

INSIDE YOUR SUMMER SCENE

THERE'S a whole host of news in this summer edition of Scene, with new ideas, new faces and off-beat stores.

Here's a taste of what's in store . . .

Baby Faces

The cute little face below is one of the subjects of our Spot the Baby "Teaser". All you have to do is match the faces with their adult counterparts. It's not as easy as it looks!

All our baby faces are on Page Three.



Uxbridge

ALSO on Page Three is a special in-depth focus on the Uxbridge store.

Canada

OUR new-look Canada news is on Page Two, and among the stories is an interesting insight to life in Niagara Falls.

Scene

Correspondents

THIS edition sees the start of a new regular item featuring the Scene correspondents, whose first contributions have proved a real bonus. This lively feature is on Page Eight.

Buying

AN article on the Central Buying Team makes up our centre page spread. This picture special starts on Page Four.

PLUS

- Appointments: Page Four.
- Retirements: Pages Five and Six.
- General News: Page Seven.

New modern stores will bring benefits

IN HIS annual statement to shareholders the Chairman, Mr. John Norman, had to report a group pre-tax loss of £220,000 against a profit of £2,615,000 in the previous year.

The figures were as follows:—

UK stores	428,000	1,555,000
Canadian stores	(820,000)	573,000
Plumb Contracts	172,000	487,000
	(220,000)	2,615,000

U.K. profit at £428,000 was reduced by £1,127,000 compared with the previous year. The majority of the reduction is accounted for by losses, after interest charges in the new Redditch and Basingstoke stores and by the closure costs of the Colwyn Bay and Brighton stores.

The shortfall in the established stores was modest and more than explained by the low level of sales during the severe weather conditions in December and January.

Although early losses have to be expected until a sufficient volume of sales has been generated, we believe that new modern stores, planned for the longer term, will provide the most certain opportunity for profit growth in a fast changing retail market place. In this context, we are encouraged at the future prospects of both Redditch and Basingstoke stores.

The Kingfisher Shopping Centre in Redditch was finally completed in March 1982 and is only now being promoted as a major regional centre. As it draws in new customers so our store will benefit. By contrast, the Basingstoke store opened in September 1981 as the final major space user to complete an already established shopping centre, and got off to a good start.

Sales in the first six months of 1981 in Canadian retailing were reasonably buoyant. However, from August onwards the level of consumer spending fell sharply as the recession in the U.S.A. spilt over into Canada.

In Hamilton the situation was exacerbated by the steel strike and the three established Robinson stores in the city suffered sales decreases of up to 25 per cent in the second half year.

The ninth Robinson store was opened in the new Lime Ridge shopping centre on the Hamilton Mountain and got off to a reasonably good start despite the difficult local conditions.

Two thirds of the setback in Canada from a profit of £573,000 to a loss of £820,000 can be attributed to the downturn in the economy, the steel strike and the higher exchange rate. The remaining third resulted from the two new stores with Kitchener incurring a substantial loss in its first full year of trading.

When opened in August 1980 as the first phase of the new King Centre, it was planned that a large office tower would be constructed as an integral part of the development. Its postponement, as a casualty of the recession, and the delayed completion of the centre itself will inevitably prolong the period needed to bring this store into profitability.

Plumb Contracts Limited had a pre-tax profit of £172,000 compared with £487,000 last year. Profit margins were under extreme pressure throughout the year and the company had to finance increased working capital due to the slower payment of customer accounts.

However, the main profit shortfall was suffered in the first quarter of the year. Since then, the company succeeded in holding its previous year's operating figures and this must be regarded as a satisfactory performance.

U.K. profits in relation to capital employed were insufficient to generate any allocation of shares under the staff share ownership scheme. This is the first time there has been no allocation since the scheme was approved by shareholders in 1974.

The effects of the recession on our business have called for many painful decisions as a necessary part of the recovery programme. Management and staff have responded to the changes within each operation with understanding and the board are grateful to them for their co-operation and support.

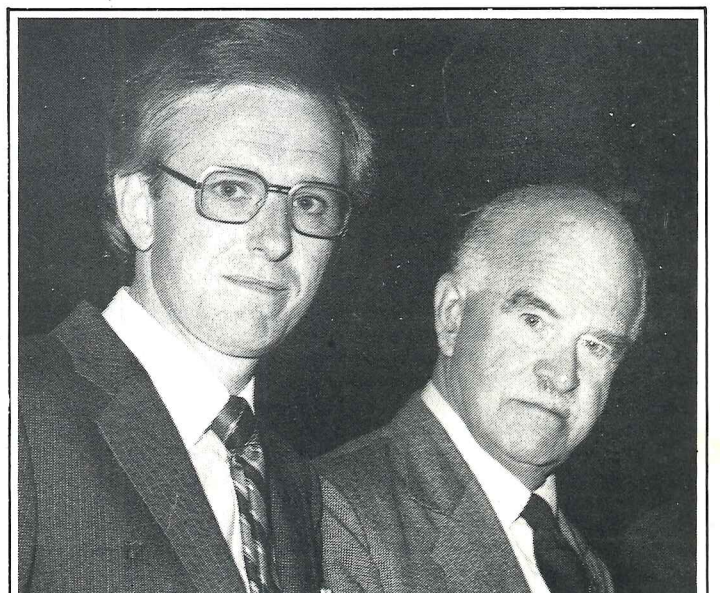
Trading conditions continue to be extremely difficult, and the first six months of the current year will include for the first time the seasonal loss-making months of the Basingstoke and Hamilton Lime Ridge stores. It will thus be unrealistic to expect any improvement on the level of last year's loss by the end of July.

It is to the second half, and particularly to the final quarter, where we look for recovery. If this should coincide with an improvement in the economic climate in either the U.K. or Canada, then we should start to see positive rewards from the development programme now completed, and from the very hard work which is being applied at all levels of the business.

CHAIRMAN'S PRIZE AND BUYERS' AWARD



Mr. Barry Boycott, General Manager of Basingstoke (right) who received the Chairman's prize, a gold Omega watch. With him is Mr. Paul Clarke, Jewellery Buyer, who received a gold Parker pen and pencil set for achievements in the Buying field.



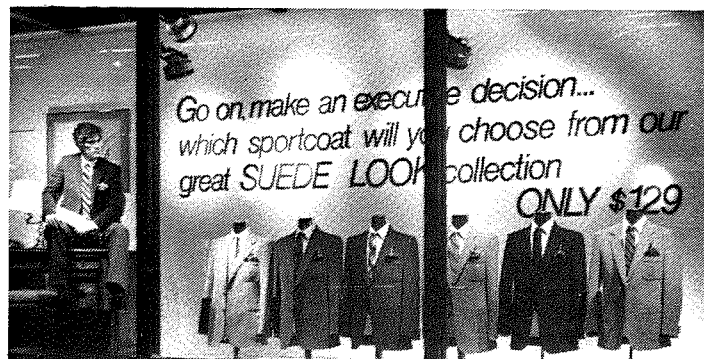
Mr. L.R. Jordan (left) received the Walter Gittings Security Shield from Mr. Gittings, on behalf of Mr. Phillip Tubbs, Store Detective in Southampton. Mr. Tubbs also received a black and white portable T.V.



Turning on the power!

FOR the past two years, customers of Robinson's have been privileged to purchase a variety of merchandise under our "Sweet Deal" programme.

A "Sweet Deal", to quote Mr. Terry Horne, Company Vice President of Merchandising, is "simply an item which has been bought in depth . . . The item must have high volume sales potential well above our normal high standards for sales and value". Once a Sweet Deal is given approval we T.O.P. it by — TURNING ON THE POWER".



jackets for the super low price of only, \$129.00 — less than half their original value.

Seventeen hundred jackets were brought into the stores and some 1000 plus walked out in the first week alone!

The remainder were regrouped into our two best stores with a sell-out anticipated.

Naturally, advertising played a major role in this merchandising success but the idea of T.O.P. is to

get everyone involved. The jackets weren't only sold on the department — everyone in the stores participated by aggressive suggestive selling: "Have you seen the terrific value on men's sportcoats in our men's clothing department today?" says the salesclerk in housewares to her customer.

In a time when competition for the consumer's dollar is becoming increasingly tough, we at Robinson's sugar coat the product and T.O.P.!



PICTURE yourself in a 16ft. x 12ft. room with four white walls and a cathedral ceiling. No, it's not the isolation room at a psychiatric hospital. It's the racketball courts of Ontario!

The object is to defeat your opponent by hitting a rubber ball off any of the four walls, letting it bounce only once before the opponent makes his strike.

Two of our Waterloo store employees have developed a finesse in this sport. Mrs. Joan Oberholzer recently won two Intra Club League tourneys by defeating 8 competitors and Mr. David Uttley won the Ontario Consolation trophy by defeating 5 out of 6 seasoned competitors.



PLUMB CONTRACTS



THE news of Tom Doyle's sudden and unexpected death on January 28 came as a stunning shock to everyone in Plumb's and to the many in Owen Owen who knew him well.

He joined Plumb's as General Manager in 1956 and was appointed Managing Director a year later. Those early years were very difficult ones for the Plumb business as it struggled, under his leadership, to develop its own special expertise in the shopfitting world.

That he succeeded in his efforts is amply borne out by the results produced by the company in recent years.

He had planned to retire later this year on his 63rd birthday. He was looking forward to this prospect and to the task on which he had already embarked of training his successor, Mr. Richard Cressman.

His courteous nature and his wide experience of the business will be greatly missed by the colleagues who worked with him.

JOE'S FINAL FLING

SCOTTISH dancing is by no means the traditional method that Canadians use to say farewell to retiring colleagues.

That is unless the person in question is a Scot! And Joe Bellingham, who left after 26 years service, was born and bred in Glasgow, so it was like home from home when colleagues from Robinsons donned kilts and sporrans for a Highland fling.

DANCERS

A piper ushered Mr. Bellingham into a banquet hall where he enjoyed a buffet dinner, followed by an evening of Scottish country dancing, courtesy of the Matheson dancers.

There were contributions from Heather Morrison who danced a Highland Medley, and an Irish Jig and Sailor's Hornpipe from Joanne Soales, while Valerie Harris recited "The Maird O' Cockpen".

Gifts presented to Mr. Bellingham included a tape deck, microwave oven and barometer. He had joined Robinsons in 1955 in the signing and display department, and was manager of the sign shop when he retired.

OUTSTANDING

The "Sweet Deal" story at Robinson's has been an electrifying success. The values offered the customers have been truly outstanding and the turnover of merchandise rapid and profitable.

Our most recent "success" story concerned men's "suede-like" jackets. Judicious buying permitted us to offer our customers the opportunity to purchase these

Why tourists fall in love with Niagara

WHAT IS different about Robinson's in Niagara Falls when compared to the other Robinson's stores?

Tourists! We get them by the carload, busload, vanload and on foot. They start at Easter and keep on coming till Christmas. You can tell that the tourist season has started by the number of people hovering around the entrances at the 10.00 a.m. opening each day, or by the campers coming in out of the rain.

They are not necessarily recognisable on sight, blending adequately with the natives, but their accents are an absolute give-away. The majority are American, a good deal of these coming from New York State, but some have come "up north" from Florida or South Carolina.

EXPLORE

Most tourists who see Niagara Falls for the first time head directly for a look at that famous cataract and to soak up the roar and the splendour of something the locals take for granted. They explore the usual tourist traps such as Ripley's Believe-it-or-Not Museum and the cavern tours under Table Rock House, a building immortalised in the movie "Superman II".

At night they claw and shove their way up and down Clifton Hill, a garish street of gift shops, restaurants and amusements with a honky-tonk flavour, buying and spending on anything that will declare: "I was here".

It is when they tire of all the tinsel and noise, and yearn for

something relaxed and authentically Canadian that they appear on our doorstep, eager to be rescued with good quality that is "Made in Canada". It is then, along with the soapstone carvings and Blue Mountain pottery, that the shoes, clothing and other Canadian-made items begin to sell.

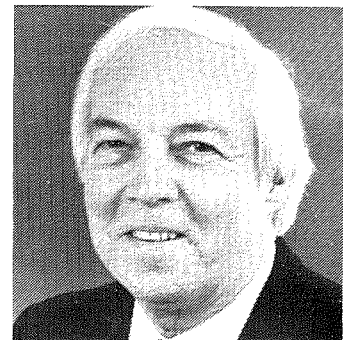
OVER-THE-RIVER

Not only does the American tourist visit from the States, but also the American resident living just on the other side of the Niagara River. We have account holders "over the river" who shop regularly, paying the duty and taxes at the border which are absorbed painlessly into the 20 per cent difference in the American dollar. It pays to shop Canadian!

LIFE-BLOOD

Any travellers, not just Americans, have little trouble finding us in the Niagara Square Mall. The four-lane Queen Elizabeth Highway, which runs right by our door, is the oldest thoroughfare of its type in North America, bringing people in from Toronto, Ontario, or from Buffalo, New York.

The tourist is the life-blood of Niagara Falls, and is welcomed by all. We can't offer palm trees or exotic living, but we can offer hospitality. So the invitation to British colleagues is: "Come up and see us sometime!"



AN OLD American adage "go west young man", led Ed Tribe to the doorstep of Robinsons 35 years ago in the hope that he might be taken on as a temp.

He was taken on, but he never travelled the miles back to his home in Fort Frances Ontario. Instead he stayed with the firm, and only recently retired as Credit Manager and Company Executive.

CAREER

He was born in Emo, Ontario, and married his wife Helen while working in a hardware store. The newlyweds honeymooned in Hamilton, and it wasn't long after their return to Fort Frances that Mr. Tribe decided to seek his career back in Hamilton.

The temporary position came up, and he rose through the ranks to Credit Manager, and, in 1960, became a Company Executive.

Since then he has watched the Company grow and seen its credit operation increase dramatically.

His enthusiasm has influenced one of his three daughters to follow him. Deborah is a department manager at Limeridge store.

THE CANADIAN CHALLENGE

IT SEEMS our Canadian colleagues are just as eager to know about the little things that go to make Britons so unique, as we are to hear of their way of life.

In a letter, Robinsons store staff write: "We feel we are obtaining a somewhat warped point of view of life in merry old England, as we read or watch on the telly, stores of MI5 intrigue.

We trust that the British programme Are You Being Served? is not typical of a British Department store!"

In short, we in Canada would appreciate more news on the British way of life".

So we have a challenge! If you can think of items of interest for our Canadian readers then please pass on your ideas to your Scene Correspondent.

UXBRIDGE

Store that's one big happy family...

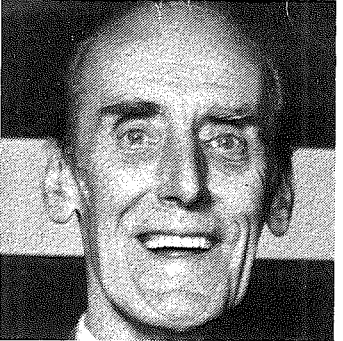


● Sandie Graham (top) and Mary Mudge . . . fine examples of a happy team which makes for a successful store.



● June Keeble (left) is often seen on the river bank while Catherine Meehan's hobby is painting.

MAGICAL MEMORIES



LIFT-MAN Fred Catley's life was a series of ups and downs, in more ways than one. Now he's retired from Uxbridge store he's remembering — and writing down some of the amusing, and often sad, incidents which made his job so enjoyable.

Let's hope we're all fond enough of our stores to put pen to paper about them in the years to come!

Fred writes: "One day a little boy about four years old stood facing the lift on the ground floor, and watched with interest each trip. Finally during a lull in the routine he came forward and asked: "Are you magic?" I said, "I don't think so, why?" "Well where do you keep getting all the people?" he said.

DUBAI DEAL

OUR REPUTATION is travelling all the time. Uxbridge store has just had an order for 72 salt and pepper mills — from a hotel in Dubai.

THEY'VE got the cutest little baby faces . . . but see if you can recognise any of these babies' characteristics and who they are today. Some are easier than

others; with characteristics that cannot be mistaken, while others are a little more baffling. The babies above and on page one are: Louise Roberts, Central Sales Audit Manager; Les Naylor, Central Buyer of Menswear; John Barker, Management Accountant; Joan Rochelle, Lingerie Buyer; Cathy Lewis, Fashion Accessories Buying Controller; Clare Reid, Group Personnel Manager (Management); Chris Mitchell, Group Personnel Manager (Staff). The adult versions are on page six and answers on page eight.

THERE was an Englishwoman, an Irishwoman and a Scotswoman . . . plus a German, an Italian, and an Indian to name but a few of the staff who make up the Uxbridge store.

The incredible combination of languages and accents does leave customers looking baffled. But they rarely leave the store without having made a friend.

That's the way they work at Uxbridge. Salesmanship goes hand in hand with amicability. The language barrier may sometimes be there, but a smile and a friendly greeting comes through in any language!

The store, based in a town which is just 16 miles out of London, gives the impression of being a rural area where everybody wears hats and takes afternoon tea.

KID GLOVES

It was the ideal setting for a typically English department where the ladies of the day bought their furs and the gentlemen shopped for kid gloves.

And the Suter family kept up that image until Owen Owen came along four years ago and bought both Uxbridge and Slough.

At Suters formality was the order of the day. And that didn't allow for frivolity.

Today the atmosphere is still in the family mould — when people at Uxbridge say that age old cliché: "We're just a big happy family", you can see they really mean it.

And they prove it with actions. Like the day in March when the resident young shoe repairer developed appendicitis and was rushed to hospital. A group of girls went along, saw he had no slippers and promptly collected for an extra pair of pyjamas and some slippers!



● Jane Bennett, Susan Humphries and Edna Connelly . . . their job is to keep their departments running smoothly.

The same happened to General Manager Sandie Graham when she had a back injury and was away from work. People were dropping in at lunchtimes, and evenings to see her.

In most staff canteens the diners eat in relative silence and leave without a whisper. In Uxbridge dining room one would be left wondering whether a belated Christmas party was being held, judging from the jollity.

It could stem from the fact that the majority of staff, both management and assistants, are young. The rest are young at heart.

Sandie Graham, for instance, is everybody's ideal General Manager. Of Irish descent with a friendly grin and an infectious lilt she regards very highly the atmosphere in which she works.

"I had worked in seven stores but when I was told about Uxbridge I didn't like the idea of working so close to London. But it's so "olde worlde" and the people are so pleasant that I'm glad I've stayed here so long", she said.

Sandie joined Owen Owen as a management trainee straight from university where she had taken general studies and geography among her subjects.

"I don't know how I became interested in the retail trade. I came from a family of teachers and my courses were nothing to do with retailing", she laughed.

But the interest was there and it has developed into a real sense of loyalty, put to the test especially when the Uxbridge store opened and Sandie had to make vast changes in the face of a reputation which had held for decades.

Another "foreigner" was Jane Bennett of Liverpool. She had worked in Clayton Square and was sales manager of Rare Set, but she wanted a bigger challenge and is now sales manager of fashions.

"When I first arrived I think people were a bit wary. My sense of humour was different to theirs. But it didn't take long before I got to know them".

When one assistant makes a good sales everyone celebrates. Like the time when Helen Drukarz (she's German) sold a mink and a fox fur to one customer.

"Everyone was delighted for me, they all said how good it was", she grinned.

And everybody was in stitches at one customer in Jane Bennett's lingerie section.

The rather hefty lady asked for a bra, but there was none of that size in stock. "Oh well, I'll go to china and buy two saucepans instead", she replied.

COFFEE BAR

Customers are on first name terms with staff. Retired lift keeper Fred Catley recalls one Christmas when he was called on in an emergency to play Santa.

One boy, a regular with his mother, sat on his knee and chirped: "Aren't you doing the lift anymore then Fred?"

"I had to make a quick explanation about Santa having gone to feed his reindeer and asking me to stand in", laughed Fred.

Today there are queues for the Scandinavian-style coffee bar which dominates the centre of a floor and provides a focal point for customers to chat while looking around.

However the little specialities — a throwback to Suters days — are still evident, like the brass stair rails, polished daily and always gleaming.

HECTIC

And there's always a sparkle in Edna Connelly's china and gift department. She sees it as an extension of her home and strives to keep it tidy.

Personnel Officer Mary Mudge, formerly of Suters, has the task of keeping staff happy. But she doesn't have much of a problem, doing her job, though it can be hectic at times.

Getting to know Catherine Meehan and June Keeble could fetch you an unusual gift — or a fishy story.

Catherine (she's Scottish) is a keen and talented artist. Her speciality is painting on velvet, and her work adorns many a living room.

CONFIDENT

June's one time hobby was . . . handgliding. She gave it up eight years ago and opted for a more down to earth pastime — fishing.

Right now everyone is congratulating Susan Humphries, Sales Manager of Accessories, on passing her B.E.C. Higher National Certificate, and on her wedding to former colleague Nigel White.

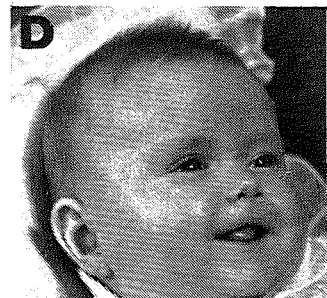
Mrs. Mudge is keen to ensure her staff are confident when they go out onto a sales floor.

"They spend the first year gaining confidence and learning the background of the job. After all they should give a customer the impression they know what they are talking about!" she said.

It's the confidence which is proved in hard cash at the end of the year. So far Uxbridge is fifth in a table of 21 stores after 12 weeks of the last year on percentage increase on half year.

And that's enough to put a smile on the face of Miss Graham, her sales management team and her staff.

NAME THAT BABY!



BUYING

COMMUNICATION IS THE N

GIRL FRIDAY'S KEY ROLE IN OFFICE TEAM



● Debra Lavender . . . the early bird who catches the 7.05.

MERCHANDISE samples abound, fashion posters adorn walls, telex machines clatter, typewriters tap, telephones ring incessantly in the hurly-burly that is Central Buying Office.

Often frantic, never dull is how Office Manager Miss Marie McCabe describes it. There are days punctuated by panics, orders get lost, advertised lines aren't in, a telex

goes astray, the O.T.B. doesn't balance. These are the things that go to make up the working life of a Buyer's Assistant.

There are in all, 18 "Girl Fridays" who work with the Buyers and whose job involves them in almost every aspect of the buying function. For those keen to make a career in retailing, the opportunities are there.

Proof is provided by Debbie Lavender who has made the tran-

sition from being a Buyer's Assistant to that of Acting Buyer, in less than three years.

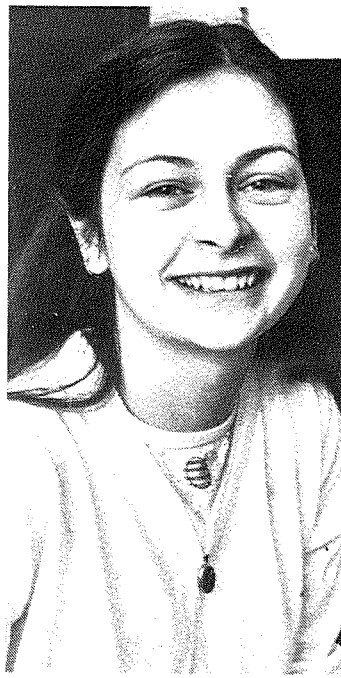
A lively, energetic 23-year-old, Debbie clearly enjoys being part of a highly fashion orientated Buying Team.

Bubbling with enthusiasm she describes future fashion trends which she hopes will be reflected

● CONTINUED ON PAGE FIVE



● Office Manager Miss Marie McCabe — she's a shoulder to cry on.

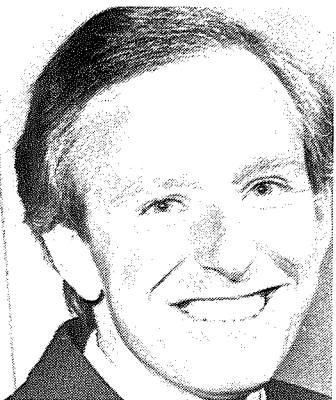


● Gaynor Atherton . . . "was thrilled to be kept on".



● Louise Williams . . . wants to further her career in retailing.

APPOINTMENTS

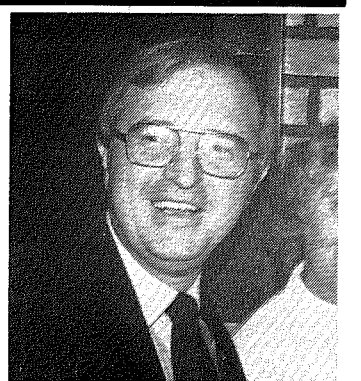


MR. LES JORDAN was appointed Sales Controller of the Southern group of stores in succession to Mr. Denis King, on February 1, 1982.

Mr. Jordan joined the company in 1964, and held General Management appointments in Preston and Bath.



MR. DENIS KING was appointed Controller of Marketing on February 1, 1982. He will be responsible for the planning and execution of the company's marketing and sales programme. He will be based at head office.



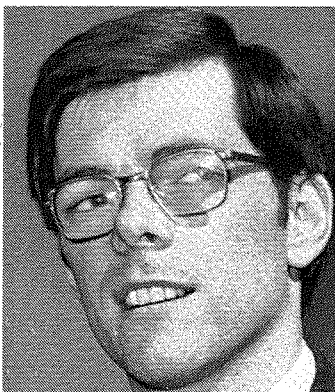
MR. KEN SPEDDINGS is usually to be found offering farewell messages to departing employees. But it was his turn to be given what was described as a "rousing send off" when he left Preston store as General Manager to take up a similar post at Bath.

Colleagues toasted him at a cheese and wine party



MR. ROGER MURDOCH was appointed General Manager in Birkenhead on February 1, 1982.

Mr. Murdoch joined the company in 1968, and has held management appointments in Birkenhead, Clayton Square, Chester, Uxbridge and Finchley.



MR. ROBERT LINGARD was appointed General Manager of Torrington Avenue on March 1, 1982. He joined the company as Warehouse Manager in Torrington in February 1981.

NAME OF THE GAME

● CONTINUED FROM PAGE FOUR

in those Rare Set departments for which she has responsibility and takes in her stride the constant travelling (up at 5.30 a.m. to catch the 7.05 to London) which is a necessary part of the total commitment the job demands.

Baby Doll

Louise Williams, a bright, go-ahead 20-year-old, joined the Buying Office three years ago and is Assistant to Lingerie Buyer Joan Rochelle.

A slim 5'6" Louise is often called on to model a new line — perhaps a leisure suit or frilly negligee, and recalls one memorable occasion when she was required to sally forth in a Baby Doll. "I draw the line at Swimwear and Corsetry", she laughed.

Although there are, she admits (with a rueful glance at an overflowing filing tray) the day to day routines, it is the overall variety of the job that keeps her interest. Louise hopes to make her career in retailing.

Sell-Out

"Girl Friday" to Hardware Buyer John Davis, is 28-year-old Jean Brindley whose experience is wide-ranging. Household Linens, Audio and Electrical are just some of the departments Jean has had in her care.

Her five years with different Buyers have rendered her capable of handling most situations. A recent in-store promotion was an instant sell-out, and with Controller and Buyer away, it fell to Jean to make sure that repeat orders got to the stores.

Jean has had an opportunity to visit a trade fair with Mr. Davis and found this "behind the scenes" aspect more than interesting. Jean too hopes to make her career in retailing.



● Jean Brindley with her buyer Mr. John Davis — "Variety is the spice of life".

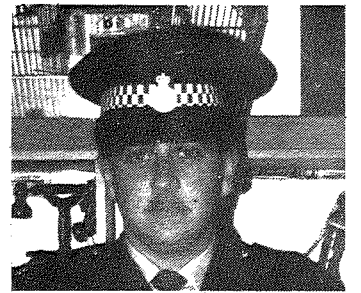
Youngest member of the team, 17-year-old Gaynor Atherton joined the company 12 months ago on a Work Experience scheme and was assigned to the Buying Office. Gaynor took the high-speed routine in her stride and is

now working for Buyer Paul Clarke in the Fashion Accessory Division.

Still in the throes of learning the ropes, Gaynor maintains that each aspect of the job is interesting in its own light.

Communication says Miss McCabe, is the name of the game, visibly proud of the enthusiastic team of Assistants who support their Buyers so ably.

'Special' Dave on the city beat ...



WHEN even the night owls among us are fast asleep, 20-year-old Dave Rodgers is walking the streets of Liverpool, as part of his hobby!

Though he faces the prospect of danger constantly, Dave enjoys being a Special Constable — an unpaid back-up to the police.

Riots

For the last year Dave, a member of London Road's display team, has been ready for duty in any situation. And that included the riots at Toxteth last summer. He was not actually needed but the mere thought of it would be sufficient to put off all but the most dedicated.

However there are some lighter moments which make the "job" so attractive, like State visits, and galas and fetes during the summer.

Newsgirl Jan hits the headlines

IT'S NOT often that newscaster Jan Leeming is the subject of a news story . . . but she made headlines when she visited Owen Owen at Basingstoke.

Jan, whose dark features usually adorn our television screens, for B.B.C.'s news, was one of several stars who visited the new and ultra modern Basingstoke Shopping Centre for its opening.

And one person who had plenty of information for Jan to report was the store's General Manager Mr. Barry Boycott.

Our picture shows Mr. Boycott (right) with Miss Leeming and the Mayor of Basingstoke.

A STAR — or several — was born at Coventry store in January when A.T.V. filmed preparations for the January sales. Staff apparently excelled themselves in removing Christmas decorations and replacing them with sales stock. Autograph books at the ready!



RETIREMENTS

WHEN retired Stourbridge Office Manager Mrs. Deacon asks for breakfast in bed, she'll no doubt get it on a silver platter. That was her retirement gift from the company when she left recently.

Mrs. Deacon had been with the company since 1969 starting at the Wolverhampton store where she was responsible for stockroom and invoicing before transferring to Stourbridge.

Travelling has played a large part in her retirement plans, with a one month holiday in St. Ives and six weeks in Canada.

MR. LIONEL KEMP retired from Finchley store's Menswear Department, much to the disappointment of his colleagues, who felt he had made a considerable contribution to the section, despite joining only eighteen months ago. Previously he was a pattern maker for hospital clothing for 32 years.

● More retirements overleaf.

Children say thank you to Santa

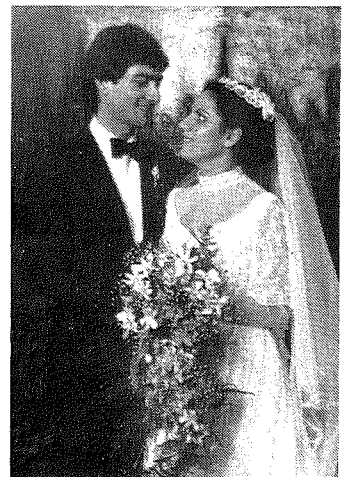
FATHER Christmas at Redditch store received more than the average sackful of letters — and they came along after all the presents had been given out.

The notes came from handicapped children from the Victoria school in Northfield, Birmingham and all were to say thank you for a special visit to Redditch Grotto, which had been arranged by staff.

Message

It's rumoured that the youngsters are still talking about their visit, at which they met several Santas including members of Management.

In case the children or teachers get to read this — the messages goes out from Redditch "Thank you Victoria for giving us the opportunity to give a little joy to those children".



Couple marry twice in 11 months

IT WAS a knowing look that passed between the happy faces of Finchley Fashion A.S.M. Nina Karolis and her husband Tasos, when they went through a romantic wedding ceremony.

For they'd done it all before! The couple were first wed at Hendon Register Office more than a year ago.

And eleven months later they tied the knot at the Greek Orthodox All Saints Church.

Nina and Tasos celebrated their honeymoon in Thailand.

RETIREMENTS



WHEN it comes to furs and laces Roma Tomkins is yards ahead. Her good service cannot be measured, but she'll be missed on the fabrics counter of Bath store following her retirement recently, after 13 years. Roma is the sister of another

well known ex-member of staff Sadie Miles. Sadie however hasn't disappeared for good. She returned part-time a few weeks after her retirement!

Roma is pictured with General Manager Mr. Ken Speddings.

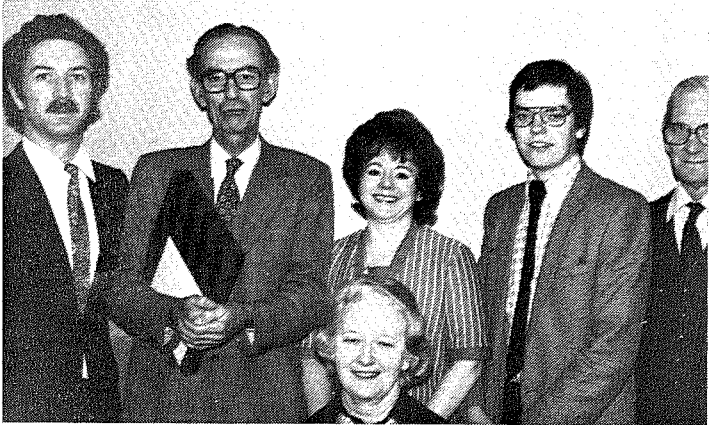
His office was a stable!

WHEN Painting and Requisitions Manager Norman Handley (pictured right) joined the firm in 1934 he didn't think his plans to "work like a horse" would be taken literally!

That is until he was shown his office — the old stables — and there still were the tethering rings on the walls, and a hayloft!

The building was in Kempston Street Liverpool and Mr. Handley was one of the silk screen department originators, producing work for both Owen Owen and T.J.'s.

Pictured (left to right): Mr. Les Brownrigg, Mrs. Handley, Mr. Handley and Mr. E. Hodges, Director of Store Operations.



RICHMOND Carpet Manager Mr. F. Pirson will never forget the visit from one mother and her two children.

For the visitors were the Queen Mother and her daughters, our Queen and Princess Margaret!

He himself will always be remembered by the staff at

Richmond, who said farewell to him in March.

Pictured (left to right): Mr. J. McGill, Mr. F. Pirson, Mrs. P.W. Harman, Mr. J. Harrison, Mr. R. Charlton, Mrs. P. McGeachie.



JOAN Atkinson was treated to a taste of cocktails, travel and sweet music by colleagues who attended her retirement party at Preston store, after 29 years with the company.

They held a party in the Red Rose Restaurant where they presented Joan with a set of luggage and a stereo cassette player!

Group Personnel Manager Chris Mitchell is seen presenting Joan with a carriage clock on behalf of the directors.



FAREWELLS were to Bath Customer Accounts Office assistant Edna Evans (pictured above).

Though she left the store as a full time worker last November she was back to start 1982 as a part-timer!

Edna is pictured with colleagues who attended her "farewell" celebrations.



AFTER more than 40 years of display work, T.J.'s Jim Traynor has retired.

Jim was one of three T.J.'s staff who shared retirement celebrations. Ella Burnell joined in 1937 and worked in the invoice department. Sidney Kingsley joined in 1962 and worked in the carpet department. Left to right: Jim Traynor, Ella Burnell, Mr. Fleming and Sidney Kingsley.



THREE ladies who between them have served 57 years with Owen Owen are pictured celebrating together at their retirement celebrations from Clayton Square.

Shown with General Manager, Mr. Tom Brent, (left to right) are: Mrs. Kathleen Doran, Mrs. Enid Colvin and Miss Lena Schaar.



THOMAS Finnegan, otherwise known as "Mick", knows every crack in the wall at London Road building.

cobwebby corners that the rest of the staff don't even know exist.

"Mick" has been a porter, duty man and house supervisor, and when he retired was house/maintenance supervisor.

Since he joined in the 1934 as a ticket collector in the Grotto, "Mick" has had a varied working life which took him up ladders, down cellars and into some of the

He is pictured with his wife and Miss Rigby and Mr. Fleming at his retirement presentation.



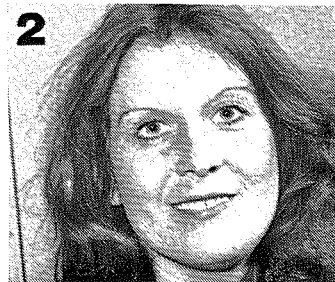
CONGRATULATIONS from colleagues were two score for Maggie Hanlon (right) of Chester branch. First there was the celebration when she left the store as Senior Sales Manager then a few months later there were more good wishes when her baby John Paul was born.

Maggie shared her leaving party with cash office manager Mrs. Lili Ross (left) who retired after 17 years service.

She is especially missed for the delightful poems which she could compose for just about any occasion.

NOW THOSE BABY FACES!

Have they changed? Here's your chance to find out by trying to match up the adult faces with the babies on pages one and three.



SLIMMERS BOOST FUNDS

IT'S not every hospital which welcomes overweight visitors — but staff at St. Catherine's in Bath were thrilled when they heard about the extra pounds being carried by our Bath store.

For each pound in weight meant money — and when the slimmers dieted it was the hospital's kitchen appeal which was to benefit.

The idea to raise money for the rebuilding of the kitchens, by way of a slim, came from Mrs. Christine Higgins, pictured below, a part-timer on linen, who had heard that staff were looking for ways to help.

Mrs. Higgins herself was keen to lose weight, but needed an incentive. The Nursing Home staff were delighted with the idea, and it was agreed that representatives would come in and meet the slimmers after the slim!

However those icy months around Christmas, combined with the attraction of all that festive food, resulted in weight losses by only four of the original ten slimmers, with some actually gaining weight!

Happy

However the hard core few did remarkably well, losing 62.5 lbs. in total. And those who didn't lose still paid up, they considered it a penalty for not losing the desired amount.

So it was a happy League of Friends Chairman who collected the cheque for £79.00 in March.

The rebuilding of the kitchens is now underway, with the kitty standing at £62,000 in collections.



● Pictured at the presentation are (left to right): League of Friends Chairman Mrs. Radley, Mary Fogerty, Marcia King, and Personnel/Training Officer Mrs. S. Jones.

JANINE RACES TO SUCCESS

OWEN OWEN staff are held in high esteem by shoppers in Redditch, not only for the quality of our goods, but for our superb pancake racers.

During this year's race, in the Kingfisher Precinct, Redditch was represented by John Clarke, Paul Banes, Jacky Spencer and Janine Leasesly. And we had two seconds in John and Janine. Both won £20.

It's not surprising that Janine, of Rare Set, was in the running. She ran in the Women's A.A. Championships at Crystal Palace in 1979, and represented Britain in an International Schools contest in Belgium, in which she and the team came first.



Looking in at a prize display

SNOW-covered shoppers could have crawled into the Clayton Square window display and gone fast asleep last winter. The Accord display was so effective that it was to win the annual competition run by the home textile firm. And gift vouchers were presented as prizes.

Pictured (left to right) are: Keith Hancock (Marketing Promotion Manager); Mr. Tom Brent (General Manager Clayton Square); Maureen Hitchmouth (Accord Department Manager) and Frank Blundell (Display Manager).



OWEN OWEN's staff at Richmond are very important people — at least as far as a local night club is concerned.

And to prove it 57 of them have been presented with V.I.P. memberships for Blazers, a club in nearby Windsor.

So far two visits have been made, to see the Drifters and the Stylistics. The evening was organised exclusively for people in the retail trade.

For one member of staff, Nikki Priest, there were plenty of reasons to enjoy herself, during the first visit. For not only was she 21, she had become engaged — and both she and her fiancée were a little baffled when the event was announced and they were presented with a gift and card from colleagues.

SURPRISE FOR A SPECIAL CUSTOMER



RICHMOND store's fashion department staff took part in a very special centenary celebration recently.

They laid on tea in the restaurant to welcome the reason for the celebration — a sprightly old lady who is a regular customer, and who had visited the store to buy an outfit for her birthday!

When the General Manager heard the news he arranged for Miss Orlow Burton and her companion to have tea in the restaurant with the firm's compliments.

Miss Burton, who marked her centenary on May 13, chose a smart navy and white outfit with a blue rose.

She is pictured with her great niece.

SMOKERS TIP

IF you want to give up smoking — transfer to our Stourbridge store! All efforts are being made to convince smokers to kick the habit — including having a dish of mints in the canteen. And with good health could come wealth, as one ex-smoker found out. She had saved £140 towards a summer holiday.

True stories from the shop floor

SALES GEMS . . . you hear them in the most unusual places, through dressing cubicle curtains, in the powder room, or the lift.

They are found everywhere . . . and we love to pass them on.

So here goes with a couple of the best . . .

Purchased

Heard in Bath store . . . an Indian lady brought back a coat bought for her daughter which did not fit. The assistant discovered the coat had been purchased two months earlier.

On asking why it had not been returned before she replied: "I had to send it to India to my daughter and she sent it back!" We've heard of flying carpets but . . .

Slim

A complimentary (?) quote from a customer at Liverpool Clayton Square. A foreign customer sought advice from a sales assistant on how large a size 14 was. She asked the customer whether the person for whom the garment was meant was slim.

The reply came: "Oh no, she's like you!" (The assistant was a size 14).

DOUBLE WIN

ESTEE Lauder Consultant at Finchley store Rebecca Ng is a dab hand at promoting the latest programme in Age smoothing. And her expertise won her a microwave oven when she beat her autumn sales target.

Meanwhile the store's window dresser, Cheryl Holt, was a runner-up in the Ladybird Window Display competition winning £50.00.

BUT FOR THE SWEET TOOTH ...

EVER felt peckish when all the sweet shops have closed? Here's a simple way of satisfying your taste buds.

They're peppermint sweetmeats and they caused problems at the bring and buy sale at Bath store — no-one wanted to sell them because they tasted good enough to be eaten by the staff!

Take: 1 lb. icing sugar, 2 oz. melted butter, 2 tablespoons warm milk, 2 teaspoons peppermint flavouring.

Melt butter and add milk and flavouring, stir gradually into icing sugar. Mix well and knead until smooth. Roll out thinly on surface dusted with icing sugar. Cut into rounds with pastry or biscuit cutter. Leave in cool place until firm.

That mouth-watering recipe deserves a cheer for Alison Coles of G.M.O. Bath.

CHRISTINE'S ROYAL DATE

MRS. Christine Higgins, rubbed shoulders with Royalty when her husband — Squadron Leader Brian Higgins — was presented with the M.B.E.

At 40, Squadron Leader Higgins is one of the youngest Squadron Leader commanders in the Air Training Corps to receive the honour.

He received the award, part of the Queen's Birthday Honours List at Buckingham Palace.



INTRODUCING...

Scene's Correspondents

SCENE Correspondents — you're the tops! Since we sent out a request for news it has been coming in at an incredible speed.

All our stores and units have an abundance of very interesting people — and the Scene Correspondents are no exception! Their contributions are witty, funny, and varied, which makes for a brighter summer edition as you will no doubt have noticed. And for that we have to thank everyone who had a hand in compiling them.

We should recognise that stories don't just appear magically. A lot of hard work and constant searching for news is done by our Correspondents, all busy people. Yet they have proved that with your help they can add that extra personal touch to a story, as has been done with those so far sent in.

You don't have to wait to be asked for your contribution. Our Correspondents are ready to accept stories all the time. In case you are not sure who your Correspondent is, we are listing them. And in both this edition, and the Christmas one, we will be highlighting them, telling you who they are, and what they do.

So here goes with the introductions . . . first, Margaret King

INVITATION TO THE BALL

Life on Margaret King's farm is far from average.

Actually the farm isn't Margaret's — it belongs to the Queen! But Margaret's husband is one of the workers, and that means the family lives on the Windsor Royal Estate.

Of course, being neighbours of Royalty means that when there is a neighbourhood get together you stand in good stead to be on the guest list.



BATH store's Ansley Jeffrey has something of a menagerie at home. It consists of two dogs (plus a puppy), a Java sparrow, and five budgerigars!

In between feeding times she works in the despatch department, and confesses to being the office stationary "dragon".

A keen interior decorator, she says her family is never sure what colour the house will be at any one time! Other hobbies include reading, gardening, doing puzzles and collecting toy cars!



HARRY Davies is a C.B. 'buddy'. He enjoys a dabble on his son's rig, and sounds an ideal husband as he lists among his hobbies, home decorating!

He joined the Finchley store 5 years ago, starting as a salesman, progressing to A.S.M. three years ago and now supervises beds, kitchen furniture, gardening, china, house hold and electrical goods.

And that was exactly what happened to Slough correspondent Margaret. Here she recalls the event which most of us merely dream about:

7.30 and dragging myself downstairs rubbing the sleep from my eyes, groping for the post and newspaper. The usual brown envelopes to be put aside till after the second cup of coffee, a letter from the Literary Guild, and hang on, what's this? An invitation, not to the local Policeman's Ball, but to Buckingham Palace — A Royal Invitation to the Ball no less!

Actually, we had been expecting it, but it's nice to know she hasn't overlooked us.

Rush into work and immediately down to Berkertex to try on the dress I've had my eye on for so long. Quick, fetch the alteration hand, only a month to get it fitted. Offers flood in of stoles to borrow and the only genuine mink is gratefully accepted, though slightly put off when the General Manager says it looks just like a pair of fur oven mitts, but what do men know? Face by Charles of the Ritz, hair by Glenby, Christian Dior tights and Bally shoes, nearly set and still three weeks to go!

Rollers

The day dawns, but oh no! it must be pneumonia, a deadly strain of flu or the like for I feel dead, you can't look and feel like this and still be alive can you? The show must go on. Ring the office and the Personnel Manager advises me to stay in bed and stagger in later. I offer to be her slave for life and then realise I practically am! 3.30, the face pack's on and the rollers in, then home again. Another overdose of Day Nurse and off for the coach.

THIS IS IT! I'VE ARRIVED! So much to take in. The grandeur's breathtaking!

Dinner was served buffet style. A few glasses of wine then music and dance.

Too soon the clock strikes, not 12 but 12.30 and the evening is over, time for Cinderella to hang up her glass slippers and back to the Personnel Office tomorrow. Will life ever be the same again? My only chance now is an invitation to the christening.

JUNE JAMESON (LONDON ROAD)



TO BE, or not to be an amateur dramatist. That's the question which faces T.J.'s London Road Correspondent June Jameson. She is hoping to join an amateur dramatics society, to add to her other hobbies, which include theatre visits, and keeping fit in the gym next to the store!

June is Advertising Assistant to the Sales Promotion Manager. She joined the company in 1981 and duties include following through details of advertisements, liaising with the General Manager, and booking advertising space.



SHIRLEY FARLEY (REDDITCH)

A LIFETIME in the retail trade took Shirley Farley into the Redditch store on its opening, as A.S.M. in the major fashions department.

Now she's taken on another role, as the store's Scene Correspondent. Shirley lists among her loves, theatre-going and writing, and among her hates, cleaning windows and driving on motorways!

She maintains she's good at laddering tights, killing plants and putting on weight, and bad at remembering birthdays, and dental appointments.

Shirley is married with two daughters and a son.

KAY PAYNE (RICHMOND)



KAY PAYNE has something of a reputation at Richmond store — for her strawberries.

The staff at Richmond express a keen interest in the size and quality of the crop each year, according to the Richmond Correspondent.

Kay is Secretary of the store's Social Club, and feels it brings management and staff closer. One of her first objectives when she took over in 1979 was to boost funds to subsidise staff get togethers!

Kay is married with two sons, and enjoys riding, swimming, darts and table tennis.



Girl who never walked alone

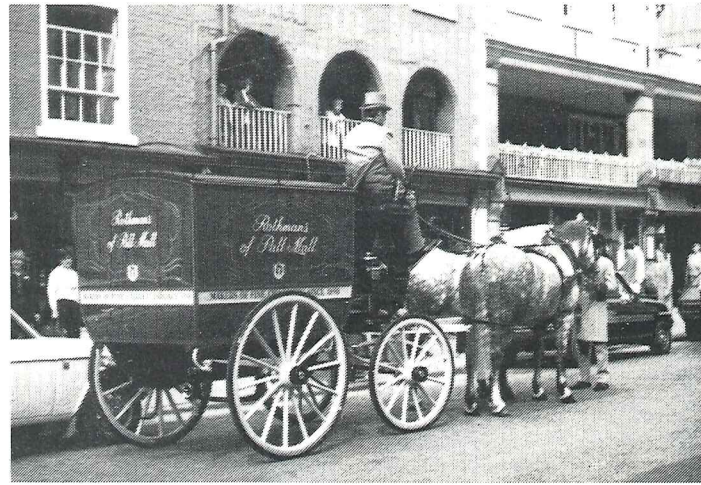
THERE'S nothing Liverpoolians enjoy more than reading about themselves . . . or at least about the Scousers who have made it: i.e. the Beatles, the Reds and Kay Deverill.

Kay who? Perhaps the name means little to outsiders, but if you were at the Liverpool Show back in 1963 you might have "blimped" — a Scouse term for observing a

pretty woman — young Kay dressed up to the nines and holding a cup (see picture).

And if you've passed the Estee Lauder counter at Redditch you may find a familiar face looking just as attractive, and with very few signs of age!

Kay delights colleagues, and customers, with tales of her days in Liverpool when Bill Shankly was next to cleanliness and they were bopping to "Hard Day's Night".



THE PICTURE shows a delivery of cigarettes from Rothman's being made to our Chester store by brougham. The coach is 116 years old and is pulled by two grey hunters.

Rothmans is the only tobacco company to deliver cigarettes in this way.

Produced by Kershaw Publications and printed by The Bemrose Press Limited/Cheshire Typesetters, Chester.

Teaser Answers

- A = 7 (Louise Roberts).
- B = 2 (Cathy Lewis).
- C = 3 (Chris Mitchell).
- D = 1 (Clare Reid).
- E = 4 (John Barker).
- F = 6 (Les Naylor).
- Page One = 5 (Joan Rochelle).

SCENE CORRESPONDENTS

- Bath: Mrs. A. Jeffrey
- Chester: Mr. B. Wilson.
- Coventry: Mrs. Perry
- Finchley: Mr. H. Davis
- Kidderminster: Miss M. Wainwright
- London Road (T.J.s): Miss J. Jameson
- Preston: Mrs. P. Newsham
- Redditch: Mrs. S. Farley
- Richmond: Mrs. K. Payne
- Shrewsbury: Miss B. Purslow
- Slough: Mrs. M. King
- Southampton: Miss H. Kirkland
- Stourbridge: Mrs. E. Mulraney
- Uxbridge: Mr. F. Catley (retired)
- Weston Super Mare: Mrs. D. Robertson
- Wolverhampton: Mrs. B. Tidmarsh
- Head Office: Mrs. J. Wishman