



THE NEWSPAPER OF THE OWEN OWEN GROUP

# Scene

No. 7 · SPRING 1972

## DRAMATIC TURN-ROUND IN SECOND HALF



**I**n his annual statement to shareholders, the chairman, Mr. J. A. H. Norman, reports that a substantial recovery in the second half of last year produced a profit for the full year before tax of £632,000 (£617,000) after carrying forward £79,000 (£10,000) as unmatured profit on long-term credit sales.

Group sales increased by 5.3 per cent (or 2.6 per cent if the new Erdington store is excluded) and the trading surplus improved by 13.5 per cent.

trading year in 1967/68.

More progress was made during the year towards the concept of a chain of department stores. Better control throughout the buying system and greater standardisation in the presentation of merchandise at the point of sale is coming through in improved performance.

Profits in Canada, after conversion into sterling, were 11.9 per cent up on last year, despite the adverse effect of the Hamilton bus strike on the performance of the main store in the

first half-year; the Burlington store contributed a 40% profit increase.

*Hudson's Bay Company has bought part of the shares in the Canadian business and will put additional money into the business over the next six years (see page three). The infusion of new Canadian capital will allow a faster rate of growth.*

The performance of Plumb's was exceptionally good. It is serving a growing list of clients of national repute in many commercial fields

including shops, restaurants, hotels and offices.

"The strength of the profit recovery in the second half was very encouraging, after the bad start to the year, and I would like to express the thanks of the Board to everybody who worked so hard to bring it about," said Mr. Norman. "Trading in the UK and Canada has started well in 1972 and we expect to report a continuing improvement in the coming year."

### SALES and PROFIT

	before tax		after tax	
	£'000	% of total	£'000	% of total
UK Stores	20,100	76%	368	58%
Canada	5,624	21%	207	33%
Plumbs.	670	3%	57	9%
	26,394	100%	632	100%

Although the final profit before tax of £368,000 earned in the UK stores was lower than last year, there was a dramatic turn-round in the second six months, when the result was a record and considerably above the level achieved in the comparable period of the group's peak

## New Managing Director for UK Stores

"The measurement by which the outside world judges our success is mainly by the profit we earn in relation to the capital we employ. The major factor in becoming more profitable is our ability to increase the value of the average transaction which, in turn, means that our sales force has a tremendously important role to play in the continuing success of Owen Owen."

This is the view of Mr. Terence McGrath, the newly appointed managing director of Owen Owen (Stores) Ltd.

### Middle East

Born in Birmingham in 1934, Mr. McGrath was educated at King George VI Grammar School, Edgbaston. His father was a pattern maker in the local G.E.C. factory and his mother was a nurse. He joined the R.A.F. after leaving school in 1952 and spent most of his three years' service in the Middle East.

He came into retailing almost by accident. He took a "temporary" job as a salesman on the dress fabrics department at Marshall and Snelgrove in Birmingham. The "temporary" job

lasted five years and led to the buyership of several departments. In 1960, he went to Rhodesia as merchandise manager for a group of department stores. It was in Africa that Mr. McGrath's eldest son was born. When he returned home, he joined Macoward's as assistant general manager at the "Maddox" department store in Shrewsbury, becoming general manager, then area controller and regional director.

### Clear View

Six years later, with the clear view of broadening his commercial experience, and particularly of gaining further knowledge of managing a multi-unit operation, he joined the Rank Organisation as catering general

manager in charge of Rank's popular catering outlets which included five motorports, twenty theatre restaurants and a collection of bars, public houses and eating places. After ten months, he was promoted to manage the Rank cinema division comprising all Odeon and Gaumont cinemas. The introduction of twinned and triple theatres only slowed down the admission decline and, whilst short term profits increased, there was obviously no growth potential within the industry. So Mr. McGrath returned to his first love of retailing, as director of retail operations of Peter Robinsons, until joining Owen Owen in January of this year.

Christine and Terry McGrath have been married for 13 years and have three children—Guy (11), Sarah-Jane (7) and Ashley (5). They live at Esher in Surrey, but they will soon be moving to Hoylake.

### Cameraman

A serious amateur photographer, Mr. McGrath has "shot" game in Africa with his single lens reflex camera, and plans to take up under-water photography this year. He is a keen squash player and hi-fi fan, having constructed his own loudspeaker enclosures. He gets great enjoyment from cooking, his favourite foods being from Mediterranean countries.



Mr. McGrath relaxes at home with his wife, Christine and three children

# ?uzzle corner...

## WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

More questions to test your general knowledge. Give yourself four points for every correct answer and reckon your score out of 100. There are no prizes, but you can take a bow if you get more than half right.

1. What is the capital of Switzerland?
2. What is the collective name for a group of badgers?
3. How many books does the bible contain?
4. When was the Massacre of Glencoe?
5. What is ambergris?
6. Who is this?



7. What was the name of the ship in which Jason and the Argonauts sailed in search of the "golden fleece"?
8. Who wrote "The Vicar of Wakefield"?

9. What is the name given to the Isle of Man Parliament?
10. What is a Nuthatch?
11. Where is this?



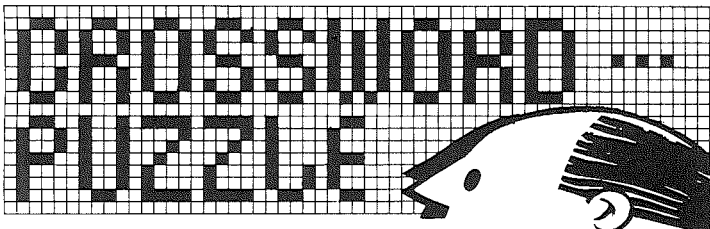
12. Who was Captain John Speke?
13. Which 5 counties border on Wiltshire?
14. What is miscegenation?
15. Which planet is nearest the sun?
16. What was this famous event?



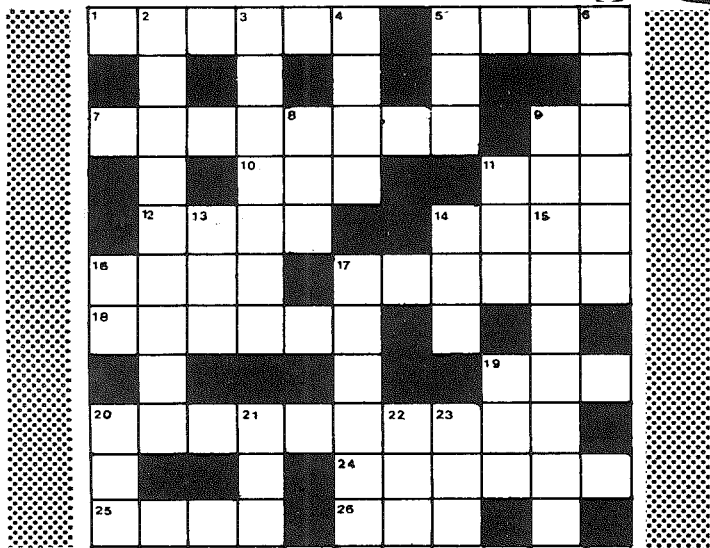
17. When did Charles Lindbergh make the first solo flight across the Atlantic?
18. How long is a cubit?
19. What do the letters Q.C. stand for?
20. When is St. David's day?

## answers

1. Berne.
2. A cete.
3. 66-39 in the New Testament and 27 in the New.
4. 1692.
5. A solid substance that floats on the sea.
6. Flyer Sheila Scott.
7. The Argo.
8. Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774).
9. The Tynwald.
10. A tree-creeping bird, some of which are found in England.
11. Oxford.
12. Discoverer of the main source of the White Nile, also Lake Tanganyika.
13. Somerset, Dorset, Hampshire, Berkshire and Gloucester.
14. A mixture of different races.
15. Mercury—36 million miles (Earth is 96 million miles from the sun).
16. British runner Roger Bannister becomes the first man to run the mile in less than four minutes in 1954.
17. 1927.
18. About 21 inches.
19. Queen's Counsel.
20. March 1.



## Crossword solution...



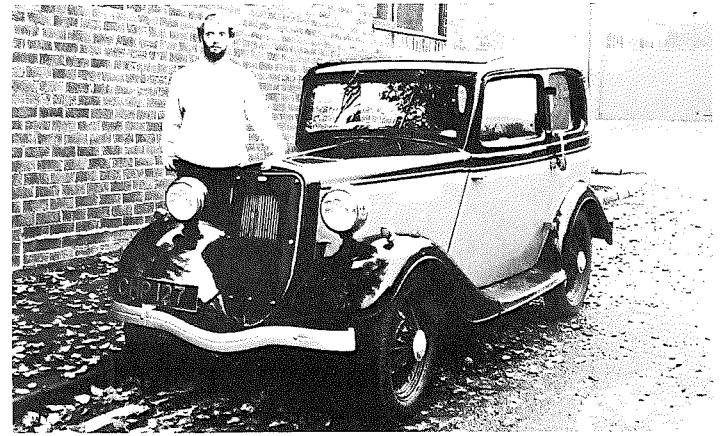
### ACROSS

- 1 Tug DEB to complete the estimate (6)
- 5 T.V. commercial, fit for a hole in the bath (4)
- 7 Often asked of a customer paying by cheque (8)
- 9 Negative (2)
- 10 Slippery customer (3)
- 12 Undercooked, or maybe part of a set (4)
- 14 You usually pay tax as you do this (4)
- 16 Continent (4)
- 17 Spades are approved (6) anag.
- 18 Most of our workers are classed as the white variety (6)
- 19 If we're in this, we're not profitable (3)
- 20 Mini-treads, run the business? (10) anag.
- 24 Some people drink 'em, and some wear 'em? (6)
- 25 Story perhaps, with high hopes (4)
- 26 A real good looker (3)

### DOWN

- 2 If one of our competitors is, he doesn't know about it (9)
- 3 Military sounding for a manager (7)
- 4 Lubricate after Tea? it hard work (4)
- 5 You can get wool or wood in 2, 3 or 4 (3)
- 6 Is the coffee always sold on this floor (6)
- 8 Drive the ball away from this (3)
- 11 Sag back? It's natural perhaps (3)
- 13 Sounds drinkable, poorly (3)
- 14 Study the sky for this river (3)
- 15 Returns to a former position (7)
- 16 Short or current? Account (2)
- 17 Find a spire encouraging (6) anag
- 19 Initially a firm loaning electric appliances to householders? (3)
- 20 Miniature worker on the hill (3)
- 21 Unwell (3)
- 22 Timid maybe (3)
- 23 One of ten, found in a pair of boots (3)

## John's taking his 1937 Model Y Ford to Italy!



Joiner John Clarke, from Plumb's at Coventry, bought this 1937 Model Y Ford for £38. Working weekends and evenings, he installed a new 8-horse power engine, renovated the interior, patched up the body, and had it sprayed blue and black. The result, as the picture shows, is a rather grand-looking motor, which John uses every day for work. It gives him 40 miles to a gallon of petrol and is capable of 60 miles an hour.

John is currently helping fellow joiner Peter Johnson to rebuild a similar car, which Peter picked up for just £15! And they plan to take their vehicles on a three-week, 2,000 mile jaunt to Italy and back in July. "I'm keeping my fingers' crossed", said John.

## STRAP ON YOUR SHOOTIN' IRON!

If you mosey on down to the Bootle corral be sure to strap on your iron, 'cos there's likely to be some shooting break out there any day. For Mark Mitchell has been raisin' a posse and they don't take too kindly to strangers, especially those from the Lazy Double O.

Actually, handyman salesman Mark from Bootle Strand is trying to form a shooting club. Mark (21) is a rifle and pistol instructor for the Bootle squadron of the Air Training Corps and teaches boys aged 13 and upwards how to shoot straight.

He is one of the best shots in a cadet unit that has won a number of national and international trophies.

Mark has received a lot of support for his idea to form a

T. J. Hughes small bore rifle and pistol club and is looking round for a shooting range where they



can practise. But he says: "It's a bit difficult, because most of the ranges are military ranges and they are not too keen to let you use them at the moment, in view of the Irish troubles".

## Holiday

A one-day holiday for two in the Dutch bulb fields was won by Mr. Hall, sales manager of haberdashery, menswear, stationery, toys and fashion fabrics in Wolverhampton's annual sales managers' competition.

The second prize was shared by Miss Pam Lean, sales manager of ladies fashions, and Mr. K. B. Speddings, household departments SM.



It's not the Bunny Club—it's Finchley's Christmas party and there's no truth in the rumour that there were just two bunnies when the party began! Bunny-in-chief Stan Smedley, the store's restaurant manager kept an eye on the attractive female bunnies and seems in no hurry to return to his hutch. They were (from left): Ruth Hayes (haberdashery), Jeanette Easton (scarves and gloves), Leueen Vieira (display) and Ellen Hannavy (display). The girls served refreshments and at the end of the evening one of their tails was auctioned for charity. Ear ear, we say.

# MAJOR EXPANSION TO FOLLOW HUDSON'S BAY DEAL

*First step is a new "Robinson's" store in Hamilton, Ontario...*

Under agreements which became effective on January 29, the Hudson's Bay Company has acquired an initial interest of 27 per cent of the shares of Owen Owen (Canada) Limited, the company which holds all the shares of Robinson's. Over the next six to nine years Hudson's Bay will build up their holding to just under 50 per cent by putting another \$3,552,000 into the Canadian companies.

With the help of these fresh funds, and under the management control of the Robinson team, it is intended to expand the Robinson business quite dramatically in the years ahead. First step will be the transfer of the existing Bay store in Hamilton to Robinson's name

and control on August 1 this year, and this will be quickly followed in 1973 by another Robinson store in the new Hamilton Eastgate shopping centre. Further Robinson stores are planned in the Niagara Peninsula and possible Southern Ontario.

The history of Robinson's new trading partner makes fascinating reading. It was late in September, 1668, that the ketch *Nonsuch* from England, with Des Groseilliers aboard, anchored in James Bay. Here a small fort was built and the men spent the winter hunting and trading with the peaceful Crees. The following October the ketch arrived back in London with a handsome cargo of beaver pelts. Because of this successful voyage, King Charles II granted to 18 adventurers a Charter incorporating them as *The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay*.

## Indians and Wars

In the first century of the Company's life the men on the Bay established forts, traded with the Indians and were involved in wars with the French.

As competition from the Montreal-based North West Company increased in the 1770's, the Company moved into the interior and gradually built a network of routes and forts spread out over the north and west.

In 1870, by Deed of Surrender, the Company formally transferred its chartered territory to Canada in return for farm lands in the Prairie Provinces. This land has since been sold, but mineral rights on 4½ million acres have been retained. The petroleum and natural gas rights have been optioned to Hudson's Bay Oil and Gas Company Limited in which the Hudson's Bay Company has a 21.9 per cent interest.

Hudson's Bay is now one of the leading Canadian retailers with retail sales in 1971 of \$400 million. Approximately 250 stores, ranging from Newfoundland to the Yukon

## NEWS FROM CANADA

and from the Arctic islands to the Niagara Peninsula, serve the diversified needs of Canadians.

## Fur Traders

The company maintains its traditional interest in fur. Although fur is a small portion of its total sales, the company is the largest fur trading firm in the world, with auction houses in Montreal, New York and London. The wholesale department distributes giftware, confectionery and tobacco products through a network of branches located from coast to coast. The company's famous blankets and spirits are sold throughout Canada and the United States.

In 1970, three hundred years after its incorporation, the headquarters of the company was transferred from London, England, to Winnipeg, Canada. Hudson's Bay House serves as the company's head office and the administrative centre for the various activities which, today employ about 15,000 people.



The Hudson's Bay store in Hamilton.

## Camera team visits Clayton Square

Young school-leavers at Clayton Square became television personalities in February, when a BBC production team visited the store to record a 20-minute schools programme.

The BBC camera team and producer Miss Barbara Parker spent a week at the store filming for a careers series which will be screened in October. They visited most departments, including the canteen, interviewed some of the staff and watched them at work. Said Miss Parker: "We were mainly interested in filming the young assistants, who had only recently left school".

## Radio Solent

Miss Audrey Knowlton, Southampton's fashion SM, and Mr. Jim Haines, the store's chef, have also been representing Owen Owen on television and radio.

Miss Knowlton was heard twice on Radio Solent talking to interviewer Gaynor Jones about spring fashions and Mr. Haines starred in a Southern Television women's programme on which he presented a two-tier wedding cake to a couple married for over 25 years, who missed having a white wedding because of the war. Apparently, Jim was given a blunt knife to cut the cake "on the air" and had a real struggle! Also appearing were Lady Montague of Beaulieu and trombonist George Chisholm.

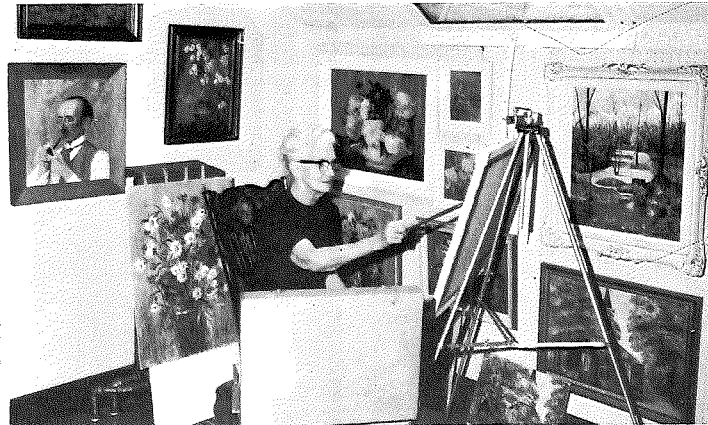
## Distinction winners in 1971 Test

Distinction winners in the 1971 Proficiency Test were—Mrs. C. A. Bosworth (Wolverhampton), Miss S. J. Crewe (Chester), Miss B. J. Davies (Coventry), Miss P. Duff (London Road), Miss T. Freeman (Clayton Square), Mr. P. V. Hughes (London Road), Miss C. E. Lewis-Lomax (Chester), Miss C. Lloyd (Chester), Miss C. Okell (Clayton Square), Mr. D. Pollard (Doncaster), Mrs. V. B. Robinson (Southampton) and Miss M. B. Whittaker (Wolverhampton).

Each of the above winners obtained a distinction by achieving 80 per cent or more on each of the four two-hour papers which make up the test. This group has been invited to head office to a residential training course which is part of their prize.

We hope they enjoy their visit and add to their laurels!

A 1970 distinction winner, Mr. P. Griffiths, has been appointed manager of 106 grocery section in the William Jones speciality food department at Chester—at the age of 19.



Miss Doris Morley, seen here at work in her studio, was apprehensive when she retired from Robinson's seven years ago. But she needn't have been, for her talent for painting has kept her active.

She has given two one-man shows at the Hamilton Art Gallery and the City Hall.

## Right hand



The "right hand" to the buyers in the sportswear department, where she had worked for 15 years, Mrs. Edith Mountain, retired in January, after 30 years' service.

Mrs. Mountain, who came from Scotland, joined Robinson's in 1942. She went to the store with a friend, who wanted to work there, but it was Mrs. Mountain who got the job in the children's wear department. She also worked on millinery, furs, cosmetics and dresses.

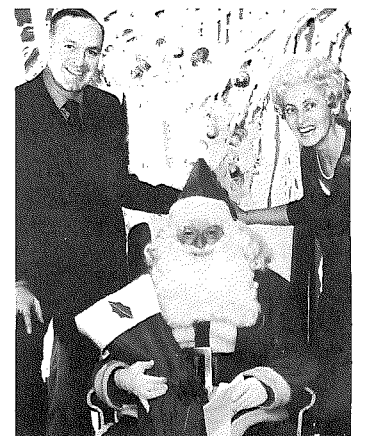
## She took her coat off and stayed 40 years!

Mrs. Winifred McCormick, who retired in January, after working at Robinson's for nearly 40 years, was the mainstay of the men's furnishings department and one of the most popular people in the store.

Born in Liverpool, she emigrated after leaving school and came to live in Hamilton with her family. She could not have had a more enthusiastic welcome when she called in the store for a job—it was the day of the anniversary sale.

The store was packed with customers. Wondering where to apply, Mrs. McCormick asked an assistant, who indicated the director, Mr. R. L. Smith. Mr. Smith did not waste any time—he told her to take off her coat and get cracking. She did—and stayed for 40 happy years.

## Santa retires



Christmas will not be quite the same in Hamilton this year. For the town's most famous Santa Claus has retired. For 25 years Mr. Jack Prudence was Santa to the hundreds of children—many of them now grown up—who visited Robinson's at Christmas. Mr. Prudence gave his final performance last December and the staff responded by filling a stocking just for him. It was stuffed with fruit, canned goods, soft drinks, slippers, a handsome gift certificate from the management and a nicely filled wallet, and it was presented to him by president Mr. F. W. Dakin and personnel manager Miss D. Bechler.

# A BIG "Hello" from the Hello Girls!

"Scene" snaps the faces of our  
switchboard operators—  
Are they how you pictured them?



**BOOTLE CENTRE**—Kathy Roberts.



**FINCHLEY**—Ann Cooper (16).



**CHESTER**—Jennifer Ratcliffe.



**SOUTHAMPTON**—Mrs. "Jo" Hopkins (left) and Mrs. Joyce Fielding.



**BIRKENHEAD**—Mrs. June Snowdon (left), Mrs. Elsie Cawley (sitting) and Miss Carol Jacques.



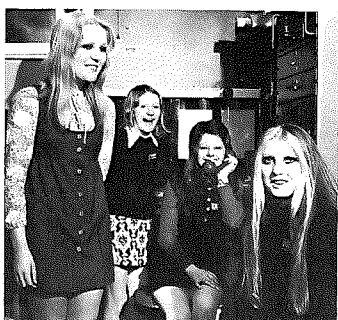
**LONDON BUYING OFFICE**—Margaret Ryan.



**PRESTON**—Mrs. Maria Gray.



**ERDINGTON**—Lynn Fearon.



**BOOTLE STRAND**—From left: Kay Farrimond, Ann Wright, Theresa Weston and Marie Burns.



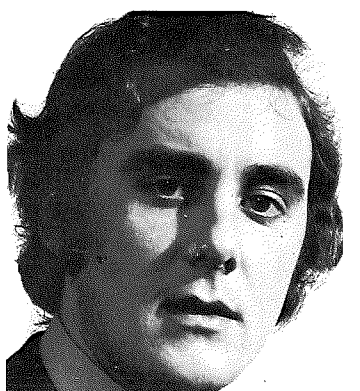
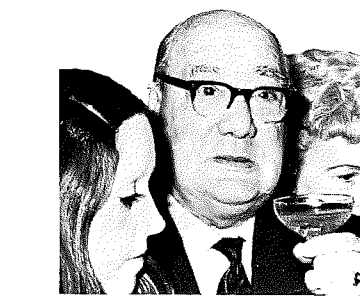
**CLAYTON SQUARE**—From left: Mrs. Kathleen Doran, Mrs. Marjorie King and Miss Vera Hulme.



**COVENTRY**—From front: Mrs. Ann Rawson, Mrs. Barbara Doble and Mrs. Joan King (supervisor).



**WOLVERHAMPTON**—Mrs. Doreen Thomas.



Merchandise manager Brian Bolton (22), has also worked at Finchley and Clayton Square. He has been at Bootle for three months.





# NEW-LOOK BOOTLE STRAND DRAWS THEM IN

*"The potential of the store is tremendous" says the general manager*

The Bootle Strand store has just been given a £30,000 facelift and 5,000 square-foot floor boost—in just two months! The store—the four-year-old Bootle Strand branch of T. J. Hughes—is now one of the most modern-looking in the country. Fittings from the former Blackpool store were utilised in the expansion, which raised the store's selling area to over 20,000 square feet, and its sales potential is described as "tremendous".

At the centre of a new shopping development called Bootle Strand, the store is rapidly establishing itself as a mecca for shoppers from a wide area. The precinct, which now boasts over 100 shops, was opened in 1968 and features car parking for some 1,000 cars and its own bus station.

But it soon became apparent that more space would be needed and so former supermarket premises next door were acquired. A wall was knocked down to make a thoroughfare into the new section and the supermarket's ceilings were redesigned and lowered. The floor was retiled, the store's heating system was extended and windows and doors were taken out and replaced to the same pattern. The whole stockroom system was changed and the receiving bay was moved to the new section, enabling separate receiving and despatch bays to be provided.

Ex-navy man Mr. Roberts keeps the store "shipshape"—he looks after the store's maintenance and is responsible for security and goods receiving.



● House Supervisor Mr. Rodney Roberts

The general manager is Liverpool-born Mr. Alan Douglas who joined Owen Owen in 1969 as manager of the warehousing unit at Bootle Centre and was later appointed A.G.M. at Chester. He became Bootle's general manager last July. His interests include classical music and poetry. He says: "The potential of the Bootle Strand store is tremendous and we have only just started to tap the market".

The biggest gross profit earning department in the store is shoes, explained merchandise manager Mr. Brian Bolton (22). "It was given more space in the recent changes and although it was moved off the ground floor, its sales increased by 35 per cent in the first week".



Other departments that gained space include the two boyswear sections, which doubled in size, and haberdashery, which grew three-fold. The opportunity was also taken to rationalise the various fabric departments, which were sited together on the ground floor for easier shopping and manning. But every department was affected



● General Manager Alan Douglas

In addition staff dances and social evenings are held at regular intervals, and the store's hockey

team puts on a good show at occasional matches.

However, the store takes an interest not only in purely local affairs. Because of where it is situated, it has strong associations with a town in Belgium. Every year students from the town of Mons, 30 miles south of Brussels, come to Bootle and work at the store for a short time to improve their English. In return the shop staff are warmly welcomed when they visit Mons.

A plaque is displayed in the store commemorating the strong ties between the "twin" towns.



**Come and see us sometime!**



## Magne Party

Party to celebrate breaking the weekly record exceeded the previous record by over 100 per cent. Mr. Alf Russell, aged 74, the electrical department; Miss Nellie Pawson, part-timer; Mr. Paul Clarke, former perfumery assistant; and Mrs. J. Lydiate, clerk.



Twenty-one-year-old Barbara Corish, sales assistant on perfumery, has worked at Bootle Strand since March and would like to make a career in cosmetics. In her spare time she teaches horse-riding and also paints horses. She has won several rosettes for her riding.

The work was carried out by a Manchester firm and the project was supervised by Mr. John Murden and Mr. Jim Read from technical services, and the store's house supervisor Mr. Rodney Roberts (33).

Said Mr. Roberts: "There were no snags, so it was possible to get the job done very fast. There was excellent co-operation between the contractors and the shop staff, so fixtures were rapidly installed and the new section opened on March 13, two weeks ahead of schedule, adding 5,300 square feet to the ground floor".



Before Christmas, Mr. Douglas was interviewed at the store by commentator the late Franklin Engelmann for the radio programme "Down You Way". He was one of seven people featured in the programme about Bootle—but the store interview topped the bill. Mr. Douglas talked about the store's contribution to the success of the new shopping precinct, and the final item on the show was the staff's record choice—appropriately, "Let's all go down the Strand".

by the moves and received the facelift treatment. Only menswear has stayed in the same place, but it has been drastically restyled.

The store has 59 full-time and 26 part-time staff on three floors. It is already playing a part in the life of the town and has staged fashion parades and a careers exhibition for local churches and schools. Recently a window was set aside for a display concerned with activities for the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, in co-operation with the local organisers.

store's ubiquitous office supervisor person to retire from Bootle Strand—service. Her introduction to Owen on sales assistant at Clayton Square years later she returned to the same supervisor and progressed to the duties included helping other stores roll. She became office supervisor the year it opened—and a year later.

Bonner is fond of gardening and she has a son, Bernard (33), who is

## on to retire

# NOBODY COULD EXPLAIN THE CRATER IN THE FIELD

The investigator for the British Unidentified Flying Object Research Association pushed his way through crowds of sightseers and officials to where the "thing" had landed. There was a large, circular depression in the field, about 35-ft. across and 4-ft. deep. It sloped inward to the centre where, in a smaller crater, stones were welded together as if by terrific heat. Outside the large crater there were imprints in the wheat like huge footprints . . .

*The mystery of the Charlton Crater remains just one of the unsolved phenomena known to Mr. Norman Toogood, from Southampton.*

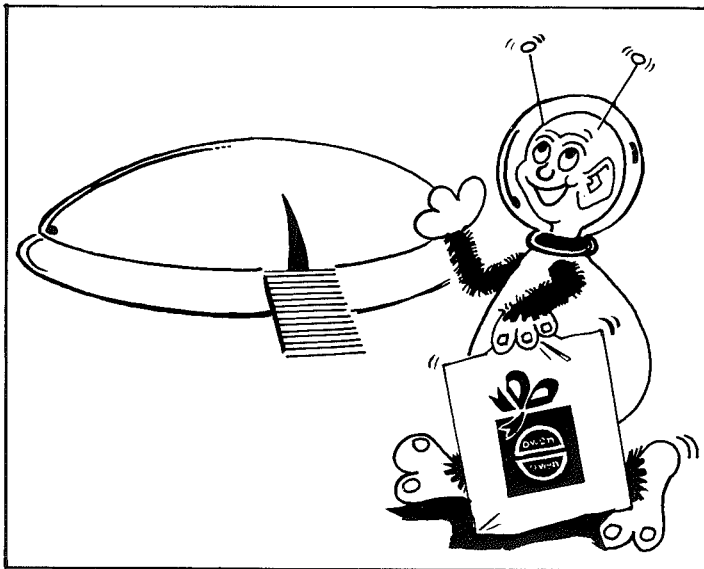
Stock Clerk Mr. Toogood has investigated scores of strange sightings and occurrences, but the "landing" in the field was the most puzzling. "There had been two reports of unidentified flying objects in the area in the previous 24 hours", he said. "But, despite the efforts of many people, including the police, army and government officials, the mystery was never cleared up".

"It was like something had stood there generating enormous heat".

Mr. Toogood has just resigned from the UFO research association, for which he was the area investigator, because of ill health.



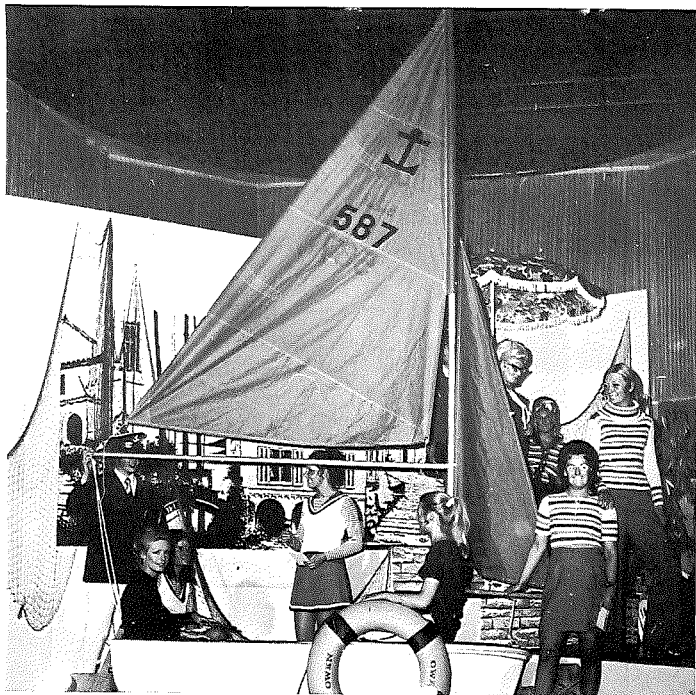
But he still takes an interest in happenings which cannot be explained. And he says: "The government takes a keener interest than most people think".



## The Right Medicine

Strange but true—a customer who struggled into the medical room of a rival store with a load of parcels and asked if she could lie down declared that she had done all her shopping at Owen Owen, but the rival store had a—much nicer medical room! Since then, "Scene" understands that our medical room has been given a dramatic, £100,000 facelift featuring sauna baths, a chiropody service and sweet music (all courtesy of Owen Owen, MD) making it the most comfortable in the country. In fact, it's booked up until 1974!

## QUAY TO SUCCESS



The display team at Doncaster transformed the stage of the local Top Rank Ballroom into an Italian harbour, complete with boat, for a fashion show in aid of the Doncaster Grammar School Parent-Teachers' Association which raised £200. Over 1,000 people attended the show, which was given by girls from the store's fashion floor, helped by two professional models, displaying the nautical look.

In the picture (from left): 1. David Flannigan, Beryl Sanderson, Irene Brooks, Yvonne Paine, Elaine Presley, Margaret Barrowcliffe, Jean Crossland, Cherry Raymond and Julie Evans.

## Well done, Clayton Square

A customer in Geneva, Switzerland, who ordered a bunk bed from Clayton Square was so pleased with the service that he wrote a letter of thanks. He said: "It is very unusual to find such good service anywhere in Europe".

# Preston opens Souvenir Shop

Preston store has opened a souvenir shop in preparation for the town's Guild celebrations later this year—held every 20 years to commemorate past achievements—which are expected to attract more than 400,000 visitors.

The shop is selling all types of souvenirs, from badges containing the store crest to crystal glass goblets. The store is also busily laying plans to take an active part

## Promoted

After only four months with Owen Owen, Miss Sheila Fish has been appointed sales manager of the fashion fabric and paper pattern departments at Coventry.

Sheila joined the store as a management trainee last November, after gaining a B.Sc. in textile chemistry at Leeds University. She spent most of her training period with Mrs. Huddleston, sales manager of stationery.

in the celebrations. It will enter a decorated float in the processions and put on a special "face" for the occasion with Guild colours and signs.

The celebrations will last a week. There will be parades through the town every day and for the climax on a Saturday night a great firework display will be staged in the local park.

## Gold watch

A gold watch was presented to Miss F. Groves, sales manager of London Road's fashion accessories department, when she completed 25 years with the company before Christmas.



Fifth-form students from a local high school modelled Rare Set clothes in up-to-the-minute styles and colours at a fashion show at Wolverhampton in March. Personnel assistant Miss C. Hale described the clothes as the girls stepped out.

# BIG CHANGES UNDERWAY

Better-looking sales floors, easier shopping and improved staff facilities are the targets of major changes taking place in nearly all the stores at the present, under the supervision of technical services controller Mr. John Murden. They include:

**Clayton Square:** Final plans are being made for work to start in the next two months on two fully automatic passenger lifts, to replace two of the three existing 38-year-old lifts. The third lift will be replaced at a later date. The new equipment will be operational in November. Cost of the project—£30,000.

**Bootle Centre:** A farewell party to Bootle Centre was held at the Mecca ballroom in Liverpool on April 6. The premises have now been completely evacuated, except for the computer hardware section, which remains there. Warehousing has been re-located in the London Road complex and the offices re-positioned on the first floor of Audley House.

**Chester:** Work has started on re-fitting the Eastgate Street ground floor selling area, including an improved street frontage, a new carpet and the re-location of the main staircases at the front of the shop. The project will enable better use to be made of the restricted ground floor sales space which amounts to 8,000 square feet. Cost—£43,000.

**Erdington:** Work will be finished in August on installing two centre escalators and two staircases designed to make it easier for customers to reach the two top floors. Heavy brickwork separating the two sides of the ground floor is also being dismantled in a major undertaking costing about £90,000.



Some of the stockroom staff of T. J. Hughes, Liverpool, who were closely involved in the organisation necessary before our central offices could be moved from Bootle Centre to Audley House.

**Coventry:** Under way is the installation of two new automatic lifts serving the basement to the penthouse floor—one floor higher than the existing, 15-year-old lifts—and the lifts should be in use in November. Scaffolding has been erected to the full height of the building at the Leofric entrance to enable the new lift motor room to be built with the least inconvenience to customers and staff. Cost—£32,000.

**Southampton:** The ground floor is being re-located and a new vinyl tile floor is being laid. Lighting and perimeter treatment will be updated to a design by Lucy Halford Associates of London. The work is being carried out over four consecutive weekends and should be finished on May 21. Cost—£21,000.

## "FRIENDLY" SOUTHAMPTON

A visitor from America to the Southampton store remarks: "I sure wish I had a friendly store such as yours back home in the States". She singled out for praise Mrs. Rene Broxup, a part-timer who works on several departments as a "floater".

When you walk into the security manager's office at London Road, down the steps from the staff entrance, ex-Cheshire crime squad detective Peter Leech beams, stands up from his chair and gives your hand a mighty squeeze. His office is white-walled and functional—a desk, a chair, a metal filing cabinet with a typewriter on top, a locker and a redundant notice board. There's a badly-forged £5 note on his blotter and an unstarted "Daily Telegraph" crossword in his tray.

"Where are the TV monitors and the wanted posters?" you ask yourself. But no, that's not how it's done. Peter Leech is one of only three security managers in the group (the others are at Clayton Square and Coventry) and he has charge of a force that includes five uniformed officers, two store detectives and two part-time security "officials". His job is also considerably helped by two notable deterrents—Photoscan and his reputation.

The London Road security team—the largest in the group—has an enviable record of crime-busting and keeps watch over four selling floors and a vast amount of warehousing space.

The main problem, of course, is shoplifting—by both the professional thief and the small-time habitual criminal. "The professional is out to make a good living from stealing and usually works in groups", said Mr. Leech. "They are usually women, supported by a man waiting in a car, who travel from store to store".

"Recently a woman was caught with 50 pairs of children's knickers in her bag. There were three in the gang, but we had to act fast to catch one. Then there was the man who came in the store five minutes before closing and asked me where he could buy a shopping bag.

"He then proceeded to fill it with stolen goods! He visited five departments and took paint, pictures, a raincoat and a set of bathroom scales, among other things. Of course, he didn't get away with it".

**"He asked for a shopping bag and proceeded to fill it up with stolen goods!"**

# ON THE LOOK OUT



Security team: back row; Mr. Leach, Mr. Blood, Mr. Earley, Mr. Quayle, Mr. Beggs. Front row: Mr. Doyle, Miss Fitzpatrick and Miss Grossart

## On their toes

A well-organised shoplifting gang was foiled at Clayton Square by the vigilance of Miss Hicks (dresses) and Mrs. Spiller (coats).

They spotted the gang at work several times in the store and informed the security team. On two occasions the gang were preparing to make off with a total of £140 worth of leather coats.

## Chase

Two men who walked out of our Preston store with £80 worth of records reckoned without S.M. Mr. Brian Roston, D-I-Y assistant Mr. Stephen Mills and the store detective.

The alert trio chased the men into the street and retrieved the goods, although the greedy thieves got away.

## She caught thousands

A sherry party was held at London Road to mark the retirement after more than 28 years of the company's senior store detective, Miss May Bateman.

Miss Bateman joined the group in 1943 and all her service was spent at London Road, where her courage and vigilance accounted for thousands of would-be shoplifters. She also dealt with numerous staff enquiries and trained many budding detectives.

Tribute to Miss Bateman's long and devoted service was paid by Mr. A. T. Dyson, the director and general manager of T. J. Hughes, Mr. J. H. Barkway, the personnel director, and Mr. W. Gittings, the security controller.



## TOP SALESWOMAN

Congratulations to Mrs. E. Blakemore, of Wolverhampton, who won the award for the store's top saleswoman of the half year, seen here receiving her prize from general manager Mr. Peter Hunt. Mrs. Blackmore is in charge of the dress department and made a big personal contribution to the department's successful dress sales. Also in the picture are Mr. Philip Brosgarth and Miss Pam Lean, SM of ladies fashions.

## She's "Mother" to three hundred...

"I shudder to think how many miles I walk in a year—it must be hundreds. I even find myself standing up at home, because I am so used to it! But I enjoy every minute of my job and would not swap with anybody."

The voice belongs to Miss Gert Cain (in private life Mrs. Unsworth), senior supervisor at Clayton Square, who is in her 37th year at Owen Owen.

Lost children, broken till rolls, a sloppy display, or the hurly-burly of a sale and the strategic placing of staff—they are all the things that Miss Cain's working life is made of. Her task is to see that everything and everybody looks good and is doing the job well—to keep an eye on seven floors and 300 selling staff to ensure that nothing and nobody is out of

place. Which is why her first priority is a comfortable pair of shoes!

## Profile

"The most important thing of all is to give the customer service," she says. "I love life in the store and think there is a marvellous atmosphere of help and companionship here."

Miss Cain has worked at Clayton Square all her life. She started there as an assistant on the

## Hampers



Hampers were awarded to the winners of a salesmanship, merchandise knowledge and "serve-through" ability competition for non-food selling staff at Birkenhead. There was a draw for first prize, which was won by Mrs. G. Eccles, of menswear, and Mrs. C. Roberts, of childrens wear. The part-time winner was Mrs. J. Ellis, of shoes. In the picture (from left): Mrs. Ellis, Mrs. Eccles and Mrs. Roberts.

## JUDGED

Wolverhampton general manager Mr. Peter Hunt was asked to act as a judge for an annual Personality Queen contest run by the local newspaper. First prize included £10 worth of clothing from the store's Rare Set boutique and the winner had her picture taken making her selection.



hardware department and, with the exception of some "fascinating weeks" at Southampton, Coventry, Preston and Blackpool, when they were opened, has never moved.

Miss Cain lives in Wallasey, over the Mersey from Liverpool, where she was born, and enjoys gardening and home decorating. She also plays the piano.

As steward for the Merseyside Drapery Trade Charities, she organises bring and buy sales, collections, and a weekly draw, for the benefit of retired drapery trade staff.

## All aboard!

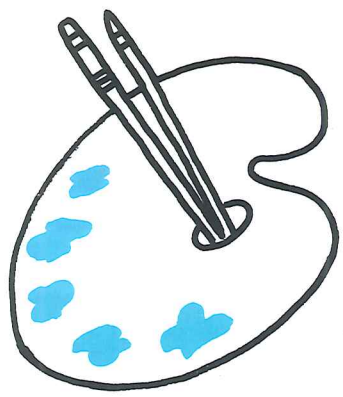


This bed literally floats you off to sleep. It's filled with 150 gallons of water and the Americans say that in five years one in 10 of us will be sleeping on Waterbeds like this one. The water is in an ultrasonically sealed vinyl bag which is claimed to give sound sleep in seconds and even support all round. No need for sleeping draughts—but don't forget your seasick pills!

A Waterbed was the centre of attention at the opening of a new bedding department at Doncaster recently. Two of the store's attractive girl assistants—Lyn Fern and Anne Brookes—showed off the bed.

## Impressed at Chester

A couple who came to shop at our Bridge Street, Chester, store were so impressed with the service they received from Mrs. J. Baghurst on the linen department that they sought out the merchandise manager to say: "She was so pleasant, kind and helpful that we shall tell all our friends to shop at Owen Owen".



# ARTISTS IN THE PICTURE

Scratch below the surface of any of our stores and you are bound to discover a wealth of hidden talent among the staff. Some may be musicians, sportsmen, poets, photographers, historians, or stamp experts in their spare time. Or they may have an untapped talent they are anxious to take up in earnest, given the time, or the opportunity.



Left to right: Miss Marion Meads, Miss Elizabeth Ashley and Miss Pat Clarke.

## Ian, too—



All the good artists aren't just at Birkenhead, however. Ian Foster from Clayton Square, is also a keen painter and has had some pictures picked for amateur exhibitions.

Ian has been interested in art since he was five and it was his best subject at school. Although he has not sold any of his paintings, which he does in oils, he has given many away as gifts to as far afield as Vancouver and San Francisco.

A salesman with furniture concession, Ian attends evening classes and says he finds painting relaxing.

### In Common

Birkenhead is no exception. In common with the Paris district of Montmartre, with its picturesque cobbled streets and outdoor cafes, Birkenhead, though less good-looking, has an artists' "colony". It's at T. J. Hughes.

The three principal picture-makers are Marion Meads, Elizabeth Ashley and Pat Clarke. The trio take their hobby seriously and have all been to art school, which shows in the high standard of their work.

### Scholarship

Sales manager Miss Meads started painting at school and won a scholarship to Liverpool College of Art. She likes to use charcoal and, influenced by her favourite artists, Van Gogh, Monet and Gauguin, she has produced pictures which have been displayed at a number of private exhibitions.

Display girl Miss Clarke won a place at Southport College of Art, after passing her GCE "O" level Art, but decided to make her career in display and has worked

at Blackpool and London Road. She likes drawing landscapes in pen and ink.

Sales supervisor Mrs. Ashley is the longest-serving member of the creative trio, having worked at Birkenhead since the store opened 12 years ago. But she is a newcomer to painting which she started only two years ago, while she was convalescing from a long illness.

She attends Birkenhead Art School for one night a week. Her husband insisted, because he wasn't getting his supper when she practised her hobby every evening!

## Hobbies Exhibition



About 50 exhibits, including sculptures, paintings, home-made wine and cakes, were displayed at an Arts, Crafts and Hobbies Exhibition in the training room at London Road organised by the store's social group. Chairman Mrs. Joan Holstead says it is planned to hold the event every year. The group has contributed over £30 to the Cottage Homes this year as a result of increased activities.

## Perfumery Buyer for over 22 years

Most men buy cosmetics only on special occasions and then only for their wives or girl friends. But Mr. Myers Roberts has been buying them for over 22 years—for all the Owen Owen and T. J. Hughes stores.

Mr. Roberts, who retired on March 30, had been group central perfumery buyer since August, 1949 and had worked for Owen Owen for nearly 35 years. His job was to buy cosmetics and toilet goods from all the leading suppliers for the group—mainly new lines which, depending on if they sold well or not, would then be taken up by the stores' own sales managers.

### Coventry

Mr. Roberts started at Coventry as a member of the store's display staff back in 1937, when it was opened, and was in the city the night the store was destroyed by German bombs. As staff officer with the Coventry Emergency Services, he was in the thick of the heartbreak operations following the blitz and worked round the clock for several days, taking the injured to hospitals outside the city.

Later he joined the RAF as a nursing orderly and served in India and Burma. He went back to his old job in June 1946 and was made a department manager three months later. He had charge of



seven departments, one of which was perfumery.

In 1949 he was asked to take over from Miss Holmes as central perfumery buyer based in Liverpool.

Married for 31 years, Mr. Roberts met his wife, Beatrice, during the war at the No. 6 first aid post in Centaur Road, Coventry. She later became his secretary with the emergency services. They have two daughters Mavis (25) and Diane (29), who is married with two sons.

Mr. Roberts is fond of reading and classical music, and used to be a dab hand at chess, a talent which he passed on to his daughter, Mavis, who in 1964 was invited to play at the Liverpool Chess Congress. "She could beat me easily now," sighed Mr Roberts.



◀ Watch out Liverpool, Clayton Square have formed a football team! Although for the time being they will be playing only friendly matches, next season they hope to enter the Business Houses League.

They have already played a few games and Bill Shankly is reported to be watching their progress. But we can reveal there's no truth in the rumour that Clayton Square have offered £5 for Ian Callaghan.

## THEY GET A KICK FROM SOCCER



Left to right (back row); David Hunt, Michael Flanigan, Allan Leap, Michael Foster, Peter McRae and James Langley. Front row: John Jones, Gerard Gallagher, David Middleton, Daniel Goudie and Christopher Fitton.



After a disappointing start, Southampton's soccer stars have found their feet and had a good season of friendly matches against local stores and groups. Their record at the time of going to Press was: played 21, won 12, lost 6. Goals: For 98, against 48.

In the picture: Back row: J. Joice, R. Miller, S. Lakeman, J. McCarthy, T. Rolfe, M. White, R. Baker and T. Noice. Front row: G. Smith, D. Rowe (capt.), C. Morgan, J. Edwards and M. Pascoe. The team's coach and secretary, Roy Dawson, is a painter.

## Fashion show at Coventry

Over 600 people attended a charity fashion show at the Leofric Hotel, Coventry, in aid of the Holy Trinity Church restoration fund.

The event was organised by the Coventry store, who displayed a wide range of Owen Owen and fashion lease merchandise, and put on a raffle and tombola. Canon Lawrence Jackson, who opened the show spoke warmly about the friendly ties between the store and the church, and general manager, Mr. P. J. F. O'Ryan replied to the Canon's speech.

▲ There are two pairs of brothers in the Coventry team, seen here kitted out and rarin' to go led by centre-forward Dave Cheyne. Back row: Tom Balcarris, Alan Parker, Simon Weclawek, Rick Strain, Ron Lewis and Jim Balcarris. Front row: Alf Dry, Yan Weclawek, Dave Cheyne, John Quinn and Nigel McKinnon.



Winners in a salesmanship contest at London Road (from the left): Miss C. Jones, perfumery; Mr. S. Kingsley, carpets; Miss E. Fraser, dresses.