



# SCENE

SUMMER 1981

## CHALLENGING YEAR - BUT PROFITS UP

GROUP profit before taxation for the 53 weeks ended 31st January, 1981, was just ahead of the previous year's total, and was earned after absorbing pre-opening expenses and initial trading losses in the new stores at Redditch and in Kitchener, Ontario.

"In the circumstances" wrote the Chairman, Mr. J.A.H. Norman, in his annual statement to shareholders, "we feel it was a very satisfactory outcome to a difficult year when consumer spending fell in real terms. It was achieved only with the most strenuous efforts to reduce costs and improve productivity at all levels of the business and I would like to thank management and staff for their contributions".

The pre-tax sales and profit figures were as shown in the panel on the right.

### U.K. STORES

While total U.K. store sales increased by 9.1%, the increase excluding the new Redditch store sales, was limited to 6.6%, not a high level against the rate of inflation and the reason why a stringent control of expenses had had to be exercised throughout the year.

Effort has continued to be directed to achieving a better profit mix in our merchandise assortments and to simplify procedures in distribution, in accounting systems and in the supply of computer-based management information. It has proved to be a slow and difficult process but we can see the prospect of a more efficient and profitable business as the results of this work begin to show.

The company's future strategy must lie in the development of larger units where the maintenance and better display of a wider, competitive range of goods can be combined with satisfactory service to customers. It is in this context that we view the latest stores in Redditch and Basingstoke, each of which will be the focal point in large pedestrian shopping centres, with easy access and ample car parking facilities.

### CANADA

The Canadian profit of £573,000 showed an excellent recovery on the previous year. All established

	53 weeks to January 1981	53 weeks to January 1980	Inc./Dec.	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
<i>Sales</i>				
U.K. stores	82,681	75,782	+ 6,899	+ 9.1
Canadian stores	26,204	24,962	+ 1,242	+ 5.0
Plumb Contracts	9,310	6,409	+ 2,901	+ 45.3
	<u>118,195</u>	<u>107,153</u>	+ <u>11,042</u>	+ <u>10.3</u>
<i>Pre-tax Profit</i>				
U.K. stores	1,555	1,885	- 330	- 17.5
Canadian stores	573	329	+ 244	+ 74.2
Plumb Contracts	487	369	+ 118	+ 32.0
	<u>2,615</u>	<u>2,583</u>	+ <u>32</u>	+ <u>1.2</u>

stores contributed to this better performance.

Since the end of the financial year, the partnership with the Hudson's Bay Company in the ownership of Robinson's has been terminated. The decision to buy back the 49.9% shareholding was taken only after the most careful consideration of the alternative courses open to us.

Robinson's profits, which have fallen since 1976, are projected to move upwards again as the severity of the drag from new store openings lessens. We therefore felt justified in accepting the financial and human strains which might result in the short term from the increased commitment involved in a return to 100% ownership of the business. This view was shared by the Canadian executive management team which, under Mr. Dakin's leadership, has remained unchanged for nearly twenty years.

The growth from two to nine stores in the space of nine years is a remarkable story. That it was achieved without inhibiting a similar pattern of growth of Owen Owen stores in the U.K. has been due to the support of our Hudson's Bay partners and I would like to record our appreciation to their representatives who were members of the Robinson's board since 1972.

### PLUMB CONTRACTS

Plumb's have produced another sparkling performance with increased sales and profits satisfactorily diversified over a broader customer base than hitherto and with continuing growth in the new furnishing division.

The Plumb management now have a stiff challenge ahead of them to maintain the present level of activity during a time of recession.

### THE CURRENT YEAR

Speaking to shareholders at the Annual General Meeting held on 11th June, 1981, the Chairman said:

"At the end of the first quarter, the established stores in the U.K. and Canada showed a small improvement in operating results over the same period last year, despite a lower contribution from the T.J. Hughes group on Merseyside.

"The two stores in Redditch and Kitchener, Ontario, which opened in August 1980, have incurred the expected initial trading losses with sales levels as yet insufficient to meet fixed costs, not the least of which is interest charged on the capital investment.

"We expect this pattern to continue during the remainder of the first half with the improvement in the established stores being sustained, but being more than offset by the losses of the two new stores.

"As indicated in my statement, Plumb's are presently having a difficult time although the prospect is beginning to look a bit brighter for later in the year.

"Shareholders will be well aware that the result published at the half way stage is rarely a reliable guide to the full year's performance because in our particular sector of retailing, the volume of sales and profit is so much weighted to the final quarter.

"The current year is unlikely to be any exception and we see no reason why the established parts of the business should not continue to improve. The overall result will, of course, be affected by the costs of financing the development programme which, I may remind you, includes the two additional major stores opening this autumn in Basingstoke and on the Hamilton Mountain in Canada.

## HOW THEY WON THEIR 'GOLD'



● THE Chairman's prize, a gold Omega watch has been awarded to catering Director, Mr. M.D. Lloyd.

Mr. Lloyd, pictured with the Chairman, is responsible for the catering operation in all stores and offices; the retail food departments in Coventry and Chester and the cigarette kiosks in the stores.



● PICTURED receiving gold Parker pen and pencil sets for achievements in the buying field are Miss Bernadette Mulholland, T.J. Hughes's Resident Buyer, and Miss Krystyna Eitner, Owen Owen Central Buyer. Miss Eitner has responsibilities for haberdashery and stationery and Miss Mulholland buys for the lingerie and some of the fashion accessories departments.



The Walter Gittings Security Shield has this year been awarded to the Security Department in T.J.'s, London Road.

● Mr. Bernard Creswell, Security Manager (pictured here) accepted the shield on behalf of the department from the Chairman at the annual staff meeting earlier this year. Each member of the winning team received a pen and pencil set.

The team has recovered about £7,000 worth of stock and in many instances have been faced with difficult situations that have required tact, diplomacy and courage, said Personnel Director Mrs. Stella Adams.

"As well as covering the store to deter and detain shoplifters the team cover security for the whole complex - Stafford House and Audley House. "No one person can be singled out from a group of people who essentially work as a team", said Mrs. Adams.

# RETIREMENTS



## How can you retire when you look 39?

WHEN news of Miss Ona Moulding's retirement was made known a colleague at Liverpool decided that the best way to express how he felt was to write a poem about her.

Miss Moulding joined the company in February 1948 as a trainee with T.J. Hughes' and in June of the same year was appointed staff trainer.

In August 1959 she became senior staff trainer, this time with Owen Owen and seven years later was appointed group training controller.

In February 1975 she became management services controller and eight months later was appointed director of management services, Owen Owen (Stores) Limited.

Although Miss Moulding retired at the beginning of the year she retains a close connection with the board as a non-executive director.

Miss Moulding was awarded the Chairman's Prize for 1969 for her work on the training of decimalisation. Here Mr. David Rennison, Resident Buyer, (pictured left with Ona) describes her as 'The Indefatigable Moulding — in a Nutshell'.

She came up through the ranks — like a thro-bred horse,  
Then as head of group training ran course after course,  
Everyone in the joint Got her decimal point  
But when she turned us metric! She had to use force.

When challenges came she just couldn't resist 'em  
One was mountains of paper which bunged up our system  
Of forms once abundant She made half redundant  
And after she'd done it all! No beggar missed 'em.

Some speakers were a dreadful bore  
They'd drone on for an hour or more

Mutt'ring their figures  
Midst numerous niggers  
You would hear an occasional snore.

She seemed relaxed and never tense  
With her Moulding ring of confidence

We'd listen with awe  
Often clamour for more  
As she plied us with sound common sense.

Of management services, they made her top tutor  
The managers moaned, "She'll not cope, It won't suit her"  
And just six weeks later  
Without any data  
She'd taught all it knows to the bloody computer.

We've all got a feeling that's hard to define  
P'raps our business without her may suffer decline  
After thirty three years  
Of blood, sweat and tears  
How can you retire, when you look thirty nine?



Mr. Arthur Greenly, Sales Manager menswear department, (pictured) enjoyed a double celebration recently, thanks to big-hearted colleagues at Kidderminster.

They organised a surprise party at the Mitre Oak, Kidderminster, to mark his 65th birthday and his retirement after more than 15 years with the company.

Eighty-five members of staff and management were present, including many former colleagues.

The company and store presented Mr. Greenly with radio/cassette.



Mrs. Judy Holtom, Invoice Office Supervisor in T.J. Hughes, London Road, retired from the company after 34 years' service. She joined us in 1946 as a clerk in the receiving room.

As a tribute to Mrs. Holtom, colleague Mrs. E. Burnell wrote a poem entitled "Well Done, Judy".

For more than thirty years you've given your service — loyal and true,

And many are the tributes, which we warmly pay to you.  
You've worked with diligence and pride — you've always done your best,

And you — with flying colours — have passed each single test.  
You've never dodged an issue, or left queries 'on the shelf',  
Not a minute have you wasted — you have never spared yourself.  
Meticulous and eager — conscientious — true as steel,  
Prepared at all times to help out, with eagerness and zeal.  
No-one has been more faithful — and thanks are surely due,  
To a tireless, selfless worker dear 'Judy', such as you.

And now you've truly earned the right to take an easy chair,  
And watch the busy world go by, without a single care.  
In the years which lie before you, may you have a lot of fun,  
Ever happy in the knowledge of a job of work well done.



● A continental quilt and covers were among the gifts Mrs. Jean Crowe received when she retired from Clayton Square cash office in March. Mrs. Crowe, pictured with General Manager Mr. Tom Brent, joined the store in 1963.



● Miss Dorothy Furness has retired after completing 27 years' service as supervisor/store detective with Clayton Square in March. She's pictured receiving a pearl necklace — a gift from the company — from General Manager Mr. Tom Brent together with the store gift, presented by Mrs. Thelma Morgan, staff committee representative.



Mr. John Morris (centre) said goodbye to friends and colleagues in Bootle Centre when he retired as manager of the central broadloom stockroom recently.

Mr. Morris joined the company straight from school in 1934 as a floor boy in T.J. Hughes.

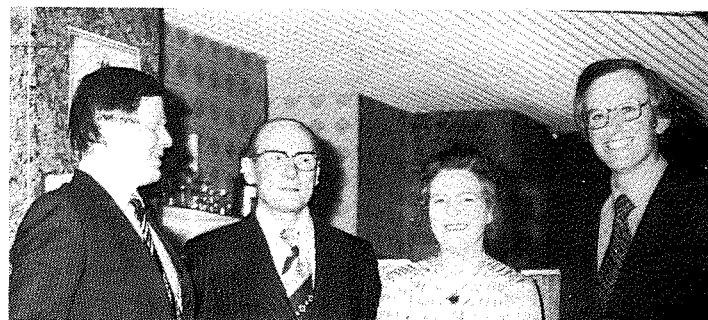
He held portering and driving posts and later became a despatch supervisor.

He was appointed manager of St. Annes Street warehouse in 1961 and later moved to Bootle Centre with stockroom responsibilities for Clayton Square and T.J.'s.

Among the gifts he received were a teasmade and workmate.



● Alfred Mitchell retired in February. Alfred, pictured with his wife Betty and Personnel Director Mrs. Stella Adams, (left) worked in the Transport Department at Bootle.



A portable television, tool box, car vacuum cleaner and a foot stool made specially by the store's maintenance men were among the gifts Mr. Ron Butcher, House Manager, received to mark his retirement after 28 years in the Bath store.

The television — a gift from the Board — was presented by Sales Controller Denis King (left). Also pictured with Mr. and Mrs. Butcher is Mr. Les Jordan, General Manager (right).

The retirement party was also attended by Area Engineer Mr. Ozzie Knights, Mr. Jim Reid and Mr. Jim Riley from the property department and two previous general managers Mr. Alan Turner from Richmond and Mr. Russell Ford from Weston-Super-Mare.

# EXCITING DEVELOPMENT IN STORE

THE COMPANY'S latest venture is to open a store in Phase II of Basingstoke Central Area Development Plan. "The opening date is scheduled to be on the 17th September 1981 and we shall then be trading alongside other nationally known names which include C. & A., Sainsbury's and Boots", said John Murden, Property Director.

Basingstoke is a town which has been developing over the years and still intends to get bigger. The quoted population is approximately 90,000 people, but with the highly developed network of motorways and trunk roads, the shopping population is estimated to be in the order of 150,000 people.

Phase 1 of the Town Centre was constructed during the 1950's, Marks & Spencer, Littlewoods, Woolworths, W.H. Smith and Tesco being housed within this earlier scheme.

Owen Owen first expressed an interest in opening a store in Phase II of the Town Centre Development in 1972. There was then a delay until 1978 before a developer was appointed and work on site commenced.

## THE STORE

The Owen Owen unit is contained within three levels of the development. At the lower level goods are received and the main stockrooms are located,

together with the staff entrance, security and cloakrooms. There is approximately 8,000 sq.ft. of selling space which will house kitchenwares, glass and china departments, together with a snack bar and hairdressing salon, on a mezzanine accessible from lower ground and ground floor.

The ground floor, with access from the main pedestrian mall, contains approximately 20,000 sq.ft. of selling space, with young fashion, fashion accessories, toiletries, jewellery, menswear, sportswear and haberdashery providing the main attractions.

"The first floor, with approximately 36,000 sq.ft. of selling space, will be the largest single floor of any store within the Group", said Property Director John Murden. The emphasis will be on ladies fashions, childrenswear, toys, gifts and household goods, but additionally there will be the restaurant, customer accounts, General Manager's Office and the staff restaurant and toilets.



Basingstoke.

## CIRCULATION

Circulation within the store will be centred on a main vertical core housing five escalators and providing an inviting approach to customers to move easily through the main point of entry to the displays of merchandise at both lower ground and first floor levels.

A car park on the roof (owned by the developer) will be the point of entry for many of our customers. There will be two lifts and a staircase serving from the car park to each of the selling floors.

Customers will be invited to move freely through the selling floors by the use of tiled walkways. Individual merchandise departments will be carpeted.

The facility to control temperature conditions within selling floors by either heating or cooling the air, linked to the facility to reclaim heat generated from the lighting and the people using the building, is designed to provide both customers and staff with a pleasant environment within which to shop and work.

Bovis Construction Limited are carrying out the contract to

fit out the shell; they have now worked with Owen Owen for over 40 years. Specialist Shop-fitting work is being undertaken by Plumb Contracts Limited and Ruppel Products Limited. Jim Reid, the Group Engineering Controller, and John MacKay, the Store Planning Manager, are busy liaising with engineers, architects, merchandise heads and many other interests, who are involved in the complex task of opening a major retail unit of this size.

The Christmas issue of Scene will include photographs of the new store.

## RETIREMENTS



Mrs. Nellie Walker from our Coventry store retired in March after 34 years' service in the catering department.

She is pictured with Mr. James Mariner, Director and General Manager of Coventry, at her retirement party.



Mrs. Alice Donald has retired after 21 years. She joined Coventry store in 1959 and moved to Wolverhampton in 1978.

The company presented her with two Royal Doulton figures and from colleagues she received a carriage clock.

Pictured are Mrs. Stella Adams, Personnel Director (left) and Mr. John Prince, General Manager.

## Good Bye Mrs Chipp



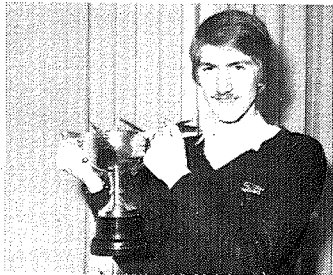
Mrs. Winifred Chipp from Stourbridge has retired after 12 years' with the company. She joined the store (then Stringers of Stourbridge) in 1969 as secretary to the general manager.

Born in Calais, France, Mrs. Chipp began her working life in Britain as a meat clerk. From here she spent four years as a Capstan operator before joining Brierley Hill Public Library where she remained until 1953 when she was appointed private secretary to the chairman of a local firm. When the company was taken over Mrs. Chipp entered the retail trade with Stringers.

Her responsibilities increased and when Owen Owen acquired the store in 1975 she became Personnel Officer.



Furniture salesman Mr. Sydney Dowding (left) from the Southampton store receives a £100 cheque from the Silent Night area representative as runner up in a Silent Night "Hollywood" prize draw.



Menswear salesman Mark Roberts from our Southampton store won a £50 prize for selling the winning suit in a Quest Club competition.

The customer, Mr. Gordon Farnworth, won £100 by identifying four cloths and completing the winning line "Quest Suits suit me because Quest suits me best".

## A PROUD PAINTER

Ian Lewis from Plumb Contracts proudly displays the British Decorating Association Cup which marked his victory in a national competition in 1980, the same year he sat the City and Guilds Advanced Craft Examination in painting and decoration which he passed with distinction.

Plumb Contracts recruit about 10 school leavers every year and to teach them the secrets of the trade. Ian joined in 1977 to begin a three-year apprenticeship followed by a six month course at night school.

# Media challenge for the

TODAY'S 'BEST SELLER'

## Owen Owen SCOOP PURCHASE of Fogarty Duck Down Quilts!

'So soft'... 'so warm!'



**BELOW  
HALF LIST PRICE!**

<p>Luxury Fogarty duck down quilts with 100% cotton down proof covering, 11.5 warmth rating for a beautiful night's sleep. All quilts are fully guaranteed and conform to the British Standards 5335.</p>	<p><b>SINGLE</b> list price <del>£84.00</del></p>	<p><b>Our Price</b> <b>£39.95</b></p>
	<p><b>DOUBLE</b> list price <del>£123.00</del></p>	<p><b>Our Price</b> <b>£59.95</b></p>
	<p><b>KING SIZE</b> list price <del>£156.00</del></p>	<p><b>Our Price</b> <b>£69.95</b></p>

Also Owen Owen budget and option account details in store.

# owen owen

Richmond, Telephone: 940 3601

## The backroom staff who bring in our customers

OWEN OWEN has never been one to hide its light under a bushel; its dynamic advertising team has seen to that.

The 12 men and women who "sell" the company nationwide are only too conscious of the need to keep The Public informed of "what's in store" if we're to keep ahead in the competitive world of retailing.

Advertising is three-pronged: It tells the customer what a store has to offer, keeps him informed of developments (sales, new lines and special promotions) and continually brings the company name to public attention.

Because of the cost of transport today the average shopper is more inclined to treat a trip into town as a cost-saving exercise rather than a regular shopping spree so in this respect advertising is vital if firstly the store is to tempt her in and secondly secure her custom.

The brains behind Owen Owen advertising are based in the Liverpool headquarters, Stafford House, which also happens to be the nerve centre for the group's communications, a vital part of the advertising programme.

It's from here that Group Media Planning and Accounts Manager Vi Calvert tackles the daunting task of preparing the budget for advertising for the 22 stores. Working to a figure laid down by the board — approximately £¼ million a year (which also covers running the department) — she assesses the requirements of each store, decides how she thinks it should be spent and what the cost and associated costs of advertising will be for any one six month period, before submitting her proposals to Mr. Eric Hodges, Director of Store Operations.

### PLANNING

Usually she knows when any major events are forthcoming and which merit special attention, so she breaks the budget down to give adequate cover for each store in the group.

Major events like the Home Time Gala (for people who like to beautify their homes) and the twice yearly sales are obvious advertising material but much depends on the size of the store and the lines they carry.

Having decided what form the budget will take for each month in the half year Vi then has to prepare the monthly sales promotion calendar which advises the stores of the updated position of the promotional plan.

The object is to give the stores complete detailed information for the planning of any one month. It carries for example the sales figures comparison on the previous year, the cost of the advertising programme for the month and the individual adverts day by day, week by week. In effect a general manager can glance at the sheet and know immediately what his store is promoting that particular week.

"We don't produce individual programmes for each store; they are tailored to meet the needs of the group. We do what we term 'one-offs' for one or two stores which might have a problem in their area, perhaps a difficulty on sales, when we bring into the programme additional adverts to give support in the areas they need, so we do have to be flexible", explained Vi.

The stores are given six months notice of pending promotions, the information for which is constantly updated with the sales promotion calendar.

Once the media decisions have been reached Eleanor Jones and her team take over. Working to Vi's budget specifications Eleanor decides on the size of each store's advertisement (the larger stores naturally take the biggest adverts) and from here she goes on to meet the three buying heads who produce what is termed a write-up form which carries a list of the stock they want to promote. The best promotional merchandise is selected for Mr. Hodges' approval.

Once the big volume lines are determined the next step is to prepare the advertisement content sheet which is a summary of what lines will be carried in the advert. Each store receives a copy so that its general manager knows what merchandise will be featured (a copy also goes to the company's advertising agency Brunnings of Manchester) and attached will be a copy script detailing the goods. The three regional warehouses are also advised so that they can process the stock in advance.

Brunnings will already have been advised on how the

• Total cost of the promotion of this advertisement was £9,200 — but it paid off.

# dynamic Liverpool team



● Keeping the customer informed. Owen Owen's advertising team, left to right, (front row): Jann Buckley, Vi Calvert, Liz Bradbury, Dot Rowe, Jeanne Graham, Sylvia Brimage, Carol Ackland and Eleanor Jones. (Back row): Harry Maddocks, Richard Tankard and Les Brownrigg.

company feel the merchandise should be presented and which major lines to build on, and their task at this point is to prepare a visual (a rough layout) which when completed will give Eleanor a better idea of how it will look when it goes to print.

A trained eye should spot not only spelling mistakes at this point. With the ever changing trading standards the company has to watch out for anything which may contravene the Trades Description Act. Some mistakes — or literals as they're referred to in the newspaper trade — do occasionally slip through, sometimes at the company's expense. If a company inadvertently advertises an item at £2.99 instead of the correct £22.99 it could be faced with problems. If they withdraw the item from sale they could still be prosecuted under the Trades Descriptions Act and even if they go ahead and sell it at the reduced price the matter may not rest there if the customer chooses to take the issue further.

The stores themselves book the space required for their particular advert and once it has appeared they give a feedback to central office, forwarding the cutting with a record of how much was taken that day.

The cost of newspaper advertising space is constantly increasing. It is only by negotiating special discounts that we are able to maintain the volume of space required to meet our promotional plans — and not overspend the budget!

For example, the gross cost of buying one single column centimetre of space for the Owen Owen group across all newspapers in March, 1980 was £46.25 and in March, 1981 — £58.16, that's a 25.75 per cent

## Operation is geared to improve efficiency

increase! Then, of course, the cost of producing the advertisement has to be added, that is why advertising space is at a premium and why the selection of merchandise to be advertised is so important.

To give some idea of the response advertising can produce we selected one particularly successful promotion for the luxury Fogarty duck down quilt, a group wide advertisement (week ending 21.2.81).

The cost of newspaper space and production = £9,200. Sales results over ten days = £140,000.

The introduction of telex machines — and a tele-copier which transmits printed material, a valuable asset to the advertising department — saves considerable time and money. With the development of centralisation the department now stands as the nerve centre for our communications, housing the central unit for the group's private telex system.

In times of emergency Eleanor can summon a print out relating to an advert she's working on within four to six minutes, whereas before she relied on the post and if a weekend was looming she'd probably have to wait until the following Monday before tackling the problem.

Newspaper advertisements (radio and television have become rather expensive platforms from which to inform the public and are used selec-

tively) are an essential retailing aid but the secret of successful advertising doesn't end with the printed matter.

Within the store themselves there has to be a suitable and identifiable display to catch the shopper's eye.

Point of sale material must reflect what the company is advertising otherwise the exercise is incomplete. A recognisable logo (photographic tickets are now very much in evidence throughout the group) should support all advertised lines.

### BEST TACTIC

It's this area which comes under the watchful eye of Display and Design Co-ordinator Richard Tankard. He ensures that all stores present the merchandise to its best advantage using point of sale material selected by the central office. The combined efforts of advertising and display work will ensure that what the customer sees in the paper will be immediately recognised in the store.

"In effect we are putting it on a plate for the customer", said Richard — and basically that's the best tactic of all.

The aim of the total sales promotion operation at both central and store level is being constantly geared to improve efficiency.

Explained Director of Store Operations Eric Hodges: "Last year, despite massive increases in media and service-costs, the company was able to operate an aggressive sales promotion programme over the following three areas: advertising, in store display and sales promotion discounts at a saving in excess of £100,000 on the previous year's costs. A great deal of credit for this improvement in efficiency rests with our central advertising team".

## HOW IT STARTED

IN JUNE 1923

# Owen Owens

## 325 RAINCOATS

Specially Low Prices for this collection—a discount purchase from the manufacturer.

**NEXT MONDAY**



Well-tailored Coats in Gaberdine, fawn shot effects, including several well-known guaranteed makes. As illustration and swing style.

Price **49/11**

Jap Silk Rubber-lined Coats, extremely light in weight. Adaptable collars, pockets, and belts. Navy, grey, and brown.

Price **39/11**



Price **29/11**



Price **18/11**



Rubber Coats, saxe or navy with white line, also similar style in fawn, light in weight, rubber-lined.

Price **15/11**

Price **49/11**

Odd Samples in Gaberdine, some navy, trimmed braid as illustration, navy and colours with collars and contrast, and fawns lined check.

Price **29/11**

Proofed Twill Coats, three shades, fawn, check-lined. Tailored pockets, storm collars and belts. Good wearing quality.

Price **18/11**

Coats in good hard-wearing Twill, fawn and brown shades, with belts and without, several styles in collars.

Price **12/11**

### 5/11 Hat Values

Several shapes in Canton Pedal, all season's colours, trimmed satin ribbon.



Silk Crinoline Shapes

Black, White, Cream, Champ, Beige, Mole, Copper, Havana, Nigger, and navy.

5/11

### SPARKLING DRINKS at a moment's notice

#### SPARKLET SYPHONS

For making aerated water at home. Simply unscrew the siphon head, fill the bottle to the line with cold water, replace the head, screw down a sparklet bulb and shake. Quart size is most useful. Complete with six bulbs. Price **10/6** One dozen bulbs for recharging 3/6. See them demonstrated at Owen Owens daily, next week.



### UNMADE JUMPERS

Cut from our renowned all silk Schappe Crepe de Chine.

7/11

Front embroidered dainty design; neck, sleeves and basque scalloped and finished in silk. Cut full to allow adjustment to almost any figure. Yet so simply sew the side seams to complete the jumper. Colours: Pink, Rose, Turquoise, Jade, Tan, Grey, Lemon, Salmon, Mauve, Ivory, Coral.



### BARGAINS in the Basement

Raincoats for men. Fawn twill, rubber-lined, storm collar, slip pockets, belts. **12/6**

White Cooking Aprons, with bib and pocket, soft linen finish. **2/3½**

Matting for Kitchen Hearths, camps, or bungalows. Blue, red, or green with fawn. Size 66 ins. by 36 ins. **7/6** bound each end

Post Orders Promptly and Carefully Attended.

**OWEN OWEN, LTD., LONDON ROAD, LIVERPOOL.**

● How fashions have changed — and look at these prices!

# LEN HAS THE TECHNOLOGY

MANAGEMENT Services Controller Len Foster's job may sound extremely complicated, but it's one that he has successfully mastered.

On leaving school, he started his career as a trainee Quantity Surveyor but after eighteen months an opportunity arose to train as a computer programmer and, although he knew little of what the job entailed, he looked upon it as an opportunity "to get in on the ground floor" of a young and emerging industry. This was back in 1965, just about the time Owen Owen were installing their first computer at Bootle Centre.

"I have never regretted the move into computers; there is an immense challenge in putting one's wits against a machine and getting it to do what you want. Even though most of my time is now taken up with managing the department and liaising with other sections of the company, I still enjoy the chance to do some programming and deal with some of the technical matters which arise daily.

"There have been many changes in the department since I first joined the company particularly

**Meet a man who has got his job 'taped'**

over the six years. Six years ago we were processing seventeen miles (!) of paper taper per week over the Christmas period from Sweda cash registers. Now that point-of-sale terminals have replaced the cash registers, the sales from all of our stores are transmitted in four hours over telephone lines each night.

"I have a very experienced management team supporting me with Alf Rowley as Computer Development Manager looking at new systems and equipment; Jim

O'Gorman as Systems and Programming Manager; Jim Wafer as Operations Manager and Joan Hostead who looks after much of the liaison with stores, particularly involving point-of-sale terminals.

In 1972 Mr. Foster was appointed as Systems Analyst, liaising between the computer section and the outside departments; finding out what they required and translating that into computer programmes suitable to be run on the computers.

In 1974 he was appointed Systems and Programming Manager responsible for all the development of computer systems from programming to designing and implementing systems.

Mr. Foster was appointed Data Processing Manager in 1978, running the whole of the computer operation and also responsible for the computer operators and data preparation personnel.

"Management Services encompasses more than just the computer department. I am working now with the stores and the distribution centres — the major developments centre around distribution", he said.

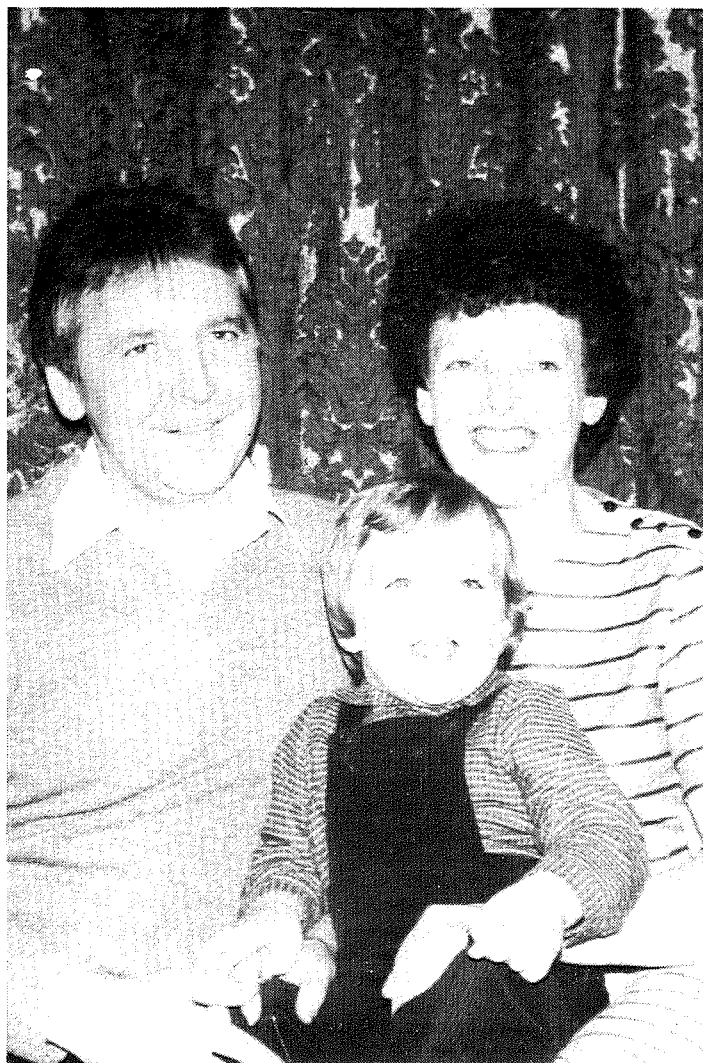
## HOBBIES

Despite Mr. Foster's complex work life he also is a happy family man with his fair share of hobbies.

He, his wife Margaret, and their two-year-old son Stuart, have made their home in Roby, Lancashire.

Mr. Foster is a member of Liverpool Cricket Club and enjoys playing squash and tennis. Although he enjoys participating in sport his major love is watching football. He is a season ticket holder at Goodison Park and can be seen cheering his team Everton at every home game.

"I've been watching Everton for quite a few years now; Saturday afternoons aren't the same without them", he admitted. And one of his hopes for the coming season is that the players who wear the royal blue jerseys will finally carry off a major award.



● Len Foster relaxing at home with his family.

"I've been waiting a long time to see my team win a major trophy and I just hope next season will be the one in which they do it. We've had two good F.A. cups runs in the last two seasons, so I don't see why next year cannot be our year".

A recent hobby Mr. Foster has just embarked on is cinephotography, still at the experimental stage, he says.

Mr. Foster recalls several incidents during his time at Owen Owen but one particular event sprang to mind.

"As more and more of the various functions within the company had come to rely on the computer for storing and processing information, it had become vital that a strict security control and contingency plan was formalised.

"So much of the information related to the company's business was put on reels of magnetic tape, rather than on paper, that it was essential to ensure the information was secure and could be recreated should a disaster occur.

"Such a disaster did happen in August 1978. It tested our contingency plan to the full. A fault developed in the computer room air conditioning system. Actually, it was a Sunday when the room was empty, and it flooded the computer room with steam and condensation. The problem came to light when water was spotted falling from the ground floor ceiling of the London Road store.

"The computer was out of action for a week but the contingency plan held good and no information was lost and the essential processing, such as the payroll, was carried out on another computer. We have a reciprocal back-up agreement with them over matters like that.

"When our own computer had dried out it was a case of working around the clock for the computer to make up the backlog", he said.

"I can't see anything like that happening again but if it does — we'll cope", said a confident Mr. Foster.



● Doris with the Dunkirk Award.

## Award brings happy memories for Doris

THE smile says it all for Mrs. Doris Crouch.

The medal she holds was presented on behalf of her husband Robert who died over 14 years ago.

The Dunkirk Award, specially commissioned for the French for those who took part in the 1940 battle only became available to former British Servicemen in 1970, three years after Mr. Crouch's death.

In an interview with a local paper Mrs. Crouch, who works on the small electrical department in London Road said: "I cried

my heart out when I received the medal in the post . . . I was so proud.

"It brought back all my memories from that day in 1940 after he had been rescued from Dunkirk and I went to meet him at St. Helen's station".

Mrs. Crouch said she was giving the medal pride of place among the several wartime decorations her husband had received.

● Picture by courtesy of South Lancs. Newspapers Picture Service.

## COTTAGE HOMES

# A CHARITY THAT BEGINS 'AT HOME' . . .

If you are about to retire, or have retired, then read on . . .

The Linen and Woollen Drapers' Cottage Homes is the retirement home for people who have worked 25 years in the retail clothing, shoe and department store trades. From the time Cottage Homes was founded in the 19th century it was firmly believed that the concept of

• In this article we look at the contribution of the Cottage Homes in providing retired people in the retail trade with a permanent home.

total care was the right way of looking after retired people.

The Cottage Homes look after 500 people on its three estates; the largest is in North London at Mill Hill, the second is at Derby and the third is south of Glasgow at

Crookfur, Newton Mearns.

Those who enter the Cottage Homes as residents are provided with a self-contained cottage or flat where they look after themselves without interference, but with the knowledge that help and support is always available.

On each estate there is a fully-equipped nursing wing with qualified staff giving a 24-hour service. Residents enter the wing either temporarily until they are nursed back to health or permanently should the incapacity be more chronic. Only in the case of an operation or really severe illness need anyone leave the Cottage Homes and then they return to be cared for as soon as possible.

The Cottage Homes also provides financial assistance for those who are not resident. This particularly applies these days when nursing homes fees are so expensive.

There is a waiting list for admission so early applications are appreciated. These are accepted from a year before you are due to retire.

The charity is a trade benevolent organisation which serves members of the trade of both sexes, who have been employed in a retail drapery, women's wear, children's wear or men's wear establishment, department store or wholesale warehouse for the distribution of such goods.

The board of management may also help those who are similarly employed on the distribution side in a manufacturing business, supplying the above retail or wholesale establishments. The charity also assists the widows of those similarly employed.

### VACANCY

Applications for residence should be sent to the Secretary of the Cottage Homes at Hammers Lane, Mill Hill, London, NW7 4EE. Applications can be received from married couples where the husband has been employed in the trade, from widowed or single women who have themselves been in the trade, or from widows of members of the trade. Men who are on their own can be considered for residence at the Leyland's Estate in Derby.

No application for residence can be considered unless the applicant has been in the distributive section of the trade; is judged in financial need by the Cottage Homes and Relief Committee; is over 65 years of age (women 60) or has retired after more than 25 years' in the trade.

If the committee accepts an application, the applicant will be informed when a vacancy occurs. The medical officer of the Cottage Homes will examine the prospective resident to ensure that in the first instance he or she is fit and capable of running a home. People reaching the age of 70 may apply if still employed in the trade.

## Total care for life - that's the promise



• Mrs. Maisie Mildred Long.

MRS. MAISIE Mildred Long lives at 117 Chalet at Mill Hill. She was born in Kentish Town on November 11, 1902.

The eldest of five children, Maisie remembers well her father's health being greatly affected, like so many men during the First World War, by being gassed while on active service. Nevertheless, a happy family atmosphere ensued during the time she attended Gt. College Street School and it was during the Great War that she left school at the age of 14 to go out to work.

Maisie's first experience of work was at Cawdell's in Grays Inn Road, a firm of surgical instrument-makers.

### WIDOWED

Following there, she was employed by Hart's, the China and Glass people but, it was at Pugh's in the Holloway Road where she met her husband-to-be, Ernest Long, and married him.

After the first year of marriage, a daughter was born to Maisie and Ernest and a son three years afterwards, and their family seemed complete. Then sadly, at the age of 35, Maisie was widowed and, with the help of her mother with whom she decided to live, she began the daunting task of bringing up two young children, aged only 7 and 10.

Maisie's working life began in earnest with a family to support and she joined Selfridges in 1933, staying for sixteen years, so these

years spanned the London Blitz of the Second World War, when she remembers fire watching duties, equally vivid are her memories of Mr. Gordon Selfridge dressed in top hat and tails - a very impressive sight.

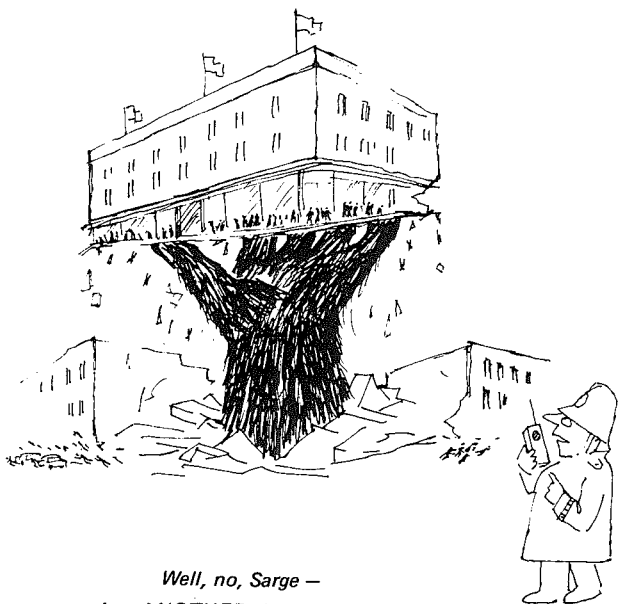
She then joined Prior's, later to become Owen Owen, in North Finchley and she cannot speak highly enough of the years she spent there. For 18 years she was with them as a buyer in the China and Glass Section, and has a special mention for Mr. John Norman who, she said, treated her always extremely well, and she was very sorry indeed when the time came to retire from the firm.

She applied to the Cottage Homes, was accepted and arrived in July, 1967, where to this day she keeps a very attractive home.

Maisie, very assuringly in her own words, explained the freedom from worry, as well as the care and peace she experiences at the Cottage Homes. She mentioned two colleagues from Owen Owen, who are at the Leylands Estate - Miss Ellis and Miss Fisher.

With your help we can maintain this for her and others like her in the retiring years, and uphold the promise TOTAL CARE FOR LIFE . . . a promise given to all 500 of the three Estates at London, Derby and Glasgow.

## CARTOON CORNER



Well, no, Sarge -  
not just ANOTHER shoplifter . . .

## RESTAURANT

★★★★ FIVE STAR SERVICE



Taking a break from their studies is a party of newly appointed managers (and those with longer experience) who attended a three day sales management course at Stafford House. Pictured (top row, left to right) are: Mr. John Wishman, Clayton Square; Mr. Simon Hewes, Preston; Mrs. Carmela Eaton, Coventry; Miss Pamela McCartney, Clayton Square; Mr. Neil Michaelson, Uxbridge; Mrs. Pamela Winstanley, Preston; Miss Linda Kinnon, Slough; Miss June Hutchinson, Slough; Mr. Gary Higley, Kidderminster and Mr. Ken Stewart, Chester.

Front row, left to right: Mrs. Wendy Cropper, London Road; Mrs. Betty Fischer, Finchley; Miss Brenda Gibson, Chester; Mrs. Lesley Rowland-Jones, Coventry and Mrs. Maureen Pearce, Newport.

# A bargain in store

## ... THAT'S THE PROUD BOAST OF T.J.'s

IN 1912, using his £150 savings, T.J. Hughes opened a draper's shop in a predominantly working class area of Liverpool. He established a reputation for offering value for money and business was good.

Nearly 70 years later that principle still stands. T.J.'s prices are low, lower than anywhere else it is fervently claimed, but the irony is that Joe Public is often as suspicious of a bargain as he is resentful of paying through the nose.

Admittedly the regular customers — like the lady from Wales who buys all her children's socks from London Road's T.J.'s — know when they are on to a good thing, but for the uninitiated the name T.J. Hughes is not always greeted with the enthusiasm it deserves.

T.J.'s is an example of why you shouldn't judge a book by its cover. It doesn't carry exotic fixtures or shagpile carpets to woo the unsuspecting window shopper into the store for the simple reason that if it did T.J.'s could not maintain its policy of keeping prices down.

The story of T.J.'s began in the early 1920's when Owen Owen occupied what is now T.J.'s, London Road. Mr. Hughes had already opened his shop in the same road.

When Owen Owen moved to Clayton Square the company intended to sell the London Road premises but it was unable to do so and the building became something of a burden, added to the fact that there was several thousand square feet of selling space going to waste.

Mr. Duncan Norman (chairman at that time) had been impressed by Mr. Hughes' busy little draper's shop. The two men struck up a friendship and before long they formed a limited company with the opening of T.J. Hughes in London Road.

The business initially occupied just the front of the building but within two years it had expanded into a full-scale department store. Mr.



● The T.J.'s team, left to right: Phil Griffiths, General Manager of the Birkenhead store, René Priest, General Manager at Bootle Strand; Henry Cotton, Buying Director; Nick Arnott, Sales Promotion Manager. Seated: Peter Fleming, Director and General Manager of Liverpool's T.J. Hughes.

Hughes once again based his success on offering value for money; merchandise at very keen prices in relation to its quality.

Two years before his death at the age of 43 he persuaded Owen Owen to buy his share.

The company changed the management structure but retained the policy that had made Mr. Hughes so successful.

The secret then behind the three successful T.J. stores — including Bootle and Birkenhead — is quality merchandise for almost silly prices, (quality is never debased in order to get a better price) and of course regular advertising.

Since London Road is just outside the city centre store it is essential that shoppers know exactly what to expect if they travel the extra distance.

Although a well-established part of the Owen Owen group T.J.'s operates on a very different policy. Owen Owen's business is based on regular or planned merchandise which, like other big stores, are basic and repeatable lines. T.J.'s on the other hand bases its operation on special purchases. Buyers are always on the look out for a manufacturer who produces too much of a particular line or gambles on a line that doesn't come off. If they consider that the merchandise is up to the required quality and will sell at a price the tough negotiating starts.

Towards the end of last year T.J.'s made a purchase of several thousand leotards. One customer put an order in for 50, she eventually left with 100 having paid 99 pence a piece. In all 6,000 leotards were sold.

Another success story followed in February when the Liverpool store took delivery of a number of dresses to be sold for £4.99. £1,000 was taken on the first day when shoppers learnt that yet another bargain was there for the taking. One minute the store had been relatively quiet and then quite suddenly there was a crowd round the rails like bees round a honey pot.

Buying Director Henry Cotton's enthusiasm for T.J.'s merchandise is catching to say the least, but it's an enthusiasm based on his confidence in the operation.

"We don't spend as much money on interior display and display equipment as the city centre stores, we put our money into advertising because we have to attract people up London Road.

"The point is if you are giving value for money the customer is prepared to put up with his surroundings as long as he gets a bargain he can sing about".

"We don't mind seconds but we won't buy shoddy goods just to make a low price", said Mr. Fleming.

### TURNOVER

T.J.'s don't deal entirely in distressed merchandise. If a line is worth having it will find its way into the store, like the home wine concentrate for 99 pence or the jogging suits purchased in Nottingham and selling for £11.99.

"Very often we will buy something that doesn't have a complete size or colour range and we know we can't repeat it. We sell out meanwhile looking for something else to fill the gap. Our aim is for a very fast turnover and we try to keep stocks low and turn it over many times".

It isn't unusual for a customer to purchase 10 dresses at a time because of the low prices. It's even better when Owen Owen buyers shop there because it only goes to confirm that the T.J. policy is working — and yes, it happens often.

Added Mr. Fleming: "Our staff are as important to our success as the goods we sell. Without their hard work and cheeky Liverpool humour the T.J.'s formula would not work". Customers frequently compliment the staff, even taking trouble to write to the General Manager. Here is an example:—

Dear Sir,

Having completed a purchase valued at £455.00 I'd like to express my appreciation of the excellent service afforded to me and my wife and in particular the prompt and positive attention of Mr. Kinsella in your carpet department.

—W.D. Corlett, Balorina, Isle of Man.

Said Mr. Cotton: "People who work for T.J.'s are proud of what we are. It is people who have not worked for T.J.'s who feel that it is a bit beneath their dignity sometimes.

"If you've worked here you can't fail to be tremendously excited; it's like riding on the crest of a wave".

## Ladies figure it out — for charity

The ladies from Bootle warehouse regional stockroom have been taking their figures and decided to beat inflation into shape the hard way — by dieting.

At 8.15 each Friday morning they held a weigh-in to assess their progress.

### EXERCISE

Each member paid 10 pence a week (an extra 10p levy for those who gained a pound) and for those who were extra keen a lunch-time exercise room was set up to help fight the flab.

At the end of the 10 week diet-in the lady who lost the most weight received the proceeds which were forwarded to a charity of her choice.

### £30 BOOST

Big-hearted Brighton staff held a series of raffles and raised £30 for a little girl born without legs who was featured in the local paper.

## CAPTION CONTEST



CAPTION \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME \_\_\_\_\_ STORE \_\_\_\_\_  
I SPOTTED \_\_\_\_\_ ERRORS, AND HAVE 'RINGED' THEM, ABOVE

### 'Caption Contest'

This cute pooch left a calling card, much to the shopkeeper's disgust, and cartoonist Fred Catley the liftman from Uxbridge invites readers to think up a caption and ring the six deliberate mistakes.

Send your entries to: Mrs. C. Reid, Group Personnel Manager, Stafford House, Craven Street, Liverpool not later than July 5.

A £20 gift voucher will be awarded the sender of the most original caption — provided all the deliberate errors have been ringed. The winner will be notified by internal post.

## WEDDING ALBUM

Supervisor at our Stourbridge store, David Miles married Julie Monkton at the town's Evangelist Church. Julie also works in the store — in the Quick Fare restaurant, and the couple met three years ago. Although the weather was wet and the car broke down on the way David and Julie assured us their honeymoon in Cornwall was perfect!