

CHAIRMAN'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

The Trading weeks leading up to Christmas and the January Sale days that immediately follow have a special significance to all of us in department stores.

Much of this year's effort has been directed towards the sales that we shall take in each department during this crucial period and the results for the full year will depend heavily upon them.

Every one of us is in the fight – buying, selling,

distribution and administration – and I should like to thank each reader of 'Scene', in the UK and in Canada, for their contribution to this great team effort for 1976.

And a happy Christmas, too



COSTS OUTSTRIP SALES

The group had to report a loss of £290,000 for the six months ended July 31, 1976, which compared with a profit of £585,000 in the same period of 1975.

The main reasons underlying the loss were:

- Much reduced profits from the established stores in the U.K. because we failed to achieve the sales increases necessary to meet the continuing high level of increases in expenses. Total expenses went up by about 15 per cent over the previous year. Total sales went up by only 5 per cent. And our gross profit margins were down.
- The losses made in the period by the newly acquired U.K. stores came into our figures for the first time. These were to be expected in the first six months despite an excellent sales performance.

- A very similar picture in Canada, where, although inflation has been less than in this country, a stringent anti-inflation programme has cut back customer spending at a time when costs are still rising. So in Canada, too, the four established stores produced a smaller profit, and the store at St. Catharines, opened in September, 1975, contributed a heavy first half loss (again as was expected).

- Continued hard going at Plumb Contracts, with new work in the office and shopfitting field very difficult to come by at a time when clients were cutting back on their development programmes.

The half-year results show a disappointing reversal

August proved difficult, with adverse weather in the U.K. and in Canada. September however showed a slight improvement.

The outlook for spending, in the U.K. at any rate, remains uncertain with the immense problems facing the country consequent on inflation – which is now increasing

both prices and unemployment.

We can, however, look ahead to better things. Sales in the newly acquired stores in both the U.K. and Canada are developing well, and second half profits will take the place of first half losses in most of the stores – though whether the profits will be sufficient to wipe out the first half losses remains to be seen.

Sales in the established stores in both countries are beginning to respond to the much strengthened promotional programmes.

While national economic conditions must have their influence, the full year results will mainly depend on our own efforts – in getting the extra sales and in minimising the extra expenses.



Mr. H. W. Plumb, joint managing director, is responsible for the attainment of store profit objectives.



Mr. J. M. Hoesli, merchandise director of Owen Owen (Stores) Ltd., with overall responsibility for non-food group buying.



Mr. E. Hodges, sales director, is responsible to Mr. Plumb for the central planning and direction of sales and sales promotion.

Wines and Spirits in Chester

Does the ghost of a long dead Victorian woman haunt the wine department at our Chester store? Nesta Silvey and Nancy Ashley believe it does. And what's more they claim to have seen the little old lady vanish into thin air.

The strange event happened on a Monday morning in October while Nesta was cleaning bottles



on a fixture in the thirteenth-century part of the building. She takes up the story in her own words: "I suddenly became aware of someone standing alongside me. I turned around and saw this white haired little old lady dressed in a bonnet, hip length green cape, and long grey skirt.

Vanished

"Obviously I thought she wanted serving. I turned back to the fixtures to climb down. But when I reached the floor she was gone.

"Nancy, who was also in the department was just standing there with a blank disbelieving look on her face. She had seen the lady fade away into the bitter lemon stand . . ."

Both women searched the shop high and low but could find no trace of their strange visitor.

At the time workmen had opened a cellar door in the same part of the building to test the sprinkler system. They saw nothing.

The women told their story to

other members of staff who took it as a joke. But soon events were to convince them that Nancy and Nesta had seen something.

Research

Adamant that the little old lady had appeared, the two women began to do some research of their own. And they found, that back in Victorian times where the wine market is now, a little grey haired old lady, had stumbled and fallen down an open cellar door . . . by the time help reached her, she was dead.

UK Pension fund survives inflation — so far

Inflation attacks not only our current living standards — by raising prices and creating massive unemployment — it also imperils our living standards when we come to retire — by making our pensions insufficient to meet living costs.

Pensions are built up during working years by contributions related to earnings, and pension schemes can only continue to work if the value of money remains reasonably stable, and if the income from the pension fund's investments exceeds the rate of increase in earnings due to inflation.

Inflation at the rates experienced in the last few years has seriously damaged a number of pension funds and must destroy them if comparable rates of inflation continue.

Actuarial valuation

Our own fund has just been the subject of an actuarial valuation as at March 31, 1976 — and the preliminary valuation report shows that, thanks to prudent funding, to a reasonably successful investment policy, and to a special extra contribution of £150,000 made out of profits last year, the fund has so far withstood the strains of inflation and in fact shows a small surplus of expected assets over expected liabilities. This can be considered very satisfactory, particularly in the light of the material improvements in benefits made in 1972.

An actuarial valuation is an extremely complicated mathematical exercise carried out by

statisticians specialising in pension matters. Starting with full details of the fund's members and pensioners, they make certain assumptions regarding the course of earnings, the income on moneys invested, and the levels of contributions and pensions over the next 30 or so years. They calculate the probable income and outgoings of the fund and are able to advise as to whether or not the fund is going to be able to pay the pensions promised.

So far so good. But inflation has got to be overcome or it will imperil pension funds such as ours which relate pensions to the earnings of final years of service.

With inflation at only 5 per cent a year, anyone now earning £1,500 a year and with 30 years to go to retirement would finish up with a salary of £8,250 from cost of living increases alone. With inflation running far in excess of 5 per cent, final earnings would be many many times greater, and it becomes impossible to finance pensions related to such earnings out of contributions made out of the much lower earnings of the earlier years.

Good results

A great deal depends on the pension fund's investment performance, and we check from time to time how our fund is doing against other funds. So far our results have been satisfactory as measured against other funds. But again, until money invested can earn a greater return than the rate at which its value depreciates through inflation, the future must be uncertain.

Most of our pension fund is

invested in ordinary shares, mainly in U.K. companies, but with a proportion in North American companies and a little in Australia and Japan. The pension fund does not hold shares in Owen Owen Limited. Part of the fund is always kept in 'liquid' form i.e. in cash or on deposit with banks or short term loan to the money market.

The breakdown of investments, as at September, 1976, was as follows (giving percentage of total by market values at that date):

	%
Fixed interest mainly U.K. government stock	9.1
Ordinary shares:	
Capital goods: (building, engineering, electronics)	13.9
Consumer goods: (household goods, breweries, leisure, food, stores, tobacco)	13.1
Basic materials: (chemical, oil)	14.3
Financial: (banks, insurance)	11.2
Property: (property unit trust)	0.3
Others	19.9
Short term loans and cash	18.2
	100.0

The geographic distribution of the holdings, by market value, was as follows:

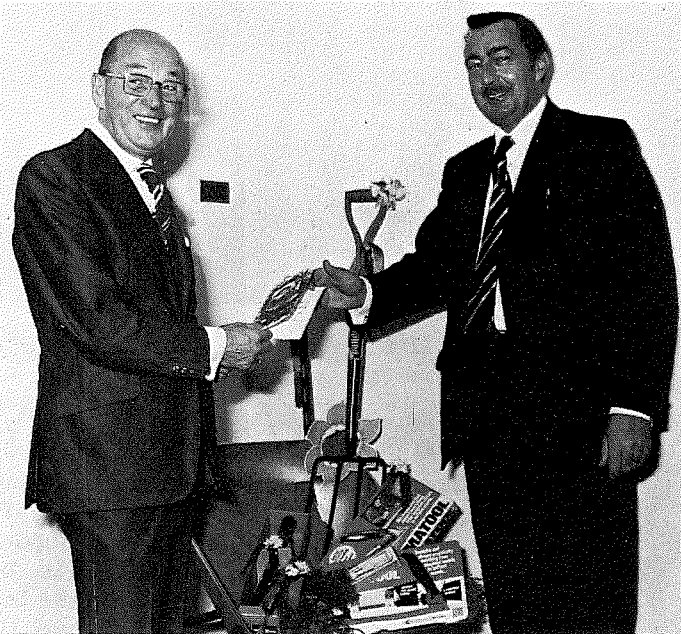
	%
United Kingdom	76.6
North America	20.6
Australia	1.4
Japan	1.4
	100.0

The proportion of the fund in overseas securities has given some protection against the loss in value of the £ sterling which has risen from the excessive inflation rate in this country.

Changes ahead

The future of the pension scheme is again under consideration in the light of the new State Pension Scheme which is to

Tom leaves Preston



come into force in April, 1978. Certain changes will inevitably have to be made to adapt the scheme to a whole new range of very complicated legislation, but it is to be hoped that the main features of the scheme can be retained in tandem with the new State Scheme provisions on either a participating or contracting out basis.

Robinsons

Pension arrangements are different in Canada, reflecting to some extent differences of practice and legislation between the two countries. The Canadian pension fund investments are managed by an insurance company. However, a recent actuarial valuation of the Robinson pension fund has confirmed that their fund, too, is in a satisfactory state, and it was possible to introduce a number of benefit improvements last January.

A present for Tom Heaps from general manager Jim Herbert to mark his retirement after 16 years as sales manager in the Audio department at our Preston store.

Following the presentation Mr. Heaps was taken to dinner, and regional director Arthur Simpkin presented him with a clock on behalf of the Chairman and Board of Directors.

FIRST FOR SAFETY

When it comes to emergency procedures, Owen Owen has long led the field. Even before the Fire Prevention Act and the Health and Safety Act, the Company have always insisted on the highest standards of safety, both for staff and customers.

In fact 100 years ago our London Road store had fire doors, and its sprinkler system, installed in 1913 was one of the first in Liverpool.

by PHIL SHACKELL
Company Safety Officer

Safety precautions are always very much in mind; at the moment sprinkler systems and automatic alarms are being installed in our Chester store to bring it into line with others in the group.

Above all, safety depends on common sense practices like training. In fact on the very rare occasions we have had fires it's been by no means unusual for us to be praised by fire chiefs. On one occasion an ex general manager was shopping in one of our stores when he heard the alarm go off. He was one of the first on the scene with an extinguisher in his hand.

Don't scream

But we hope that everyone's efforts will be a little more professional than the warehouse manager who posted the following notice:

In case of fire
Do not panic, scream or shout
Raise the alarm
And put the flaming thing out.

Ladies at the helm

Ethel Trowler has recently been appointed general manager of the Clayton Square store.

She joined the Company in 1954 as a sales assistant on jewellery at Clayton Square. She has since worked in London Road and Birkenhead, and for the past

five years was merchandise manager in Chester.

Miss Trowler enjoys music and playing golf particularly on her holidays in Scotland.

Sue Walters is the general manager of the Bath store. She joined the Company in 1968 as a management

trainee and has worked in Coventry, Wolverhampton, Erdington and Southampton. Her interests include yoga and swimming.

Pat Telkman

Pat Telkman is the general manager at Coventry.

Mrs. Telkman joined the Company in 1970 as fashion merchandise manager at Coventry and prior to her present appointment was general manager at Wolverhampton. She is a very active person and enjoys gardening, cooking and 'do it yourself'.



Pat Telkman



Sue Walters



Ethel Trowler

Married

Congratulations to Taunton staff, Stephen Cartwright and Caroline Goodwin.

Stephen is sales manager linens, soft furnishings, dress fabrics and haberdashery. Caroline is an assistant on fashion accessories.



It's the turn of our staff restaurants to come under the spotlight in this issue of *Scene*. We asked a selection of our stores to send us details of their longest serving member.

The best 'cuppa' in the town



Miss Margaret Thornton

Miss Margaret Oakley, Shrewsbury, known affectionately as 'Marg' has been working in the store for over 30 years. Her main job has always been head cleaner but through the years, due to staff shortages, she has continually been roped in to help out in the staff canteen. She can tell many a tale of what canteen facilities in days gone by - makes you think.

She says she first heard of a job going in the store through her friend Nellie who already worked there. "So need we say more than 'thank you Nellie', and thank you Marg for looking after us all these years," say the staff.



Mrs. Rhoda Harding

Mrs. Rhoda Harding is better known to the staff at the Bath Store as Blodwen.

Mrs. Harding has been with the store for nearly 20 years and her canteen has catered for not only staff but also celebrities, senior citizen parties and visitors from other stores. You name it and Blodwen will arrange it. She looks after the junior staff like her own children and her fame has spread far and wide for her cheese topped omelettes.

Jumble sales

Mrs. Harding has always been involved with the Cottage Homes whether it be a raffle, jumble sale or football sweep. Her target for the year is £500.00 - so far she has over £200.00 and she sees no difficulty in reaching her goal by April.

Mrs. Sheila Green has been assistant manager at our Southampton staff restaurant for almost four years.

Outside work she is a member of Southampton Choral Society and sings soprano. She is also a very active member of the store social committee.

Mrs. Mary Williams joined Newport store in 1966, and has worked in the restaurant kitchen and in the staff restaurant. She has lived in Newport all her life and went to the local school, leaving at the age of 14 to go into service.

At that time she worked from 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. daily for a wage of 6/3d. a week. Later she went to work in Colliers restaurant as a



"Black or white?" asks Pat Vernon from Wolverhampton.

kitchen maid, and worked her way up to become cook.

She is known throughout the store as Auntie Mary, because she is such a motherly figure.

Mrs. Etta Kelly came to Preston as a "temporary" 15 years ago, to earn a bit of extra money for Christmas - and stayed.

Etta is married with two children and her first grandchild is due this Christmas. And according to the staff, she makes the best cup of coffee in the whole of Preston.

Patricia Vernon joined Owen Owen as a trainee in August, 1969.

After three months she transferred to the Coventry store for further training and remained there for 14 months. After this Miss Vernon returned to Wolverhampton as assistant catering manager and still holds this position.

Miss Vernon is engaged to be married to Mr. John Giles, who was previously employed as catering manager in the store.

Miss Margaret Thornton joined the staff of T. J. Hughes, London Road in May, 1939. She can recall her first wage packet being 20 shillings for a week's work.

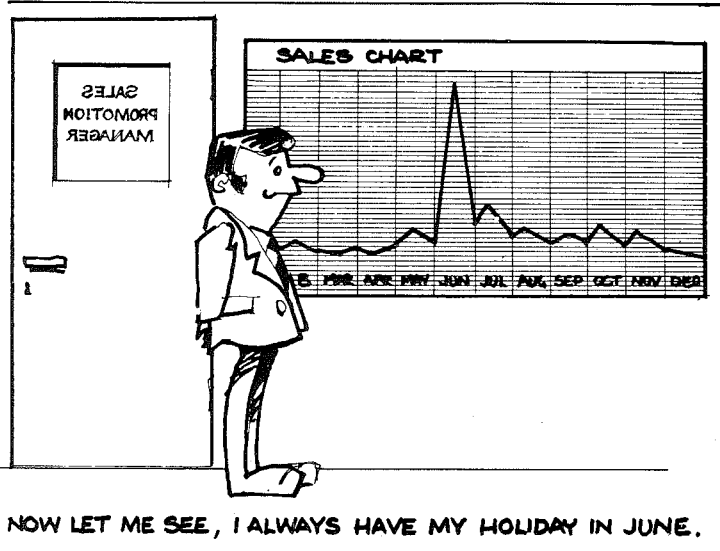
Miss Thornton has always worked in the staff restaurant as a kitchen assistant, following in the footsteps of her Aunt who previously worked in the staff restaurant as a cook. She enjoys her work and will be sorry to retire later on this year.

Miss Thornton is well known to all the staff in the store as every Christmas she entertains them by singing Christmas songs while they are enjoying the Christmas dinner. She has always taken an active part in the store's sports and social activities and can remember when staff dances were held monthly in the staff canteen as well as bingo sessions.

Jean Davies manages the restaurant at our Stourbridge store, assisted by Margaret Beard and Christine Richardson.

Jean started in the store seven years ago, in the despatch department, combining her duties with helping out in the canteen. She took charge when the manageress left.

Married with two children, her hobbies include knitting, crocheting, and gardening.



Peter Hussey

Peter's putting his stamp on poetry writing . . .

Peter Hussey turned to poetry when he was away from his family, little realising that one day he would see his work in print.

But now, six years later, he is fast earning recognition as one of the North's most promising writers.

And although Peter, who is just moving to be general manager of our Richmond store, only classes himself as a "fairly good second rate poet" people who have read his work reckon he will go far.

His initial interest grew after he read a book of poems by the Irish writer William Butler Yeats. "I started to jot down a few verses myself, but I kept my hobby very secret," he says.

"Then I moved to Bath and heard about weekly workshops at a local arts centre, designed to give beginners a chance to read in public. I

plucked up courage and went along.

"When I moved to Merseyside I joined a similar group in Chester and this year had some of my work published in an anthology of Chester Poets."

Peter has also attended a week long course run by the Arven Foundation in Yorkshire, to give poets the opportunity to meet and criticise each other's work, and he remains an avid supporter of the foundation.

Ideas

Married with three children he says that he has no set pattern for writing. "Ideas often come to me in the most funny situations. I live in Runcorn and drive across the bridge to work. One day I

decided to write a poem about bridges. I played around with the idea for some time before putting pen to paper and I think the result was one of my best. I have no set topics. I will write about anything that catches my imagination."

His poetry now fills a small black bound notebook he carries with him wherever he goes. He has lost his initial fear of reading in public and welcomes critics.

He is hoping to launch a postal service where poets in different parts of the country will be able to send their work to each other for criticism.

Chester Poets are already planning another anthology and there will certainly be a place for his work. Things look very bright indeed for Peter Hussey.

Why not try some of these tasty dishes in 1977?

Kitchen secrets from round the stores to cook when you recover from Christmas!

The festive season is traditionally a time for fine food and drink; turkey, ham, plum duff and Christmas pudding, a nip of sherry and a drop of brandy will be on all our tables when we sit down to Christmas dinner this year. They are all traditional English dishes. But around the regions people have traditional dishes of their own, equally exciting and just as tasty. So we asked our stores to let us into their kitchen secrets.

Why not try some of these recipes in 1977?

Elderflower Champagne – Evesham

1 gallon water
3 pints of elderflowers
3 lb sugar
2 lemons
2 oranges
½ oz. yeast

Pick flowers from stalks and put into a pan with the water. Bring to boil, then simmer 15 minutes. Add sugar and the fruit rind. Bring back to boil and again simmer 15 minutes, then strain and add fruit juice. Mix the yeast with a little warmed wine. Smooth over a piece of toast and place on top of the liquid. Leave until it stops fermenting, bottle and leave six months.

Liverpool Scouse – Clayton Square

1 lb. of stewing steak
2 small lamb chops or breast of lamb
Carrots
1 onion
1 small turnip
2 Oxo cubes
2 lb. potatoes

Place ingredients into pan and cover with water, add salt and pepper to taste, and cook until potatoes are soft and ready to fall.

Shropshire Fidget Pie – Shrewsbury

This pie was used a great deal in old farmhouses as a supper dish for harvesters.

Ingredients: Potatoes 1 lb.; apples 1 lb.; bacon or ham (home-cured) ½ lb.; pepper; a very little salt; sugar if apples are sour; about ½ pt. stock.

Time: to bake about 1½ hours.

Method

Put a layer of rather thickly sliced potatoes into a pie dish. Then a layer of bacon or ham cut into small slices or diced, then a layer of apples, peeled and sliced and dipped in sugar if very sour.

Repeat the layers until the dish is quite full. Add the stock. Cover with a short crust pastry. Bake first at the top of a fairly hot oven removing to the bottom for the last half hour.



Bara Lawr Gyda Gamwn Cymru Ac Wyau – Newport

Lava Bread with Welsh Gammon and Egg – Serves 4.

Lava Bread is made from a smooth fine seaweed found off the shores of South Wales. It is gathered daily.

The seaweed is thoroughly washed to remove all sand and grit. It is then boiled for 5–6 hours, until it is quite soft. The liquid is drained off. The bread should be used and eaten as soon as possible.

1 lb. prepared Lava Bread
4 slices of Welsh gammon
2 oz. oatmeal
1 oz. bacon fat
4 eggs

Fry the gammon. Melt the bacon fat in frying pan. Divide the Lava Bread into 4 cakes and coat them with oatmeal.

Fry the Lava Bread in the bacon fat for 5–10 mins. Fry eggs. Arrange each gammon slice, Lava Bread cake, and egg on a hot plate. (Lava Bread is similar in use to the English Black Pudding).

Cow Heel Pie – Preston Serves 4

1 cow heel (diced)
1 lb. stewing beef (diced)
1 large onion
1 large carrot
1 pint stock
½ lb. short crust pastry

Seasoning

Lightly fry off chopped onions and carrots and place in an earthenware pie dish. Add seasoned cow heel and stewing beef. Cover with one pint beef stock. Cover top with short crust pastry.

Cook in moderate oven for 1½ to 1¾ hours. Remove from oven and serve.

Faggots – Stourbridge

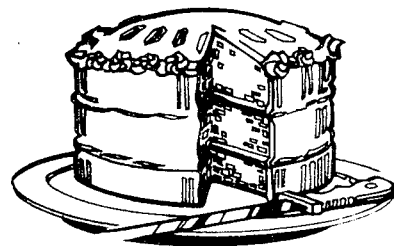
1 lb. stale bread
1 lb. pig's liver
½ lb. of fat pork or bacon
1 lb. onions peeled and sliced
6 sage leaves
½ tsp. mixed dried herbs
Salt and pepper
Pig's caul

Remove crust from bread, cut into small pieces. Cover with warm water. When soft drain off liquid and press as dry as possible. Beat smooth with a fork.

Wash and dry liver and remove rind from bacon. Cut up in small pieces and put them through the mincer with onions. Add the herbs and seasoning to the bread and then add the minced meats.

When thoroughly mixed, form the mixture into balls. Wash the caul and cut into squares. Wrap each ball in a piece of caul and pack closely into a baking tin.

Bake in a hot oven for approximately 45 minutes. They should be nicely browned. Serve with thick brown gravy, mashed potatoes and peas.



Sally Lunn Cakes – Bath

Called after the woman who invented them. She lived in Bath and is said to have made them for the Prince Regent. One recipe dated circa 1770 used to be baked in thick round, flat loaves on a baking sheet, but is now more often dropped into greased cake tins.

½ lb. flour sieved with ½ tsp. salt into a warm bowl
¾ oz. yeast creamed with 1 tsp. sugar

1½ gills milk
1 oz. butter
1 egg

Milk and sugar for glazing

Prepare two warmed greased 5-inch cake tins. Heat the milk and dissolve the butter in it, then allow to cool to blood heat. Sieve the warm flour and salt into a warm bowl. Beat the egg and add the tepid milk.

Cream the yeast and sugar and add egg and milk to it. Make a well in the flour and strain in the liquid, mix to a dough, turn onto a floured board and knead lightly for a few minutes.

Put half the dough into each warmed cake tin, cover, set in a warmed place and allow to rise until doubled in bulk, about half an hour. Bake in a hot oven about 15–20 minutes.

Brush with sweetened milk and put back into oven to dry and glaze.

Members of the Central Staff Council took a break to pose for our cameras at their first meeting on November 2. Minutes from the meeting, which took place in Liverpool, had been circulated to all stores.





Some of the staff take a break to pose for our camera outside Owen Owen, Stourbridge

Keeping the Personal Touch

When Stourbridge was a bustling Victorian town the rich flocked to Mr. J. J. Stringer's store to furnish their homes for the princely sum of £40. Ornate horse-drawn hearses clattered down cobbled streets taking the wealthy to their final resting place in oak coffins. For the poor of this glassmaking town there were cheaper shops, second hand furniture and paupers' graves.

But times have changed in Stourbridge. The rich have all moved to more lucrative pastures and the poor are not quite so poor. Old Mr. Stringer sold out to Macowards in 1960 and 12 months ago they in turn sold the store to Owen Owen.

Changes

The past year has seen a great deal of change in the store, in a town where change is not readily accepted, but already the staff are showing the town, that the personal touch so loved by Mr. Stringer is still there.

Much of it is due to general manager, Tony Baker, who was in the store in the Macoward days. He has seen new departments



General Manager Tony Baker.

opened, introduced menswear, electrical and haberdashery during the past six months, and is already making plans for future developments.

Real zest

But he is quick to point out that he has the backing of a first class staff who tackle their work with real zest. People like his secretary, Winifred Chipp, who doubles as personnel assistant. French born, she came to England on the last boat to leave in 1940 and soon became known for a fine singing voice in concerts up and down the country.

Many of the staff have been at the store since the Stringer days. Betty Allen has 22 years' service and Alma King has notched up 17. Both now work part time in the linen department.

Marjorie Round in dress fabrics is a keen sewer herself and she helps to boost sales by wearing clothes made out of material in stock. But she still finds time to take part in the local Towns Women's Guild amateur dramatic society.

Housekeeper

Elsie Stuart started in household linens eight years ago and moved to china and hardware after a year. She comes from Pevensey in Sussex and once spent five years as cook and housekeeper to the late Lord Winborne. She has many hobbies but particularly loves painting and gardening.

Molly Ryder manages lingerie. She has lived in Stourbridge for more than 30 years.

Hilda Boyes from the fashion department previously worked for Avon Cosmetics and Littlewoods.

Eve Mulraney has managed Holmes Shoes for the past 11 years. Very interested in first aid she is always on hand to bandage cut fingers.

In the Wedgwood room wedding bells recently rang for Pauline Hanks. Her colleague Jo Miller who joined the store five years ago was also married, in November.

Scouser

Diane Webb, office manager joined Stourbridge recently from our Wolverhampton store. Fred Howells has just been made sales manager after four years in the carpet department. Barry Jones joined the store from Bootle and soon made himself at home as sales manager in charge of menswear. When he is not working he is busy teaching the staff Scouse.

Driver David Miles has recently taken over the despatch department after eight years on the road and he is coping very well with the enormous amount of stock arriving at the rear entrance.

Maintenance man Jack Boulton is now semi retired, but still works as hard as ever when he is in the store.

Assistant general manager Roger Seaton is the latest addition to the staff. He has joined the store from Wolverhampton.

Great team

"They are a great bunch to work with," said Mr. Baker. "They really pull together as a team. For

example a few weeks ago we arrived to find the menswear department flooded and water pouring into the fabrics department. In next to no time stock was salvaged and the big clean up under way while the remaining staff coped with busy Saturday trading.

"By early afternoon it was difficult to convince customers that we had been flooded and figures were so good that we were afraid Head Office would insist that we had one every week."

The store itself is a quaint blend of the old and new, the new fittings, carpeted floors and modern displays contrast with the remnants of the Stringer days.

The funeral parlour laying out room is now the despatch room. Many staff still remember when the marble slabs were there, and once when a trapdoor was opened by workmen they found several urns containing ashes . . .

The store recently took over an adjoining cinema. It's being used for storage at the moment, but you can still pick out the stage and the boxes.

And in an upstairs room of the former Stringer building, staff will show you a metal hoop, part of a winch used to lift bales of hay into a loft.

At the cosmetics counter - Winifred Chipp and Jean Andrews.



DOWNTOWN WINNERS OF INTER-STORE BOWLS TROPHY

The five-pin bowling season finished off with a competition for Robinson's Inter-Store Bowling Trophy.

The host was the Centre Store Bowling League, which very sportingly produced a five-pin bowling team, though used to ten-pin bowling.

It was a real fun night. A strong contingent came all the way from our newest store in St. Catharines, suitably dressed up with banners waving. The Fruitland Warehouse came up with an excellent team as well, for the first time.

After hard fought and much enjoyed preliminaries, the Downtown team store was able to re-capture this sign of achievement, after having had to relinquish it for several seasons.

The picture shows personnel manager Miss Bechler presenting the trophy to the winning team.



HAPPY FAMILY AT ROBINSONS



Mrs. Helen Knight, supervisor of our Downtown sales audit department has retired after 33 years' service.

She had been in charge of the exchange and lay-away office, worked on cash in the credit office, ran the central wage office as supervisor and in her spare time relieved on the switchboard.

The positions she held indicate the ability, integrity and versatility Mrs. Knight possessed.

Many members of her family have worked at the store including, her son, Barrie, her brother, nephew and cousin which made their family a real part of Robinson's.

Sidewalk Sales Success for Eastgate

Eastgate's gigantic Annual Sidewalk Sale was a huge success again this year with the theme of 'Yesterdays'. An inter-store committee was set up and each area was given a theme to coincide with the 'Yesterday's' idea.

For the third year in a row the store received the trophy and gift certificate from the management of Eastgate Square for the best decorated store, and their children's area received a gift certificate from the Mail for first prize for best costumes, and second prize was presented to their Heritage Cafe.

Prizewinners in the store were:

Best costume

1st—Mrs. Chris Frewin (Children's Wear)

2nd—Mrs. Joyce Westerside (Hosiery)

Department with Best Theme

1st—Lamps and Luggage

2nd—Sportswear

Department with Best Sales Increase Last Year

1st—Lamps

2nd Furniture

Her voice will be missed



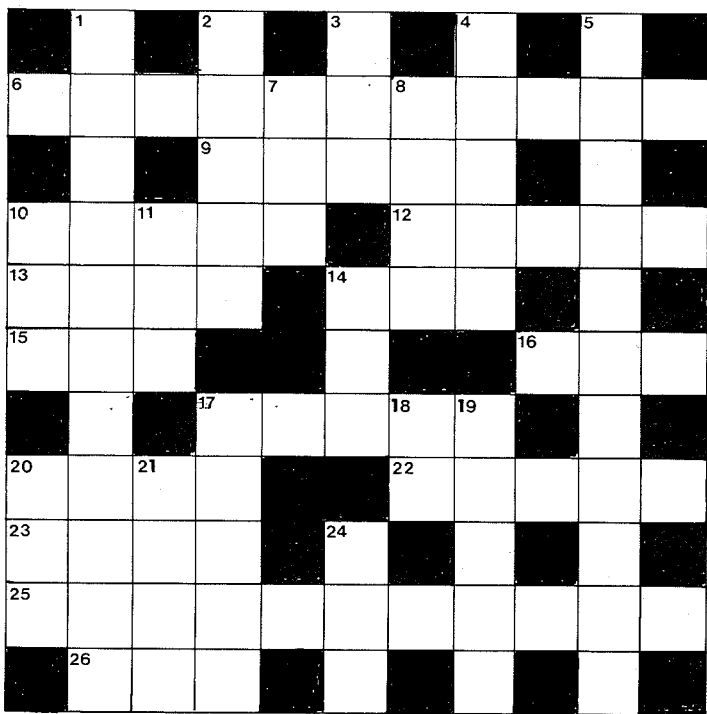
Mrs. Mildred Corman, supervisor of Robinson's Downtown switchboard has retired after 27 years' service.

To many people in our branch stores, and customers, and suppliers, Mrs. Corman was a voice, a voice which was pleasant, a voice which gave answers or found out the answers, a voice which was at all times business-like and helpful.

But for those in the Downtown store, Mrs. Corman was a real personality, setting high standards for herself and her team of operators.

She ran her department so efficiently that the switchboard was always staffed. Despite illness, or accidents, someone was there to open the board and look after our business.

In her position she had to handle much confidential business for the President and Directors of the Company. She had so trained herself to recognise voices and identify them easily with names and business that it never failed to amaze our suppliers and customers alike.



Across

- 6 Haven of Queens?
- 9 I bait for a bone.
- 10 Fissure.
- 12 Idiots food for thought.
- 13 He's smart, it's generally accepted.
- 14 Letter from a swarm.
- 15 Executed the deed.
- 16 Curve on Joan maybe?
- 17 A club we start but cannot join?
- 20 A Do-gooders circle.
- 22 Cap material perhaps.
- 23 10 this for a major scientific achievement.
- 25 It sounds cheaper but it means we pay more.
- 26 Dad's retreat.

Down

- 1 Placid comet becomes very difficult.
- 2 Room at the top?
- 3 Taxi.
- 4 One rib left over perhaps.
- 5 A governing body ending with a limited allocation.
- 7 Wallop.
- 8 Tiny coin.
- 10 Unhappy about upset ads.
- 11 Easily this, could find you on the wrong track.
- 14 Order or offer.
- 17 Eve was the first.
- 18 George's decoration.
- 19 Best people think they are.
- 20 Hasn't got now.
- 21 No score darling.
- 24 Wet clay mix.



Ed's 30 year record



Ed Tribe will be completing 30 years with the G. W. Robinson company next June. He has now the distinctive honour of being the employee with the longest service record.

After graduating from High School Mr. Tribe went into the banking business and joining the Dominion Bank in Fort Francis, Ontario in 1936, was transferred by them to Winnipeg, Manitoba and from there he joined the R.C.A.F. shortly after the outbreak of war in 1940.

centrally in the Downtown store and many of the methods have become quite sophisticated. Two years ago the billing system became computerized with all its accompanying headaches.

Evenings

Thirty years now seems to have a special importance in Ed's life. He has just celebrated his 30th wedding anniversary. Our picture shows him with his charming wife Helen. They have three daughters: Dawn married to a chartered accountant in Montreal they have a five-year-old son; Becky Lynn - buyer for a chain of luggage and handbag companies; and Debbie still in high school working evenings and Saturdays selling in the Robinsons Burlington Store.

Decorator

Ed's special hobbies are gardening and travelling and whenever in England he makes sure he drops in to Liverpool to look up his friends at Owen Owen.

His friends would agree that he is also an excellent interior decorator. His home in Burlington is beautifully designed with exquisite colour schemes and home furnishings. With such a home goes his very warm and friendly hospitality.

Temporary

Though he did not manage to get overseas he was kept very busy preparing men for service abroad.

Ed got back into civilian life and banking in 1945. Two years later when he and his family moved to Hamilton he applied to Robinsons "as a temporary measure" - but was hired as an office manager and never looked back from that day onwards.

With the growth and development of the Company his own work and responsibilities grew.

Grown

When Owen Owen took over Robinsons in February 1954 he became the credit manager. Since that day the credit business has grown from 10,000 accounts to over 100,000. Forty to fifty per cent of business is done on credit. He controls the operation of all five stores. Billing, collection work, authorizing of purchases is done

CENTRAL STOCKROOMS OPEN THEIR DOORS AGAIN

Central stockrooms in Bootle have opened their doors again after a five-year closure. A major part of the building has been re-occupied for 'heavy' department stock, moved from St. Anne Street and Kempston Street warehouses, and for the new central china stockroom.

Warehouse manager, Don Mitchell who has been with the company for 36 years, and transport manager Ernie Cowley, who has 46 years' service, are in charge of the 60 members of staff. "But

we all work together as a team," explains Don. "When everyone's work is so varied you have to learn to rely on each other a great deal."

Three buildings

Spread over three buildings the stockrooms handle everything from furniture and china to electrical goods. They deliver to all our stores and also to customers in the immediate area, including Crosby, where Ken Skupski, who handles the warehouse's stock of kitchen furniture, plays for the local football team, Marine.

Ken, aged 21, started his football career with Tranmere Rovers at the age of 15. He transferred to South Liverpool 12 months later. In the years that followed he went on loan to Stoke City and played for Aston Villa for three months. Now Marine's number one goalkeeper, he once trained with Gordon Banks.

No worries

Like every major storage place, central stockrooms would be lost without its cleaning staff. But with Jenny Yates and Flo Maddox keeping the place tidy Don and Ernie have no worries.

Jenny has been with the company for 13 years and Flo for nine and they know what the job is all about: "They're generally a fairly tidy lot here," said Flo, "provided you keep on the job all the time. With packaging and materials and general rubbish always around you are never without something to do.

But we love our work and would never change."

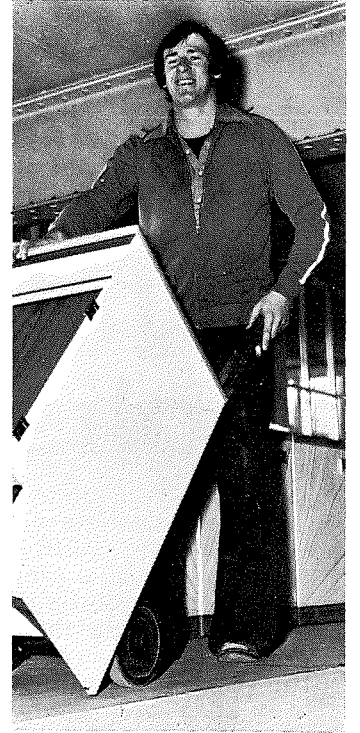
It's a view that's shared by all the staff.



● Cleaners Flo Maddox (left) and Jenny Yates – they love their job.



● At the desk are Ernie Cowley (left) and Don Mitchell. Pushing the trolley is number one goalkeeper, Ken Skupski.



MR. LLOYD OWEN OWEN

The death has occurred, at the age of 74, of Mr. Lloyd Owen Owen, of Garthgwynion, Machynlleth, Montgomeryshire, the younger son of Owen Owen, the founder of the business.

Mr. Lloyd Owen was appointed a Director of Owen Owen Limited in 1924 when he was 22, his father having died in 1910 and his elder brother, Harold, having been killed in a railway accident in Mid-Wales in 1921. Mr. Owen remained a non-executive director until 1956; after his retirement from the board he continued to take a close interest in the development of the business. For many years he was also a trustee of the Owen Owen No. 1 Trust which his father had set up to provide benefit for employees and former employees of the business who were in need.

Service

Outside the business Mr. Lloyd Owen's principal interests lay in public affairs in Wales and especially in Montgomeryshire. He gave distinguished service to the County as a member of the County Council for 48 years, being appointed Chairman of the Council in 1946. He was High Sheriff of the County in 1929.

Before the war he was an active member of the 7th Battalion (T.A.) Royal Welch Fusiliers and he served throughout the Second World War.

After the war, his keen interest



in forestry led to his appointment between 1946 and 1962 as a Forestry Commissioner and Chairman of the Welsh National Forestry Committee, and in 1957 he was invited to be Chairman of a Committee appointed to examine water resources in Wales. Later, as Chairman of the Montgomeryshire Water Board, he served on the Severn-Trent Joint Authority which was responsible for the construction of the Clywedog Reservoir in Mid-Wales. He was appointed a C.B.E. in 1962.

In 1928 Mr. Lloyd Owen married Megan, daughter of the late Edward Jones, of Caersws, Montgomeryshire. They had one daughter, Mrs. Ruth Lambert, who will be known to some members of the staff for the studies she has undertaken into Staff facilities in the stores, and twin sons, David Owen who is a barrister in London (and succeeded his father some years ago as a trustee of the Owen Owen Trust) and Edward Owen who farms in Shropshire.

Bob Reid – man of integrity

Bob Reid died on September 28, aged 57 after a short illness. The shock of his death has been all the greater because he appeared to have made a complete recovery from the major operation he had undergone in the earlier part of the year.

Our immediate thoughts and hearts go out to his wife, Lynn and son Robert, who are known to so many in the company.

Small band

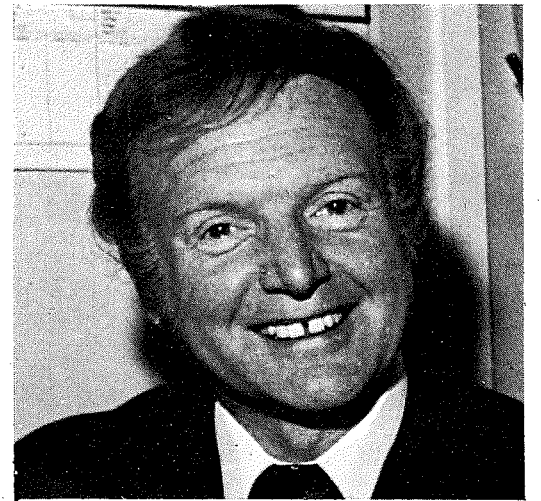
He joined T. J. Hughes in 1934 at the age of 15 and shortly afterwards transferred to Clayton Square, when the organization consisted only of the two Liverpool stores which were run independently. Mr. Reid was thus one of the small remaining band of pre-war staff who saw the business grow out of its small beginnings in Liverpool and who contributed personally to this growth.

Including war service, Mr. Reid served 42 years with the firm. From central buying to store merchandising, he was soon appointed to his first general management position in Blackpool and then later, to Preston. During 1961 and 1962 he was with Robinson's in Canada as merchandise manager.

At the centre

On return to England, Mr Reid ran the Coventry store for two years before moving back to Liverpool. The last 11 years of his life were spent at the centre of activities, first with the Owen Owen stores and from 1967 onwards in the T. J. Hughes group. His final appointment as merchandise director tragically coincided with the operation he was advised to undergo.

He will be remembered for a long time for his personal qualities – his loyalty to the organisation in good times and in bad, his personal integrity and for the sense of fun and infectious enthusiasm which characterized his dealings with other people.



Former merchandise director, Bob Reid, who tragically died in September.

A Super Colleague and Friend

Not only the staff at Owen Owen, but many in the rag trade were saddened to learn of the death of Brenda Console. To all in London Buying Office, it was loss of a super colleague and a good friend.

Brenda joined the fashion team in 1972 as dress buyer and achieved considerable success in a department which is notoriously difficult and variable in trading. Prior to this Brenda had been a fashion buyer with Peter Robinson and her earlier career had seen her as a well-known fashion model, from where, no doubt, she developed her chic sense of dress.

To those of us who have worked with her we will remember Brenda for her sense of humour and great friendliness.

