



THE NEWSPAPER OF THE OWEN OWEN GROUP

Scene

No. 11. SUMMER 1974

NEW STAFF SHARE SCHEME

UNDER the newly introduced staff share ownership scheme the company nearly doubled the number of its shareholders when, on 6th May, some 1,720 of the company's management and staff were allocated ordinary shares in Owen Owen Limited.

The new scheme, which was introduced for all eligible U.K. staff, in succession to the earlier profit sharing scheme which had been in operation since 1943, will enable staff to build up a worthwhile holding in the company's shares over their period of employment. The shares are held in trust for five years, during which time they cannot be transferred or sold.

81,000 Shares

In total, some 81,000 shares were allocated to staff at a gross cost of nearly £52,500, bringing individual entitlements ranging from 79 shares to full-time staff with over 15 years service, to 20 shares to part-time staff with between 2 and 5 years service. Entitlement under the scheme is determined solely by length of service and is the same for management and for staff.

Distribution of shares can only be made in any year provided that the previous year's U.K. trading profits exceed a pre-determined minimum level. Once that level is passed, an amount of money is allocated for buying shares for distribution to staff—and, broadly speaking, the higher the level of the U.K. profit, the larger the amount of money that can be

allocated to buying shares for distribution to staff.

The other major factor that affects the number of shares which can be distributed in any year is determined by the price of the shares on the Stock Exchange. This varies from time to time in line with the general level of stock market prices and also in line with the stock market's view of the progress and likely profitability of the company.

Over the past year, the price has been as high as 125p per share and as low as 30p per share—the low point being reached early this year when the stock market as a whole took a plunge, and when department stores' profitability in general was expected to be badly hit by the lighting restrictions introduced during the energy crisis.

Following the publication of the company's trading results in April, the share price recovered

and stood at 43p on 6th May when the shares were allocated.

The mid-market price of the shares is published each day in many newspapers, including *The Times*, *Financial Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Liverpool Daily Post* and *London Evening Standard*.

Price Link

With this year's allocation price of 43p being near the lower end of the range, it means that it was possible to acquire a larger number of shares with the money available than if the share price had been higher. If the price of the shares is higher in future years on the allocation date, it may mean that a smaller number of shares will be available for distribution. On the other hand, any such increase in price will mean that this year's shares will have increased in value.



"Dicker" Richards retires

Miss Florence ("Dicker") Richards, counting house manager at the former Colmers store in Bath, has retired after 49 years with the firm.

Miss Richards began as a 17-year-old schoolgirl on a two year apprenticeship in the counting house. In those days everything was written in pen and ink. Only many years later were machines introduced and later still computers.

A working member of the store's recreation club, Miss Richards will be missed for her keen sense of humour and her fund of amusing stories about the firm's earlier days.

She is pictured here at her retirement party with some of her colleagues. Left to right—Miss M. Chandler, Mrs. A. Hodgkinson, Mrs. J. Perrin, Miss Richards herself, Miss S. Harris and Miss M. King.

ROGER'S LUCKY DAY

A pools win or just a lucky day? Roger Tubb, catering manager at Wolverhampton thought it must be one or the other when his morning mail contained a cheque.

But 15p doesn't seem to go very far these days.

However, the explanation for the cheque goes a long way towards boosting one's faith in human nature.

A customer from Birmingham, relaxing with a coffee in the Terrace Restaurant after her fashion shopping, had inadvertently left without paying.

The cheque arrived with a most apologetic letter and a promise to re-visit the restaurant.

Mr. Brent's 25 years

A gold clock was presented to Mr. T. Brent, the general manager of our Chester store, by the Chairman at a meeting with the directors.

The presentation was to mark Mr. Brent's 25 years service with the company.

After being a sales manager at Southampton and Doncaster, for a short period Mr. Brent worked as stationery buyer at head office. He spent a further ten years as dress fabric buyer before becoming major fashion buyer and later selling controller.

He spent some time as assistant general manager, Clayton Square, before being promoted to general manager of Finchley, Bootle and finally Chester.



Mrs. Hughes and camera win the day

BATTLING Clayton Square pensioner, Mrs. Norah Hughes used her camera to help persuade the authorities to ban heavy vehicles from using the road outside her home.

Mrs. Hughes, who lives in Stanley Lane, Eastham, Wirral was fed up with the noise and the danger of the huge lorries speeding past her front door.

So out came the camera she had bought in a jumble sale for 25p, and soon she had collected snaps of 45 culprits.

The pictures were shown at a public enquiry, and it was decided that a by-pass should be taken to avoid the village. In the meantime lorries over 2 tons have been banned.

Sales last year increased by over a third, from nearly £33 million to just over £44 million. The profit before tax was £1,633,000 against £1,409,000 in the previous year, showing an increase of £224,000.

Increased rates of taxation have hit group profits particularly hard this year—after tax, the profit came to £806,000 against £886,000 in the previous year, a decrease of £80,000. So the tax collectors in England and Canada took £304,000 more, and £827,000 in total.

U.K. Stores

Sales started off magnificently in February and March last year, as the public indulged in a great spending spree before the introduction of VAT. But then the rate of sales increase dropped away through the summer months, and for a time we did less well than our competitors. A great effort, however, in December and January recovered much of the lost ground—and this in the midst of the energy crisis, with shortened trading hours, gas lamps and reduced heating! In his statement to shareholders with the annual accounts, the Chairman paid tribute to the way in which the crisis was met and overcome,



Mr. W. Shuttleworth.

saying, "The recovery during the final months of the year owed much to the magnificent efforts of all management and staff in these adverse conditions, and I would like to place on record the Board's gratitude to them".

Best performances among the Owen Owen stores came from Chester, Finchley and Wolverhampton. Neither Clayton Square nor Coventry matched the previous year's profit earning. Southampton, after a poor start, made a

BUSINESS REVIEW

tremendous recovery in the later months of the year.

In the T. J. Hughes stores, London Road again lost some ground in profit terms, but this was principally due to the below par performance of the leased food department which has now closed down. Birkenhead continued to perform well, and Bootle Strand maintained its successful development. The two branch stores, serviced from London Road, largely made up for the



Mr. G. G. Wilson.

profit shortfall from the parent store.

The Colmer stores achieved a higher profit than in the previous year, aided by the closure in September of the small off-centre Bristol unit in accordance with an earlier decision by the Colmer board to close the store if its results did not improve. Central buying was established in these stores at the end of January, 1974, and in mid-April they changed to trading under the Owen Owen name. Once the initial problems of integration are overcome and the group systems and trading policies are firmly established the three stores in Bath, Taunton and Weston-super-Mare should make a worthwhile contribution to the group.

Within the existing stores, 1973 saw major improvements to selling areas in Clayton Square, in Coventry and in Southampton, while in Chester the first phase of a redevelopment programme for Bridge Street was completed. The second phase has now started.

It is hoped to open a new Owen Owen store in Birkenhead during 1975 in the new shopping centre being built there.



A view of the store at Taunton.

Canadian Stores

It was, as we have said, a great year for sales in Canada, with volume going up from £9 million to £14.5 million, helped a little by the change in exchange rates, to some extent by excellent performances from the original Downtown store and Burlington, but mostly by the additional sales from the Hamilton Centre and Eastgate stores.

The selling area in Canada has more than doubled in the last two years—thanks in part to the new impetus given to expansion by the agreement with the Hudson's Bay Company. The Canadian sales are now just over half as much as in the U.K., though profit last year was only just over a quarter as much. This was due partly to the lower levels of profitability of newly opened stores as they build up their sales volume, partly to the cost of pre-opening expenses which have to be incurred for some weeks or months before trading



The Robinsons store at Hamilton Centre.



Mr. F. W. Dakin.

actually starts, and partly to the carry forward of profit on long term credit accounts (which we bring into the reckoning only as payment is actually received).

With no new store opening in Canada this year, there is every prospect of a much improved profit contribution from Robinsons. It had been hoped to open an additional Robinson store in Kitchener in 1975, but unfortunately it was not possible to reach agreement with the shopping

centre developer on the right terms, and negotiations for that store have been discontinued. Robinsons are now looking at a number of other possible new developments, with the aim of maintaining their steady programme of expansion. Three of the Canadian stores—in the newly built shopping centres of Burlington, Hamilton Centre and Hamilton Eastgate—all have more than 100,000 sq. ft. of selling area on one floor and all have massive car parking space immediately adjacent.

Plumb Contracts

Plumb's had an excellent year, building on the solid foundations of the past few years when they established a reputation for high standards of craftsmanship, for achieving completion dates, and for quality of design. Their premises in the centre of Coventry have been enlarged by the acquisition of the lease of the adjacent

have a record of which they can be justifiably proud.



Mr. T. Doyle.

The Current Year

There is perhaps only one thing we can be sure about in 1974-75. It is not going to be easy, either for the individual battling with the rising cost of living or for the company battling with the same inflationary problems.

In Canada, it will be a year of consolidation and planning for the future. In Plumb's progress may be slowed by the cut-back in new developments by their major client companies in the present economic situation, and they are now looking for further work in European countries following a successful job in Belgium last year.

In the U.K. retail field, there are very considerable cost increases—not just of the 12% or so inflationary level, but much greater than that in local authority rates (some of which are up by nearly 50%), in postal charges (up 28%), in electricity charges (up 30%), in extra national insurance stamps and so on. On top of this, there is the compulsory reduction in gross profit margins, and a possible cut back in overall personal spending as similar increased costs eat into the household budgets.

The answer must lie in increased sales through better merchandise, better values, better presentation and better service so that we achieve a greater share of what our customers are able to spend. To the end of May, at any rate, we have started reasonably well. Now we have to keep it up.

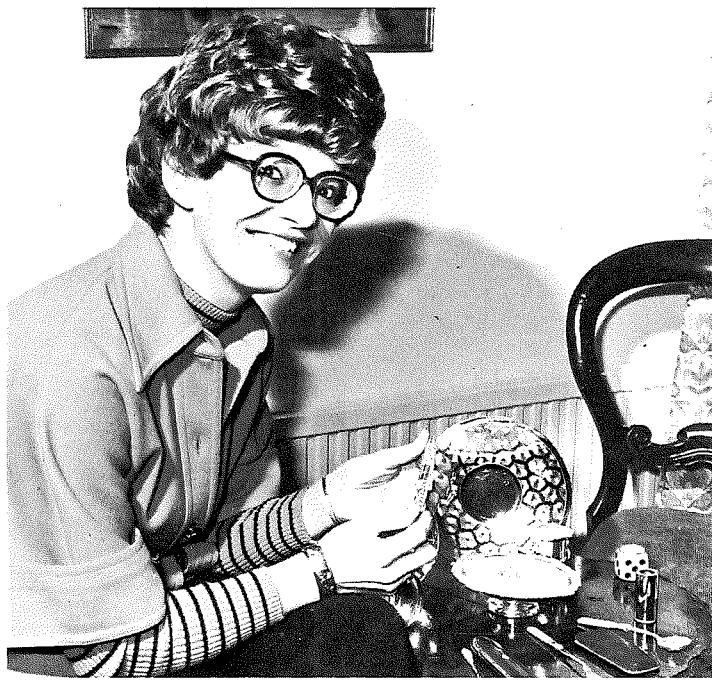
From Hems to Hats

Janet Viner's career began in Norman Hartnell's workroom—sewing hems!

She was trained in dress design at Croydon College of Art, and after gaining experience in pattern cutting, dress design and selling, she joined Owen Owen last year as a buyer's assistant and has just been appointed buyer of rainwear and millinery.

Still deeply interested in the practical side of fashion, she teaches dressmaking one night a week at her local art college. Her other hobbies include motor racing, travel and the theatre. And, of course, her fiancé—she became engaged earlier this year!





Miss Mee sits down to inspect some of her silver.

HARD WORK SUITS ME(E)!

THERE'S no place like home. Elizabeth Mee, group personnel controller, couldn't agree more—but she hardly ever sees it!

Because during the week her job takes her to our stores all over the country, and at weekends she often likes to visit the friends she has made on her travels.

So Miss Mee holds precious the time she can spend relaxing in her flat, which overlooks the sea at New Brighton in the Wirral.

But she loves her work too. "I can never get enough done," she says. "And a busy, even hectic working life suits me—I work best under pressure."

To say Miss Mee's job keeps her busy would be something of an understatement. As the ultimate head of personnel management in all our stores, she often spends as many as three days each week away on business and sometimes more.

The company's management development programme is centred at her office too, and Miss Mee is personally responsible for interviewing prospective managers and management trainees.

Since leaving Liverpool University in 1965 with an arts degree in geography, she has gained experience in all aspects of personnel management.

Her first job was as a graduate trainee with Owen Owen, and later she moved to T. J. Hughes, Birkenhead, as staff manager.

Advancement

Miss Mee left the company for a period of six years. "The reason was to advance my career, but I always knew I would come back into the retail industry—retailing was my first love."

During those six years, with Courtaulds and Carrington Viyella, she was able to study personnel management more closely and also to specialise in training and industrial relations.

At Meridian, a subsidiary of Courtaulds, she had the challenging task of setting up a personnel department from scratch while the labour force increased from 500 to 1,000 in two years.

But during her absence Miss Mee still kept in close touch with Owen Owen, and when she was offered a job as personnel manager at the Coventry store she accepted.

Only days after taking it up though, she was brought back to Stafford House and there she has stayed—watching the group expand to bring her more and more of the work she enjoys.

Personal Contact

"When the company was small, it was easy to keep in touch with everyone," she points out. "But as we grow bigger, and our branches spread all over the country, it makes it much more difficult."

"It's impossible for me to know everyone in the company by name, but personal contact remains through store management."

However, Miss Mee emphasises that she is always ready to help where necessary, or to chat about any individual problems which staff may have. "I like to think the company is large enough to provide first-class staff policies but also compact enough to keep the personal, family touch."

When she finds time, how does Miss Mee wind down?

With books ("I devour novels")

and music. She is a more than competent pianist, in fact she studied music very seriously until going to university. At school in Nottinghamshire, her home county, she accompanied choirs, played in orchestras and was a keen competitor in music festivals.

She can also play the church organ, and used to deputize for her uncle in her local church. But now she plays for her own pleasure and gets as much enjoyment from listening.

Travels Abroad

Miss Mee finds a lot of her time at home taken up by dusting—"a nightmare!" Because she is an avid collector of antiques, china, glass and silver. Not to mention all the souvenirs she keeps of her travels abroad.

And they must be too numerous to mention, as travel is another great love of hers.

Each year Miss Mee makes a point of having at least one holiday abroad, and over the years she has made a wide circle of friends in Europe.

This summer she is off to Crete to stay with friends she met on one of her cruising holidays.

But there is one travel ambition Miss Mee has yet to fulfil—she has always wanted to visit Africa.

For a woman whose ambitions so far have all become realities, the safari should not be too far in the future!

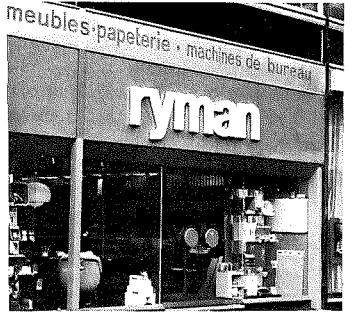


Experimenting in the kitchen. Miss Mee reads cookery books "like novels" and enjoys entertaining friends with new dishes.

First European Contract

Last year Plumb Contracts carried out its first contract on the Continent which was designed by Plumb Design Group.

This was a Ryman shop in Brussels. Plumb Contracts have been carrying out Ryman installations in the United Kingdom over the past two years and some thirty contracts have been completed.



The Brussels showroom and shop are at 3 Square du Bastion and the whole of the interior fittings and the fibreglass shop-front were fabricated by Plumb Contracts and shipped out to the site. Only glazing, plastering and decorating were carried out by local contractors.

Obviously, the project required more detailed organisation than the installations carried out in this country. The contract ran smoothly and was completed ahead of time, and at a lower cost to the client than if Belgian contractors had carried out the work.

New Offices

Plumb Design Group has moved into new offices adjacent to the existing Plumb Contracts' premises.

Work is still going on in the new offices which will eventually house the Sales, Furnishing and Accounts sections of Plumb Contracts on the first floor and will incorporate a new boardroom.

This will greatly alleviate the problems of shortage of space in the main building and should provide a modern and more pleasant atmosphere to work in.

Know your Staff Committees

Staff committees are one of the most important links in the communication chain in each store. They enable the views of the staff to be put over to the store management, and are also a valuable sounding-out ground for ideas from the management.



The staff committee at T. J. Hughes, London Road: Miss E. Rigby, C. Ash, A. Marks, J. Crane, W. McCullough, Miss C. Waters, Mrs. Taylor, Miss V. Bowler, Miss M. Readley, Miss J. Grey, Miss E. Skitt, Miss P. Wilde, Mrs. E. Reade and Miss P. Mulroy.

Of course staff committees are nothing new. Records and Minutes go back many years in London Road and Clayton Square.

What They Do

Staff committees discuss matters ranging from staff facilities to customer service facilities and from training to pensioners' welfare and, through the committees, decisions are made which generally affect the life of the store.

The committee should also get the first information about any impending changes, amendments to rules and regulations, holidays, time off arrangements, etc. Consider the arrangements about Easter and the changes in trading hours in some stores—the staff committees were the first to be consulted.

In some large stores the social committee is a separate meeting but usually it is combined. For example—recently staff committees have been discussing amendments to the rules of the hockey matches at the annual hockey tournament.

How They Work

Staff committees are composed of elected representatives—usually one on each floor. The store personnel manager is the chairman and usually the catering manager and general manager will join the meeting.

New committees are elected each year by ballot and at this time deputy members are also elected to take the place of full members should they be unable to attend meetings.

Meetings are usually held in the staff training rooms on a monthly basis, and are reasonably informal.

So much for how the staff committees operate. What about the people who make the staff committees tick? We asked some of the longest serving members of staff in T. J. Hughes, London Road—who also happen to be staff committee members—what were the benefits of staff committees.

Mr. "Mike" Finnegan, cleaning supervisor of the T. J.'s complex started with the group in 1934 and has been a committee member since 1965. He says, "The main thing about staff committees is

that you can reach decisions without argument. There is much more co-ordination between different functions because each person can see and understand the other side of the argument—and this helps enormously."

Jack Crane, a joiner with the company since 1935 agreed. "Because we are party to the decisions, it makes us feel part of the firm itself. There is open discussion on a friendly basis and no one feels constrained. No one needs to 'fight' for their rights."

Cyril Ash, supervisor of the receiving room since 1958 but a committee member only this year says, "I find I can answer many queries from people in my section almost immediately because I am 'in the know'. It saves queries going to staff committees or the manager concerned and therefore wasting time. Staff will come to me because they find it easier to go initially to another member of staff."

So make sure you know your staff committee member and take an interest in your own store committee.



Roaming Retirement

It will not be a quiet retirement to the country for Mr. Arthur Comley, director of the former Colmers store in Bath.

Because Mr. Comley, who retired earlier this year after 25 years with the firm, plans to spend most of the next few years travelling through Europe with his wife and son.

Mr. Comley joined the firm as the buyer of floor coverings and furnishing fabrics, and was appointed to the board in 1961. Then his responsibilities included personnel and co-ordination of stores in the Colmer group.

At Mr. Comley's retirement party are (left to right)—Mr. J. A. H. Norman, chairman; Mr. Comley; Mr. D. J. Thomas, general manager; Mr. J. Colmer (former chairman); and Mr. G. H. J. Holland, managing director of Colmer's.

Advice for schoolgirls

Talks on skin care and hygiene were given by Miss Beryl Duro, S.M. and Max Factor consultant at the Doncaster store, to pupils of Wilby Carr High School.

Miss Duro made two visits to the school and these were followed up by a trip to the store for the girls. A mini fashion show was organised in the canteen when staff modelled clothes designed for the 15-16 years age group.

Many of the pupils seemed so impressed with the store that there should be no future shortage of sales assistants in the Doncaster store!

Is this a record?

Does any other branch of the Company have so many families amongst its staff?

At Audley House there are no less than 12. There is George Webster (Garage), whose brother Alan works in Lino. And Norman Snape (Receiving Bay) whose wife Doris is in the Owen Owen stockroom.

George Williams works in the Furniture workroom while Mrs. Frances Williams is on the Clayton Square staff.

Then there are two sisters—Mrs. Frances Burns and Mrs. Gladys Linforth—both working in central stockrooms.

Transport driver Brian Irving's brother Peter is a porter, and Don Mitchell (St. Anne Street manager) has a brother Alfred in Transport.

Credit office supervisor Jenny Smith's mother, Elsie works in the central stockrooms, and Winifred and Margaret Vaughan make another mother and daughter team. Mrs. Vaughan is in central stockrooms while Margaret is on the Clayton Square staff.

Husband Alan Richardson is a transport driver while his wife Christine works in central stockrooms. Driver George Hollingsworth's wife Joan is in the despatch office, and his uncle Leslie Hollingsworth in the receiving bay. Cleaner Mrs. Florence Maddox has a son Michael working in St Anne Street stockrooms. And finally there is Albert Lowry (Post Room) whose wife Florence works in the Bought Ledger department. It must be a record!

Mr Cotton's ill-fated car

It must be a chance in a million for anyone to pull up at traffic lights behind their own stolen car.

Yet that is exactly what happened to Mr. H. E. Cotton, general manager of the Clayton Square store, whose Ford Cortina was stolen from a Liverpool multi-storey car park.

An hour later, after reporting the theft to the police, Mr. Cotton was driving home with his wife when they took a wrong turning.

They pulled up at a set of traffic lights directly behind Mr. Cotton's own car! Two people were inside, and the car had already been fitted with false number plates.

So Mr. and Mrs. Cotton gave chase for about a mile. Then the Cortina risked crossing some more traffic lights on red, and it was lost.

But the new number was given to the police, and about ten days later the car was found. However, it came back transformed—fitted with a radio, 8-track stereo, an aerial, sun visors, a new back seat, five new wheels, new gear shift, carburettor and steering wheel! It was also covered with stickers, including one which rather ironically declared—"This car is fitted with a burglar alarm."

Mr. Cotton took the car, which had been rather badly dented, to be checked over at a garage.

Then two days later came the final twist.

Driving to work Mr. Cotton went into a car park and got out of the car to open a barrier. The Cortina burst into flames! Two fire engines arrived, with hoses and jemmies and the car was pronounced a "write-off". A sad end to a car with quite a history.

Big 'Bingo'

A 'Big Bingo' night at T. J. Hughes, London Road, raised a net sum of £180 for the Merseyside Drapery Trade Charities.

The store's general manager Mr. P. B. Fleming, is this year's chairman of the charities.

What's new from Canada?

Eastgate Anniversary

The first anniversary of the Robinson's store at Eastgate was celebrated with a fashion show.

Members of staff or their children modelled new lines in Ladies, Mens and Childrens wear for an audience of 200 composed of staff and their families.

After the show, the Eastgate Entertainment Committee served wine and cheese. The whole evening was so successful, it could become an annual event!



Two of the Eastgate models—Bill Stark of Men's Clothing and Deborah MacLellan, the store manager's 10 years old daughter.

Downtown



After 17 years service with Robinson's Downtown, Mrs. Marie Hamill has retired.

For the last 2½ years she has been supervisor of the Linen department. This came after the closure of the Budget Store where she had previously worked.

Mrs. Hamill is so active that she is not retiring for relaxation—rather to become more involved with her other activities. Church work has always taken a great deal of her spare time.

Among her gifts, Mrs. Hamill received a set of luggage and a television.

AGENCIES FOR ALL STORES

All Robinson's stores now have a travel agency, and customers can charge their travel expenses to their account.

At Burlington and Centre store banking facilities are also offered—The Canada Trust Company have established branches there.

The pic that got away!

When the Downtown switchboard received an anonymous call to say that a "streaker" would be visiting the store, cameras were at the ready.

But—either it was too cold or modesty prevailed—he didn't turn up!

AFTER 21 YEARS

In 1952 a customer bought some linen supper cloths and tray cloths from our store in Southampton—for 1/9d and 1/- respectively.

She embroidered them and put them into use. Now 22 years later the baby boy she was expecting then is to be married. And his fiancée has specially asked for one of the cloths "for sentiment".

Mrs. E. P. Roberts of London told her story to Household Linens of Southampton. "The linen has been constantly in use all this time and even after 21 years of family battering the cloths are still in perfect condition and as white as snow . . ."

"Naturally when I next visit Southampton I shall try to stop by and enjoy another spree."

Efforts abroad

As part of Plumb Contracts' efforts in the Continental market, they have announced the appointment of Mr. J. S. Sheldon, European Sales Executive and Mr. G. Roukaerts, agent for Brussels.

They will work closely together in order to promote Plumb Contracts and Plumb Design Group on the Continent where it is felt there is great potential for a company which can offer such comprehensive service to the client.



Mrs Huddlestone retires

Mrs. Angela Huddlestone, surrounded by the many gifts and cards she received from friends at the Coventry store when she retired after 29 years.

Coventry's new look



The new third floor carpet department at Coventry. It is spacious, and carpets are arranged in colour co-ordinated panels for a pleasing visual effect.

WHERE else can you look from your restaurant table and watch great passenger liners like the QE2 majestically slide down river bound for New York. Or giant container ships with cargoes destined for all parts of the world.

That's just one of the scenes to be found at our Southampton store where more than 400 staff—full-time, part-time and Saturday staff—are producing (at least for the time being) the best sales percentage increases in the Owen Owen group.

To the 214,000 citizens of Southampton the Bar Gate represents a monument to 800 years of illustrious history. But to Eric Hodges, general manager of our store in that great port, Bar Gate is a nasty word.

For the well-preserved, rugged stone gateway and tower dating back to the 12th Century stands on an island dividing the city's main shopping street. On the far side of the Bar Gate to Owen Owen are most of the main competitor stores.

And for years when our store was not crowded with shoppers the Bar Gate, inevitably, would be blamed.

Mr. Hodges, who only took over the general managership last October, believes that it was not a physical obstacle—though possibly psychological.

"To offset that slight disadvantage we are surrounded by car parks—something like 750 spaces within a 100 yards of the store.

"And when the whole of the shopping area becomes a pedestrian precinct at the end of the year we will be in a better position than any of our competitors," he says.

Highest Increase

Already the Southampton store is able to boast of the biggest sales increase of any store in the Group this year and the Southampton staff intend to keep it that way, in fact they are anxious to accept a challenge from any of the other stores!

Comparative shopping has high priority in Southampton and as a result Owen Owen now gives customers better value than competitors.

The store has a good sprinkling of enthusiastic young managers leavened by the experience of older staff. Indeed there can be few stores who can boast anyone like 71 year-old Mr. George Mordey who is working three-days, a week in the catering department. To watch George with a bacon knife as he strips the bones and slices the rashers is an education in itself.

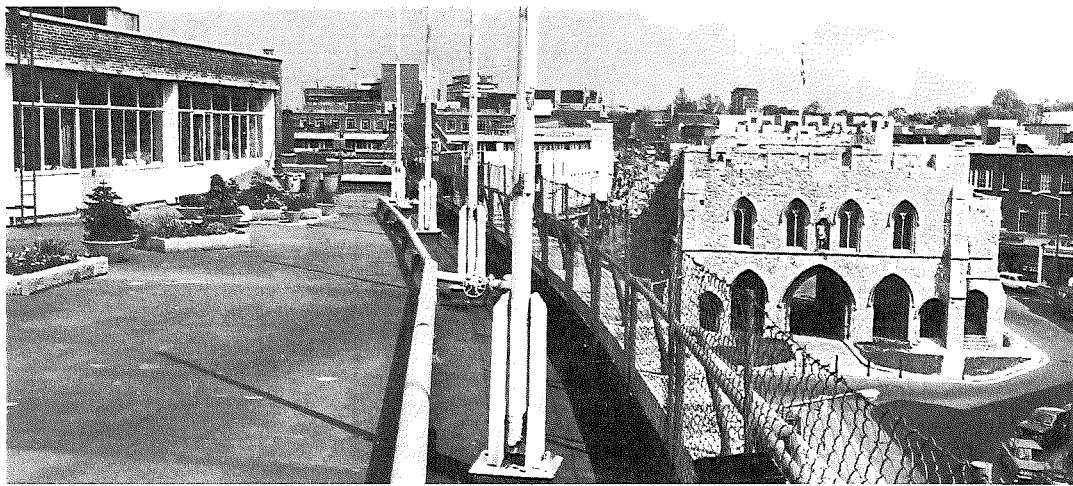
A keen walker, Mr. Mordey is a member of the Ramblers' Association and recently took part in a 20-mile sponsored walk for the Cottage Homes—and walked the distance with plenty of "puff" to spare.

He is, of course, well known at Chester where he was manager at William Jones, our high class grocery shop, where he numbered amongst his customers three different Duchesses of Westminster and several other Lords and Ladies.

A widower, Mr. Mordey likes the life in Southampton although he has moved about the country since he was first apprentice to a grocer in 1915 in Derby. He has worked in Bakewell, Northamp-

'WE AIM HIGH'

—say Southampton



A view of the Bar Gate from the roof of the Southampton store

ton, Newcastle under Lyme, Braemar and Chester.

Another 71 year-old is Mr. Charles (Bob) Wallace who is a part-time kitchen porter. He only joined the firm a year ago after 50 years in the asphalt business. He has also been a keen cyclist for half a century and has some trophies and medals to prove it. Three of them have been won in the past three years. Indeed, Bob enjoys nothing better than going for a 30 or 40 mile spin on a Sunday and still takes part in 100 competitive events.

Youngest Ever

At the other end of the scale is 17 year-old Malcolm Collins, who was the youngest ever in the store to take—and pass—the Proficiency test.

Malcolm, who is a salesman in the Audio department, was recently awarded the Raymond Humphries Shield as a young member of staff who shows most promise.

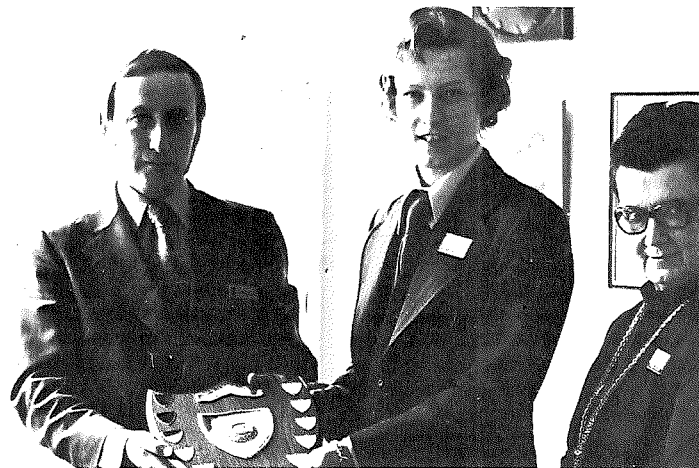
There are several young sales managers who joined the store straight from school. Take Gloria Kensett who recently married and is now Mrs. Richards. She came to the store eight years ago as a junior trainee. Today she is S.M. Boyswear, Haberdashery and Luggage on the ground floor. One of triplet sisters, Gloria has a good out-of-store record, too. She was a Queens Guide at the age of 16 and has a Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award.

Why did she join Owen Owen? "I was a Saturday girl while still at school and I liked it so much I decided to make it my career. I still love it."

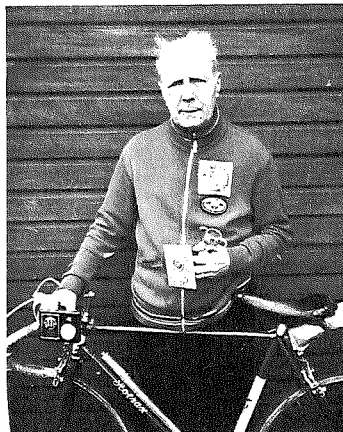
Social Life

There appears to be more out-of-store social activities in Southampton than in most of our other stores. Mr. Jeffrey Redding, S.M. Electrical—another school-leaver who climbed the promotion ladder very quickly—is chairman of the store's Amateur Athletic Association. Most staff belong to the Association and pay anything between 1½p and 3p a week for the privilege.

On the sports side there is a football XI (although there are outsiders in it), there's a successful mixed hockey team (as if the other stores didn't know!) and usually there is an annual Management v Staff cricket match. Skittles enthusiasts also add to the interesting range of activities.



Young Malcolm Collins receives the Raymond Humphries Shield from Mr. Hodges. On the right is Mrs. D. B. Willmer, personnel manager.



"Bob" Wallace, 50 years a cyclist with some of his trophies.



George Mordey deftly cuts a piece of bacon.



D.J. Len Dear at his turntable.

The Christmas dance, the annual outing—this year it will be to Bognor Regis—and the Christmas party for the children of staff at which House Manager, Ted King plays the part of Santa Claus, are some of the other functions which make Southampton such a lively place to work and play.

A recent introduction has been a couple of discotheque evenings which have proved very successful. One of the reasons for their success was undoubtedly the D.J. —Len Dear, S.M. of Do-it-Yourself who used the disco unit he designed and made himself.

Mr. Dear, who joined the store only a few months after it opened in 1951, is a stereo enthusiast.

Although he started with Owen Owen more than 20 years ago at the age of 22, he took three years off to be a steward on "Shemara"—the famous yacht of Sir Bernard and Lady Docker. He began as personal steward to the captain and later to Sir Bernard and Lady Docker.

"It was a great experience but after three years I wanted to settle down and rejoin Owen Owen—who else."

Present Problem

One of eight brothers and three sisters, bachelor Len is a favourite uncle to 30 and great uncle to 85. "It's just impossible to buy them all Christmas or birthday presents."

We don't know if one of Leslie's young relatives took part in The Crow competition which attracted a lot of attention amongst the city's young generation. Certainly Mr. Malcom Stockdale in the Display department who walked down the high street in the huge Crow outfit got attention he would willingly have foregone. An elderly lady beat him about the huge crow's head which he was wearing and yelled: "It's long-haired louts like you that we have to pay rates and taxes for." "I can only hope she was just shortsighted," said Malcolm charitably.

One staff member who the public do not often see is 40 year-old Roy Dawson, first hand in Maintenance, who is also secretary of the football team. He and his colleagues in Maintenance earned great praise during the power crisis earlier this year. At the start of the electricity cuts Roy helped to ensure that the store never closed while competitors were limiting opening hours. Apart from 100 or more Calor gas lamps, there were two deafening generators operating in the loading bay.

Another back room boy is Chef J. Hayes/Haines who was astonished when the crew of round-the-world sailing boat British Soldier sent in a message from the restaurant to say they thought his pork was "the greatest".

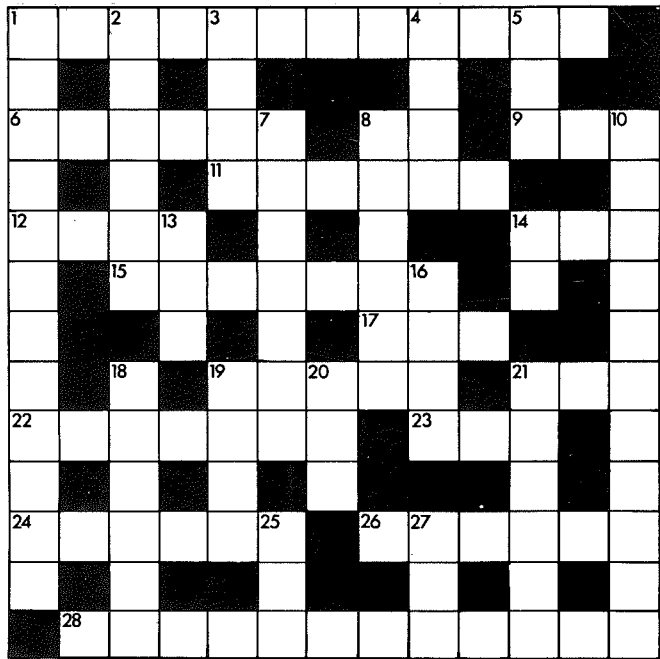
"Work, Work"

Mr. Hodges had the final say: "The future is bright. We have a good management team and an enthusiastic staff. We aim for high standards; 100 per cent in every thing we do; in presentation, merchandising and cleanliness."

Which all seems to lead up to his philosophy that to be successful in business requires, "Work, work, flair, and more work". A philosophy which has taken him from being a junior in Dress Fabrics at T. J. Hughes, London Road and various management appointments in Clayton Square, Coventry, Birkenhead, Bootle, Chester and Erdington to his present job.

And he still has time to go trout fishing occasionally!

CROSSWORD



Clues Across

- 1 Now hear this, 'cement on a nun' (anag.).
- 6 Like better.
- 8 Initially a Bachelor of Art.
- 9 Portly perhaps, with bygone.
- 11 Load again.
- 12 Often associated with Stephen.
- 14 Me or I, or both, a record label?
- 15 'S' Tied up that's the difference.
- 17 Christmas, new years—or just some woman maybe?
- 19 Place to keep things, where you work.
- 21 To begin with this fella geller?
- 22 Bent over forwards.
- 23 Bolted.
- 24 If it's in this, it's not far away.
- 26 Town in Somerset with many namesakes.
- 28 Considered every detail.
- 2 Wanted badly.
- 3 Employer.
- 4 Al and me look good enough to eat.
- 5 Its partner might be fruit.
- 7 Rise pet and take a breather (anag.).
- 8 Doesn't sound a particularly nice beverage.
- 10 Superbly with add sparkle.
- 13 Lin goes back with nothing to show.
- 14 I.E. might be an alternative.
- 16 Always.
- 18 Ah! fool useful in bath.
- 19 Flat perhaps, or top, in cricket it could be off.
- 20 Rhyme.
- 21 Open.
- 25 Might stop you talking or make you laugh.
- 27 Surly brand of mans shoe.

Clues Down

- 1 In one perhaps when uncertain of the future (anag.).

If a limerick you can contrive
And yours is best you could
win £5

Don't name any folks
Or go tellin' rude jokes
Write today or it may not
arrive!

If you are feeling poetic . . .

Scene has decided to hold a Limerick Competition. If you feel inspired, send your contribution (before 31 July) to:

**The Editor,
c/o Secretary's Office
Stafford House,
Liverpool L69 3BD**

The prize for the best limerick—provided it is good enough and clean enough to be published—is a £5 gift voucher.

The things they say . . .

A rather distraught, frustrated customer, lost amongst the first phase alterations at Bridge Street, asked where the entrance was. On receiving the reply, "Please follow the arrows," the customer replied sharply, "Never mind the arrows, I haven't seen the ***** Indians yet!"

Another customer telephoned the store in Clayton Square asking to be put through to the 'stimulated' fur department.

. . . and do

A customer from Wolverhampton was disappointed when his "everlasting light bulb" blew after four years use.

Well, four years is not quite everlasting, but it's not too bad!

Anyway he took it back to the store. Replacement was impossible, but the customer left contented with a refund—after some hasty conversion of the original cost into new pence.

MANAGER AT 20



Lynn Rawlings is just 20—and already a sales manager!

She joined the company as a sales assistant in Baby Linen at Coventry after leaving school at 15. She was promoted to first hand, and later transferred to Boyswear where she became a full sales manager.

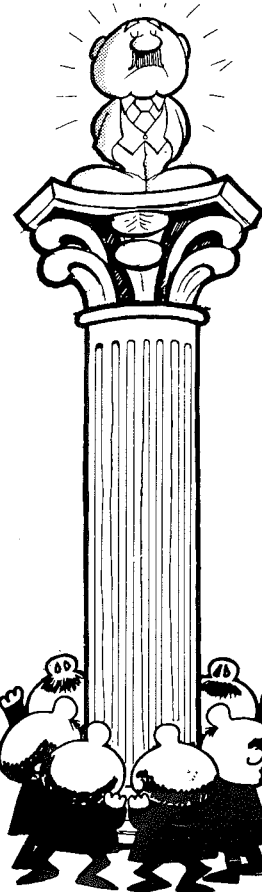
Lynn takes an active interest in the store's social life and has recently joined the committee of the Sports and Social Association. She also enjoys swimming and is a keen spectator of most sports.

Do You Remember?

Can you recall your very first sale?

Leslie Dear, S.M. Do-It-Yourself at Southampton recalls that within half an hour of his starting in Carpeting he had made his first sale. "I was lucky that the customer knew what she wanted and I sold her eight yards of 36-inch wide, floral pattern—a Brinton, I think. Fortunately some of the older hands showed me how to cut the carpet."

Anyone with an amusing memory of his or her first sale? Let the Editor know. We'll pay £2 for those published.



COME DOWN OFF THERE....
JUST BECAUSE YOUR BASIC
BOOK WAS UP TO DATE!

Money Quiz

Guess the name of the coin/note for the following objects:

- Head ornament.
- Ruler.
- Pig.
- Vocalist.
- Bicycle.
- Hairstyle.
- Stone.

Answers at foot of page



SUMMER means STRAWBERRIES

Make the most of the strawberry season. You think there is nothing nicer than strawberries and cream? Then try this deliciously different recipe, and see if you change your mind.

STRAWBERRY ICED CUP

Ingredients:

- 2 large oranges
- 3 oz. caster sugar
- 1 lb. fresh strawberries
- 2 bottles white wine (dry, medium or sweet)
- Mint leaves to decorate
- Soda water or ½ bottle of sparkling wine.

the refrigerator to chill (a little crushed ice may be added).

- 6. Just before serving, add soda water or sparkling wine, or any champagne that happens to be handy.

Makes approximately 16 glasses.

Method

- 1. Pare the rind thinly from the oranges, remove any white pith remaining on the rind.
- 2. Shred the rind very finely with a sharp knife, put into a bowl.
- 3. Squeeze the juice from the oranges and strain into the bowl. Sprinkle with sugar.
- 4. Cut strawberries into sizeable pieces and add to the above.
- 5. Pour over the wine and put into

Answers to Money Quiz

The correct answers should be:
Total £26.36 7/8.
£14.00 (14 lb.).
Bob.
Penny farthing.
Tanner (£10.00).
Guinea.
Sovereign.
Crown.



ER... ER...

R.O.S.P.A. Awards

The following transport drivers have received their R.O.S.P.A. awards for 1973:—David John Bolderson (Diploma), John Brady (Diploma), David Collett (Diploma), Ernest Gibson (Star Bar to 20 year brooch), Richard Hyndes (5 year medal), Harold Marsden (Diploma), Charles G. Montague (Oak Leaf Bar to 10 year medal), Joseph Woodward (Diploma), Rolan Brearly (Diploma, Coventry), George Gittings (Bar to 5 year medal, Coventry), Edmund Leslie Smith (Diploma, Finchley).

Welcome to Coventry

Mrs. J. James has become personnel manager at Coventry.

With many years experience in personnel, Mrs. James was previously staff manager for another store in Wolverhampton.



Complaints can mean new friends for Miss McCabe



Miss McCabe (seated) is pictured with Carole Jordan on the left, Diane Calder and Dee Hughes.

PATIENCE, tact and a sense of humour. These are the qualities Miss Marie McCabe, Service Manager at Clayton Square, finds essential.

Because each day Miss McCabe is dealing with customer complaints and "the customer is always right"—even when he is wrong!

But she can safely say that all difficulties are resolved to the customer's satisfaction.

And not only has Miss McCabe made quite a number of new friends through dealing with complaints—the store has made many firm customers who have been impressed by the courtesy and efficiency of the service department.

The company's policy is heavily in favour of the customer. Complaints regarding small and rela-

tively inexpensive items are normally dealt with by department sales managers.

But where large sums of money are involved—as in furniture, bedding, carpets and electrical appliances—the problem is referred to Miss McCabe.

She is normally able to sort things out, but should there be any special difficulties the General Manager, Mr. H. E. Cotton is brought in.

The job Miss McCabe has is not always pleasant. Customers with a grievance are usually feeling aggressive when they come into the store. So it is imperative that she is able to break down the barrier by being friendly and anxious to help.

But there is another side to Miss McCabe's job. She also deals with customers by mail. If a customer sees an item advertised in their newspaper, would like to buy it, but does not want to

travel into town, they can arrange the sale with Miss McCabe over the telephone or by letter. The store has many customers, particularly in North Wales, who find it easier to shop this way.

Miss McCabe has two assistants—Diane Calder and Dee Hughes. They work alongside Carole Jordan, the general manager's secretary. In a way all of them are Mr. Cotton's direct representatives in dealing with customer problems and services.

With 33 years service, in several different capacities, behind her Miss McCabe is well acquainted with store policy.

She started work with Owen Owen as a clerk in Furniture, then moving into Central Buying Office in a supervisory role. She describes a spell in the Wages office as useful, but much prefers the daily contact with the public that is the essence of her present job.

STEPHEN'S SPECIAL YEAR

It has been a year to remember for Stephen Cartwright of Soft Furnishing/Linen at our Taunton Store.

He has been promoted to A.S.M. of the department, and also become engaged to Carolyn Goodwin, sales assistant in Hardware.

Their colleagues wish them every future happiness.

Bath first-aiders to the rescue

A loud bang followed by moans for help. And a keen band of first-aiders at our store in Bath (formerly Colmers) rushed to the scene.

One patient unconscious, one with a broken leg, another with a broken clavicle and a fourth clutching a bullet wound in the foot!

The team soon got to work, and the patients were attended to—all ready for the . . . ambulance?

No, the first-aiders had forgotten to get the police or an ambulance.

Of course we must point out that all this was just a practice.

However, when it came to their first aid examination a week later, all the candidates passed.

They made the grade

In the most recent proficiency test, our staff gained 18 distinctions and 60 passes.

The distinction winners were:
Clayton Square: J. Mountfield.
Coventry: H. D. G. Brailsford, N. S. N. Hill, Miss S. E. Tantrum, P. J. White.

Southampton: S. C. Ashley.
Preston: Miss S. M. Cinis, Miss P. J. Wells.

Doncaster: Miss B. Cowan.
Chester: Miss C. L. Maddox, Mrs. K. Huth.

Finchley: M. Styman, Miss J. Easton.

Wolverhampton: Miss V. Pickersgill, Miss J. Rathbone, Miss V. Hale.

Edington: Miss A. Gould.
London Road: G. P. Harland.

IN BRIEF

What a Bargain Porteress retires

Can you imagine paying £17 17s. 6d. for an oak bedroom suite?

Well, in 1939, it was possible—as Pauline Barnes of the Personnel Office at Clayton Square can prove.

When her mother was moving house she found a copy of the *Liverpool Daily Post* dated July 1939. And there were the details of the suite which was being supplied for a competition by T. J. Hughes.

Mrs. Catherine Roberts, porteress at T. J. Hughes, London Road, has retired after 35 years with the company.

Mrs. Roberts will continue part-time.

How it began

An insight into how "Thursday Bargain Day" originated has been given by Mrs. D. M. Moore of the Cigarette department, Clayton Square.

She tells us that during a talk on the history of Liverpool, Mr. Wilson Parry told how Owen Owen offered to give discount on all tickets if the railway company would run an excursion from North Wales to Liverpool.

Travellers had to go into the store to receive their discount, which was paid out on the top floor, and since they had to walk right through the store very few left without buying something.

Top consultant

Mrs. C. Hawkhead, beauty consultant at the Clayton Square store, was successful in last year's Dorothy Gray "Consultant of the Year" competition.

Since transferred to Innox, Mrs. Hawkhead achieved a place and a prize of £25.

All about paper

There are probably no people more aware of how much paper we waste than members of the social club at Taunton.

Because they learned all about paper-making during a Spring outing to Wiggins Teape Ltd., paper mills at Ivybridge, Devon.

The tour of the factory lasted two hours, and club members found it hard to believe the amount of work involved in the paper-making process.

A collection was made, and given to the factory's favourite charity, a nearby special school. The visit was followed up with dinner in Exeter.

Xmas in Japan

Last Christmas was quite a new experience for Gill Richards of Clayton Square.

Because Gill, who is S.M. of Haberdashery, Wools, China, Gifts and Sewing Machines, spent the holiday with friends in Tokyo, Japan.

Shotgun Jill

Sharpshooter Jill Collett of Menswear at Doncaster spends her Sundays clay pigeon shooting in Lincolnshire. Her fiancé is an expert and first taught Jill how to use a gun.

Now, with her 410 lightweight single-barrelled shotgun, Jill is the only girl in a club of 20 men.

£20 for charity

Mrs. Jean Crowe of the Cash Office at Clayton Square has been helping to raise money for charity.

She took part in a sponsored walk organised by the Autistic and Leukaemia Committee, and was well-supported by her colleagues in the company.

So she was able to contribute £20 to the committee who raised a total of £1,500 on the day of the walk.

Getting away from it all

SEA, sunshine and the "most beautiful beaches in the world". MR. M. R. TANKARD, design services manager, describes for us his holiday in the Seychelles.

The Seychelles consists of over a hundred islands, situated in the Indian Ocean, a thousand miles east of Mombassa, East Africa. Even though they sit only four degrees south of the equator they are never visited by typhoons, hurricanes, or tidal waves, and they have no snakes or dangerous wild animals. French settlers found the islands only two hundred years ago, and except for the occasional pirate they had never been inhabited.

Now the warm, friendly population of 50,000 mostly inhabit the largest island, Mahe, which is only 17 miles long by 5 miles wide. Their language is basically Creole (French based), although many people on the islands speak both English and French.

Plenty To Do

There is plenty to do, skin diving, horse riding, water skiing, fishing, yachting, or just lazing in the sun on one of the beaches, said to be the most beautiful in the world. The islands have many miles of excellent roads and one is able to hire a car and visit the tea, cinnamon and copra plantations. The islands are of particular interest to the ornithologist, as there are many rare and beautiful birds.

The hotels provide plenty of evening entertainment and there are clubs and a cinema in Victoria,

the capital of Mahe. This year there are 12 approved hotels on the islands, but naturally since the opening of the International Airport on Mahe in December 1972, many more will be opening next year, and in the years to come.

But it will be a great shame if these undisturbed islands become spoilt by sky scraper hotels and tourist pollution.



A group of successful candidates from the Chester store. In the picture (from left to right) are: Mr. T. Brent, the general manager; Miss L. Maddox (distinction winner); Miss C. Hale, personnel manager; Mrs. K. Huth (distinction winner); Miss C. Lloyd (trainer); A. Turner; A. Manship; Miss J. Formstone; Miss V. Hitchin; R. Clark; Miss S. Smith.



Coventry store had its best results ever in the Proficiency Test, with four distinctions and nine passes.

In the picture (left to right) are: sitting—distinction winners, Mrs. H. Brailsford, N. Hill and Miss S. Tantrum. Standing—passes, M. Bagley, Miss S. Horobin, Miss G. Robinson, Miss C. Isaac, Miss C. Wright, and C. Pittaway.

WELL, he did catch something!

The South Coast was having its worst weather in living memory with floods and storms causing havoc in Hampshire. But all this did not deter three intrepid fishermen from the Southampton store.

Mr. E. Hodges, the general manager, Eric Jones, store accountant and Bob Hebson, display manager went off for a day's sea fishing.

In a force 9 gale this was impossible, so they tried beach fishing instead. Three hours later, soaked to the skin, they took home the catch—Bob Hebson had hooked a 6 lb. bass, Eric Jones managed 37 inedible crabs and Mr. Hodges had caught a cold!

T.J.'s give 'Gary' star appeal



The smart young man in a tuxedo is 'Gary'—a 14 year-old country-style singer and guitarist looking forward to success in the world of entertainment.

There's no doubt that clothes can add a touch of 'star appeal'. And 'Gary' and his Mum and Dad, Mr. and Mrs. F. Turner of Kirkby, near Liverpool, think T. J. Hughes gives just that.

For all Gary's outfits—except the shirt he's wearing—were bought at our store in London Road.

Even his guitar strap was made from two leather belts his mother found at the store.

In a letter to T. J. Hughes, Mr. Turner thanks the staff for the service his family has received there.

It could have been nasty

When a lady customer at the Wolverhampton store carrying an Owen Owen bag, asked to see the general manager everyone prepared for the worst.

In fact, the lady had insisted on seeing him especially to express her appreciation of the cheerful and helpful service she had received in Fashion Fabrics.



Well done George — British Champ

Amateur featherweight boxing champion of Britain.

That's George Gilbody, the trainee accountant we featured in the last edition of *Scene*. On 3 May, at Wembley, he beat Welshman, I. Pritchard, to win the title, after seven previous bouts which started earlier in the year.

Now George has been chosen to represent England in the European under-21 championship, to be held in Kiev. After five days training in Cardiff, the team flew out to Russia on 30 May.

This will be the second time George has represented his country. He captained the English team which beat Germany in another international last summer.

STOP PRESS

George has now won the Bronze Medal in the European under-21 championships.

Darts Double for Paul



Mr. J. A. Mariner, regional director (on the left), presents Paul Clarke with his prize for being runner-up in both the singles and doubles sections of the annual darts match at Erdington.

Outright winner of the singles was Gerald Patterson. The pair who won the doubles prizes were Robert Johnson and Colin Goode, and joint runner-up with Paul in this section was Malcolm Barnes.

The match, which took place at the staff dance, has always been greeted enthusiastically by the men, but next year female staff hope to compete too.

There were 16 entrants for the singles and 16 entrants for the doubles. Well done to the winners!

The biggest shoe department in the region?

A bright and spacious new shoe department has been moved into the basement of T. J. Hughes, London Road.

The shoe section was formerly on the ground floor, but with more space for service and display the new department is hoping to be able to widen its range of stock.

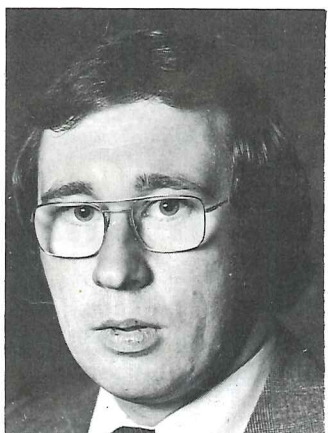
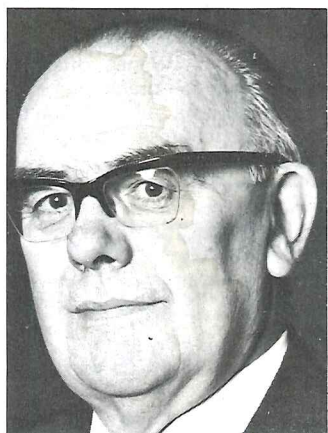
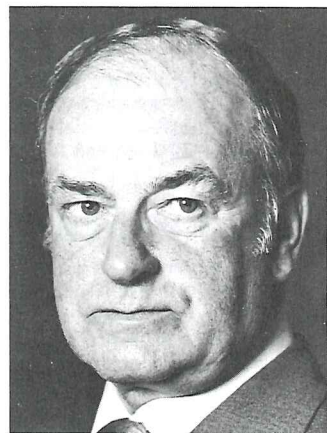
Designed by Alan Miller, head of design for Owen Owen, the area is partially carpeted (something quite new) and equipped with the most modern display fittings. The alterations were carried out during a weekend so that business was not affected.

Mr. E. Evans, who has been with the company for 36 years, is resident buyer. He joined in 1936 in Carpets, but moved to the Shoe department ten years later and has

worked in that field ever since. Before becoming a buyer in 1953, he was sales manager of the department.

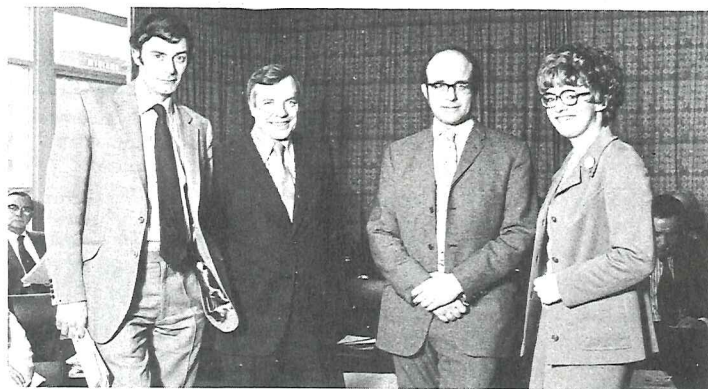
This job now belongs to Mr. John Osborne, who came to Owen Owen 18 months ago from the Clarke's shoe firm where he was a manager. Mr. Osborne feels that T.J.'s probably now have one of the biggest shoe departments in the region.

Award Winners



Pictured above are Mr. R. Rennie (centre), group accountant, who won the Chairman's Prize for 1973 and Mr. C. Macfarlane (left) and Mr. M. E. Priestley (right) who were joint winners of the Buyers' Award. Mr. Macfarlane is central buyer of boys' outfitting and Mr. Priestley is central buyer of carpets.

"Management Today"



At the Senior Management Conference held every six months at Stafford House, a talk was given by Mr. R. Heller, editor of "Management Today".

Our photograph shows (left to right)—Mr. V. W. Baylis, Mr. J. H. Barkway, Mr. R. Heller and Miss Elizabeth Mee.

Across the Atlantic — again!

Mrs. Mary Bourne, of the Glass and China department at Erdington, is becoming quite used to the seven-hour flight from Gatwick to Toronto airport.

For the past five years she has made the trip annually to visit her daughter, son-in-law and three grandchildren in Ottawa. And now she is preparing for another. This time she will not be travelling alone—her sister is joining her.

Mary is 65 years old and has been with the company (formerly W. M. Taylor and Sons) for about 18 years.

New look ground floor

More feminine appeal was the idea behind the new ground floor development at Colmers, Weston-super-Mare, and this has been achieved by re-grouping of merchandise and the introduction of new lines.

The development began in the middle of February with the closure of footwear—making way for a colourful new separates department.

Menswear has been re-sited next to separates and the range extended, and boyswear has been established as an additional department.

Part of the floor has been refitted to accommodate cosmetics, toiletries and fashion accessories and in particular to introduce an Estee Lauder agency.

25 years

The following staff have completed 25 years service with the company:

Miss M. Wilson/Wring (invoice office); Miss M. Wethered (systems analyst); Mr. R. D. Briggs (central buyer); Mr. P. T. Shackell (house manager); and Mrs. A. Barron (London Road).

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Across: 1 Announcement, 6 Prefer, 8 BA, 9 Tub, 11 Refill, 12 Even, 14 Emi, 15 Dispute, 17 Eve, 19 Store, 21 Uri, 22 Stopped, 23 Ran, 24 Offing, 26 Street, 28 Thoughtfully.
Down: 1 Apprehension, 2 Needed, 3 User, 4 Meal, 5 Nut, 7 Respite, 8 Bitter, 10 Brilliantly, 13 Nil, 14 Eg, 16 Ever, 18 Loofah, 19 Spin, 20 Ode, 21 Unseal, 25 Gag, 27 Tuf.