



THE NEWSPAPER OF THE OWEN OWEN GROUP

Scene

No. 4 MAY, 1971

CRUCIAL YEAR FOR GROUP AHEAD

A NEW OWEN OWEN

GROUP pre-tax profits for the year ended January 31 were £617,000—£268,000 more than the previous year. Eight UK stores achieved their targets, but Canada contributed 30 per cent of the profit from only 22 per cent of the sales, stressing the importance of improving home performance.

Chairman Mr. John Norman said. "This year is a crucial one for the group. We must show by our performance that 1970 was only the starting point of a

Mr. Norman said that urgent steps were being taken to rationalise selling and non-selling areas in the Liverpool stores and to reduce the overhead cost of the business on Merseyside.

Success in Canada

In Canada, both stores reached a record trading profit, over 26 per cent up on the previous year. Burlington did exceptionally well and the downtown store achieved its budget despite dislocation while the building was being modernised.



Mr. Norman

recovery trend, from which we shall make real growth. We have the capacity to do just this".

Sales of £25m.

Total sales for the year were £25,059,000, of which the UK contributed £19,043,000, Plumb Contracts £464,000 and Canada £5,552,000.

Despite the greatly improved showing, stores in England produced just 66 per cent of group profits from 76 per cent of sales.

The stores which reached their profit targets were — Coventry, Southampton, Preston, Chester, Finchley, Wolverhampton, Birkenhead and Bootle Strand. There were exceptionally good results from Chester, Wolverhampton and Bootle.

Urgent steps

Of the four stores which failed to reach their targets, the two Liverpool stores continued to suffer from local problems. London Road and Clayton Square contributed only 15 per cent of the UK group trading profit last year, compared with 50 per cent in 1967/68.



The new Owen Owen store at Erdington, near Birmingham, as it was when it was acquired earlier this year. Since becoming part of the group, it is trading as an Owen Owen store. See page three.



Preston line-up

These seven delightful young ladies are members of the Owen Owen Preston netball team, which plays in a local league every week. Although the picture shows them on their way down, personnel assistant Miss J. Goldstone assures us they are chasing the league cup, under the expert guidance of their captain Miss T. Baxendale. They are from left: J. Lomax, C. Nicol, S. Boston, S. Brierley, J. Cragg, C. Jenkins and Miss Baxendale.

Your New scene

—is bigger and brighter, with more pages for more news and pictures about you and where you work.

If your store, or department, has not received full coverage in the past—now is the time to do something about it, before the next issue. *Scene* is **YOUR** magazine and **YOUR** news is what makes it tick. We need your contributions to make it good to look at and interesting to read.

Tell us

If you have a story about your work, or the way you spend your spare time—send it to *Scene*. If you keep hedgehogs, or collect train tickets—tell us about it. If you play the bagpipes, or design dirigibles—drop us a line. And if you say you don't do *anything* interesting—we don't believe you!

You can send your contribution (no poetry, please) to the Editor, care of the secretary's office at Liverpool, or simply tell your personnel manager, who will pass it on to us.

Here are some hints:

- Give us full christian names and ages, if you can
- Don't assume we know who you are talking about—give us their full title
- Tell us when and where it took place, and how and why it happened
- Have you got a picture? Is it black-and-white? (We cannot usually print colour, or Polaroid photographs.) Ideal size is whole plate—about 6½" by 8½"
- Don't worry about the grammar—we will probably re-write it to conform with the style of the magazine;
- And don't forget to add your name, so that we can get in touch, if necessary.

We want to hear from you, no matter how small a contribution you have. Remember, *Scene* is **YOUR** magazine and it needs plenty of **YOUR** news.

They were offered a choice—sightseeing, skiing or a steam bath, followed by a rub down in the snow. The bath was lovely, but . . .

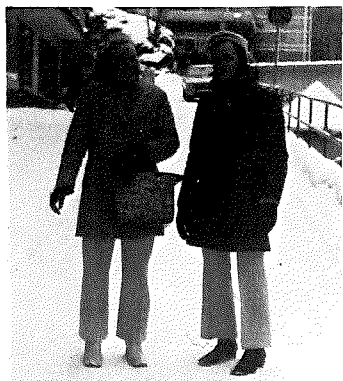
AUSTRIAN "CURE" GOT COLD SHOULDER FROM WINNING QUARTET!

FANCY a steam bath, followed by a cold rinse and a rub down in the snow? This invigorating treatment was offered to four Owen staff who won a trip to Austria in the Handyman Best Saturday Result Competition. Taking the trip were winners from Birkenhead Mr. Frank Widmark and Mr. Bob Warren, from the DIY department, and runners-up from Bootle Mrs. Agnes Stading and Mrs. Sylvia Share. Mrs. Stading works in the DIY department and Mrs. Share is a stockroom assistant.

The quartet spent four days in Austria in February and agreed that the trip was "out of this world".

Heavy Snow

It started with a night at the Swiss Cottage Hotel, London, followed by a plane to Nuremberg.



Mrs. Stading (left) and Mrs. Share from Birkenhead.

The party should have landed at Munich but their progress was impeded by heavy snow and a diversion to Nuremberg meant an additional two-hour coach trip to destination Salzburg.

Shopping

On Saturday morning the group went shopping and became more familiar with the Austrian currency of schillings, and soon learned that the weather is vastly different from ours. The streets, or strasse, were covered by heavy snow, and workmen were busy with enormous shovels clearing the pathways.

After lunch at the hotel, they went by coach to the birthplace of Mozart, and toured the cathedral

and churches. Salzburg is dominated by the Festung Fort which towers above the city, but the approach roads were deep in snow and a visit was impossible. The highlight of the tour was a trip to the place where *The Sound of Music* was made.

Too cold

The next day the four went on a trip to the mountains and the centre of the winter sports. It took three hours to reach the destination, but once there they had a

choice between sightseeing, skiing, or having an outdoor steam bath followed by a cold rub down in the snow! The baths are reputed to aid in the relief of rheumatism and arthritis due to the chemicals in the water.

Mrs. Stading said, "The hot bath was lovely but we only put a toe in the cold water and did not venture out into the snow—it was freezing!"

In the evening they went to the Mirabell Palace Hotel for a tradi-

MARILYN IS YOUNGEST GIRL MERCHANDISE MANAGER

Twentythree-year-old Marilyn Bowles has just been made a merchandise manager at the Clayton Square, Liverpool store—and the youngest female merchandise manager in the group—less than seven years after joining the company as a junior trainee.

Driving

Marilyn, whose interests include driving and interior decorating, started her career with Owen

on August 31, 1963 and, after 18 months' training, became A.S.M. of sweets and tobacco at Clayton Square. She was made acting sales manager of girls' wear



Miss Marilyn Bowles

tional Austrian meal and a display of folkdancing.

Typical

The last day of the holiday was Monday and by 11 a.m. they were already at Munich, with Austria a long way behind. Nine hours later they arrived at Lime Street, Liverpool, and were welcomed home in typical English fashion—heavy rain.



New Queen at Coventry

in March, 1967, and stepped up to S.M. nine months later and took charge of the additional baby linen, children's underwear and children's shoes sections.

She then spent a year as staff trainer and went to Stafford House as central merchandise trainer, when she was set the task of producing a presentation handbook for the group haberdashery departments. The handbook fixed guidelines for the presentation of stock based on colour, size and type.

Mother

Marilyn, who is married to an engineer (her married name is Russell), says she loves "slapping wallpaper on" and walking her "gigantic" collie dog.

Her mother used to work in the check office at Clayton Square up to a few months ago.

Top beauty consultant

Beauty sales consultant at Clayton Square, Miss Winifred Ross, came top of her group and won a day in London and a special prize in a competition organised by Helena Rubenstein.

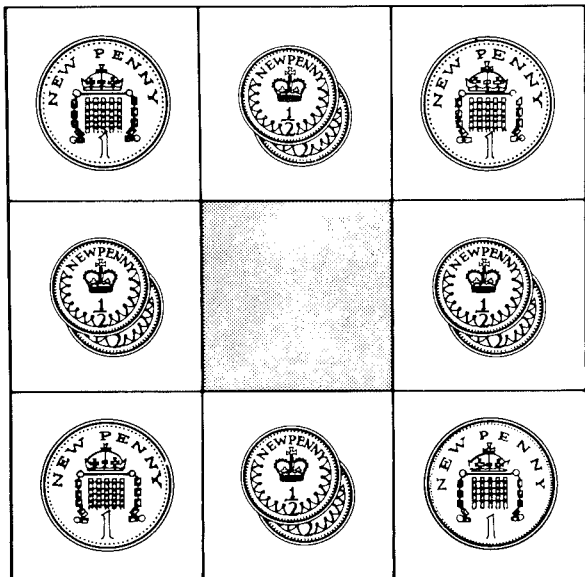
Miss Ross out-pointed 78 other consultants in the contest based on takings over a period of eight weeks and led her group by a clear six points.

BLACKPOOL COLLECTS 10,000 STAMPS

The Blackpool store has collected 10,000 Green Shield stamps to help buy a kidney machine. The stamps have been sent to the television programme "The Golden Shot", who organised the appeal. The staff are also busy collecting postage stamps from incoming letters and parcels to aid African leper colonies and have presented £23 to a local school for handicapped children—the proceeds of a "Wishing Well".

NEW-PENNY PUZZLE

If you think you are good with decimal money, here is your chance to prove it! Rearrange the coins so that each side of the square totals 2½p. All squares must contain at least one coin. Don't use the centre square. The answer is on the back page.



The latest addition to the Owen Owen 'family'—the former W. M. Taylor's at Erdington, on the fringe of Birmingham—is the group's 13th store in the U.K., two overseas cousins in Canada making 15 stores altogether. And, judging by the enthusiasm with which all concerned are helping to create the store's new image, the outcome is undoubtedly going to be lucky—for the shoppers of Erdington.

LUCKY 13 MEANS TO BE

MIDLANDS SHOPPING MECCA!



General manager Mr. Eric Hodges has worked for Owen Owen since he was 16.

STAFF and management are fussing over the Erdington store as though it was a sweet young thing being groomed for her coming-out—attending to such matters as make-up and dress, and ensuring that nobody is displeased by the transition. For the store has to flirt with all the customers and offend none.

Announcing the purchase of Taylor's, the chairman, Mr. John Norman, said the business would fit very well into the group's trading pattern in the Midlands area. "Coventry and Wolverhampton are only 40 minutes away on either side of Erdington and Taylor's will soon be trading as an Owen Owen store with our regular merchandise selection and values. We have been very pleased to welcome the management and

fashions are situated. Other improvements, like the installation of escalators and a new interior decor, are planned, and Miss Lucy Halford of Halford Associates, London, has been asked to produce a design for consideration by the Owen Owen board.

General manager Mr. Eric Hodges said, "The store has strong household departments and the trend will be to maintain this strength and to develop and ex-

and liaising with central buyers to ensure that the stock coming in is tailored to requirements.

If Mr. Martindale had not taken a "temporary job" at Clayton Square, Liverpool, three years ago, he would probably be training as a pilot at this moment. He said, "I had always intended to go in for civil aviation. But I joined Owen Owen as a temporary salesman and became so interested that I decided to stay."

Owen Owen statistical systems are also being introduced at the store and this is the responsibility of office manager, Mrs. Christine Butterworth, who has worked there for four years.

Mrs. Butterworth (26), who lives in nearby Sutton Coldfield, is in charge of customer accounts. She joined W. M. Taylor's as office supervisor, in 1967, after seven years in banking.

Cheerful

Now she is cheerfully adapting herself to the new routine and helping others to make the change, with the co-operation of Mr. Cyril Cowell, store accountant from Coventry.



Office manager Mrs. Christine Butterworth confers with Merchandise manager Mr. Ian Martindale.

staff of Taylor's into the group and feel sure that they will quickly become fully-fledged members of the Owen Owen team."

pand the fashion and fashion accessory departments. It is in a very good position in the middle of the high street, where a great deal of development is due to take place shortly."

Front Room

Owen Owen took over the store on February 1, 1971—84 years after Mr. W. M. Taylor and his wife opened a shop in the front room of their home in Potters Hill. The business flourished and grew, and established its headquarters in Erdington in 1957.

Some 10 years later work started on rebuilding and extending the store and when redevelopment was completed in June, 1969, it became Birmingham's biggest suburban department store with over 32,000 square feet of selling space and with car parking at the rear for 40 cars. It has an electronically-controlled air conditioning system which changes the air 6-10 times an hour.

Emphasis on Fashion

The store was closed for three days to enable the re-organisation to take place. The whole ground floor was changed round to give stronger emphasis to the fashion departments and similar moves took place on the first floor, where children's wear and women's

Liverpool

Mr. Hodges (33) was born in Liverpool and has worked for Owen Owen since the age of 16, when he joined the yardage department at T. J. Hughes in London Road. Since then he has worked at Clayton Square, Coventry and Southampton before his first general manager appointments in Birkenhead and Bootle Strand. In 1970 he was general manager in Chester during one of its most successful trading years.

He enjoys trout fishing—and his work. He said, "I get a great deal of personal satisfaction from retailing. It presents a challenge and there are measurable achievements against which you can judge yourself."

Decided to Stay

The store's achievements will also depend to a large extent on the efforts of merchandise manager Mr. Ian Martindale, a major part of whose job involves installing Owen Owen merchandise systems,



Gwen Pearson (18) is a sales assistant in the glass, china and fancy goods department on the ground floor.

She says, "I think it is important that the office looks upon itself as part of the store. Although we are the non-selling side and contribute indirectly to the profit, we nevertheless have an important part to play."

One of the most successful departments in the store is the soft furnishings department on the second floor—the "domain" of Mr. John



Workroom forewoman Miss Nellie Harrison (right) has been an upholsterer in the store for 35 years.

Hopkinson, sales manager for soft furnishings, drapery and electrical. Mr. Hopkinson (42) has worked at Erdington for four years. He previously spent nine years at Lewis's in Leeds and managed a small textile shop in Stockport. He is a keen golfer and likes pottering about in his garden.

He says, "I have tried very hard to build a department that stands

When Miss Harrison started at Taylor's in 1935, the workroom was a small room at the back of a garage. Now, happily, it occupies a part of the top floor, where it gets plenty of daylight and is spacious enough to work in comfortably.

In contrast to Miss Harrison's 35 years' service, personnel assistant Miss Fiona Broughton (22) has a long way to go! She has worked at Erdington for just three



Mr. John Hopkinson soft furnishings SM discusses business with personnel assistant Miss Fiona Broughton, aged 22.

out in the store, because I think that we are more of a specialist section. We attract people from good class areas, mainly on personal recommendation, and have a very capable staff.

One of our regular customers came in at Christmas and spent £550 on large velour curtains, with pelmets, tails and swags. There are not many workrooms that can produce this kind of work and it does great credit to our workroom staff, some of whom have worked here for more than 30 years."

Forewoman

One of these is Miss Nellie Harrison, of South Yardley, Birmingham, the workroom forewoman who has been an upholsterer in the store for 35 years.

Miss Harrison shares the workroom with 13 other women upholsterers. The work they do is sometimes far from run-of-the-mill loose covers and curtains. They have also made in recent years: motor racing posters, canopies for cocktail bars, slippers for the display staff, cash bags for the counters, sashes for beauty queens—and ribbons for soldiers' socks!

months. But she is already well-acquainted with the town, as she lived there for a spell when she was studying at Aston University.

Pottery

Miss Broughton, who makes pottery in her spare time (none of which has yet made its way to the china department, as far as we know) is responsible for working out the staff requirements for the re-organised store, which at present employs some 90 full-time staff and 30 part-timers. She joined Owen Owen in July last year as a graduate trainee and was acting assistant personnel manager at London Road for six months.

Taylor's has come a long way since 1887 and now a new chapter is being written in its history as an Owen Owen store. When the re-organisation is complete and, looking farther ahead, when the town's shopping centre has been fully developed, the store should prove a veritable mecca for shoppers, who already come from a wide area.



Fashion buying controller Mr. John Hoesli encountered deep snow on his travels in Canada in March.

FASHION TRIP FOUNDERS IN SIX-FOOT SNOW

Six foot snow drifts confronted fashion buying controller Mr. John Hoesli during a two week visit to Canada and North America in March.

The man-sized snow drifts resulted when the worst snowstorm on record struck the city of Montreal, Canada, producing 33 inches of snow in just three days. Mr. Hoesli, who was looking at fashion buying systems at our stores in Burlington and Hamilton, said, "It was comical trying to visit suppliers in such terrible conditions. The snow was 5-6 feet high in some streets and cars were abandoned all over the place. Give me a good old English winter any time!"

more emphasis on casual wear and retailing concepts are very advanced."

Good Ideas

Mr. Hoesli said he had brought back some useful ideas which might be introduced into Owen Owen fashion buying systems. He also visited department stores in New York and before returning to the U.K., travelled to Denmark for the annual Copenhagen Fashion Week.

Back at Home

From Burlington, Canada, to Birkenhead, Wirral, has come Mr. Bob Forrester, after more than four years across the Atlantic. Mr. Forrester, who was operations manager for G. W. Robinson, took up his appointment as Birkenhead general manager on April 13.

He leaves a deep impression in Canada—especially in amateur dramatic circles. For he was closely connected with the Burlington Little Theatre and, just before leaving Canada, he received the best director award in the Western Ontario Drama Festival for his direction of "A Flea in her Ear". It was his third best director award.

TEST CANDIDATES FROM COVENTRY WIN SIX DISTINCTIONS

Coventry led the field of successful candidates in the latest company proficiency test, with four ordinary passes and six distinctions.

Over the group, 77 candidates sat the test and there were 38 passes and 15 distinctions.

The other store results were: Clayton Square—five passes, three distinctions;

London Road—three passes, one distinction;

Southampton—eight passes, one distinction;

Preston—five passes;

Doncaster—two passes;

Chester—six passes, one distinction

Finchley—two passes;

Wolverhampton—three passes, one distinction;

Birkenhead—two distinctions.

There were no entrants from Blackpool and Bootle Strand.

Best Candidates

The 15 candidates who gained distinctions were:

Miss S. Colson (Wolverhampton);

Mr. A. Davidson (Coventry);

Mr. P. Griffiths-Grindell (Chester);

Miss E. Heap (Coventry); Miss C.

Hobson (Birkenhead); Miss J.

Howett (Southampton); Mr. P. W.

Latham (London Road); Mr. N.

Moister (Clayton Square); Mr. R.

Murdoch (Clayton Square); Mr.

E. Nicholas (Clayton Square);

Mr. S. Poulton (Coventry); Miss

J. Ritchie (Coventry); Mr. P. White

(Coventry); Mr. D. Wingrove

(Coventry); Miss A. Wright

(Birkenhead).

Warm Welcome

It was Mr. Hoesli's first trip to Canada. He said, "The management of Robinson's gave me a fabulous welcome and there was hardly a minute to spare."

He saw how "downtown" (city centre) department store development was giving way to out-of-town shopping, with easier parking and more pleasant surroundings. One-level department stores with huge car parks were springing up and proving immensely popular. "Families in Canada think nothing of driving 30-40 miles to shop and the two-car family is not a luxury but a necessity. Retailing is very different and the shops seem to cater for every type of customer and carry bigger ranges. There is

25 Years' Service

The following people have received presentations marking 25 years' service with the company:

Miss B. Heath (Stafford House)

retired;

Miss A. Quine (Clayton Square)

Miss E. Burnett (London Road)

retired;

Miss E. M. Mayman (London

Road);

Miss L. Shaer (Bootle Centre)

Miss K. McGrath (London

Road);

Mr. D. J. Kershaw (Clayton

Square);

Mr. D. A. Beasley (Plumbs)

Miss P. N. Cunliffe (London

Road).

innocence

A woman customer visited the lingerie department of the Wolverhampton store with her small boy and tried on several bras. Rejecting one, she said, "That's very nice but it's much too big."

To which her son replied, "Well, can't you keep it until you grow into it?"



In the swim

Doncaster girls Irene Booth, Jean Crossland, Cherry Raymond and Pauline Anderson look like they are about to take a plunge. In fact, they are modelling swimwear for an advertisement in a local newspaper.



Buy sale makes £89

A bring and buy sale at Clayton Square in March raised more than £89 for the Merseyside Drapery Trades Charities.

The sale was held in the staff restaurant and there were five stalls, selling such items as china, jewellery and home-made food.

Overflow!

The staff of the Southampton store responded wholeheartedly when a request was made for blood donors. The result was an overflow of benevolence.

They gave 64 pints and another session had to be arranged to accommodate disappointed employees.

Retired

After six years in the ticket office at Bootle Centre, Mrs. E. Thompson has retired. She will be missed by her friends, but will not be altogether out of touch. For her husband, Mr. V. B. Thompson, is a dutyman at Bootle. He has worked for the company for 15 years.

Taking stock after 47 years..

At least half a million pieces of furniture passed through the hands of Mr. Joe Culshaw of 21 Boxdale Road, Mossley Hill, Liverpool as stock receiver for Owen Owen. Mr. Culshaw, who retired in February, worked in the receiving room of the St. Anne Street, Liverpool, warehouse for over 30 years.

He joined the company in October, 1923—the year that Baldwin became Prime Minister—at the age of 17 as a porter boy in London Road. His job was cleaning windows and keeping the brass plate on the door shining. After a spell as a goods lift driver, he joined the St. Anne Street staff in 1935.

Checking

As a receiver, his responsibility was for checking and recording deliveries and passing goods in good condition to the stock room before they found their way to the Clayton Square store.

Blind Date

Mr. Culshaw and his wife, Rose, have a married daughter, Collett, who lives in Aigburth. He has an interesting tale to tell about how he met his wife. "A pal of mine—Arthur Worrall, who works at the company's central warehouse at Bootle—was courting and asked me to make a foursome with his companion's girl friend who was a waitress in our restaurant at Clayton Square. It was a blind date, really, but we met, fell in love and were married five years later."

Born in Everton, Mr. Culshaw is nevertheless an active Liverpool



Mr. Joe Culshaw

Pampered like a potted plant—the computer that needs people . . .

HAVE you ever wondered what happens to the paper tape on your cash register, which dutifully, day-in, day-out, records every transaction, or how you come to be paid accurately each week? Both involve the computer at Bootle centre—a computer that is very dependent on people.

People have to tell it what to do and spell out elementary clerical systems, like teaching a child with amazing capabilities. But the advantages are tremendous—faster, more accurate results and a reduction of menial clerical tasks.

Humidity

The Owen Owen computer is five years old. Called a Honeywell 200, it cost £110,000 and is pampered like a potted plant—cared for in an air-conditioned room at the correct humidity to operate with complete efficiency. Its "keeper" is computer division controller Mr. Alun Blackwell.

Mr. Blackwell, a chartered secretary and former accountant, has been in retailing for 30 years. He is head of the division which employs more than 30 people—two systems analysts, five programmers, one operating manager, six operators, four control clerks, one punch room supervisor and 12 punch operators.



Chief operator Mr. Harry Christian (left) with operations manager Mr. James Wafer.



Control clerks and punch operators (from left): J. Hankin, L. Glover, P. White (supervisor), P. Hincks, L. McDonald, J. Shenton, A. Thomas, C. Ditchfield, H. Daly, C. Keith, B. Watkins, C. Dorrian and B. Winterton.

He said, "Whatever the computer does, it has to be fed with its information by people. If you don't feed in the right information you get even more wrong answers. The well-known phrase is 'garbage in—garbage out' and the computer works so fast that a little garbage in produces a lot of garbage out. So it is very important that the clerical systems are thoroughly under-

. . . these people



Computer operators Peter Murdock (left) and J. O'Gorman.

stood and accurately performed.

"You have to examine every system in fine detail so that every possible eventuality has been looked into."

Credit Systems

The computer's main application is in Owen Owen credit systems, that is monthly and budget accounts, HP and credit sales. About 135,000 accounts are processed by the computer.

If a customer buys a chair on an existing budget account, the sales assistant makes out a bill which is passed to the central credit office at Bootle. A punch operator "copies" the details on to punch tape, which is then fed into the computer on a reel which contains thousands of credit transactions. The computer collects all

price of the merchandise. The computer scans the tape and produces figures which show the sales per department for each product—figures on which the buyers base their buying plans and from which the general managers are able to decide the most effective departmental layouts.

The computer and the paper tapes have made it possible to determine with far greater accuracy the sales turnover of the various types of merchandise.

Wages "Suite"

There are 29 programmes, or stages, involved in what Mr. Blackwell calls the full payroll "suite". Every week the wages offices in each store submit to Bootle any changes in the regular payroll, such as days off, bonuses, or illness. The information is coded on cards in the language of the computer and placed on magnetic tape. With this information the computer prints the pay slips (at speeds up to 950 lines a



Controller Mr. Alun Blackwell (left) with (left to right) programmers Miss L. McEwen, Mr. S. McMullen and Mr. D. Hodgson, and systems analysts Miss M. Wethered and Mr. A. Rowley.

What Do You Know??

A short quiz to test your general knowledge. Give yourself four points for each correct answer (no cheating!) and reckon your score out of 100. There are no prizes, but you can take a bow if you get more than half right. The answers are on the back page.

1. Who wrote the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire"?
2. What is a crosier?
3. Where is the longest river in the British Isles?
4. Who was the biographer of Dr. Samuel Johnson?
5. What was the name of Henry VIII's second wife?
6. When is St. George's day?
7. Where did Napoleon die?
8. What was a groat?
9. Where would you expect to find a ptarmigan?
10. Where is Honolulu?
11. Who said, "The greatest of evils and the worst of crimes is poverty"?
12. What is the largest lake in the world?
13. What do the Roman numerals CMXCIX stand for?
14. What is the currency of Denmark?
15. What size is foolscap?
16. How long is a lawn tennis court?
17. The height of a horse is measured in hands. What is a hand?
18. Who was Pan?
19. What is the national emblem of Canada?
20. Which is your silk wedding anniversary?
21. Which grows up—stalactites or stalagmites?
22. What is the longest chapter in the Bible?
23. What do the letters N.B. stand for?
24. What is the collective name for kittens?
25. When was the Mutiny on the Bounty?

minute), which are sent to the stores, where the wages are made up.

Full Marks

The payroll operation for 3,500 staff involves 5-6 hours of staff and computer time every week at Bootle.

"The computer rarely goes wrong," said Mr. Blackwell, "and if it does make an error, it is usually because it was fed with the wrong information. It has never to my knowledge gone wrong and produced a result which could be mistaken for the right one."



Sweet tooth!

Don't ask Barry Glasspell if he takes one lump or two—he takes as many as he can get his hands on and his total to date, including loose packets, is 248.

Barry, sales manager of men's wear at Southampton, collects sugar knobs, and three-quarters of his collection comes from abroad. His unusual hobby began in September, 1963, when Barry and his wife were on honeymoon. Barry says they lost their way and were saved when he remembered a sugar knob in his pocket bearing the name of the hotel, which he gave to a taxi driver.

He expects his collection to get a boost this summer. He has asked all his friends to bring back sugar knobs from holiday. "They were quite sweet about it," he said.

Laughter



Owen's Own lines are off to a flying start

WHAT do the following products have in common? Shirts, sheets, trousers, towels, electric lamps, ladies' coats, paint and grease-proof paper. The answer is that they all bear the name Owen's Own—a name it is hoped shoppers will come to regard as a sign of good value and sound quality.

It was a year ago that the board of Owen Owen made the decision to introduce the new brand name, replacing previous names like Clare Ashton, Paul Clayton, Young Tempo, Rowen and 365. Since then the label *Owen's Own* has been appearing on more and more merchandise.

Strength

Senior buying controller Mr. Vincent Baylis said, "We hope to establish the name *Owen's Own* as synonymous with good value, in the same way that other stores have built up brand names. The field of own-brand products has expanded very rapidly in the last few years. It also provides us with



a strong base for advertising and a way of keeping the company name in the public's mind."

The change to Owen's Own is nearly complete—more than 50 items now carry the name . . .

Competitive

To qualify for the name *Owen's Own*, products must be of good quality and bought to sell at a competitive price. And they must be exclusive to Owen Owen in their styling, labelling, or packaging.

One of the latest lines to be introduced bearing the new name is fashion trousers. "We wanted to capture more of the young market," said men's clothing buyer Mr. Douglas Briggs. "Like other items, they are made to our own specifications and we supply the cards and woven labels which are attached to the garment. "We have ordered 14,000 pairs

of trousers for the Spring in all the newest cloths, like Crimplene, and more than half are fashion trousers."



The *Owen's Own* brand labels and packages are designed by Mr. Richard Tankard, the head of features and own-brand labelling in the central advertising office, who is responsible for point-of-sales material and window display aids for the stores.

Mr. Tankard has designed all the *Owen's Own* labels produced in the past year. He passes them to Mr. Baylis for approval, then, if the go-ahead is given, to the advertising studio for the finished artwork to be done. Print buyer Mr. Norman Handley, who buys the Owen Owen stationery for the group, then arranges for the labels to be printed.

It all adds up to a hopeful invasion of the own-brand market armed with good value and reliability.

Pat on the back

A Doncaster housewife has written to her local newspaper, praising the "polite and friendly staff" at Owen Owen.

She said, "I find myself returning to those shops in town where all the staff show some interest and pleasure in serving their customers."

Oo-ahh! That's Better!



THE office staff at Stafford House, Liverpool, must be among the fittest girls in the company. For every Wednesday after work they proceed to the training room on the second floor to loosen their limbs and shed some inches doing exercises to music.

In the picture

Keep-fit girls (from left) Susan Tavistock, Moya Tracy, Catherine Hughes, Sylvia Brimage, Jean Watson, Dorothy Horne, Janet McCoy, Marie Smith and Marion Noon.

The keep-fit class, which now boasts some 12 members, was the idea of 17-year-old Moya Tracy, who is a clerk in the personnel office.

Sixth Form

"We had a keep-fit class in the sixth form at school, so I thought it would be a good idea to start one at work—and everybody was in favour of losing some weight before the summer holidays!" said Moya.

Ballet Expert

The class, which meets for an hour, is taken by Miss Jean Watson (24), who is secretary to sales promotion manager Mr. David Rennison. Jean has worked at Owen Owen for five years and is obviously the right person for the job.

She is a ballet and tap-dancing expert and has her own ballet

school, where she teaches 35 children aged 3–12 years old. She has been dancing for 16 years and is a member of Birkenhead Amateur Operatic Society. Jean brings a record player to the keep-fit classes and conducts the

exercises in time to the music. Jean has only one complaint—the men have taken no interest in a similar venture!

Nimble Nina jumps for joy at Doncaster



Hot Pants girls Nina Fidler (top) and Angie Broadhead (taking the strain) release some energy outside the Doncaster store where they work in the Rare Set department.

Wins trip to Holland

Chester trainee Miss Jacqueline Dickinson, aged 18, has won £50 and a trip for two to Holland in the "Chester Chronicle" Queen of Commerce Contest.

Jacqueline came second in the final, after being picked by the public from a newspaper photograph to represent the store, where she has worked for nine months.



Seeing double—twice!



Rosemary (left) and Rosalind



Alan (left) and Colin.

There's no need to blink. It's not trick photography—there really are four of them and we agree—it's two much. But what better for a bumper new issue of 'Scene' than a double dose of identical twins?

The deceptive duo (top) are sisters Rosemary and Rosalind Young aged 31, who work respectively at Bootle centre and Clayton Square.

They joined Owen Owen on the same day in August, 1954, but (fortunately for the staff and customers) Rosemary (left) is a credit office clerk and Rosalind is a sales assistant in the lingerie department—so not too many people get confused.

Changed Places

"We enjoy being twins and would not change for the world," said Rosemary (or was it Rosalind?) "When we went to school, the teacher used to split us up, one at the front of the class and one at the back, so that she could identify us. But we used to change places.

"People still get confused. Some of the staff don't believe me when I say I have a twin sister. They think I work at Clayton Square and Bootle!"

Wrong Twin

The sisters get mischievous delight from the confusion they cause—but they always tell each other when people make the mistake of talking to the wrong twin.

There is less trouble telling Colin and Alan Roberts apart. For Alan wears a moustache and wider sideboards than his brother. Otherwise they are identical in looks and personality—and they are both commercial artists in the central advertising department at Stafford House.

The brothers, who are 24, live in Chester and have worked for Owen Owen for more than five years.

BIG CHANGES at COVENTRY

Big changes have been taking place at Coventry, involving new escalators and the complete re-fitting of the ground floor. When the operation is complete, it will have cost £150,000. But the result will be easier shopping and more effective displays.

The re-fitting was started last year and is being completed at the moment. Lino tiles have been replaced by a carpet and extensive new fixtures are being installed in the central area and walls. New canopies are being provided and the whole ground floor is being re-decorated.

Tricky Operation

Seven new escalators have been installed, comprising four down escalators and three going up. The project was split into two phases. Both involved a tricky operation to get the escalators into the store.

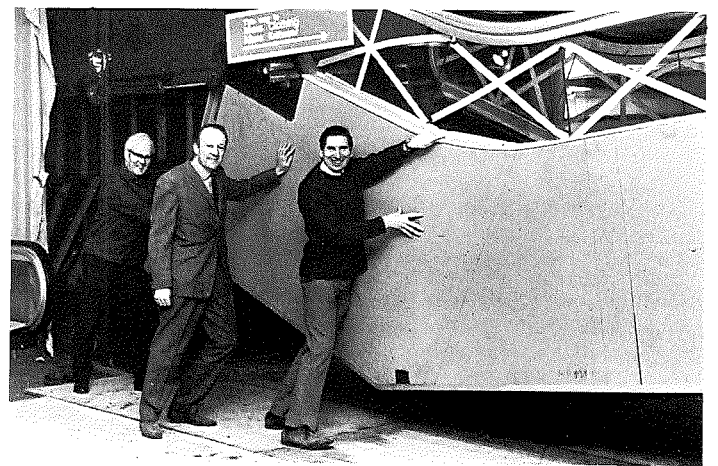
Two sets of doors at the store's Leofric entrance had to be dismantled to make room for the machinery to pass through and the difficult task of manipulating the escalators inside took place after 11 o'clock on Saturday night,

when full advantage could be taken of the weekend closing.

Staff Helped

A crane was used to lift the machines from a lorry to the pavement where they were manoeuvred through the doors on a cradle. The store staff spent Saturday evening moving the ground floor counters to make way for the escalators and returned on Sunday to replace the fittings, after the machinery had been screened off. The customers did not notice a thing!

The first phase, involving the replacement of the "up" escalators was completed last September and the second phase—the installation of the "down" staircase—was completed last month. Regional engineer Mr. Bill



One of the new escalators being installed at 2 o'clock on a Sunday morning with (from left) Mr. Rolf Hellberg (architect), Mr. Murden and Mr. Hemsworth.

Gleave, of the technical services department, co-ordinated the operation, with the help of general manager Mr. Ken Hemsworth. The new Otis escalators are better looking and simpler to maintain, and they enable the customers to travel more easily and comfortably

between the store's five floors. Mr. John Murden, controller of technical services, said, "All aspects of the changes were taken into account at planning level and the operation was carried out with the expertise of selling, design and technical staff."

RAISING STANDARDS AND KEEPING DOWN COSTS

TREMENDOUS improvements have taken place in the standard of staff restaurants in the past 18 months. Modernising and redecorating has occurred at nearly all the stores and service buildings, and restrooms have been added where none existed before.

The man behind the changes—the latest and most visible in the restaurant development that has taken place in the past few years—is director of catering Mr. Stan Willer.

Domestic

Mr. Willer has worked for Owen Owen for nearly 20 years and he has been in charge of catering since 1956. He set himself the task of rationalising the operation and improving the economics of catering.

"The restaurants were run on very domestic lines," he said, "the first thing we did was to alter the buying and stock procedures, in

—There's a tug-of-war against rising prices in the new-look staff restaurants

order to put it on a firm basis of cost control. This gave us a clearer picture of food costs and we were able to standardise prices in staff restaurants in all the branches. There has been a continual tug-of-war against rising prices, but we have always managed to put off higher charges until the last moment."

Problem

Miss Beryl Birchall, catering manager, said, "Men are less understanding about price increases than women because they don't do the shopping."

One of the problems has been convincing staff that the restaurants are not making a profit.

"If we buy an item for 6d., we must sell it for 10d," said Mr.



Staff of the London Road store enjoying their lunch in the new restaurant.

Willer. "Sixpence covers the cost of the item, while 5d. goes on wages. Add to this at least 2½d. for overheads, like lighting, cleaning and replacements, and we are making a loss of 3½d., which, at the end of the year, adds up to £29,000!"

A Planned Diet

The staff restaurants used to serve only coffee, tea and biscuits at morning breaks—now some of them offer cornflakes, egg on toast, bacon sandwiches and other delicacies. Lunch has also been improved, and there is always a lower-priced dish available.

"We frown upon sandwiches at lunchtime because we feel that everybody should be able to get a substantial meal to keep them going," said Mr. Willer. "We take a

real interest in the diet we serve."

One of the biggest improvements has taken place at T. J. Hughes in London Road, Liverpool, where the restaurant has been moved from the top to the ground floor and completely redesigned. It now uses the same kitchen as the customer restaurant. It has new furniture and up-to-date decor, and the food is kept hot under infra-red lamps.

Mr. Willer said, "I feel that our restaurant staff are in a key position. They are often the butt of irritable shop staff and we impress upon them the important part they can play in providing a relaxed atmosphere in which harassed shop staff can unwind. I like to think that, in a small way, we contribute to happy customer relations."



Food is kept warm under infra-red lamps at London Road.

SOUTHAMPTON ON TELEVISION



Cameras from Southern Television visited the Southampton store three times at the beginning of the year. The topic—decimalisation. They spent a full day filming in the store's training room and more than 1½ million viewers saw interviews with assistant personnel manager and trainer Mrs. Doris Willmer and store accountant Mr. Eric Jones.

The Owen Owen badges apparently showed up very well on the screen! In the picture: Southampton's decimal currency advisers.

He waded through flooded floor to rescue cash...

When German bombers struck at Coventry in late 1940 and destroyed the Owen Owen store there, Mr. George Holt was one of the men who watched helpless as the building blazed. He had come to Coventry three years before to help prepare the new store for opening. On this terrible night he saw his work and thousands of pounds go up in flames.

Only Two Weeks

By rights, Mr. Holt should not have been in Coventry at all. He was 15 when he became an apprentice joiner for R. O. Jones, the firm which did the building



Mr. George Holt.

work for T. J. Hughes in London Road. Nine years later he joined the staff of T. J.'s under general foreman Mr. Frank Rees. It was Christmas, 1934 and he was told he would be there for only two weeks! Mr. Rees sent him to Coventry in July, 1937, to help get the despatch and receiving rooms, fitting rooms and offices ready for opening in September and he was

asked to stay on as foreman joiner.

Mr. Holt was on Home Guard duty when the bombers struck. "I was going home for my dinner when the chap across the road told me the store was on fire. I picked up Ed Sakne (foreman electrician) and Ernie Boyle (carpets and furniture manager)—all members of the store fire-watching team and Home Guard—and we drove to the store.

"The whole city was in flames. We tried to get into the building, but the police held us back. We could not do anything."

Climbed to Top Floor

Mr. Holt helped to salvage what was left. He waded through the flooded basement to the cash safe, put the cash bags into buckets and, together with Miss Arthurson and secretary Mr. John Fawcett, wheeled them on a trolley through the streets of Coventry to the bank. He also climbed with other men to the top floor to rescue the staff records and wage books which were lowered by rope to the street.

New Store

Trading continued in a number of temporary shops until the new store was opened in 1954. It was on the same site as the old store, but much larger. Mr. Holt was made maintenance manager in the same year and stayed at the store until May, 1965, when he joined Plumb Contracts Limited—the Owen Owen shopfitting and contract furnishing organisation—as building supervisor and transport manager.

Mr. Holt has been married for 40 years and enjoys gardening and boating. He lives at Fillongley Road, Meriden, five miles from Coventry.



The scene is separates

THE scene is separates. The scene is short. Playsuits, shorts, blouses, striped knitwear all in bright gaudy colours such as yellow, red, electric blue and a touch of lime and orange all crash into favour and give us a change from the lilacs and pinks which led us into early spring.



The climate has not been kind to lasses like Libby Lawton, seen here lamp-posing at Bootle New Strand, where she is an assistant in the fashion department. Libby, aged 22, warms to hot pants, but not when they cause chills. She is looking forward to sunnier days. And so are we!

PLAYSUITS which are this year's version of last year's mini dresses, are being made in a variety of cloths from cotton jersey to print voiles. Many of them have novelty appliques such as hearts and nursery rhyme characters. Try and spot the Mickey Mouse look.

SHORTS still fast selling and now a summer must for holidays, discotheques and warm weather wear.

BIBS and BRACES can still be seen bouncing along leading the shorts field.

BLOUSES in voile, Tricel and satin with large important sleeves, bell-shaped, ruffled or butterfly. Small prints and floppy styling add up to the Forties Look.

Print cotton T shirts give us a basic alternative.

KNITWEAR in stripes has gone berserk and gives us a zany alternative to the soft blouse theme. If you want a more positive look wear a wrap around stripe jumper with your shorts.

ACCESSORIES. Socks worn above the knee. Tights with patterns at the side of the leg. Tap-dance shoes or shoes laced up the front. Sandals with "Roman" influenced cross-straps to the knee. Crazy bows in hair. Long, curly hair Rita Hayworth style. Plummy brown lipstick and nails. Thin eyebrows. Buy a badge and wear it pinned to your shorts!

And what do you wear to cover up on colder or rainy days—a Midi jersey coat or raincoat unbuttoned to the waist to show an expanse of leg!



One of the biggest events of recent weeks at Southampton was the successful annual staff dance at the local Royal Pier ballroom, where Mrs. Rosemary Callaway (pictured) was unanimously elected Miss Owen Owen for 1971.

It was a swinging affair, with dancing, discotheque, pop groups and competitions for a variety of prizes. The store's pensioners are not forgotten, however, and tea parties are held every month, when about 20 retired employees get together to swap reminiscences.

Were You Right?

Here are the answers to the general knowledge quiz on page five.

1. Edward Gibbon.
2. A bishop's staff or crook.
3. In Ireland. It is the Shannon.
4. James Boswell.
5. Anne Boleyn, 1507-36.
6. April 23.
7. On the island of St. Helena.
8. An old English coin, worth May 5, 1821.
9. In the Scottish Highlands. It is the reign of Edward III.
10. The Hawaiian Islands in the kind of grouse.
11. George Bernard Shaw in Pacific.
12. Lake Superior, North America.
13. 999.
14. The krone.
15. 13½ in. by 17 in.
16. It is 78 feet long.
17. Four inches.
18. The God of shepherds.
19. The maple leaf.
20. The 12th.
21. Stagmites.
22. Psalm 119.
23. Nota Bene—note well.
24. A kindle.
25. On April 28, 1789. (Score full points if within five years.)

Coins solution

