbing.
- 8 This is never old.
- 11 Does he deliver your post?
- 13 Heavy, light, or intermittent, it's wet.
- 15 Primitive nails?
- 16 Dodge, but not city.
- 19 Intense feeling of dislike.
- 22 Dorothy's spot.

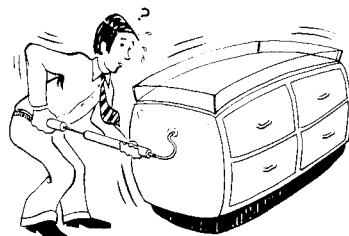
It has a bed, too!

There are changes taking place in the staff restaurant at Finchley—it has been painted and papered and fitted out with new tables and chairs.

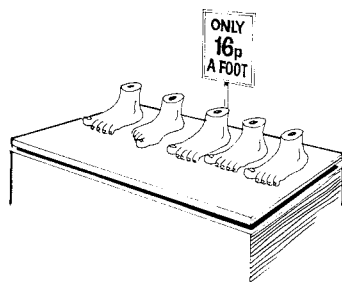
But the best news of all is the new Welfare Room, complete with bed.

"Now there will be no need to lay our sick staff down in the Bedding Department in full view of the customers," they say at Finchley. Mind you, so far they have not had many people reporting sick—we wonder why!

CARTOONS



COUNTER INFLATION



GOOD QUEEN BESS

—that's one of the many roles Mrs. Hardman, A.S.M. of the basement at Doncaster, has played as a member of her local Amateur Operatic Society. Mrs. Hardman, who is a first-class pianist too, has played leading contralto roles for the past nine years.

Crossword Solution

ACROSS: 1 Advertising, 6 Vocal, 7 Satin, 9 Lee, 10 Norm, 12 Throw, 14 Unclean, 17 Levi, 18 Utah, 20 Ova, 21 And, 23 Own, 24 Suspect, 25 Gee.
DOWN: 1 Adventurous, 2 Vicar, 3 Rill, 4 Insert, 5 Interesting, 8 News, 11 Male, 13 Rain, 15 Claws, 16 Eyade, 19 Hate, 22 Dot.

A Christmas Carol



Top row: J. C. Mitchell, Group PM (Staff); Mrs. P. A. Timbrell, Bath; Mrs. A. Crawshaw, Chester; Miss S. Harris, Weston-super-Mare.

Middle row: Miss J. Queenan, Erdington; Mrs. J. Torrington, Doncaster; Miss E. Rigby, London Road; Miss C. Poole, Finchley; Miss C. Hale, Group PM (Management); Miss S. Ross, Bootle; Miss E. Stewardson, Preston.

Bottom row: Mrs. S. Jones, Audley House; Miss J. Capewell, Wolverhampton; Mrs. J. Jackson, Birkenhead; Mrs. D. Willmer, Southampton; Miss C. E. Mee, Personnel Director; Mrs. J. James, Coventry; Mrs. P. Stevens, Taunton; Mrs. F. Martin, Clayton Square.

While salesfolk watched their stock last night
All looking glum and browned
From upstairs their G.M. came down
And they all gathered round.

Fear not said he, for Plumb will come
And ease your troubled minds
Sales targets have been cut by half
So you can all unwind.

Objectives now, have gone away
Yes yours, and so have mine
Staff discounts doubled, thank the Lord
Let's celebrate with wine.

All glory be to personnel, for
Giving us more cream
Enjoy it now, for when you wake
You'll find it's been a dream.

... to the tune of
"While shepherds
watched their
flocks by night"

ALFRED LORD RENNISON