

owen  
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# Scene

CHRISTMAS 1980

## SUPER EFFORT THAT MADE A SUPER STORE

REDDITCH General Manager Barry Boycott likened moving into Owen Owen's newest store to moving into a new house — only on a much larger scale.

And in a similar way the 200 plus staff there have a unique family-type relationship that is obvious from the minute you talk to them.

The large, modern, air conditioned shop opened right on schedule on August 28 to greet thousands of eager shoppers anxious to view the town's biggest new store in years. But if you think it

was just a case of being closed one day and then opening the next you would be wrong.

That is where the family unity, or team spirit, comes into the Redditch store. From the word go

the staff there rolled up their sleeves got down on their knees and worked. The building in the words of Personnel officer Marion Holland was "just a shell" but the staff soon made it the super store it is now.

### A SUCCESS

Marion summed it up when she said: "Everyone got down to making this place a success, from directors to shop assistants. It was a case of getting into jeans and getting a bit mucky in the process.

"It is exceptionally hard for people to realise just how much effort goes into building up a store like this from scratch. All the stock had to be brought here and it was a case of working seven days a week, virtually 24 hours a day.

"It is remarkable to think how it all took place, but now that it is complete I wouldn't be wrong in saying that the staff here are just wonderful. It is a personnel officer's dream to be able to pick all her own staff herself and that is very nearly what I did".

Marion joined the company three years ago at Shrewsbury and moved to Redditch in May for the opening. She is sure that Redditch will be a success story.

### TRAINING

"The precinct here is still at its development stage and once the introduction of the proposed new big stores take place we will see a big difference. There are a lot of people from several large cities round here who are just looking for a shopping area like this. It is ideal for their needs", she said.

Mr. Boycott moved to the area at that time and from then on started to get things under control:

## Christmas greetings from



## the Chairman

CHRISTMAS seems a long way ahead as I write in early November. The finishing touches are still being put to Christmas promotions.

In our stores, we wait expectantly, and even anxiously for the buying surge to start. It will, it always does, but we shall have to work very hard to increase our market share in the critical weeks ahead.

I know you will do your best, and please accept the thanks and seasonal good wishes of the Directors at this time.

JOHN NORMAN



● Sue Raymond, Sales Manager, shows some of the younger customers the wide range of Christmas toys that are available in the new store.

"We had to think of the thousand and one little things from ordering our own stationery right down to the toilet roll holders. It was just like moving into a new house only on a much larger scale of course", said Mr. Boycott.

"While moving in we were also recruiting the staff and it wasn't until August 4 that we started to bring in the actual merchandise.

"We moved our own goods in over the weekends, with lease departments bringing in their merchandise during the weeks. We commenced with the top floor and gradually moved through the building merchandise in each area. At the same time we started the phased introduction of our staff

and their training prior to the opening", he said.

The opening day was preceded by a cocktail party for officials, the press and developers. The actual opening ceremony was carried out by Chairman John Norman and Miss Nora Arthurson a past deputy chairman of the company.

"Being the first new store for a number of years we could lay it out exactly as we wanted to right from the start, rather than improve an existing operation. The ground floor, for instance, concentrates to a large extent on fashions, something which is traditionally kept to the first floors", said Mr. Boycott.

● CONTINUED ON  
PAGE FOUR

MERRY CHRISTMAS MERRY CHRISTMAS

# Accounting: We've got it figured out

QUILL pens and high desks with stools. Is that the impression most people have of the central accounting function of our company? Maybe, years ago, but not anymore.

Everything these days is highly mechanised, with costly electronic equipment being fed, controlled (and corrected!) by people who, in many ways unfortunately, the stores no longer see very much of. The backroom girls (and boys!) beaver away — but what do they do?

Group Financial Director, Maurice Rider, took time away from his desk to tell Scene.

## PRIME AIM

He is responsible for the total accounting function of the company and, broadly, this is split into the Central Customer Credit and Central Accounting departments. Central Accounting is split into Central Invoice Office, Purchase Ledger, Central Sales Audit Office (with its credit accounting and "lease", or concession department, sections) and Financial Accounts.

The interrelationship of these departments with suppliers, customers, stores etc. is shown in the diagram.

Much of the non-selling work formerly done in the stores is now carried out in head office. Credit was 'centralised' recently, invoice passing before that and as long ago as 1975 the old store "check offices", were consolidated into the central sales audit office.

The prime aim of these moves has been to achieve a more efficient (and economic) operation by concentrating the specialists and, by

and large, this has been achieved but probably at some cost in de-personalising these services to the stores. Additionally, the stores should now be able to concentrate on their prime aim, which is to sell goods to our customers and thus create the profits we need to keep the company going and growing.

The customer credit function is headed by John Pye, who joined the company three years ago from the banking world. His department looks after the initial vetting of accounts applications (to avoid opening accounts for people who won't pay, or who will pay but too slowly), customers' queries and inevitably, the chasing up of those who slipped through the vetting "net" and have proved to be bad payers.

Credit services are a vital part of today's retailing and the new Budget Accounts are an indication of John Pye's work in improving the range of credit facilities available.

Our investment in credit is well over half of that in stock — some £4½m. in fact — so it is vital that the whole operation is tightly controlled. Centralisation has helped to achieve this by its prompt checking of credit-worthiness and faster action in those cases where, in spite of all precautions, accounts go "bad".

The ultimate sanction in these cases when all else has failed is the law and the initiating of county

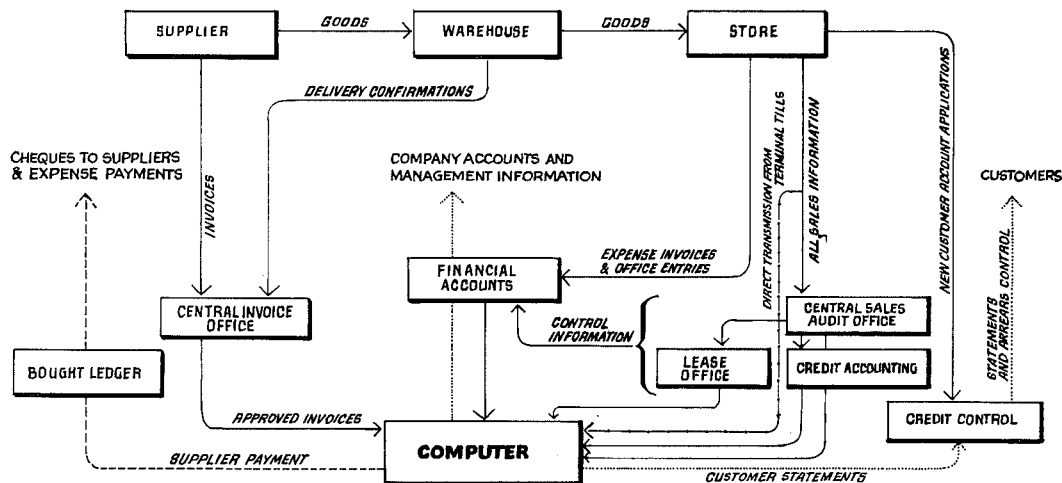
court actions is more effectively carried out.

John Pye has Phyllis Keegan leading the team helping him with the new accounts and George Banner in charge of those leading the strayers back onto the "straight and narrow" and pursuing those who have disappeared on a country ramble!

The central accounts team consists of Stan Reid, Accounts Department Controller, John Barker, Accountant, Rob Firth, Assistant Accountant, Marion Alden, Joan Duggan and "Robbie" Roberts, the three ladies managing Financial Accounts, Central Invoice and Purchase Ledger Offices and Central Sales Audit Office respectively.

## Backroom team is a credit to us...

Basically, the whole department is organised to deal with three functions — money coming in, money going out and the calculation of profit (or loss) together with the provision of management information. All sections make use of either



the "mainframe" Honeywell computer or the "mini" computer run by Management Services.

Central Sales Audit Office (CSAO) deals with incoming money from store sales. While all stores now have some electronic point-of-sale terminals which feed sales information direct into the central computer (including charges to customers' credit accounts), the audit rolls from them nevertheless have to be sent to CSAO for checking every day for there are many queries on the information fed into and transmitted by the terminals.

There are many older-type tills for which CSAO receives information to be fed into the Honeywell computer. A separate section picks up all the sales and other information on lease departments and arranges payment to our lease operators.

The credit section controls the input of charges to customers' accounts arising from sales and payments, which our customers make in the stores or send to head office.

Mrs. Roberts and her supervisors, Doreen Gelding and Jean Goodwin, and their staff normally deal with about 380 tills but in the run up to Christmas this has just risen to 450.

What happens on the "money out" side? Well, our merchandise suppliers (over 2,000 of them) need to be paid according to the terms agreed with them by our buyers.

Joan Duggan, with supervisors Sylvia Radcliffe and Dorothy Denny, lead the team here. Central Invoice Office receives all suppliers' invoices (apart from those for "heavy" and certain other goods which are still passed for payment by other stores) and "matches" them with packing notes from the regional warehouses which confirm receipt. Order prices and quantities are checked and selling prices recorded.

Invoices (including those passed by the stores) are then processed by the computer. The computer puts the invoices to suppliers' accounts, calculates what we owe them and produces cheques for payment.

Purchase Ledger Office processes the cheques through various check routines before despatch to suppliers and then adds the latest information to its supplier account files. Payment doesn't finish the process — many queries (about 1,000 letters each month and many more 'phone calls) come in.

The Financial Accounts team is led by Marion Alden and supervisor Liz Armstrong. They do the company's book-keeping. Information received direct from stores is converted into a form acceptable for punching into the mini-computer and is processed to produce a ready-

balanced and fully analysed list of all the individual transactions for the company every financial month end. The mini-computer also deals with payments to suppliers.

## Results have to be in money terms

From the final listings coming off the mini-computer, the department then compiles monthly profit and loss accounts for the company, for each store and for various operations such as catering.

The results of the work of all the people working in the company have to be recorded in money terms. Money owed to the company must be collected: money owed to suppliers must be paid: an accurate measure must be made of the profits earned and use of resources (buildings, equipment, stocks): management at all levels must have a picture of what is happening to help them in future decisions. All these functions are in the care of the Finance Department.

On the opposite page we feature several members of staff from finance.

## BUSINESS NEWS

# Aiming for a creditable result

With a deepening recession in the UK and Canadian (and indeed world) economies, most companies have been producing worse results than a year ago, with many retail companies particularly hard hit.

Against this background the group loss before tax for the six months to the end of July of £387,000 was £177,000 worse than 1979.

It was, however, better than the stock markets had been expecting and the Owen Owen share price rose by a few pence after the announcement — some small consolation and encouragement for our many staff shareholders.

With Plumb Contracts again a bright spot as they reap the benefits of the hard and successful work of recent years, and with the Robinson stores in Canada producing the same loss as last year in sterling terms, the whole of the deterioration in the group result occurred in the UK department stores.

The Robinson stores in Canada, despite difficult trading conditions and the continuing first half loss burden of the more recently opened stores there, kept their loss to last year's level.

## HOPEFUL

Looking forward to the second half-year, the Chairman told shareholders: "Retail trading continues to be difficult in both the UK and Canada, and the full year's results will depend, as always, primarily on sales in the pre-Christmas period. In the face of unhelpful economic conditions, we remain hopeful that a creditable result can be achieved".

At the time of writing it is still too early to say how the vital Christmas trading will go. In both countries we have had to keep a very tight control on costs, but given the same spirit in the second half year, we shall still achieve that "creditable result".

In most of these stores, comparatively small sales increases gave insufficient increases in gross profit to meet vastly increased operating costs and particularly the charges imposed by the public sector — in local authority rates which went up as much as 41 per cent in some cases, and in the charges of the nationalised boards.

## BUSINESS

As a result, the UK stores, which had made a small profit in the first six months of 1979, incurred a loss on the first half-year.

The T.J. Hughes stores, with a lot of hard work and a bit of help in the availability of the "distress" purchases from manufacturers, achieved a better performance than the Owen Owen stores.

## PERFORMANCE HALF YEAR TO DATE

Twelve weeks to 18th October 1980.

### OWN MERCHANDISE AND LEASE

Store	% inc./dec. on L.Yr.
Preston	+ 13.3
Colwyn Bay	+ 12.5
Birkenhead	+ 11.7
Slough	+ 10.8
Shrewsbury	+ 10.7
Evesham	+ 10.3
Coventry	+ 10.1
Wolverhampton	+ 9.9
Finchley	+ 9.3
Stourbridge	+ 8.1*
Uxbridge	+ 7.3
London Road	+ 4.7
Kidderminster	+ 3.3
Chester	+ 2.8
Bootle	+ 2.3
Bath	+ 2.2
Newport	+ 2.0
Liverpool	+ 1.8
Brighton	+ 1.8
Weston S Mare	+ 0.6
Southampton	- 5.9
Richmond	- 8.3

\* Group average  
Own merchandise and lease sales target = 9.9%.

# Elly Dean's secret

## ARTIST REFLECTS ON A COLOURFUL LIFE

FOR YEARS Elly Dean has kept a secret. Now with her family grown up and married Elly has time to tend to that secret —one that is both creative and artistic. Elly paints the most beautiful pictures.

A hobby that started off back in her native Greece when she was a schoolgirl has now become everything that it promised to be before war, marriage, work and youngsters gave her little free time to pursue it.

Now with her two daughters married and living away from home, Elly who works in the invoice department in Liverpool, is able to take to her brushes and water colours when she gets home from work. Her pictures vary from the colourful Lake District scenes to lifelike portraits.

"As a child in Athens I used to sit and sketch as a way of relaxation when I came home from school. But with the start of the war so many things happened and I never really started to paint", she said.

It was during those war torn years that Elly met her English husband Anthony. With the communist uprising Elly left Athens to come to England as Anthony's wife. They have lived all their married life in Liverpool and have two daughters, Irene and Joanna.

Now whenever Elly gets the chance she returns to Athens with her family to see her brother who still lives there: "We go over every year for our summer holidays and I hope that Anthony and I will be able to retire there one day. I will still want to come to England though because my daughters will be here and I will miss them".

Elly started night school for painting last year and she thinks she still has a long way to go: "I have learnt a lot in the past year but I cannot claim that I am an expert".

Elly's talents with her hands doesn't stop at painting: She also makes equally attractive clothes.

"When I came to England I couldn't read the dress making patterns so I had a month's tuition with Singers until I got used to following the patterns.

"Since then I started to make clothes for my two daughters and now I make all my own clothes".



## BRENDA HAS GOT THE WORLD AT HER FEET

Brenda Foster believes in "putting on those dancin' shoes". Already the invoice clerk in the lease department has stepped into the hierarchy of ballroom dancing with bronze, silver, gold and gold bar 1 awards.

She goes to ballroom dancing lessons once a week with friends and has achieved all her awards since her first lesson 18 months ago.

"I've always enjoyed dancing and decided to go along to the Billy Martin Dancing School in Derby Lane. A lot of the dancers go in couples so they obviously compete for their awards dancing together. I don't take a partner and have to take the exams with the teachers themselves", said Brenda.

But if you think Brenda's sporting talents stop at the toes you'd be



wrong — she is also a keen badminton player and a member of the Liverpool League and the Churches League.

And the awards don't stop on the dancing for Brenda recently won a trophy for coming first in the mixed doubles at a Liverpool badminton tournament.



Striking the right notes (left to right): Barbara and Susan Philips, Donna Alleyne with Mandy Smith (sitting).

## SUE IS HITTING THE HIGH NOTES

Soul fans may have recognised a familiar face at Liverpool's Empire Theatre last month — 20-year-old Sue Phillips from the sales audit office.

Star-struck Sue from Liverpool 8 has been striking the right notes at home and abroad with an up-and-coming group "Distinction".

The talented quartette — sister Barbara and friends Mandy and Donna — have been likened to The Three Degrees, and while it's a flattering comparison the singers are intent upon projecting their own image.

### NEW FACES

Their successes to date include a television appearance on New Faces in 1977 when they came third, various prizes in talent shows and a four-week tour of Germany.

Says Sue: "People seem to think we are going to make it but at the moment there is no-one pushing us. We'd like to make a record eventually but we need someone to write a song for us".

The group rehearses each Wednesday at one of their homes and use equipment provided by a resident band during each show.

But, if the reviews are anything to go by they won't be improvising for long.

## LORD MAYOR GOES ON CITY WALKABOUT



The Clayton Square entrance to Owen Owen saw the start of the first store's walkabout to be undertaken by a Liverpool Lord Mayor, when Councillor James Ross made history in September.

The coach arrived at 10.30 a.m. when Councillor Ross, in full ceremonial robes, was met by Miss Ethel Trowler, who is now General Manager of the Chester store. Along with other members of the stores committee, Miss Trowler invited the Lord Mayor to take coffee before he began his first walk of the day through Owen Owen.

From Clayton Square the coach visited four more stores in the Church Street/Bold Street area before stopping for lunch at Lewis's.

Commenting on the walkabout Miss Trowler said: "We are sure that it will be a great promotion for our stores and the Liverpool shopping centre".

# FOUNDER'S LEGACY FOR THE NEEDY

IN 1900, Mr. Owen Owen gave 2,000 ordinary shares of the company to establish a Trust Fund, the income on the shares to be used to provide financial help to "present and future employees and ex-employees of Owen Owen Limited or the widows or children of such persons". Under his will, Mr. Owen gave a further 1,000 shares to the Trust on his death in 1910.



Mr. Owen Owen

With the successful development of the company since that time the Fund's holding of Owen Owen Limited shares has grown to over 500,000 ordinary shares in the company, together with shareholdings in other companies with a market value today of over £150,000.

The Fund is administered by three Trustees — all of them grandsons of the founder — Mr. E.O. Cemlyn-Jones, Mr. D.H.O. Owen and Mr. J.A.H. Norman.

In the year to March, 1980, the Trust made grants to a total of over £35,000 — mainly to retired members of staff to supplement their income, and including Christmas grants to those retired staff with smaller company pensions.

## GRANTS

The Trust is, in law, a "charitable trust" and is subject to the authority of the Charity Commissioners and to the relevant rulings of the Inland Revenue. It can make grants only to help those who are "going short" of things reasonably needed in everyday life — but for elderly people this phrase can be interpreted fairly liberally.

So before the Trust can make a grant, it is necessary to learn something of the financial circumstances of the person to whom the grant is made. These details have to be asked for, but they are treated in confidence.

## HIGH BILLS

Examples of circumstances in which grants can be made are for people with low incomes, or people faced with unexpected high bills due to illness, infirmity, etc. These will be mainly ex-employees but exceptionally could include their dependants or present employees.

Should you know of someone in circumstances where the Trust could perhaps help (being "employees or ex-employees" of the company), if you will let your personnel officer know, she can see if a grant is possible.

## CANADA

### 'Squeeze left' - and drive on!

Planning to visit Canada? We hate to tell you but there is a communications problem — and it's not because we all speak French!

Take the automobile. You run your cars on petrol; we run ours on gas. You have your windscreen washed; we wash our windshield. Going on vacation? You put your luggage in the boot; we put ours in the trunk. You raise the bonnet; we raise the hood. Canadian "fenders" are English "wings" and English "fenders" are Canadian "bumpers".

Road signs can be somewhat hazardous to the British visitor: "Squeeze left" is not an invitation to squeeze your fellow passenger to the left. It merely indicates that the right hand lane will be ending shortly. "Soft Shoulders" is a warning that if you go off the road, your wheels may be immersed in sand or whatever.

While we are on the subject, please, drive on the right hand side of the road, not the left — or you'll be involved in a real "fender-bender!"

## GET TOGETHER

Downtown YWCA in Hamilton, Canada, saw a gathering of 150 people for the bi-annual get-together for former Robinson's employees, (below). Many of those present had worked for Robinson's prior to the Owen Owen takeover.

Mr. Bill Chambers, a recent retiree, and his wife acted as hosts for the occasion.



## Spotlight on the

# NEW IMAGE TOAST OF THE

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

This fashionable approach to selling goods is prominent throughout the store. The first floor concentrates on household goods but again with the modern angle.

Heavy electrical goods have been dispensed with — instead there is a range of modern small electrical kitchen goods, such as toasted sandwich makers, mixers, small microwaves, deep fryers and crock-pots. The range of utensils, pots and pans range from the inexpensive to the elaborate.

The kitchen cupboard is a new idea creating the complete kitchen image rather than having various counters/fixtures throughout the store. This floor also carries an impressive range of glass and china with such recognised names as Royal Worcester, Royal Doulton and Wedgwood.

The store is new, the merchandise is new and the attitude of the staff is refreshingly new as well. Terry Wardle, a name more probably associated with the Liverpool store, summed it up: "The staff are interested, they are keen to learn and it is this sort of enthusiasm that is prevalent throughout from management to staff. It is a family store where everyone gets on well with everyone. You really have to work here to feel the excitement, it's very invigorating", she said.

Terry has worked for the last 20 years at Clayton Square. She is the senior group manager of all fashions and in her own words, "is on loan" to Redditch store to help start the major fashions off.

"I'm here really because I know how the system works. There is a great deal of difference with respect to layout but presentation is a company ruling. Everything here is so fashion-orientated. I think this is a super store and I'm sure it will continue to do well", she said.

### A BIG STEP

The Redditch store is presenting another first to the Owen Owen group with its introduction of Ronald Godfrey Jewellery as a lease department. Manager of the department, Anthony Holland, confessed that he was a bit apprehensive at first:

"This is the first time Ronald Godfrey has decided to go into leasing. We are basically a high street jewellers. In fact we have taken a big step all round because our 11 stores are all in the home counties and this is the furthest north we have opened.

"Of course this is a lovely idea and I think it will be advantageous to us working in a well-thought out modern store because we deal in a modern line of jewellery".

Paul Banes, a sales assistant on the menswear, echoes the belief that the store is full of interesting and friendly people, because already he has been asked to represent it on the Central Staff Council.

"We have everything a big store needs here. It will take time to reach its peak but I reckon people from quite a way away will start coming to this precinct for convenience", he said.

Sales Manager of the children's wear and toys department Sue

Raymond, is another member of staff who believes the store will do well: "It can't fail really because everyone is rooting for each other here. At the start when it was a case of knuckling down and getting things done we were all here together in jeans and T shirts, and I suppose we adopted a team spirit that is still with us", she said.

For school leaver Alison Pearsall,

## A challenge



Personnel Manager Marion Hollan (left) and the General Manager (right).



Eric Hodges, Director of Store operations, took a party from Brunnings and Radio Birmingham (BRMB) around the store during the pre-opening cocktail party.

# The new Redditch store

# THAT'S THE TOWN

her first job is all she hoped for. Alison is a sales assistant on "Rare Set" which concentrates on young, fashionable clothes: "The area badly needed a shop like this, especially one that deals in such fashionable goods and clothes.

"It's my first job and I love it. I wouldn't swap it for anything because there is such a good atmosphere".

## ge in store



Barry (left) is delighted with the way the Manager of the new store is Barry

Alison isn't the only member of staff that feels at home at the store. Assistant Sales Manager of the kitchen cupboard Enid Thomas, is delighted with her new appointment. Her bubbling enthusiasm comes over as she shows customers the fantastic range of goods available:

"I used to be a domestic science teacher and I just love being in the kitchen. The only thing is, I can't stop buying things! This is the kind of store that was badly needed in Redditch and the people here are delighted with it", she said.

Andrew Brittain, one of the store's sales managers, isn't new to Owen Owen but he reckons that the new Redditch store is a winner.

"Compared to other stores Redditch has several advantages. The space for instance has been sensibly used. The layout has been carefully thought out. I think if the advertising continues we should attract a lot of outlying trade", he said.

### SATISFIED

Property Director John Murden said: "Now that the store is open and trading, I look back on the past three years of planning and scheming and feel satisfied that we have provided a store for the eighties. We should feel proud to have what I consider the most modern departmental store in the country today.

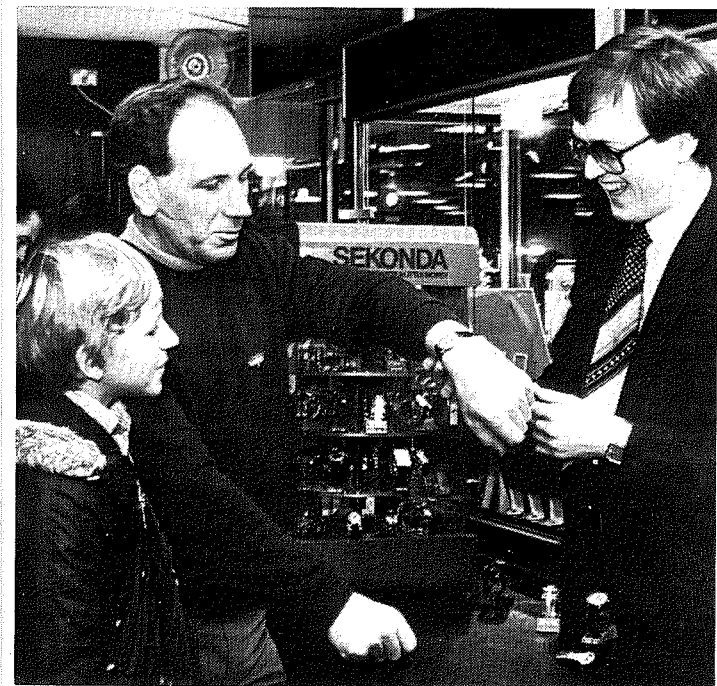
"There is always something with the benefit of hindsight one would look to adjust and alter but these are small and insignificant. We will be looking to model the Basingstoke store on the same successful lines as Redditch".



● The Redditch store based in the town's Kingfisher Centre.



● Sales assistant Wendy Green (left) and Jenny Jakeman with some of the most up-to-date fashions on display in the store's "Rare Set".



● Manager of the Ronald Godfrey Jewellery department Anthony Holland, shows a customer one of the many attractive watches on sale.



● Younger male customers are spoilt for choice at the "Young Owen" section of the store's menswear department.



## A time for giving... and receiving

The problem of what to buy for Christmas is very often solved with socks for him and perfume for her. You don't hear of many people receiving poisonous snakes for instance. You do! Good, then we'd like to hear more of the tale because this month's competition is based on unusual gifts.

Twenty-five pounds worth of gift vouchers will be sent to the person who contributes what the judges consider to be the most interesting/humorous gift received or given at Christmas.

Keep your article to 200 words maximum and forward to Mrs. C. Reid, Group Personnel Manager, Stafford House, Craven Street, Liverpool 3.

Please remember to include your name, job title and place of work, and ensure your entry reaches us no later than February 1.

## and here's a festive treat

### TURKEY AND HAM PIE

Why not use up the rest of your turkey and ham in this delicious pie?

Pre heat oven 450°F, Gas 8, 230°C.

7" flan dish; 12oz. shortcrust pastry; half teaspoon grated horseradish; three eggs; 4oz. turkey, finely chopped; half teaspoon of salt; half teaspoon of pepper.

#### Method

- 1) Roll out half of the pastry and line the bottom of the flan dish.
- 2) Put the eggs (beaten) salt, pepper and horseradish into a bowl and mix well.
- 3) Sprinkle the turkey and ham into the flan dish and pour the egg mixture over the top.
- 4) Dampen the sides of the pastry with a pastry brush.
- 5) Roll out the remaining pastry and cover flan. Egg wash the top of the pie.
- 6) Place pie in the centre of the oven and bake for ten minutes, then reduce the heat to Gas Mark 5 375°F/190°C and bake for a further twenty minutes, or until the pastry is crisp and golden. Serve hot or cold with jacket potatoes and green salad.

### YULETIDE FLAN

Pre heat oven 400°F, Gas Mark 6, 200°C.

9" shortcrust flan case - already made; 5 fl.oz. double cream.

Filling: 1 lb. of apples - cooked to a thick purée and allowed to cool; one teaspoon of ground cinnamon; 14oz. of mincemeat; one tablespoon of fresh orange juice and grated rind of one orange; two tablespoons of brandy; one tablespoon of cornflour.

#### Method-

- 1) Mix all of the filling ingredients together - make sure that they are well blended.
- 2) Place flan case on baking sheet.
- 3) Spoon mixture into flan case and smooth down with back of a spoon.
- 4) Place flan into oven and cook for 25-35 minutes or until pastry is golden brown.
- 5) When cooked remove from oven and allow to cool.
- 6) When cold, whip the cream, put in piping bag and decorate the flan. Serve on a paper doily.

# COMMUNICATIONS

## FORUM TO AIR YOUR VIEWS...

COMMUNICATIONS is a subject that comes in for a lot of criticism in any organisation, but Owen Owen's Central Staff Council which started in 1976 appears to have mastered most of the difficulties.

In 1976 it was felt there was a need for a forum at which staff representatives from all areas of the business could meet to exchange views. As a result the Central Staff Council was set up.

The first was so successful that it was decided to introduce Management Advisory Councils in each region and in head office. These councils elect representatives to attend a Central Management Council.

All these councils meet twice yearly, the chairman, Mr. John Norman, takes the chair at the Central Management and Central Staff Councils.

It is the responsibility of all members of an organisation to ensure that communications are effective. If individuals or groups feel that communication is poor — for whatever reason — they should seek to put the matter right.



• The Central Staff Council at the November meeting.

The various committees and councils provide the means. Their objectives are to provide a forum in which common areas of concern can be discussed to ensure that despite the growth of the company communications are effective and to seek views of management and staff as a team across the functional divisions.

Any topics of general interest can be discussed apart from individual grievances. Subjects touched on vary from conditions of employment, ways of improving the efficiency of the business — selling and non-selling, improving communications, changes in company policies, pensions, training, safety and welfare.

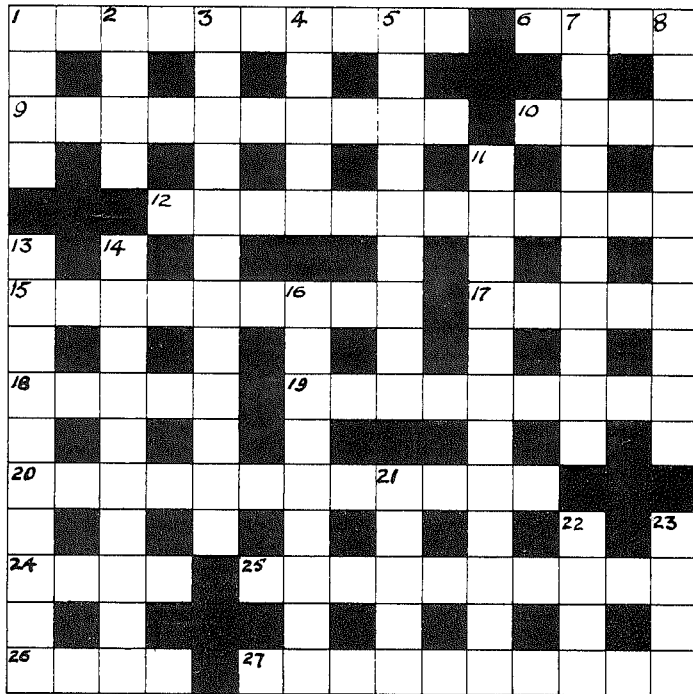
Minutes of the meetings are circulated to the relevant groups and representatives report back to the management and staff they represent.

The various councils have provided a healthy exchange of ideas and opinions and in a number of areas have led, to an improvement in a system, method of working, or staff benefits.

# CROSSWORD

### ACROSS

- 1 with 3 and 21 down. Say it: Patriot McTavish ran into ... trouble ... to get something holding promise of a season festivity (10, 2, 1, 9, 5).
- 6 The Christmas cake usually only has one such row (4)
- 9 May Nat taste in altered form this quick but hardly festive tippie? (7, 3)
- 10 Cry of dismay in a last rush for presents (4)
- 12 Her sweet mien conceals some visitors to a manger (5, 4, 3)
- 15 Perhaps the Christmas gift acknowledges what Duce tried so badly to express (6, 3)
- 17 Business period during which I-made Ivan numerous presents (5)
- 18 For lowering a boat during the party that gave Ida vital clues (5)
- 19 Give PN mistletoe and French go missing for the silly fellow (9)
- 20 Room to stow the presents — just in case? (7, 5)
- 24 12 as a group (4)
- 25 Riot, 'e cries, over the ruined writing desk (10)
- 26 Lodgings (4)
- 27 With which to express appreciation for the present, perhaps (4, 6)



### DOWN:

- 1 Girl in whose house I rise on Christmas Day (4)
- 2 Ornament in the parcel Minerva sent me (4)
- 3 See 1 across
- 4 'A Christmas Carol' is one for a book (5)
- 5 Can Wm love her so badly as to brook no resistance? (9)
- 7 The lamp-hung tree will do this for the scene (10)
- 8 Ill-feeling partly because of the present mentioned to her (10)
- 11 Moss'll catch a somehow modest festive drink (1, 5, 6)
- 13 I date Claud, rather sourly as it turns out (10)
- 14 Voyage nigh confounding FC's-reindeer on a muddy night? Hard work! (5, 5)
- 16 Not the intended eueptic result of Christmas dinner! (9)
- 21 See 1 across
- 22 Gins become indicative (4)
- 23 Not so much in Christmas blessings (4)

Solution on page 7.



Clayton Square opened its exciting new Accord bed-linen shop during the summer. Pictured with some of the items are (left to right): John Wishman, department sales manager; Phil Brosgarth, buying controller; John Hoesli, merchandise director and deputy managing director; Derek DaCosta; Ethel Trowler, general manager; Arthur Roskell, buyer; Frank Blundell, senior display manager and John Mackay, store planning manager.

# SERVICE AWARDS



Phyllis Williams of the Colwyn Bay store has been presented with a 25 year service award. She joined the store in 1942 when it was W.S. Wood. Her first appointment was as a trainee in the sewing room. Phyllis, who became work-room supervisor in 1970 is pictured

receiving a carriage clock from Personnel Director Stella Adams. (Left to right): May Mart, Windsmoor Manager; Phyllis Williams; Stella Adams; Rita Smith, Senior Sales Manager; George Harrison-Bryant, General Manager and Iris Hewitt, Elangol Manager.



Pat Robbins is a name well-liked and respected at the Weston-super-Mare store, where she has just completed 25 years' service.

Her conscientiousness and loyalty were rewarded when Sales Controller Denis King presented her with a carriage clock.

Pat joined the company of James Colmer Ltd. in January 1955. After a period in linens she was made up to junior management with responsibilities for linens and later china and hardware, until the Owen Owen takeover.

In 1978 Pat was offered an ASM position to get the new gifts department started, which she managed successfully.

In May this year she was asked to return to the linens and softs. She fully realised the company's needs and went back to her original selling department.

Customers need not be afraid of poor service at the Colwyn Bay store — not when Olive Daniel is around. For Olive's catch phrase is "Each succeeding customer is your best customer".

Perhaps that is why Olive has done so well and recently received her long service award for her dedicated 25 years with the company.

Olive was engaged by the founder and former owner of the store, W.S. Wood, and was promptly seconded to the accessories and cosmetic buyer as a 14-year-old junior.

A reliable member of the ground floor staff, she has had experience on all the accessory departments, working now in the hosiery department.

# OFFBEAT

## DID YOU HEAR THE ONE ABOUT?

### The duck who has his own bath...

... Well Anne Roe, mobile sales assistant in Clayton Square has, because she watches him take his daily trip.

Frodo is Anne's daughter's pet duck, a birthday present bought for her by her boyfriend. But it's Anne whom Frodo follows around like a dog. In fact there's many a raised eyebrow when she answers the door with Frodo at her heels.

In fact Anne is so impressed with Frodo's antics that she has had the kitchen sink moved so that she can watch him in the garden, and also to rescue their pet dog when Frodo decides he wants a taste of doggy hair.

It's in the garden that Frodo has his bath, equipped with a little ramp so that he can easily waddle up to his daily dip.

But Frodo's talents don't stop there. In the evening when the light goes on in the kitchen, Frodo can be heard at the window and he is always pushing his way around the door in search of tasty titbits!



Share a joke at Xmas

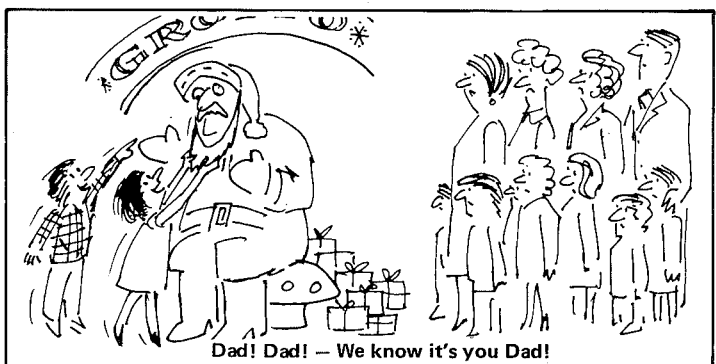
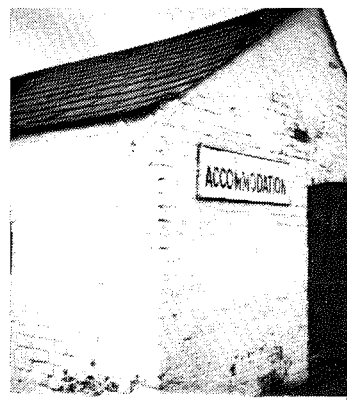
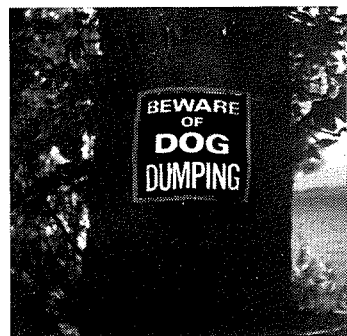
## WINNING SIGNS

Ken Foster, Assistant Store Manager with G.W. Robinson and Cherry Bennett A.S.M. with our Evesham store are joint winners of our "Silly Sign" competition.

Ken sent us a photograph of a tree which carried the warning "Beware of dog dumping".

Said Ken: "It was taken up in the Canadian North Country where my family and I were on vacation. The tree was on private property and the owner of the land was not home so I cannot give you a reasonable explanation of the sign".

Cherry's picture was taken in a village outside Evesham. She said: "We often drive into the village and one night I saw this sign offering accommodation. It looks like a dilapidated shed but it was probably once part of an hotel".



Dad! Dad! - We know it's you Dad!

## MISCELLANY



Carol Roughton may look in the dark but the Charnos consultant of the Coventry store is a bright spark when it comes to acting in musicals. A member of Coventry's Guildhall Operatic Society, she has already played Queenie in "Showboat" and Bloody Mary in "South Pacific".

Carol believes life begins at 50 and together with one of her sons, has just auditioned for Larry Grayson's "Generation Game".



## Pull the udder one!

When John Hannah works in the store's electrical department may leave Coventry store he well and truly leaves the city life behind him. For home for John is a small farm in a tiny village called Bretford seven miles away.

The farm consists of twelve acres of grassland situated next to the River Avon and seven more acres at a nearby village.

Although John, who works in the store's electrical department may leave work in the city behind, at home - it's only just beginning. On his return John has to start milking the cows and feeding livestock. And if you think there's not much to do in late summer the hay making is carried out and John can work as late as ten at night!



## ROYAL DATE FOR BARBARA

\* It's not every day you meet Royals at a cocktail-party, but that's what Barbara Crompton from the Stourbridge store did when she attended the 75th anniversary celebration of the Automobile Association, where her husband works. Also attending was the Queen, Prince Philip and the Duke and Duchess of Kent.

## CHRIS MARCHES ON

You can safely say Christopher Payne has "won the lot". Christopher who works on Saturdays on Richmond store's menswear department is a member of the 201 Twickenham Cadet Squadron of the Royal Engineers.

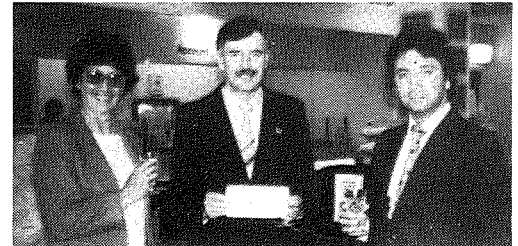
This year two new cups were presented to the Army Cadet Force by Major F. Ruthven - and Chris won them both. His achievement is even more remarkable when you realise that he was in competition with more than 120 candidates to win the title of "Best Cadet of the Year" and more than 1,000 other entrants for the north-west sector cup. He also came top in the Junior Leaders Course.

Chris is intent on an army career and in February he goes before a pre-regular Commissions Board and hopefully on to Sandhurst.



Right: Christopher Payne

Furniture salesman Thomas Roby, winner of the Silent-night "Hollywood Prize Draw" received his cheque from Colin Richards, national accounts executive for Silent-night (centre) in the Liverpool store. Also pictured is Ann Storker, Silentnight consultant.



## Store sweeps the floor!

Liverpool store was the runner up in a nationwide Hoover competition run recently for the best window carrying a Hoover display. General Manager Ethel Trowler is pictured with Display Manager Frank Blundell (right) receiving his prize of a cheque from Hoover's area manager Mr. Brodigan.



## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Across: 1. Invitation; 6. Tier; 9. Instant tea; 10. Alas; 12. Three Wise Men; 15. Credit due; 17. Annum; 16. Davit; 19. Simpleton; 20. Luggage Space; 24. Trio; 25. Escripatoire; 26. Digs; 27. Many thanks.  
Down: 1. Iris; 2. Vase; 3. To A Christ-; 4. Title; 5. Overwhelm; 7. Illu-; 8. Resentment; 11. A small; 13. Acidulated; 14. Heavy going; 16. Dyspepsia; 21. Party; 22. Sign; 23. Less.

# PROFILE

## A MAN WHO NEVER HAS TIME ON HIS HANDS...



Ask Denis King how he spends his spare time and he'll undoubtedly look perplexed. The question itself is easy — it's finding the time to relax that's the problem.

As Sales Controller responsible for the sales performance of Owen Owen's 10 southern stores, 34-year-old Mr. King is up and on the road while most of us are contemplating our cornflakes and homeward-bound from one of his regular store visits while the nine-to-five worker is curled up in front of the 'telly'.

"But", ponders the father of two, "It depends on what you want.

At this stage in life it's very time-consuming, but if you are going to be in the retail business at this level it takes more time and more effort and I enjoy the very thing that makes it so demanding. It doesn't leave me the time to do other things I'd like but it gives great satisfaction".

Mr. King was once convinced that his future lay in engineering.

This dream was short-lived when at 16 — four years after leaving his home town Preston in Lancashire — he joined a Bristol engineering firm to begin a five-year apprenticeship. It was the start of a love-hate relationship which finally fizzled out after 15 months.

Two good reasons for turning his back on this career were his hands. He suffers from what he jokingly describes as "rusty fingers". His body produces too much acid which reacts with the metals he came into contact with.

"I remember as an apprentice helping to produce this wonderful machine and when I had finished the metal was sparkling bright. The following Monday morning it was red with rust".

Naturally his parents were furious by young King's abandonment of valuable trade.

"To bide the time I pursued amateur photography. I converted a garden shed into a photographic darkroom and then started work for openings, but quite frankly they were quite few and far between and my parents by this time were getting up-tight with me".

To keep the peace he accepted a temporary job as sales assistant in the DIY department at Debenhams of Bristol. He spent his first week sweeping out the stockroom. "And I enjoyed it tremendously. I loved the life". Unwittingly Denis King had opened the door to a career that was to take him from sales assistant to Stores Controller in a remarkably short period of time.

A two year management course followed and shortly afterwards he was appointed deputy buyer of china, hardware, wallpaper and paints.

When Debenhams went over to centralisation with the effect that local buying ceased Mr. King was asked to take on a sales management appointment in a new store in Swindon, Bon Marche (or Good Market) and he spent two years as its sales manager. He was then 21 years of age and by this time had married Angela whom he'd met at Bristol when she was working as assistant manager on separates. From there he joined Colmer's of Bath where he remained for three-and-a-half years as a buyer "This was a period I enjoyed very much indeed. I was buying and

running the major stores' departments in the combined roles of sales manager and buyer.

I used to listen to the comments made about the goods I'd bought. It might be 'My God, who would buy that rubbish?' which could be embarrassing or alternatively, 'What a superb buyer that company has'. It was a very interesting exercise; buying the goods and physically promoting and selling them".

There were lessons to be learned too. "I once bought many thousands of pounds worth of saucepans from Hong Kong only to discover that when they arrived in the store all the handles were separate. I had to get 20 or so staff to screw them back on before we could sell them. Not one of my better buys".

When Owen Owen took over the reins in '74 Mr. King was asked — and happily obliged — to move to store management. He moved to Bootle from Bath as merchandise manager and made his home in Lydiate with Angela and daughter Victoria, then four.

After a year at Bootle Mr. King transferred to T.J. Hughes in London Road, but before long he was on the road again, this time southward bound to Finchley, North London as merchandise manager. After 18 months he became its general manager.

From Finchley he moved again to Richmond in picturesque Surrey to a store which was then regarded as the 'baby in the family', a store still in the early stages of development.

"That was a tremendous challenge because there was so much to do; establishing correct layout, the right merchandise content and generally making it an Owen Owen recognised store from virtually nothing. It took two years to get up to the standard we were looking for".

Mr. King wasn't able to sit back and admire his efforts for long though. He was asked to become regional controller responsible for the operation and profitability of the company's southern stores, of which there are now 10 — four more than when he accepted the post.

Today Mr. King works under the rather grand title of Sales Controller, a job which places greater emphasis on the presentation of products and the sales performance of each store within his domain.

Although his office is based in the Slough store he's more often than not on the road, visiting each store once a fortnight clocking up some 700 miles a week (one week he notched up a record 1200 miles).

Understandably the few hours he does put to one side for relaxing are filled with family life; camping and fishing, the latter particularly since it is a sport which he has pursued from childhood. At four son James is a little young to enjoy the art so it's nine-year-old Victoria who witnesses the ones that got away; and there have been a few of those.

"I spend a fortune on books. I'll read anything but particularly about fishing and history. Quite frankly though there aren't enough hours in the day to do everything".

The family's Twickenham home bear the fruits of his do-it-yourself labours, as do previous homes scattered around the country. In fact the occupiers of his former Bath residence cook 'King-style' in a kitchen he designed and built. The good thing about wood is that it doesn't rust!

### AUTUMN TRAINING COURSES



Management Trainees: Top (Left to Right): Alison Davies (Chester), Catherine Day (Wolverhampton), Wendy Torr (Slough), Susan Webb (Clayton Square). Bottom (Left to Right): Denise Adair (Coventry), Catherine Holt (Coventry), Jacqueline Langdale (Bath), Linda Deeringer (Clayton Square).



Newly appointed Sales Managers: Front Row (Left to Right): Sue Raymond, Redditch; Sally Cooper, Richmond; Delia Davies, Slough and Ann Barnes, London Road. Second Row: Barbara Chatfield, Finchley; Carol Ross, Clayton Square; Mandy Goode (Shrewsbury); Barbara Whale, Coventry; Pat Hogarth, Wolverhampton and Lynn Kinnon, Slough. Back Row: Peter Beasley, Coventry; Tony Wynne, Finchley; Leo Hargreaves, Richmond; Sam Giamborne, Slough; Mike Jackson, Brighton; Marek Wagstyl, Evesham and David Barrow, Preston; Stephen Purcell, Clayton Square; Chris Parkes, Bootle Strand; Mike Perren, Newport and Les Netherwood, Bath.

### Proficiency Distinction winners



Front row (Left to Right): Barbara Thomas, Julie Brookes, Jayne Herrmann, Linda Spackma and Linda Berridge. Back row: Peter Prentice, Debra Martin, Jean Hornsby, Lesley Sigrist, Susan Humphries, Diane Parry, Jackie Harris, Heather Muncaster, Pamela Sayer, Ian Bramley and Allan Clarke.

### Wedding Album



Roger Murdoch and Angela Young were married in Southampton at the end of last month. Roger, senior sales manager at Finchley met Angela, ASM at Richmond. By coincidence she originated from another Owen Owen town, Southampton.



Gillian Roberts has a lot to smile about. Not only has she married the man of her dreams, Glyn Alun Roberts, but she has been asked by the local newspaper to be its Bride of the Month. Gillian is clerk at the Colwyn Bay store.



Coventry's "Disabled Shopping Evening" last Christmas proved a great success and the store is intending to stage another this year. Pictured with one of the happy customers is Father Christmas himself — or Dennis Woods to his friends at Owen Owen.

\* Breeda Higgins has a lot to smile about, for Coventry's personnel supervisor has won the "Student of the Year" award after completing a course in supervisory studies.

She is pictured (right) receiving her cheque from the Distributive Industry Training Board from Mollie Southall, store trainer.



Our Brighton store has organised a mixed football team; a collection of management, lease staff, catering and non-selling members are representing the store. (Left to right): Rod Watts, Karen Gillespie, Gary Chandler, Julia Copleston and Ben Barnett. (Front): Sue Vincent, Daryl Haines, Chris Leggatt and Gerry Phillips.