

owen
owen



Scene

CHRISTMAS 1981



• Owen Owen Basingstoke. It's what the shopper ordered!

Chairman's Christmas Message

1981 has seen many changes in our group of companies.

In April, the G.W. Robinson Co. Ltd. again became wholly owned by Owen Owen. This major decision was warmly approved by Canadian management and staff.

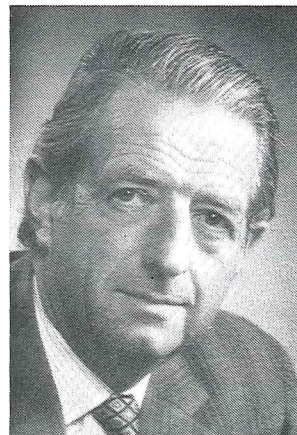
In the autumn, we opened two large stores — one in Basingstoke and the other in the new Lime Ridge Centre on the Hamilton Mountain. They are milestones of progress in both countries.

Basingstoke illustrates how far Owen Owen has developed in merchandising competence and — just as importantly — in layout, fixturing and presentation terms. The combination of all four skills has achieved a shopkeeping standard for all our stores to copy.

SPIRIT

In Canada, the new store completes Robinson's market penetration of the Hamilton/Niagara area of Ontario. Our priority is now to turn the profit potential from this compact group of stores into reality. The total selling area in Canada is nearly equal to that in the U.K.

And don't let T.J. Hughes



• Mr. J.A.H. Norman

feel forgotten, even though we have been fighting a difficult battle on the Merseyside front, with all T.J.'s typical spirit.

Plumb's too, have had their problems this year, but their experienced management and workforce are rebounding.

I hope Scene will be widely circulated in the company and that all who read it will feel part of a team with a long history and an exciting future.

On behalf of the directors in England and in Canada, I wish you and your families a very happy Christmas.

John Norman

A BIG FUTURE AT BASINGSTOKE

THE latest addition to the Owen Owen family has opened in Phase II of Basingstoke Central Area Development Plan, trading alongside other nationally known names like C. & A., Boots and Sainsbury's.

Phase I of the Town Centre was constructed during the 1950's but it wasn't until 1972 that Owen Owen first expressed an interest in opening a store in the second phase of the development. In 1978 a developer was appointed and

work on site commenced.

This, the town's only department store, is contained within three levels of the development trading on 70,870 square feet of sales area.

The front half of the ground floor concentrates on fashion accessories and young fashion, featuring a large and imposing cosmetics department, the full range of fashion accessories and the company's own well established young fashion department "Rare Set" together

with a Wallis Shop.

It also houses a leisure centre specialising in photographic equipment, a menswear department and haberdashery and stationery departments.

The first floor — the largest single trading floor in any of the group's 22 stores — has been designed in such a way that customers step off the escalators into the world of fashion with names like Alexon, Reldan, Polly Peck and Gloria Vanderbilt at their fingertips.

DISTINCTIVE

A ladies' and children's shoe department, home furnishing department and the store's Country House Restaurant are also situated here.

Downstairs, on the lower ground floor, customers enter a world of luxurious home accessories featuring a distinctive array of china, glass and tableware. Famous names include Royal Doulton, Wedgwood and Royal Worcester, to name but three.

Here too is the quaint little Rendezvous Coffee Shop which will no doubt become a popular meeting place for the inhabitants of Basingstoke.

The Famous Faces Show

'A Famous Names Store with Famous Names and More' was the theme which told the Owen Owen story in Basingstoke.

Famous names like Wrangler, Levis, Olympus sports, Accord Bedwear and Royal Brierley Crystal are all housed under the one roof in the town's new store.

And to carry the message home, famous names doubles Humphrey Bogart, Frank Spencer, Kate Bush, Wonder Woman and Debbie Harry,

mingled with the crowds when the store opened on September 17.

But there was no mistaking the two very famous faces of Elizabeth and David Emmanuel, the Royal Wedding dress designers, who were there to promote the new fragrance from the Innox range, 'Emmanuel'.

It proved to be a famous occasion for Basingstoke!

• PLEASE TURN TO CENTRE PAGES.

No Obstacle To Success

THREE teams of Coventry fitness freaks joined 117 others recently to tackle an Army assault course — all in the name of charity.

The determined efforts of Peter Beasley, Peter Hurst, Michael Jones, Peter Lucas, Gerald McDade, Paul Nowak, Brian Kerrigan, Lyn Street,

Ruth Waring, John Hannah and Kevin McMahon, raised more than £200 in sponsorship for the Cottage Homes.

The course consisted of 10 obstacles and amazingly everyone escaped without so much as a bruise.

Tasty Titbit...

HEARD the one about the disgruntled customer who returned her "Orange Skin Food" to Clayton Square because she said it was having no effect.

When questioned by the beautician she confirmed that she used it every morning as the instructions stated, but guess where?

On her toast!

MERRY CHRISTMAS MERRY CHRISTMAS

Future Prospects Are Looking Bright

* * * *

SALES % INCREASE/
DECREASE ON LAST
YEAR
38 WEEKS UP TO
24.10.81

ESTABLISHED STORES

Redditch	293.8
Weston	13.7
Uxbridge	12.5
Stourbridge	11.7
Shrewsbury	11.3
Preston	10.9
Chester	9.8
Bath	9.3
Evesham	7.3
Kidderminster	5.0
Newport	4.6
Slough	4.5
Finchley	3.8
Liverpool	3.4
Wolverhampton	3.4
Bootle Strand	3.7
Richmond	1.7
Coventry	1.1
Southampton	0.2
Birkenhead	(4.3)
London Road	(10.0)

NEW STORE

Basingstoke +36.4 on target

It must be noted that Redditch has several free weeks trading in the above figures, when compared with last year.

* * * *

**THE FIRST
HALF-YEAR**

The first half-year showed a much higher loss than in 1980. The established stores, by which we mean the 17 Owen Owen, the three T.J. Hughes and the seven Robinson stores which have been open for more than a year, came through the first half with results only slightly worse than those of the previous year.

Given the increasingly adverse effect of the recession — which hit the T.J. Hughes' stores particularly hard — and the extremely high interest rates over much of the period in Canada, this was not too unsatisfactory.

The exceptional factors which were responsible for most of the decreased loss were as follows:

Plumb Contracts Limited had a poor first quarter against very good results in 1980, and accounted for more than £250,000 of the difference at the end of July.

The two new stores opened in August 1980 at Redditch in the U.K. and at Kitchener in Canada produced losses of over

£650,000 in their first spring half-year. These are big figures, but they are part of the costs of expansion and development.

The sterling/dollar exchange rate has declined against the Canadian dollar by more than 20 per cent over the 12 months. This has magnified the Kitchener store loss when expressed in sterling, and also added more than £100,000 to the first half losses of the established Canadian stores.

The cost of financing the purchase from Hudson's Bay Company in April, 1981, of their near 50 per cent holding of Robinson's shares amounted to over £90,000 in the low volume half-year when there are no profits to offset it. This, too, added to the half-year loss.

**THE SECOND
HALF YEAR**

Sales during August and September were slow and in Canada have also been affected by a prolonged steel strike in Hamilton.

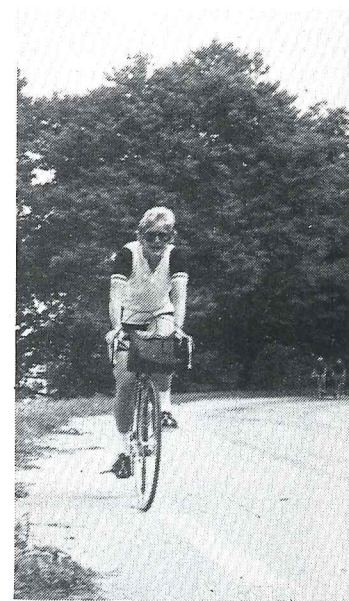
However, the exceptional factors which have so increased

the first half loss should begin to help us. Plumb Contracts has put its poor first quarter behind it and business there is now in line with expectations. The Redditch and Kitchener stores should also do better than last year.

Now that the Robinson company is again wholly owned, all Canadian profit will stay in the group, and, if the exchange rate doesn't change, it will be increased on conversion into sterling.

The new stores at Basingstoke and in the Lime Ridge Centre on the Hamilton Mountain have both got off to an encouraging start and they should take less time to reach profitability than other new stores in less favourable locations.

We are pinning our main hopes on the established stores in both countries, which are the hard core of the business. Given success in the high volume months preceding Christmas and the all-important first days of the January Sale; we can again hope to achieve a creditable result in the full year's trading.



• Wyn realising a lifetime ambition

Wyn And The Mountain Riders...

It is probably the ambition of most keen cyclists to witness the Tour-de-France cycle race, and Wyn Gough from Redditch Major Fashions is no exception.

Her dream came true this year when she, husband Brian and friends Len and Joan decided to spend a holiday in France.

They departed from Dover with four bikes on the roof of their car and the caravan behind, destined for Aix-les-Bains, close to the French Alps where a number of "tour" mountain stages were being held. They chose to watch a category I climb (the steepest) to the Col-de-Luitel some 4,000 feet above Grenoble.

SUNSHINE

Said Wyn: "The bikes came off the car and we set off to climb the Col-de-Luitel to rendezvous with the Tour-de-France race at the top of the mountain with 20 miles of Alpine roads ahead and three hours to get there.

They climbed steadily with Grenoble lying a long way below bathed in Alpine sunshine. With some 2,000 feet to go they pushed on determined to meet their schedule.

Added Wyn: "At least we reached the final hair-pin bend. We made it to the top, still riding but thankful now that it was over and that we were on time to join in the atmosphere, waiting expectantly for the riders to appear.

"It was certainly a holiday to remember".

Autumn Courses

Newly appointed and established sales managers who took part in a recent course are picture right. Back row (left to right): Tim Pearsall (Redditch), Andy Brittain (Redditch), Barry Smyth (London Road), Marek Wagstyl (Evesham), Neil Swanick (Chester), Howard Griffiths (Chester), John Foster (Clayton Square) and Peter Curry (Slough).

Front row (Left to right): Sue Humphries (Uxbridge), Shirley Brewerton (Finchley), Ann Senior (Newport), Renie Brown (Richmond), Edna Connelly (Uxbridge), Doreen Johnson (Clayton Square), Linda Deeringer (Stourbridge) and Jane DeLucey (Basingstoke).

Management trainees who took the Autumn training course are, (left to right): Debra Lynch, Margaret Daly, Linda Crook and Michael Jones.



Sponsored Swim

A sponsored swim for Merseyside Drapers Trade Charities, took place recently at Bedford House, Liverpool University. Among those taking part from T.J.'s were: L.J. Roberts (Nurse), Alan Jones (Security), Mrs. Eccles (Menswear). The swimmers raised £70.



• Miss Philippines U.K., Helen Naidas.

Finchley Beauty

Finchley store boasts its very own beauty queen — Helen Naidas, a sales assistant in the lingerie department who won the Miss Philippines U.K. contest in September.

The final was held on September 5 at London's Europa Hotel where Helen and seven other finalists paraded in swimsuits and evening gowns in front of a panel of judges. They also had to sing and dance in the Latin-American style.

Helen, whose elegant hairstyle was specially created in the store's Glemby Salon, won a three month trip to the Philippines where she's busy performing social and publicity functions.

When Christmas Starts In April



• Jackie Stone.



• Edna Rigby.

YES! Christmas really does start somewhere in the middle of April for Jackie Stone.

While others are cracking open Easter eggs she is deciding what to order for the festive season shoppers eight months hence.

December is the most important month in the perfumery department's calendar. In the three weeks leading up to Christmas a third of the annual takings pass over the counter. About £1 million is taken in that time and last year the three days before Christmas saw £¼ million being tilled.

"To say it is a hectic time is an understatement. Everyone has to work like Trojans to get that sort of money through the tills. To be honest I'm usually too exhausted to enjoy Christmas when it arrives", said Miss Stone.

Every January each store files a stock requisite so Miss Stone and her staff can start immediately on the next Christmas orders.

But it's not as simple as ordering items and waiting for delivery. The whole perfumery market has to be carefully vetted and trends recognised and respected. The latest fragrances likely to be popular at Christmas have to be recognised much earlier.

"To succeed at Christmas means a lot of hard work from a lot of people. We work as a team. From this department where we order through to the regional distribution centres, where everything is ticketed, to the actual assistants who do the selling", she said.

Working alongside Miss Stone is Angela Molina the buyer's assistant and Carole Bove who concentrates on toiletries.

When the ladies have completed their orders the next people involved are those at the warehouses like Irlam Road in Bootle. Regional stock room manager Mr. Harry Hurley has a staff of 28 helping him to get orders involving all departments on the road.

CHEERFUL

Perfumery sales manager Edna Rigby of Liverpool and her staff have the task of selling.

"All our Christmas stock is in by October and we literally bring it in ourselves. All assistants lend a hand to unload the vans, and then comes the task of getting everything out on display", she said.

"Christmas is obviously our busiest time and the girls really work hard. They have to be cheerful and helpful every minute of the day, even though they are run off their feet", said Miss Rigby.

Whilst the staff are busily selling the merchandise Jackie Stone is involved with the planning for next Christmas.

T.J.'S. XMAS

Ella Burnell, who works in the invoice office in London Road's T.J.'s store, certainly has a talent for writing poetry as the following extract proves. Ella's latest composition is 'T.J.'s Christmas'.

The season of Christmas is coming once more
There are wonderful gifts to be had on each floor
Of toys, books and games, there's a super collection
And presents for all in every connection
So make up your lists and come to our store
You'll find we can offer you bargains galore
No need to fret if you haven't much cash
With our budget accounts you can really go rash
Our prices are right, and what ever you choose
It's bound to be cheaper at T.J. Hughes.

WORKING TO THE TOP

A MONGREL breed . . . greener than the newest starter . . . pestering everyone with questions . . . getting under everyone's feet!

This was the rather self-derogatory description of a management trainee — by a management trainee!

But once the induction is over, life becomes considerably more settled and meaningful.

Linda Deeringer for example began her career in September 1980 in Clayton Square. Her first encounter with retailing consisted of running the Christmas stationery department.

PROBLEMS

"It was fun, but hard work running from the sixth floor to the basement every time a customer wanted a Christmas tree", she said.

After stock taking Linda moved to the fashion floor and then haberdashery before going to Torrington Avenue to examine the problems the warehouse has to cope with. Linda is now settled in Stourbridge as a sales manager of cosmetics and fashion accessories.

Personnel and Training



• Catherine Holt.

officer in Finchley, Alison Davis started her career at Chester.

"My training commenced in September and was designed to last for eight months. I started on the china and gift department and all I can remember about the first week was that my feet were not too happy about the idea — it was the only time I've ever considered a mustard bath.

"The training I received has been useful and the fact that I covered most areas of the store in Chester has made my new appointment much easier to understand. The training was hard work, but enjoyable and I would recommend it to anyone contemplating a career in



• Sue Webb.

retailing", she said.

Catherine Day worked in virtually every part of the Wolverhampton store including the loading bay when she started training in September 1980.

"Although I was always rushed off my feet I found the work great fun. In February I had the opportunity to become Personnel Officer at our Stourbridge store, a challenging opportunity although I was sad to leave Wolverhampton store", she said.

Sue Webb's biggest problem in training was mastering the art of "scouse".

"My first days in Liverpool store taxed my language experience straight away. I couldn't



• Alison Davis.

understand the accent. Now I'm in Basingstoke and tackling another accent.

"This new store has meant a lot of extremely hard work. If my student friends had predicted I would be working into the early hours, seven days a week, before the new store opened, half the country away from my friends and family, I would have laughed. But here I am facing this new challenge and looking forward to what else the company has in store for me", she said.

When Catherine Holt started work in retailing she didn't know what hard work was like.

"After three years at university I was suddenly confronted with physical hard work. After two weeks I had a bad back, sore feet and was thoroughly exhausted, yet extremely happy. I found nothing but friendship and support in Coventry.

OPPORTUNITY

"I began working on fashion accessories, moving on to Christmas stationery and finally small electrical and hardware; becoming an A.S.M. in March 1981.

"I soon became an expert on erecting Christmas trees, repairing tree lights and tidying the tinsel! I started my Christmas in October and it was one of the best I have ever had.

"In April I moved to Liverpool to train as an assistant in the buying office, an opportunity which both surprised and delighted me.

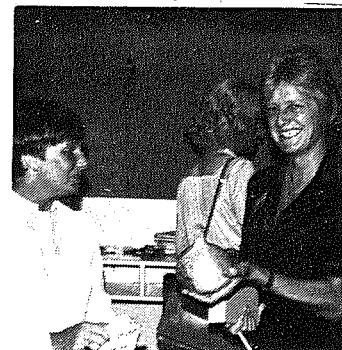
"I have moved a long way in the last year, not just in miles, also in experience. I have found many friends, learnt many things. I am still ambitious, I want to be a buyer and am glad I chose Owen Owen and retailing as my career".

Winning Smile

Autumn Training Course candidates who passed their proficiency courses with distinctions. They are (left to right) front: Deana Cavanagh (London Road), Linda Laidlaw (Redditch), Beverley Purslow (Shrewsbury), Sonia Williams (Coventry), Elaine Mahoney (Clayton Square), Anne Wyatt (Coventry).

Middle: Jan Hannant-Smith (Bath), Isobel Tomlin (Shrewsbury), Heather Towler (Redditch), Kim Baylis (Redditch), Janine Brill (Slough), Francesca Colombo (Finchley), Gloria Taylor (Coventry), Margaret Smith (Coventry), Janet Jones (Newport).

Back: Keith Warburton (Bootle Strand), Mark Edmondson (London Road), Kevin Wilde (Clayton Square), John Sutton (Clayton Square), Edward Podger (Clayton Square), Neil Baldwin (Slough) and Neal Dawson (Slough).



• A tear-jerking question has helped raise £45 for Redditch Store's Social Club.

Mrs. Marion Holland (left) the Personnel & Training Officer, armed herself with an onion and asked colleagues to guess its weight. Trying not to peel with laughter is Mrs. Winifred Gough from Major Fashions.

The onion, grown by Mr. Dennis Bird from the Loading Bay, weighed an amazing 2lb. 13ozs.

Picture: PAUL BANES.

The Crowds Flock In To

300 Jobs... and just what the shoppers ordered

OWEN OWEN Basingstoke — the store which is aptly described as the "icing on the cake" of the town's new shopping precinct — opened on schedule in September.



● General Manager Barry Boycott: "Tremendous response".

For the town itself it was just what the doctor (or rather shopper) ordered. For the people, including school leavers, it was an added bonus with 300 jobs being created within Basingstoke's only department store.

The cutting of the tape on September 17 marked the beginning of a new era for Owen Owen and Basingstoke as crowds lined the pavements, eager to be the first to view the new store.

Said General Manager Barry Boycott: "We were busy all the way through the first day. It followed through on to the Friday and Saturday; in fact Saturday was absolutely tremendous, the store was packed from about 9.30 right to closing time. People were



● Tiled walkways allow for improved customer circulation.

still queuing for the restaurant at 5.30".

Enthusiasm and hard work are two ingredients which combined to make the opening day a success.

Unbeknown to the hordes of shoppers, many of the smartly dressed Owen Owen

employees greeting them over sparkling new merchandise had only days before removed the untidy evidence of in-store construction.

Among the hardy workers was Mrs. Karen Darlow, A.S.M. major fashions who joined us

in the summer. A hectic but nevertheless enjoyable pre-opening period marked the start of Karen's career with Owen Owen.

She told us: "Some of us came in before all the full time staff and started off from scratch with the very first delivery of stock. The builders were still here so we were cleaning up after them and then checking cages and cages of stock as it arrived.

"At one point the stairs were still being built. We couldn't use the staff entrance and had to come in from the roof and down the fire exit! It's been hard work but everyone involved worked as a team".

Teamwork has proved invaluable in the past... particularly on the dance floor. For Karen's notable claim to fame includes numerous successes in ballroom and old time dancing. In the latter, she has represented Hampshire and the South of England.



● Biddy Erith of the Rendezvous Coffee Shop.



● One of our new A.S.M.'s, Karen Darlow.

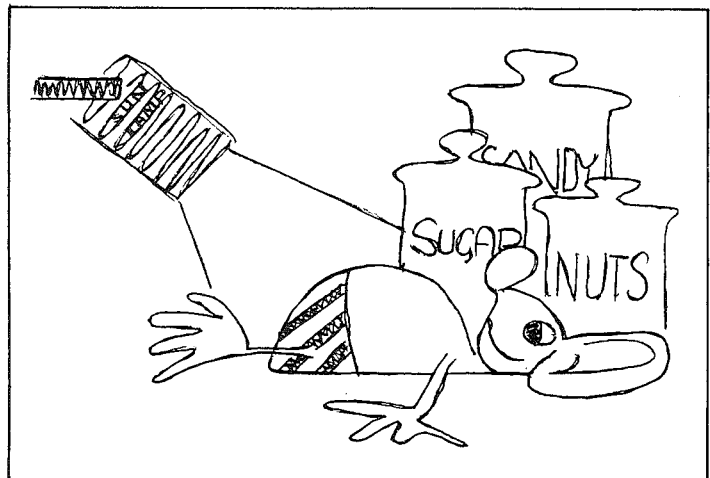


● Kay Keegan, sales assistant on ladies' fashion.



● One of the store's Sales Managers Sam Giambrone.

CANADA



OH, would that it had only been three mice and that they were well and truly blind!

Instead, Robinson's at Niagara Square has been plagued with some 300 of the nasty little rodents.

We all realise that every species has its own special niche in Mother Nature's family but a where She intended her little field mice to hibernate.

Field mice do what all good Canadians do in the winter — look for a nice warm place to get away from the blustery, frigid climate. We on the other hand do the acceptable thing — finances permitting — and head south for Florida or some sunny Caribbean hideaway.

Field Day For Mice

It appears that the local mouse travel agency highly recommended Robinson's this year. Perhaps it was because the accommodations were more luxurious or the meals so delectable — who knows? but they came in droves. And they ate and they ate — candy, cookies, even electrical wiring!

We decided this just couldn't go on. None of the ladies would go near the stockrooms and who could blame them!

Drastic measures were called for. In came the exterminators. They sprayed; they left little pots of a bluish chalk-like substance. We tried mousetraps — a futile proposition as there weren't enough in the entire town to cope with the ever-increasing population.

If you have any ideas on how Canada can solve this problem, then please write to the editor — we will pass your letters on!

TRAINING

The former Hampshire champion has hung up her dancing shoes but the home she shares with her husband Tim still bears the fruits of her labours — 200 medals and an array of cups and shields.

"I'd take it up again tomorrow if I could, but it gets rather expensive. Six or seven years ago the type of dress I needed cost around £100".

To recent school leavers like 16-year-old Kay Keegan, sales assistant on fashion, the in-store training prior to opening day taught her all she needed to know — except how to deal with first day nerves.

Recalls Kay: "Every one was shaking, especially people like myself who were asked to use the terminals when we were dealing with "real" customers who didn't realise how nervous we were, but by the afternoon I was fine.

"Cashing up in the evening was the funniest part. We closed at 5.30 but I didn't get home until 7. It had taken me an hour to cash up. Now it takes about fifteen minutes".

For Mrs. Biddy Erith and

● Continued on Page Five

THE PRIDE OF THE MALL...

AUGUST 5 marked the grand opening of Robinson's ninth and finest store at Lime Ridge Mall on the Hamilton Mountain.

By 10 a.m. the 4,000 car parking lot was full as crowds from Hamilton and surrounding areas gathered to see the new mall and the 190 outlets housed within.

Lime Ridge, the flagship store, is the end result of years of hard work and dreams. It

boasts 125,000 square feet of selling space spread over two floors.

The layout and fixtures are second to none. Natural skylights and fresh greenery are only two of the special features of the store.

"Even our two major competitors in the Mall, Sears and Eastons — both national chains — are unable to measure up to the pleasant shopping atmosphere provided by

Robinson's", said Mrs. Joanne Chrapko, from the Personnel Department.

And, she added: "We are glad to report that sales too were forthcoming in abundance which pleased all. With some 200 staff, three-quarters of whom were new to the company, opening week was plain sailing.

"Our congratulations and thanks to all those who aided in the successful opening of Robinson's Lime Ridge".

Town's New Store

Continued from Page Four.

her staff on the catering side it's been all systems go, from the word go!

"We started catering for staff in the middle of August but the coffee shop itself was the last thing to be finished, in fact we couldn't get anything in there until three days before the opening because the steps leading up to it weren't ready".

Biddy (short for Bridget) rolled her sleeves up and knuckled down with the rest to prepare the store for the big day.

"There's no place for you in Owen Owen management if you want to swan around looking important, she said, and added with a wry smile: "I've had a catering director working as a dish washer before now!"

POPULAR

The "Rendezvous Coffee Shop" as it's appetisingly known, seats 60. In an atmosphere of conviviality customers are invited to sample home-made savouries and sweets in the knowledge that they won't eat too deeply into their purses.

An H.N.D. in Hotel Catering and Institutional Management helped launch Biddy into a career with Owen Owen, working in Brighton, Slough and now Basingstoke where she's catering manager of the extremely popular coffee shop.

Although the newness of the store is obviously an attraction for staff and customers alike, there's no doubt that a department store of this size



The Rendezvous coffee shop where home-made sweets and savouries are the order of the day.

has been long awaited.

Comments like: "It's what Basingstoke needed", have been echoed throughout the store since day one.

As Owen Owen's third largest store it prides itself on offering the people of Basingstoke everything that a modern department store should offer in the eighties.

Nearly 80,000 square feet — spread over three floors — is designated to sales. Each department has been planned around a tiled walkway system designed to aid customer circulation.

In addition to the coffee shop Owen Owen houses the Country House Restaurant, a 140-seater assisted service restaurant on the first floor.

For mobile shoppers there's the added bonus of two car parks.

The overall theme provides for a bright, friendly atmosphere.

Sales manager on menswear/luggage and cook shop, Sam Giambrone, sums up the general feeling: "It's a terrific atmosphere because everyone is in it from the start".



Melanie Durrant, lease manager of Falmers.



Julie Pethick, menswear sales assistant.

Food For Thought

by Shirley Farley
ASM Fashions, Redditch

CHRISTMAS! Season of tinsel, fairy lights, carols and goodwill toward men. What a wonderful exhilarating time Christmas is. Or is it?

Perhaps if you could ignore the mess tinsel makes or have patience when one unidentifiable fairy light refuses to work, bringing all the other lights out in sympathy.

Sustain an air of nonchalance when father so enraged with this act of defiance knocks the overloaded tree to the floor. Keep calm when the now pine clad cat claws at the aged fallen fairy on the carpet. Remain unperturbed when the local rowdies shriek "Silent Night" through the letterbox, just as you've lulled baby off to sleep.

Stay ever hopeful that your bank manager remembers goodwill to all spendthrifts—YES I Suppose it COULD be wonderful!

SOGGY SPROUTS

Alas I have a severe disability that is not so easily overcome. I CANNOT COOK! Not for us the culinary delights that emerge from other people's kitchens. Succulent roast turkey, mince pies that melt in the mouth and other numerous goodies.

My mince pies would be better employed in the rock garden. My roast turkey has been likened to tough cardboard. My gravy described as a congealed mess, contrived ingeniously by me to conceal soggy sprouts.

A former dinner guest once complained: "Eating your food is like taking obnoxious medicine — it leaves a nasty taste in the mouth!"

This year I'll swallow my pride (it's better than my food) and book Christmas lunch at a local restaurant.

Oh yes, Christmas is certainly full of wonder — I wonder if the shopping's complete, I wonder if that new dress will fit, I wonder . . . I wonder . . . I wonder . . .

Brain Teaser

Retired employee Fred Catley from Uxbridge has kindly supplied this novel brain-teaser for Scene readers to tackle when they have a minute or two.

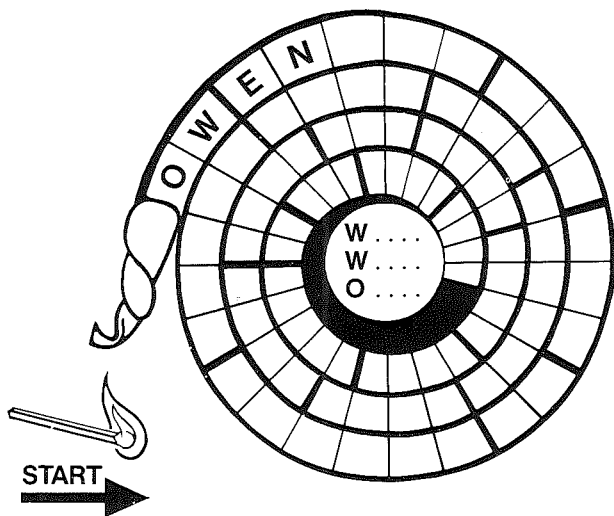
The wheel of words begins and ends with the word OWEN but it's the words in between you have to provide with the help of Fred's crossword type clues.

To assist you, the end of each

word is the beginning of the next, for example, OWEN, ENGAGE, GENUINE etc. To help you further each new word starts after the thick line so the word overlaps.

Finally, says Fred, see if you can complete the phrase in the centre which is formed with the letters from OWEN OWEN.

Answers to both can be found on page 8.



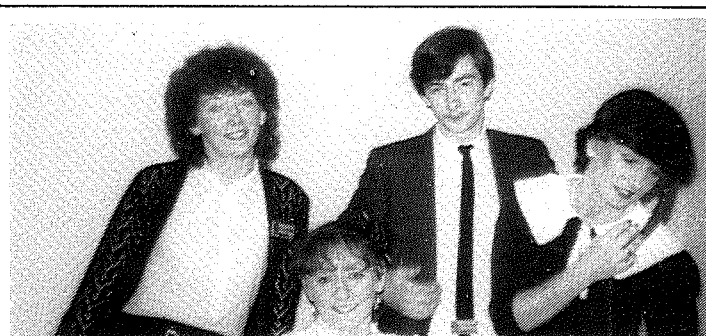
Clues:

- Results from: or comes out from.
- Gloomy, Dismal, Dark.
- The Staff of Life?
- Stick to.
- "Enclosed with this".
- The Plot (or the gravy?) . . . !
- To trap.
- Amphitheatre for sport.
- For the table — or babies.
- Kids put them on for speed.
- Break out!
- It goes with salt.
- Mistake.
- A fruit — or colour.
- Natives of Berlin.
- Question requires one.
- This boy takes the message.
- Where are the White Cliffs?
- Rats and mice are.
- A small fish boys catch.
- What you had to start with.

Winners

The judges of our Summer caption contest decided to elect joint winners.

Mrs. Turbutt, Accounts Office, Kidderminster, with: "Would madam like a receipt for her deposit?" and Mrs. Buchanan, Central Invoice Office, Liverpool, with: "Is that a 'Puddle' or a 'Yorkshire Terrier', madam?" They both win £15 vouchers.



We know London Road's T.J.'s is a family store but some people have taken it literally!

Carol Ross, Sales Manager of major fashion was the first member of her family to join the company in 1967 and sisters Ruth and Sue and brother Ian have also followed suit.

Ruth has worked in T.J.'s for 10 years and is now an A.S.M. and Sue joined us five years ago starting on menswear and she is a Resident Buyer. Ian, the latest addition joined nearly two years ago on the shoe department. They're certainly keeping it in the family!

Left to right: Carol, Ruth, Ian and Sue.

SHEILA'S LITTLE MIRACLE

Grandma Sheila Ely, sales assistant at Southampton, enjoyed the happiest of celebrations recently. Her grand-daughter Heather was one year old — and that in itself was quite a miracle.

For baby Heather weighed in at a mere 1lb. 13½oz. at birth — less than a bag of sugar. Mum Penny watched while doctors put her baby into an incubator at Southampton General Hospital, where she stayed for nearly three months.

While Heather fought to beat a total of 14 ailments, the battle was on for her family too — to keep going while their baby was on the brink of life.

Now a bundle of energy little Heather is the pride of everyone, especially her grandma.

RETIREMENTS



Bath store said farewell to one of its favourite personalities, Mrs. Sadie Miles who retired on October 2.

Sadie joined James Colmer Limited in June 1957 starting as a part-timer on toys and moving on to softs, carpets, millinery and finally to furniture where in '75 she was persuaded to work full-time.

A colleague said: "Sadie will be sadly missed for her sense of humour and her 'smashing' iced cakes which she made for the Colmers' pensioners and the Social Club to raffish, the proceeds of which go to Cottage Homes and

Purley Children's Trust".

Pictured at the farewell party (left to right, front): Mrs. S. Cammarata, Mrs. M. Grainger, Sadie, Mr. L.R. Jordan, Mr. P. Ward and friends and colleagues.



Mr. Raymond Bayliss from our Southampton store retired in October after more than 30 years with the company.

He received a gift of a Black and Decker Workmate on behalf of the



company, together with a Black and Decker drill and other gifts from staff in the store.

Mr. Bayliss (left) is pictured with General Manager Mr. Alan Turner.



Miss Betty Gibbard said goodbye to all her friends and associates recently after 32 years with T.J.'s in London Road. A popular figure, Betty is renowned for her interest in soccer, and is a keen Liverpool supporter.

She joined the company as a clerk in 1949 and later transferred to the sales floor working on fancy goods. In 1962 Betty moved to the carpet department where she remained until her retirement.

Service Awards

Three employees, Miss Eleanor Jones, Mr. Eddie Laven and Mr. Eric Stowe have been presented with long service awards.

Miss Jones, who chose an Athena tea service as her long service gift, has been with Owen Owen advertising department for the past 25 years.

She has been very much involved with the growth of the department and a great deal of credit for the dramatic changes that have taken place with converting from an in-house operation to one that operates with an outside concern must go to Miss Jones.

POST BOY

This, combined with improved efficiency, has enabled the advertising team to cope with a greatly increased number of stores.

Mr. Laven, a driver at Bootle Centre joined the company in 1956 as a porter in the hardware department and later transferred to the vans. He chose a carriage clock to mark his long service.

Eric Stowe from Coventry started his Owen Owen career as a post boy in 1956.

He transferred to the invoice office and later became supervisor of the expense invoices office.

When Torrington Avenue opened its door to the marking off room operation and the new P.O.C. department in October 1978 Eric went to help set up and run it.

Mr. Stowe also chose a carriage clock.

Wedding Parade



John Wishman, Sales Manager at Liverpool's Clayton Square and Julie Davies, a Buyer's Assistant in the Central Buying Office who married in August.



Wedding bells rang out at Liverpool's T.J. Hughes in August when A.S.M. Billy Wilks married Eileen Brady.

Billy joined the company in October 1974 and Eileen, who is First Assistant, joined us in August '78.

Shrewsbury's soft furnishing department will be minus its most familiar face in the New Year. Mrs. Eunice Pragg, who has worked there for the last 21 years has retired.

In that time Mrs. Pragg has witnessed many major changes including the transition of Maddox to Owen Owen in 1975.

At Mrs. Pragg's retirement party, management and staff presented her with a bouquet of flowers and a cut-glass vase, while the company gave her a matching rose bowl.

Mr. Dick "the painter" Meakin retired recently after many years with T.J. Hughes in London Road.

Dick joined the company in 1955 although he had been involved in contract work with T.J.'s from 1930.

Retirement will probably represent a few more trips visiting his daughter in Canada where, say colleagues, he may even "paint the town!"



Coventry celebrated the Royal Wedding with a display competition won by the hardware department, one of over 60 departments taking part.

Accounts, whose entry is pictured with its eye-catching slogan, was awarded a special prize.



A portable typewriter marked the end of one era and the beginning of a new life for Mr. Phil Draycott who left Evesham Store recently to study to be ordained into the Church of England.

Mr. Draycott who has held a general manager's appointment for the last five years, is pictured with Mrs. Jean Davis, Senior Sales Manager (left), Mrs. Draycott and daughter Nicola.



Bath store celebrated its "match of the day" with the wedding of Miss Hilda Mavis Clark and Mr. Frank Trask.

It was the union of Owen Owen present and Owen Owen past since Frank has retired from the company, although by popular request has resumed work with the Social Club of which he was chairman until his retirement in March last year.

Mavis joined James Colmer Limited as accounts clerk in March '71 and was soon promoted to invoice manager. Following the centralisation of invoices in 1980 she now deals with expense invoices in addition to her other duties.

Frank joined James Colmer in 1972 as a buyer in the electrical and D.I.Y. departments, becoming manager of the former after the Owen Owen takeover.

Although retired he still keeps busy. At weekends he acts as courier on coach trips to France, Belgium and Holland.



Mark's Big Day

Coventry sales assistant Mark Roberts believes in putting his free time to active use . . . as a member of the Territorial Army.

Mark and his brother were chosen to represent the 5th (Coventry) Battalion at the Beating of the Retreat display recently performed before the Lord Mayor of London and later the Duke of Kent and Princess Margaret on Horseguards Parade.

Mark works on garden furniture and audio.

Meet the stars of store and screen

WITH the flair and enthusiasm of Hollywood movie moguls a team from Owen Owen set about producing a company training film based on the Purchase Order Control System, the first of its kind in this country.

The men and women who worked on this venture don't expect it to rival "Gone with the Wind" but they believe it should highlight the need for 100 per cent accuracy in all sections for employees to reap the full benefits of the system.

The Scene: The Board Room.

Subject under discussion: The making of an Owen Owen Training Film.

Decision made: With the help of a grant from the Distributive Industry Training Board and working with their film unit, to make a film on the Purchase Order Control System, to destroy the myths and mysteries surrounding that undefinable subject: The Terminal.

HOLLYWOOD

"Quiet Please" and "Action" as Miss Ona Moulding takes us behind the scenes with the making of "Into the Computer Age".

"We set about forming a working party in a spirit of happy optimism not seen since the golden days of Hollywood.

The first step was to decide just how to get the message across. To inform? To educate? To entertain? All three?

The subject was straightforward enough, the Purchase Order Control System to be presented as part of our company's development into the computer age, and a pioneering effort into the bargain, the first successful P.O.C. System in this country.

Each section to be included had to be represented at the working party sessions, namely: The Buying Operation, The Management Services Department, The Purchase Order Control Office, The Midlands Regional Warehouse and The Stores.

VIDEO UNIT

When a reasonable basis had been agreed for each section, the clever part was to present each section in such a way that it illuminated the responsibilities of each person operating the system.

We set off in good heart to the Distributive Industry Training Board Video Unit at Knutsford.

We were allotted a Director/Producer from the Unit who would be supported by a filming team.

Our Director/Producer, Charles Dunstan, came to see us in Liverpool and did a splendid job of "casing" each location to be filmed.

We had a few reluctant "stars" we hoped to involve as players.

Our victims were to be: Mr. Barry Johnston for the Warehouse operation, Mrs. Pat Telkman for the Redditch Store, Mr. Len Foster for Management Services, Mrs. Marion Holland for the Store Training aspect and Mr. Richard Bedingfield, for the Central Buyers.

The tricky part of the whole operation now started. We met the film team in Redditch store where the selling staff and management threw themselves into the venture with encouraging fervour.

Flushed with triumph, we continued to Torrington Avenue Regional Warehouse where the following day was spent in photographing the delivery and processing sequences and talking suppliers' van men into taking part in the delivery scenes.

Our warehouse and mini computer staff gave the Producer no problems at all. They took direction like veterans — affixing tickets, moving stock and keying up orders on the screens.

At the end of a hectic but highly successful day we travelled back to Liverpool ready for the next morning's start in the Central Buying Office.

Mr. Richard Bedingfield, one of our Fashion Buyers, heroically started off the day's filming with a very lucid presentation of the value of the Style Status Report as a weekly analysis of the sales figures.

FINAL SCENES

The film unit then moved on, in a flurry of flex and tripods and arc lamps, to the Purchase Order Control Office where — being at the heart of the System — Mr. Len Foster, the Management Services Controller, sat nonchalantly on the edge of a desk and explained the process where 100 per cent accuracy is the only acceptable standard.

The final scenes were then shot in the Central Computer Department, starting with Mr. Barry Johnston, the Distribution Director, giving a highly competent performance and using the visual display unit to show the warehouse Order Call Up system on the screen.

The last scene was shot at the mainframe computer, showing the vital Buyers' Style Status Report — with the golden information on all store sales — coming off the computer print.

The film was presented at the General Managers Conference and we are mightily relieved to report — approved. It will now wing its way for showing to the stores, warehouses, and central sections, along with a "presentation package" (prepared by Personnel director Mrs. Adams).

So, our thanks to the staff and management who appeared in our film, and to all the other professionals in our business who will carry our company out of this recession and Into the Computer Age".



A Talent In Store

Store porter at Liverpool, Dave Dykes likes nothing better than sketching in his spare time. His artistic talent is much admired by colleagues and he is always sketching pictures for them.

Although Dave is a registered disabled person (he has a paralysed right arm), his disability has never hampered his work, as you can see from his picture of Father Christmas.

"When I was eight I went swimming down south one summer. I didn't realise it until a few weeks later but I had contracted the disease polio", he said.

Dave (34) was completely paralysed but fortunately he regained the use of all of his limbs with the exception of his right arm.

"Luckily I'd been left handed as a child so I was able to adapt to my disability that much quicker", he said.

It's that winning style!



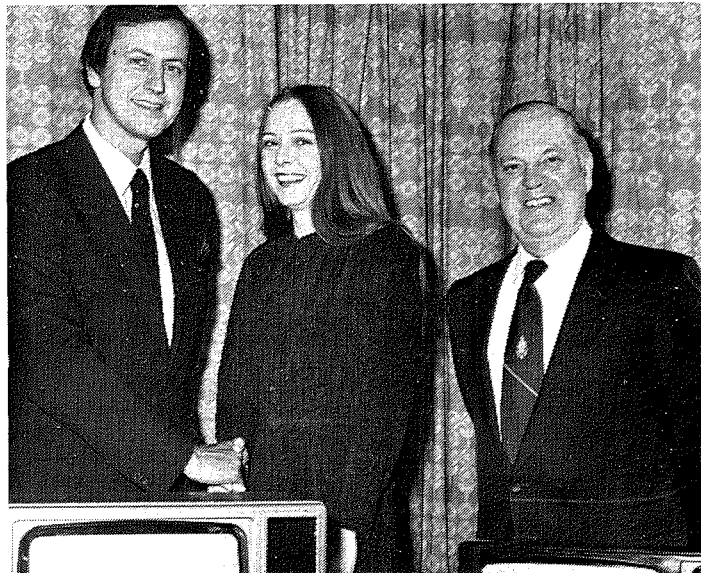
June Barrett (left) and Barbara Walsh from Liverpool's Central Buying Office have every reason to smile. They both won first prizes this summer in the "Miss She" contest held regularly at Pontins Holiday Camp.



Michael Young from London Road has been voted "Student of the Year" at Hugh Baird College of Further Education, Liverpool.



Anne Wyatt is Coventry's Golden Girl. The junior trainee on Christmas stationery has been presented with a Gold Award in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.



Mr. John Hoesli, Merchandise and Deputy Managing Director, congratulates Sue Healey, Personnel Supervisor in T.J.'s London Road store, on winning a portable black and white television, second prize in a drapery trade charity draw.

The draw, organised by Arthur Roskell, Central Buyer of Linens (pictured right) raised a record sum of £1,000 to be shared among Puxley Children's Homes, the Textile Benevolent Association and the Cottage Homes.



Pram Race

Cyril Hardinge and Kevin Moore from our Bath store put their best feet forward for charity this summer when they joined in a pram race from Weston-Super-Mare to Bath. They raised more than £200 for the Year of the Disabled Appeal.

Gloria's Win

• Mrs. Gloria Cousins (below) from our Weston-Super-Mare store receives a cheque for £100 from a Silentnight Area Sales Executive after winning a competition connected with the sale of beds.

The Calypso Spectacular!



● Mrs. D. Hampton and Mrs. F. Czapnik.

MOST towns in England and Wales have a responsibility for organising traditional community events. Some, lucky enough to be hereditary tourist spots, have a constant flow of people to create activity. Whilst others, less fortunate, sit back and wait for things to happen.

So we can forgive fellow readers of Scene who believe that by falling under the ambiguous label, "a suburb of London", Finchley is one of the latter type. Overshadowed by the big city, too close to maintain an identity, and too far away to enjoy the major events.

Nothing could be further from the truth and we are proud to say that our store is widely recognised by the local community for its active part in the year's most important social event. Namely, the Finchley Carnival.

Up and down the country, at some time during spring or summer, communities work feverishly together to "get the show off the ground". And at each Carnival the most important figure-head is, of course, the Carnival Queen chosen from the local community.

It was during the evening of the final judging of the Carnival Queen contest, when, once again, the Finchley Carnival Organising Panel with the help of our General Manager, Mrs. June Baghurst, joined forces to organise not just the

By Peter Cornwell

Carnival Queen competition, but an evening's entertainment with a fashion show staged by the Owen Owen store.

Planning began weeks beforehand with both management and staff giving their free time to liaise with local council members.

First, a new venue had to be found. The local Inglis Army Barracks gymnasium was kindly made available, and despite every assistance from the troops to clear the new £¼ million great hall of its ropes, nets and gym equipment (to make it less of an assault course) we were left with the problem of making four huge brick walls look exciting enough to create atmosphere and draw an audience.

The cat-walk, supplied by the council, was covered, decorated and set-up with back-drops by Cheryl Holt (Display) and Shirley Brewerton (Rare Set S.M.). Props



● Compere Peter Cornwell introduces two Finchley models, Mrs. Shirley Brewerton and Miss Cheryl Holt.

came mainly from ex-window displays and all other costs were paid for by the sale of samples kindly donated from buyers at Stafford House.

Huge spots were suspended to light the stage and illuminate the vast array of beautiful potted plants and flowers from a local parks and gardens department. The P.A. system was installed and Radio Friern Disco provided the backing music.

The fashion theme of "Holiday-time" consisted of five carefully timed sections, which described travelling to a tropical island in the sun, showing the fullest range of fashion that Owen Owen has to offer.

Shirley, Barbara Chatfield (Fashion S.M.) and Roger Murdoch (Menswear S.M.) had chosen the garments to be worn and rallied together the members of staff who had volunteered as models.

And so came the dress rehearsal, with the male members of "Wall Street Crash" pop group booked to judge the Carnival Queen Contest and watch our show, not to mention an expected audience of 500 people the next day — so we had to get it right!

We aimed for perfection and instead got pre-show panic. Everything that could go wrong, just did! But there is an old show-biz adage that says "Bad dress rehearsal — good performance", and that is how this magic and memorable evening came about.

The beauty pageant started it off, and after the local girls had been through their preliminary paces, it was my turn to step up and present the commentary. The scene was set, the noise of an airplane taking-off blasted from the D.J.'s speakers, the buzz from the audience ebbed, as they returned from the bar, and the show began.

STREAMERS

The first few minutes were nerve racking, especially for some of our models, who were on a stage for their first time. However, everything soon settled into place, as we gained the interest of the audience.

Eventually it was time for the big finale. In a wide assortment of evening dress and led by Cheryl and Shirley in multi-coloured cheesecloth, the models trooped up the cat-walk.

The Calypso music for our "Holidaytime" procession reached a peak as everybody, carrying mannequin masks and dancing the light fantastic, tossed streamers at the audience. The rainbow atmosphere rose to a crescendo of rapturous applause as they marched confidently back off stage.

The evening was an undoubted success. The Carnival Queen was duly elected and the raffle had raised £100 for charity. Even the prize, a 3ft. fluffy elephant had been made by sales assistant Jane Carter. The proceeds from this and all the Carnival events were in aid of the Mayor's 1981 Appeal for Crohn's Disease in Childhood Research.

ANSWERS

OWEN

1. Ensus; 2. Sombre; 3. Bread; 4. Adhere; 5. Herewith; 6. Thickens; 7. Ensnare; 8. Arena; 9. Napkins; 10. Skates; 11. Escape; 12. Pepper; 13. Error; 14. Orange; 15. Germans; 16. Answer; 17. Errand; 18. Dover; 19. Vermin; 20. Minnow; 21. Owen.

Centre Phase

WE }
WON } OWEN
ONE! }

EASY DRESSING ... 1982 STYLE

IN THE '50's . . . every woman either owned a suit or longed for one of tailored styling with nipped in waist and smoothly rounded hips, but oh how they suffered for that silhouette.

In the '60's . . . Twiggy, more than anyone else symbolised the fashion of her time with the mini revolution and freedom for us all.

In the '70's . . . we learned to love practical and comfortable clothes as the country look took over the High Street.

And the '80's? The fashion to follow.

There is something for everyone from the zany individualist to the sophisticated lady . . . that's what Spring/Summer style 1982 is all about.

The soft feminine silhouette that crept in for Winter is now generally accepted. With it, for Summer, comes the return of the waist. All skirt lengths are featured from the 18 inch mini to the mid and lower calf (figure 6). Romantic is still a strong influence taking the form of the country-girl.

The nautical influence which

appeared in a minor form for Spring/Summer 1981 has established itself strongly this year, particularly on the sportswear front. All the nice girls — come Summer '82 — still love a sailor.

Wanderlust is down the route of the Eastern line, the Orient comes through in simple shapes of wrap or tie kimono's, coolie jackets and new low crotch trousers, called zouaves, in soft handwoven cottons or lavishly patterned fabrics splashed with gold.

From the waist down, trousers steal the show in every way.

Choose from . . . cheeky high cut or baggy pleated shorts (figure 1), bermudas with turnup cuffs, in lengths from 18 inches to the knee, pedal pushers, bloomers or straight cut wide trousers cropped at mid-calf, just above the ankle or gathered into cuffs. Skirt trends still feature the jean shape in varying lengths plus wrap-over, pleated or divided culotte styles and the longer, gathered skirt.

Stretch jeans are a must and most are fashionably over-stitched with self or contrast thread (figure

2). Fabrics used range from soft comfortable cottons to stronger twill and canvas weaves which also incorporate the inevitable lycra stretch.

While the softer style skirts are created from fresh cottons, including cheesecloth, damask poplins, textured linens and voile. Stripes are dominant either contrasted with white or in toning shades, particularly the "butcher stripe".

Tops to team comprise . . . of square cut, roomy shapes especially the slash neck sleeveless T-shirt or baggy half sleeve style, plus shoe-string strap vests and lots of lightweight fancy embroidered knitwear.

Easy dressing . . . with soft, go anywhere dresses, either for a country look with voluminous smocks and tunics under short jackets with nipped-in waists.

Peplums and leg-o-mutton sleeves, or on a nautical theme with sailor collars, anchor print cotton T-shirt dresses and pleated skirt dresses (figure 3), teamed with soft blazers in wool and linens, oversized cotton parkas or blouson style jackets (figure 5) featuring details such as striped, towelling or mesh linings and contrast piping trims.

There are feminine summery dresses (figure 4) with pintucks, gathers, pleating and lace trims, or a clean cut sculptured line with tailored jackets.

Last but not least . . . accessorise all this with gold such as gilt jewellery.

Fashion for the first six months of 1982 is so versatile that you can switch your style around all Spring and Summer to create endless combinations, adding up to a variety of original looks, in colours that scream to be noticed: poppy red, electric blue, sunshine yellow, jade green, dazzling turquoise and shocking pink not forgetting the brightest of them all, snow white, plus the ever popular water-tinted pastels for high summer.



● Looking ahead to a fashionable '82, the Rare Set buying team (left to right), Claire Snee, Debbie Lavender and Kathryn Horfall.