

GOOD PERFORMANCE FOR PLUMB CONTRACTS

Group profit before tax and extraordinary items in the year ended January 26 1980 of £2,583,000 was £365,000 down on the previous year reflecting difficult trading conditions in the UK and Canadian stores, but with a further good performance from Plumb Contracts Limited.

The pre-tax profit figures were made up as follows:—

But group profits down on last year

	Profit £	Increase/decrease on previous year £
UK Stores	1,885,000	– 196,000
Canadian stores	329,000	– 217,000
Plumb Contracts	369,000	+ 48,000
	£2,583,000	– £365,000

The allocation of profit to the Staff Share Ownership Scheme in the UK inevitably reflected the fall in profit but still provided enough shares for allocations ranging between 11 to 43 shares dependent on length of service.

UK STORES

After a disappointing first half-year, some improvement was achieved in the second six months, despite the very severe effect on sales of the increase in VAT rates made in June, 1979. The full year's sales increase of 11 per cent failed to match the level of price

increases and meant we sold a smaller volume of goods.

There were no new store openings in the year but much solid progress was made with the integration of the Slough and Uxbridge stores, and in developments in the creation of or planning for three regional distribution centres to receive, process and ticket all merchandise before despatching it to the stores. Additionally, further progress was made in the development of the computer based information systems relating to sales analysis, invoicing and stock control.

PLUMB CONTRACTS LTD.

Plumb Contracts achieved a further record result with sales up by 14 per cent and profit up by 15 per cent on the previous year. The contract furnishing division made its first contribution to profit and is winning increasing acceptance for its new range of office furniture.

CANADIAN STORES

If store trading was difficult in the UK, it was even more so in Canada, where sales showed a 3 per cent fall on the previous year. While this was partly due to economic conditions, it also followed on a deliberate change of sales policy with the elimination of the regular "discount days" promotions — with an inevitably adverse effect on sales.

However, the consequent improvement in margins, together with a rigid cost

control programme, produced better earnings in five out of the six established stores — and, in fact, the £217,000 decrease in Canadian profits was more than accounted for by the first full year loss of the new North Waterloo (Kitchener) store.

THE CURRENT YEAR

Speaking to shareholders at the Annual General Meeting on June 5, 1980, the Chairman said:

Trade continues to be difficult and we do not expect any improvement until we have passed the anniversary date of the introduction of the higher VAT rate towards the end of June last year. We have responded to the situation with increased promotional activity and relentless pressure to reduce overhead costs without impairing efficiency. This should put us in good shape to take advantage of any uplift in

consumer spending during the second half year.

Canadian retailing has not been immune from the growing recession in North America and sales in the Robinson stores at the end of the first four months of the year are at the same level as those achieved in 1979. However, Mr. Dakin believes that the picture will improve as the year progresses.

The retailing performance in the UK and in Canada dominates the group picture: with some seven weeks still to run in the first half year our current projections show that the group result at the end of July will not match the same period of 1979.

These are brief comments about the year to date. Although we know it is going to be difficult for retailing on both sides of the Atlantic, I can assure you that management and staff will be doing their best to show a creditable result for the full year.



Board appointments

Two members of Owen Owen Stores Board have been appointed to the Parent Board. They are Mr. Eric Hodges (right), Director of Store Operations, and Mrs. Stella Adams (left), Personnel Director.

Mr. Hodges joined the company in 1953 as a junior in T.J. Hughes. During his career he served as general manager in five stores and as regional director in the Midlands. He was appointed sales director Owen Owen (Stores) Limited in 1976.



He has since been appointed Director of Store Operations, with responsibility for the operating performance of all Owen Owen and T.J. Hughes stores.

Mrs. Adams joined the organisation in 1964 in the Southampton personnel office. She became personnel manager in that store before moving to Liverpool as personnel controller. Mrs. Adams resigned in 1972 to take up an outside appointment and re-joined last March as Personnel Director.



Mr. John Hoesli, Merchandise Director has been appointed Deputy Managing Director of Owen Owen (Stores) Limited. His title is now Merchandise Director and Deputy Managing Director.

Winning against tough odds...

As a town Preston can't compete with the architectural wealth or the natural beauty of some of Owen Owen's other locations, but the store itself is staking a healthy claim in the retailing market.

Two major factors have helped bring the store into line. Firstly, the modernisation programme, which was undertaken over two years ago at a cost of £½ million, and secondly, the loyalty and hard work on the part of its cheerful employees.

The building was one of the first to be taken over by the company (in April 1937) but it wasn't until July 1977 that the go-ahead was given to modernise. All the windows were replaced and a completely new image created.

Internally the work produced a bright, cheery atmosphere. The ground floor was ripped out in stages to keep any inconvenience to customers at a minimum, and the basement staff said their farewells to the cumbersome air-curtain room which gave way to welcomed selling space. Furniture was introduced to the top floor (which, incidentally, trebled in size) and the remaining floors were completely re-vamped.

Said General Manager, Mr. Ken Speddings, "All of us agree it has been a move for the best, but the biggest change in the store has been the attitude towards the job."

"The staff have worked tremendously hard and morale is extremely high."

He added, "Preston isn't an easy town in which to trade. In fact, at



Mr. Ken Speddings

Where hard work pays off

the moment it is going through a bad patch with the Port closing within the next two years and the fact that 1600 jobs are being lost at Courtaulds.

"On the other hand, Leyland has moved the head office of their truck and bus division into the town, creating new jobs, and many banks and insurance companies have their regional offices here. We know that Preston has a market for Owen Owen's sort of customer and we hope to maintain our position".

Among the many departments to benefit from the store's facelift was the Red Rose Restaurant which has become practically a second home to the lady who still remembers her first day with the store — 15 years ago.

Mrs. Jennie Burke who hails from Carlisle in Scotland; and who has worked her way up from dishwasher to supervisor in the popular little restaurant.



Kay Calvert and Philip Jenkins

"I still see a few of my regulars from 15 years ago", says Jeannie who retires in less than two years time.

Two people who won't be considering retirement for some time are Kay Calvert, deputy catering manager and Philip Jenkins, recently promoted to catering manager.

Kay, 20, joined Preston store at the beginning of the year after a four month spell in Southampton — a period in her life she won't forget in a hurry.

"I was taking a chicken and ham pie out of the oven when I slipped and it went all over me. I ended up in the burns unit of Southampton Infirmary and was off work until after Christmas. I still have a few scars as a result".

Philip, at 24 years of age, had originally set his sights on a career in painting and decorating but opportunity just wasn't knocking at the time. On a friend's advice he entered the catering business seven years ago.

[Promotion]

Promoted in February, Philip is now responsible for the restaurant, snack bar and staff canteen, and after all these years he doesn't appear to regret having swapped a paintbrush for a palette knife.

Down in the basement the changes have proved to be a sparkling success — in fact, sales manager Margaret Robb was simply bubbling over with enthusiasm earlier in the year when she cracked open a bottle of champagne presented by the company to mark her floor's impressive performance.

With an increased range of products at their fingertips it's hardly surprising that visitors to the bright, attractive basement are tempted to loosen their purse strings.



BOB'S A DAB HAND AT PORTRAIT PAINTING



Bob with one of his paintings.

Bob Godlonton gave conventional painting methods the brush-off . . . in favour of his fingers.

Not only are they handy (you could say they're right at his fingertips) but Bob finds that by using fingers instead of brushes he can achieve the definition he desires for producing his favourite works, portraits in oils.

Bob (37), is Preston's loading bay supervisor.

His achievements include a picture of his seven-year-old son, Robert, a copy of Gainsborough's Blue Boy and (using two photographs) a painting of a colleague's mother and late father.

"I started finger painting by accident, really. I had been trying to re-produce a face without much success with brushes, so I started to use my

fingers. Since then I haven't kept a brush in the place".

Bob who left school at 15 and spent some time abroad touring with a band, joined Preston seven years ago.

Mary aims to cash in on her hobby

Mrs. Mary Aspden has brought a friend and happiness to many friends and neighbours since she took up her hobby five years ago — and it's one she intends to put to money-making use when she retires as carpet sales assistant.

For Mary, who joined Preston store 25 years ago, is a dab hand at cake decorating and her achievements to date include a three-tier wedding cake, several Christening and birthday cakes, not to mention a selection of beautifully decorated Christmas cakes.

"I gave it up for a while", says Mary, who attends classes at Glovers Court Further Education Centre, "but then I decided I wanted a hobby for when I finish work, although I still have a lot to learn".

PATIENCE

Mary puts her success down to patience and preparation.

"You can't hurry these things and it's important to prepare everything before-hand — and make a little extra in case of breakages".

GREENHOUSE FAME FOR PILKI...

When Mrs. Florence Pilkington joined the Preston store in '71 she never expected to become famous for selling greenhouses.

She started her career on ladies' fashions and moved on to other departments, starting with gardening, hardware and toys.

Then Pilki, as she's affectionately known, turned her hand to greenhouses — and found herself in the local paper when she made Owen Owen famous as the first store in Preston to sell 100 greenhouses.

This was only the start of her relationship with the media, for a couple of years ago Pilki was interviewed on Radio Blackburn about the store's toy department.

Val's talent with a brush

Take one talented lady, a generous helping of colour and a country scene and you have all the ingredients for a painting that will brighten any home.

And at Preston those three clues should reveal the identity of sales assistant Mrs. Valerie Parkinson, whose paintings have impressed art lovers both in the store and outside.

Valerie, who works on small electricals, trained as a commercial artist but gave her career up when she started a family.

"I wanted something to do from home and as I'd always been interested in the countryside — particularly the wildlife, I started painting from photographs.

One of Valerie's paintings was sold for £60.

Her paintings are usually completed within a fortnight, depending on the demands of family life (she has two daughters) or her garden, another of her hobbies.



Valerie Parkinson (left) pictured with Mrs. Florence Pilkington who hit the headlines when she sold 100 greenhouses.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of all is her use of animals, birds and flowers, which reflect her own feelings for "creatures great and small".

"The view is secondary to me, I take the view from the photograph and then decide on which animals or insects to use. It beats watching television any day".

RETIREMENTS



Two long-standing employees retired from T.J. Hughes recently – with a message of thanks to their colleagues across the country.

Mr. Charles MacFarlane (pictured with his wife, left) and Mr. Douglas Briggs, in a joint farewell message said: "It's been a great pleasure knowing you all – many thanks for all your help in the past and our sincere good wishes for your future health and happiness".

Mr. MacFarlane joined the company as a porter in 1935 and a year later moved on to the men's clothing department in Clayton Square.

After serving with the Liverpool Scottish during the War he went to Coventry for a short time, and in 1950 was appointed department manager of men's clothing in Liverpool, which was followed by another move in February 1951

THANKS NATIONWIDE AS BUYERS SAY 'FAREWELL'

when he was made department manager of boys' clothing and out-fitting.

In 1954 Mr. MacFarlane became a buyer for children's shoes and slippers and a few years later moved on to ladies' shoes in the same capacity.

December 1963 brought another move with his appointment as central buyer of men's and ladies' shoes, and in addition to these responsibilities he took on the central buyership of slippers in 1966.

His responsibilities were extended again when in August 1967

Mr. MacFarlane took over children's shoes. On March 1, 1969 he became central buyer of travel goods in addition to existing buyerships, but he later relinquished the latter in order to take on boyswear.

In 1979 he was appointed senior shoe buyer in T.J. Hughes and assumed buying responsibility for ladies', children's and branded shoes, a position he held until his retirement.

Mr. Briggs joined the company in 1949 as a salesman on men's clothing, becoming a sales manager in 1951.

He took up his appointment as central buyer of books and stationery in 1957 and by December 1963 he had extended his buying responsibilities to include toys, and, two years later, the buying of travel goods.

In 1968 Mr. Briggs became a buyer for T.J. Hughes in addition to his existing Owen Owen buyerships.

Two years later he became central buyer of menswear, a post he held until December '74 when he became central buyer of toys, stationery and Christmas stationery.



Poppy appeal praise ...

T.J. Hughes Limited have received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Royal British Legion's National Executive Council in recognition of their outstanding services to the Poppy Appeal.

In a letter to the company, Major Robert Tomlins, Poppy Appeal Secretary, paid special tribute to their endeavours "which have been the means of bringing essential aid and comfort to those in need".

SILENTNIGHT SUCCESS

Kevin Bailey, sales assistant in the bedding department at North Finchley store, was recently £100 better off as the result of a nationwide competition run by Silentnight Divans Limited.

He was the lucky winner in a monthly draw for salesmen who have sold Silentnight beds.

DID YOU HEAR THE ONE ABOUT...?

The gentleman who walked into Weston store's haberdashery department and asked for some round shapes. When offered bust forms the customer replied; "I'll need the largest size, they're for myself", and promptly asked for a piece of string to tie them on.

The embarrassed sales assistant obliged and the gentleman departed with his purchase . . . only to return a short while later to explain that the buy hadn't been for him personally, but to protect the heads of two golf clubs he wanted to send away!

◀ T.J. Hughes' Invoice Manager, Mr. Frank Viggers, (pictured here with his wife) accepts a farewell toast from colleagues during his retirement party. He joined us in November 1932 and was promoted to management in 1973.

Accountant retires

Mr. Walter Bradbury retired from his post as assistant to the group accountant in March. He joined the company as manager of the accounts (head office) in 1961.

Mr. Bradbury hails from Wiltshire and still takes an interest in Swindon Football Club.

CARTOON CORNER



Frankly, Madam, I should take that complaint to your doctor!

NEWS PLEASE

Please pass any news items for the next issue of Scene on to your personnel manager.

If your article is accompanied by a photograph please ensure, where possible, it is in black & white.



A farewell handshake for Miss Daisy Wignall who retired from the company in March after more than 30 years' service. Miss Wignall joined Owen Owen in 1947 and was promoted to department manager in 1957. During her years with the company she held appointments in London Road and Clayton Square.



Miss Emily Mayman, who joined the company at London Road in November 1945, has retired after 35 years. Miss Mayman was employed as a sales assistant on the menswear department during her years with T.J.'s. Pictured with her is Mr. G. Chappell, Sales Manager.

Meeting the challenge

Driving force behind Distribution

Director Barrie Johnston has developed a taste for challenges – in and out of the office.

When he joined the company as distribution controller, he became the driving force behind the very successful move to develop Torrington Avenue as a distribution centre, in a regionalisation programme that was later to incorporate Bootle and Stoke Gardens.

By the end of this month Torrington Avenue will be serving all Midlands and South West stores commanding a throughput of £30 million a year.

Later this year 21 stores will benefit from the regionalisation programme including the new Redditch store which will also come under the Torrington "umbrella".

"It's taken two-and-a-half years to get this far with the distribution centres and it's meant quite a mammoth change for this company because it has had to affect the total administration system and the basic stock procedure", explains Mr. Johnston.

It has proved to be a winning move though. Not only has it improved operating standards, but the programme has enabled the stores to convert their non-selling areas into selling space.

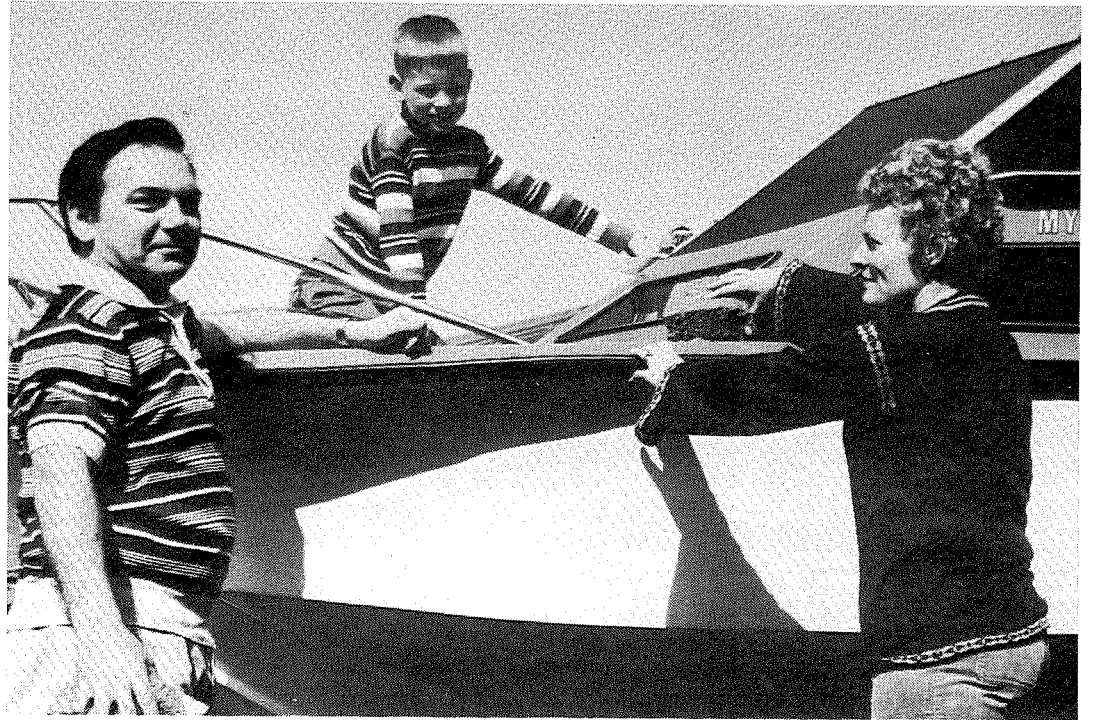
Although the project keeps him extremely busy (you have to catch him between 'phone calls or trips round the country) it's certainly proving to be a satisfying job.

"It's the challenge more than anything, the challenge of changing the whole method of operation and the involvement with people", he says.

Liverpool-born Mr. Johnston was educated at King George V Grammar School, Southport. After gaining five 'O' levels he left school at 16 and joined a Liverpool-based firm of chartered accountants as an articulated clerk.

At the age of 21 he qualified as a chartered accountant and joined United Biscuits as a cost accountant. Eighteen months later he was made distribution financial accountant.

In 1969 Mr. Johnston moved to London as distribution planning



Mr. Johnston with his "home-made" boat, son David and wife Sandra.

manager, responsible for setting up McVities cake van sales.

A year later he joined Cory Distribution (also in London) as Planning Manager before going into line management. His next move took him back up north as Depot Manager of a 250,000 sq.ft. warehouse, handling in excess of £100 million stock per annum, and he eventually joined Owen Owen as Distribution Controller. In December last year he was appointed Director on the Stores Board.

Away from the office Mr. Johnston often assumes the role of "chief cook and bottle washer".

A self-taught Cordon Bleu (he thinks his talents stem from the "beans and banger" days as a youth, who enjoyed climbing in Scotland) he's prepared to devote several days organising a dinner party.

Married with a 10-year-old son, David, Mr. Johnston is also the proud owner of a smart two berth speedboat which he put together in seven months, three years ago.

Although Mr. Johnston modestly claims that the building of the boat was purely trial and error, she's given him little trouble. In fact, he's had more problems with the trailer he bought.

"During its maiden voyage (in the Lake District) the boat went exceedingly well but when we took her out of the water we broke the trailer.

"We had to re-launch the boat and take the trailer off for repair, which took us the rest of the weekend. A fortnight later we decided to try the boat out again and this time the wheel came off. I should have built the trailer after all!"

Stepping out for Charity

Seven members of Chester store put their best feet forward in a ten mile sponsored walk round the town recently.

The money raised went towards Chester's Cottage Homes Appeal.

Those taking part were: General manager, Mr. Thomas Brent; Mrs. Janet Matthews, personnel officer; Mr. David Fellows, sales manager menswear; Mr. David Ladyman; William Jones (food); Miss Denise Jones, house maintenance; Miss Lesley Robinson, haberdashery and Miss Susan Hignett, accounts.

Stockroom Success

The Carpet Department in T.J. Hughes in London Road, Liverpool, won the Central Broadloom Stockroom competition, with a sales increase of over 100 per cent.

The contest, which was open to sales managers and selling staff, was aimed at boosting the sales volume through the stockroom.

Slough, Brighton, Evesham and Chester stores also performed well in this competition.

ZANY SNAPSHOT CONTEST

Dust your cameras and start snapping . . . and win a super prize in our "Silly Sign Competition".

Owen Owen is offering £20 worth of gift vouchers to the sender of what the judges consider the most humorous/unusual sign (like the one we have printed here).

All snapshots are to reach Mrs. Claire Reid, Group Personnel Manager, Stafford House, Craven Street, Liverpool 3, no later than September 1, 1980.



SILLY PHOTOS

Name	Picture
.....	Where taken
Store
.....	When
Dept.
.....



Lt. Col. D.E. Brand, CD retired last month as the Commanding Officer of The Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (RHLI). He is possibly better known to members of this company as the Operations Manager of the G.W. Robinson Company, Canada where he runs the Fruitland Warehouse.

He enlisted in the RHLI in April 1953 and following a meteoric rise through the ranks was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant two years later, he became a full Lieutenant in 1958. During this time he served as both a rifle and mortar platoon commander.

His ascent continued, and in May 1969 he was promoted to his present rank and appointed Commanding Officer of the Regiment. Lt. Col. Brand is only the first peacetime Commanding Officer to return and command the regiment for a second time.

Redditch department store, the latest and most modern addition to the Owen Owen group, is to open on August 28, right on schedule.

Based in the Kingfisher Centre the store occupies approximately 80,000 square feet, 63,000 square feet of which will be given over to selling.

Designed to give customers the ultimate in quality and comfort, the store boasts three extensive floors (the ground floor alone covers an area of 25,000 square feet), a 96-seater restaurant and an environmental control system which regulates the store temperature, heating or cooling as necessary.

On entering the store customers will be greeted by the traditional departments; perfumery, toiletry and jewellery and, for the first time in Owen Owen history, the ground floor will carry all fashions including lingerie and corsetry.

Floor coverings will take the form of vinyl-tiled walkways and carpeted merchandise departments aimed at inviting customers to move freely around the large sales areas.

The lower ground floor houses a hairdressing salon, run by Glemby International and, in addition, there will be men's, boys', and general children's wear and travel and sports departments.

A complete range of kitchenware will be at customers' fingertips when they enter the first floor, which also carries an impressive range of glass and china (recognised names like Royal Worcester, Royal Doulton and Wedgwood) and a wide selection of other household wares.

The customer restaurant also shares this floor and for convenience and economy one kitchen will serve this and the staff canteen.

The store will be equipped with the latest electronic data processing systems, including electronic point of sale terminals, to ensure that details of sales are speedily advised to both the buyers and regional warehouse.

The store will receive merchandise from the Torrington Avenue regional warehouse. This will enable in-store stock rooms to be reduced, and the maximum available space used to provide sales area.

Redditch was first considered as a possible trading opportunity in 1973 when the first phase of the

Kingfisher Centre was completed and operating (Sainsbury opened a supermarket and Boots, a store).

Although the original plan had been to progress in only two stages, Redditch Development Corporation decided that because of the eco-

nomie climate it was more feasible to build the centre in three phases. Phase two was completed with the opening of a Woolworth store in 1977.

There only remained phase three which offered four major

trading areas, one of which was earmarked for a Tesco store.

In the winter of 1978 Owen Owen agreed to lease a unit from the Corporation.

The developer's shell was handed over to Owen Owen for shopfitting

on September 10, 1979. During November of that year the company was delighted to learn that the last two major space units in the Kingfisher Centre had been let to Marks & Spencer and British Home Stores.

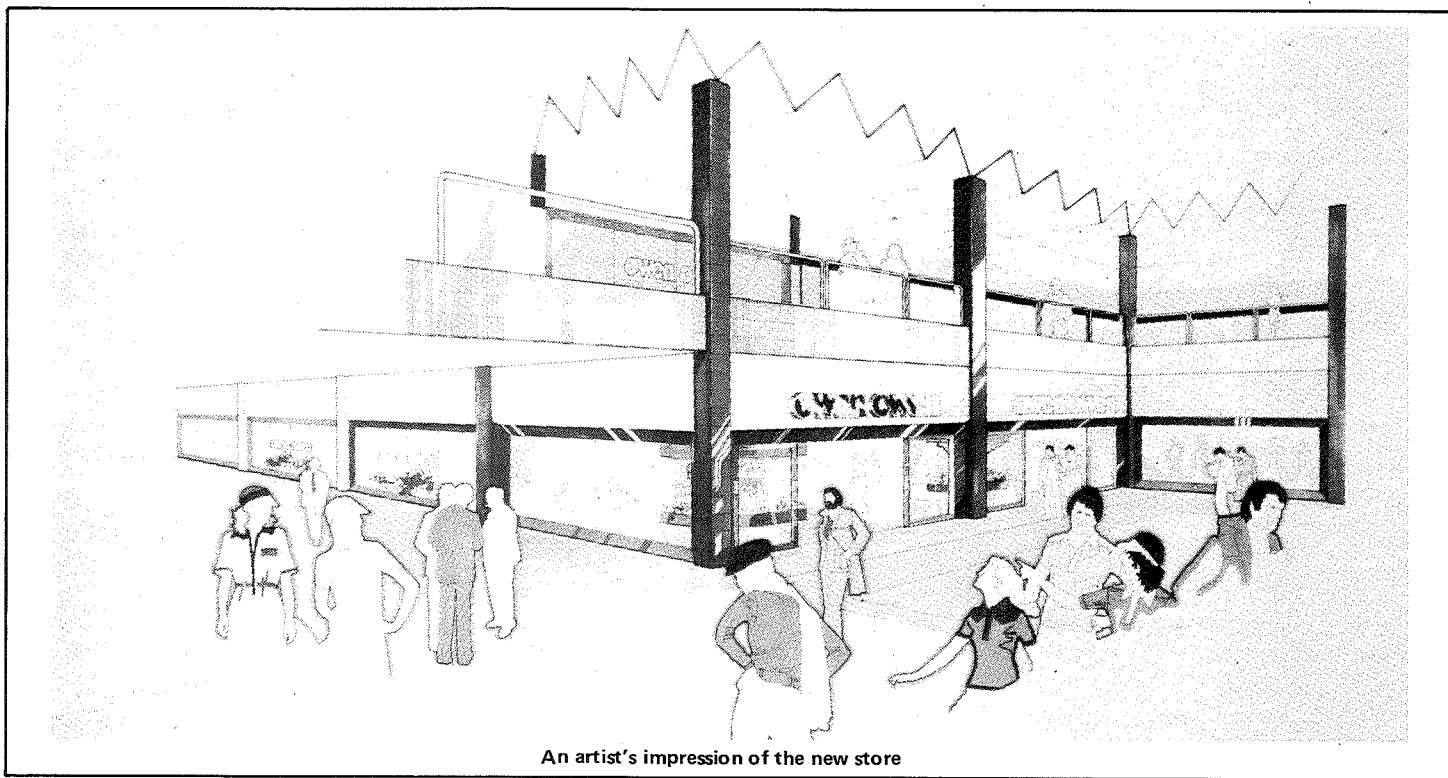
Property Director, John Murden, commented that "this must surely reflect the confidence of the nationally known multiple retailers in Redditch as a regional centre".

As Owen Owen's newest store it isn't surprising that the people who have been actively involved have found it to be an exciting prospect.

Added Mr. Murden: "We have a multi-disciplined technical team which comprises architects, engineers, designers and quantity surveyors. The contractors, Bovis Construction Limited, have been associated with the Owen Owen group for over 40 years".

Mr. Barry Boycott has been appointed general manager of the new store and, together with the Personnel Manager Marion Holland, introduced Owen Owen to the people of Redditch during an advertising and staff recruiting campaign in May, June and July.

NEW STORE TO OPEN SOON



An artist's impression of the new store



Second success for Coventry

Coventry store scooped the Dorma Silver Salver earlier this year, for the second time. They beat the set target in the inter-store competition by £1,000. Presenting the salver which they held until May, is Mr. Jim Walch, Dorma Sales Director and with him (left to right) are Peter Furde from the linen department, Dorma Consultant Rose Fletcher, Mary Kerrigan from the linen department, Ron Talbot, Dorma representative and Barbara Stone, sales manager, linen department.

Good start for T.J. Players

T.J. Hughes F.C. kicked off to a fine start in their first season in the Business Houses League.

The newly-formed team completed the season on a remarkable note, winning the League Cup Final against Brabys (1-0) with every chance of promotion from the fifth to fourth division.

The squad, which has guaranteed financial support from the store, consists of a cross-section of T.J. Hughes region's staff, including three sales managers, two assistant sales managers, sales assistants, stock-keepers and a receiver.

Among those who have demonstrated a flair for the game is Mr. Allen Clarke, carpet salesman at Bootle Strand, who has scored over 30 league goals in only 17 matches. He holds the title of highest scorer in the league.

The team, which wears the traditional T.J. colours of orange and black, includes (back) Mike Ellis (London Road), Tony Bolger (Bootle Centre), Tommy Heron (Bootle Strand), Chris Parkes (London Road), (front) John Ferguson (London Road), Danny Panther (London Road), Alan Clark (Bootle Strand) and Alan Cooke (London Road).



TRAINING

"Sell Service" the training theme which highlights the need for creating and maintaining a high level of customer service, has been on everyone's lips since its launching in February this year. And it is producing results.

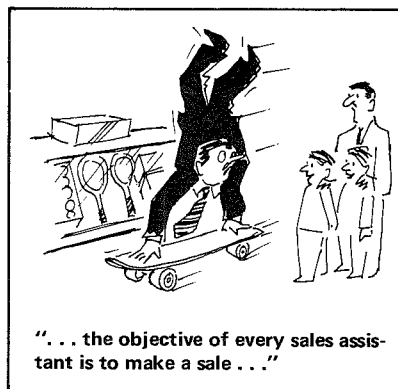
Although it was to have been regarded as the Spring training theme, Sell Service has now become the theme of the 80's.

In difficult trading conditions and the stringent economic climate we considered ways in which we could maintain our place in the market. We decided that one of the ways was to have something special to give - that is a higher standard of service, and the Sell Service training theme was born.

A series of before opening training sessions was produced by Mrs. Anne Crawshaw, Group Training Manager and all staff involved in the training agreed that there was a need to review the customer/employee relationship and that to survive in today's highly competitive market staff must provide more than a cash and wrap service to customers requiring help and guidance.

The need to produce cost effective sales has meant the introduction of cash and wrap points and it is very easy to allow the level of service to deteriorate. The objective of every sales assistant is to make a sale but there is more to it than that because the transaction must be satisfactory to the customer and profitable to the store. The customer must be impressed by the efficiency and honesty of the com-

Training Scheme has paid off



"... the objective of every sales assistant is to make a sale ..."

First Aid from 'Sell Service'

A hospital was probably the last place you'd expect to find Sell Service in action . . . but not any more.

When Slough's part-time corsetry fitter Mrs. Pat Puzey went into hospital for a few days in March, she overheard a doctor telling his patient to get a well-fitting bra.

The reply came: "How do you expect me to when I'm stuck in here?"

Mrs. Puzey couldn't resist the temptation and reaching for her handbag promptly told the lady; "I'm a corsetry fitter and I just happen to have my tape measure".

Within no time at all the lady was measured, the local Owen Owen store called in and a couple of days later there was one satisfied customer - and doctor, of course!

Said Slough's Personnel Manager, Mrs. Elizabeth Stewardson: "Mrs. Wyn Jaggard, our corsetry sales manager, just couldn't stop laughing, especially since the 'phone call came just after a Sell Service training session".

SELL SERVICE THEME OF THE 80's

pany, so that he or she will shop with us again, and recommend us to others.

Perhaps one of the most important factors to arise from Sell Service has been the fresh awareness to look for sales, rather than waiting for the customer to approach the till, and this has had a two-pronged effect. Not only has it created better relations for the store but has made

employees re-examine their job objectives.

Being fully equipped to cope with the job is also an important aspect of the Sell Service theme; knowing how to approach customers, how to conduct a transaction and being fully aware of the services available.

Judging from the response it's doubtful that Sell Service will stray

far from people's minds. However, it is intended to follow the programme up with a series of posters which will be on display in staff areas.

Mrs. Crawshaw, said "We shall be using the theme in the new Redditch store, in fact, any newcomer to the store will be trained to sell and use Sell Service. We have got to maintain the impetus".

STAFF AWARDS

● Two working holidays in New York were among the top prizes offered in the annual company awards, held in April.

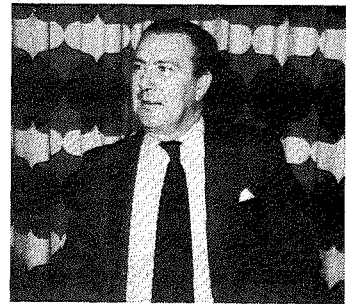


Winning smiles from three of our buyers (left to right) Miss Barbara Jackson, Mr. Arthur Roskell and Miss Susan Tavistock, who received gold Parker pens for achievements in the buying field.

Holiday Winners



Miss Sandy Graham, general manager at Uxbridge, won a working holiday in New York for her skills in establishing a kitchen concept.



Chester's general manager, Mr. Tom Brent, won a seven-day working holiday in New York in November in the seasonal gifts department competition.

CHAIRMAN'S AWARD

The Chairman's Award given for outstanding achievement went to buying controller Miss Cathy Lewis who is based in Liverpool.



Mr. Barrie Boycott (above) general manager at Redditch and Mr. Peter Jephcott general manager at Slough have been presented with prizes and Continental holidays.

SECURITY AWARDS

Security awards have been presented to Mrs. Alix Scott from Slough and Mr. Malcolm Humphries from T.J. Hughes. Mrs. Scott received a cut glass rose bowl and Mr. Humphries a lighter.

SEVEN UP

The following departments emerged winners of the Seven Up Competition, which is based on sales figures.

Chester (Gifts), Stourbridge (Lingerie), Slough (Lingerie), Uxbridge (Ladies Knitwear), Clayton Square (Young Owen), Slough (Furnishing Fabrics), Richmond (Kitchenware), Wolves and Bath (Toys/Electronic Games).

Central buyer Miss Susan Ross won a holiday when she scooped the Buyers Award for the 7 Up Competition.

APPOINTMENTS OF GENERAL MANAGERS

BOOTLE



Mr. Rennie Priest was appointed general manager of Bootle Strand store earlier this year.

Mr. Priest re-joined us in 1976 as sales manager of accessories in Bootle, transferring to Birkenhead as a sales manager in 1977. A year later he was appointed merchandise manager there and then promoted assistant general manager in London Road.

BIRKENHEAD

Birkenhead's new general manager is Mr. Philip Griffiths who joined Owen Owen in 1968, straight from school.

Mr. Griffiths began his career as sales assistant in Chester, but in 1972 was appointed sales manager. He transferred to Doncaster and in 1975 was promoted to Merchandise Manager in Shrewsbury.

In 1976 he transferred to Richmond where he remained until his appointment as food manager in Coventry the following August. He was later made merchandise manager and Assistant general manager in the store.

FINCHLEY



Finchley's new general manager is Mrs. June Baghurst who joined us in November 1971 as a sales assistant on Chester's drapery department.

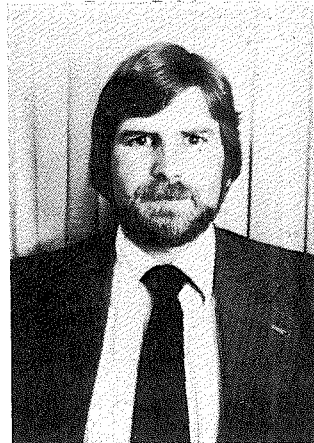
A year later she was transferred to Clayton Square where she stayed until October 1973, when she was appointed management trainee in Doncaster.

In 1974 Mrs. Baghurst was promoted manager of the lower ground floor in the same store where she remained until her transfer to Chester in 1975 where she became assistant merchandise manager a year later.

Her next move took her to Clayton Square as store trainer and she returned to Chester in February 1978.

After a year she transferred to Slough in the same capacity, a position Mrs. Baghurst held until her appointment as general manager of Finchley store in April.

KIDDERMINSTER



Kidderminster store welcomed its new general manager in April. He's Mr. Clive Wright, who joined the company in 1970 as a junior trainee on menswear in Wolverhampton.

In 1973 he was promoted to sales manager on menswear and three years later transferred to Coventry.

He moved to Chester in 1979 when he was appointed assistant general manager, returning to Coventry this year in the same capacity.

Mr. Wright recently married the general manager of Torrington Avenue, Brenda Wright (né Crawford) who was featured in the last issue of Scene.

COLLEGE SUCCESSSES



SUPERGIRL... that's Lesley Powell of Richmond. Lesley, who joined the store in April last year is currently studying for her BEC General at Kingston College of Further Education as a day release student. At present she is working on fashion accessories and finds it an absorbing and challenging department. Due to a clash of exam dates Lesley wasn't able to take her proficiency in May but she's all set for the 1981 test. Lesley lists as her hobbies reading, disco-dancing and socialising with friends.



HAPPY SMILES... and the smile says it all - 19-year-old Susan Humphries who received the Windsor Chamber of Trade Bursary for the most promising Distribution Student, after passing her BEC Higher Conversion Course examination. Susan, who joined Uxbridge store straight from school and is now ASM of soft furnishing, beds and luggage, was presented with a cheque by the Mayor of Windsor and Maidenhead at a small informal gathering at Windsor College.

FROM CANADA

FESTIVAL TIME WHEN THE SAP IS RUNNING

Canada is famous both at home and abroad for its maple syrup and maple syrup candy. Much of the maple syrup industry has been left untouched by modern science and today schoolchildren can go out and tap a maple tree using the methods of their pioneer forefathers.

They take a small pail, nail and spigot - that's all they require when the call goes out throughout the provinces of Ontario and Quebec to announce that the sap is running.

Thousands of children pile into school buses to make the annual trek to the sugar bush where they anxiously watch the sap being boiled in a large cauldron over an open fire.

The trip becomes a full-scale social event at week-ends when the whole family heads for the countryside for pancake breakfasts, pancake-eating contests and buggy and pony rides.

For the past 16 years the small town of Elmira, Ontario, has seen its population swell up by up to 50,000 in a single day during their annual Maple Syrup Festival. Fifteen hundred pounds of pancake butter,

200 pounds of butter and 100 gallons of maple syrup are consumed. For the children it's an appetising nature lesson - with a delicious ending!

After 19 years with G.W. Robinson, Harold Gater has retired... but he'll be appearing each Christmas in a familiar guise. For he has promised to continue to act as Santa Claus each year for Eastgate store's "Employees' Breakfast with Santa".

Harold has worked in three of Hamilton area stores, starting Downtown, moving to Burlington and finally Eastgate.

To mark his retirement friends and colleagues held a special presentation dinner.

TV SPOT FOR JOYCE

Eastgate store has its very own television personality working in the cosmetic department... and the lady in question hails from England.

Mrs. Joyce Westerside (né Shacklady) appeared in a 60-minute chat show where she discussed new Elizabeth Arden shades for spring and also demonstrated the art of making-up.

Joyce lived in Bootle, Merseyside before emigrating to Canada with her husband Glyn and son Graham in 1963.

She joined Eastgate staff in August 1975, and has worked in cosmetics for four years.



BUSINESS IS BOOMING AROUND THE WORLD

In Doha, on the Persian Gulf, Qataris shop in an ultra-modern 80,000 square foot department store. In Riyadh, the new capital of Saudi Arabia, Saudis browse through haute couture fashions and up-market menswear in the Christian Dior store.

Wealthy citizens of Lagos can choose from the best in men's merchandise when they enter the Nigerian-based Cecil Gee.

And in scores of towns and cities throughout the United Kingdom, hundreds of thousands of people are shopping, dining or working in environments which have been especially created for convenience and comfort.

Diverse though these situations may seem, there is one common link. Each of these projects, and many more besides were carried out by Plumb Contracts Limited, of Coventry.

The company has come a long, long way since it was acquired by Owen Owen in 1964. In those days it was a small shopfitting concern employing some 40 people and operating almost entirely in the Midlands.

It has grown to become the largest company of its type in the United Kingdom employing 250 people whose combined talents produce several million pounds worth of work each year both in the UK and overseas.

The most exciting — and exacting — overseas project to date was the enormous department store in Doha.

Incredible though it may seem the time taken to transform that piece of desert into a fully operative department store was exactly one year and one month.

Apart from the traditional departments: fashion, cosmetics, menswear, sports goods, TV and audio, jewellery, housewares, pharmaceuticals and toys, there is a gigantic food hall offering everything from American t-bone steaks to Fortnum & Mason delicacies.



Doha Centre which was completed in thirteen months.

Between the food hall and the other departments there is an exotic jungle restaurant on raised marble floors with fountains, jungle plants, life-size models of jungle animals and birds — together with appropriate jungle animal noises playing through the audio system!

Another unusual feature in the same area is a car showroom featuring Maserati cars, the first of which was sold within one hour of opening for around £20,000!

Said Managing Director, Mr. Tom Doyle: "The project was a marvellous example of meticulous planning and co-ordination.

"Apart from manufacturing and shipping out some forty container loads of fixtures and fittings to a very tight time schedule, we were also asked to supply a wide variety of supporting items, ranging from

catering equipment to staff uniforms to typewriters. All in all, we found it a most satisfying experience".

By complete contrast, one of the country's oldest and most famous hotels — The Mitre, in Oxford, with buildings dating back to the 12th Century — was completely refitted by Plumbs to provide new dining accommodation, lounges and bars.

The project included the creation of a bar in the Norman vaults which had been unused for centuries. The accumulated debris yielded several fascinating antiquities, such as old carvings and brasses which were eagerly snapped up by the Oxford Antiquarian Society, but the most unique prize was found when tunnelling through the roof of the vaults to form a spiral fire escape.

The find was a six-inch long earthenware flask embedded in the mortar.

"In the 12th Century apparently the practice was to place a flask of holy water within the structure in order to "bless this house" and the Plumb find was one of the few examples ever discovered. It now has a place of honour in one of the Oxford museums", added Mr. Doyle.

The development and growth of the company's Contracts Division has been the main bulwark in creating the highly successful company, which exists today.

But the growth and further development of the company is following other paths.

The principal source of development at the moment is the Contract

Furnishing Division, which markets the company's own splendid range of office furniture known as P.S.O., or Plumb System Office.

Last year was its first full year of trading and sales totalled nearly £1m. This year's target is double that amount and there is every indication that this tremendous increase will be achieved.

The division has added another string to its bow recently, with the introduction of an exclusive and comprehensive range of office seating, ranging from typist to board-room chairs. Here again, the initial response has been fully up to expectations.

Apart from its principal factory and head office building in the centre of Coventry, Plumbs operate three warehouse locations, a large technical office in Birmingham, its own interior design company — Misseldine & Associates, and, finally, a plastics factory on the outskirts of Coventry manufacturing G.R.P. (Glass Fibre Reinforced Polyester) products for use on both the outside and the interior of stores and shops.

The impressive fascias of the Owen Owen stores at Finchley, Preston and T.J. Hughes, Birkenhead, are typical examples of this work.

This ever-active company is now embarking on a further venture — a completely new and revolutionary chromium hanging and display system for general retail use, but with a special adaptability for ladies' and men's clothing, accessories and footwear.

Even before its unveiling at the Shopex Exhibition at Olympia in May, one nationally famous menswear chain was negotiating the system's first contract.

A fascinating company, whose attitude was summed up by Mr. Doyle, when he said: "All of us — from the newest apprentice to our craftsmen, our management and our directors — have a tremendous sense of pride in what we have done, in what we are doing, and what we are going to do in the future. We look forward with confidence to that future".

25 year AWARDS



Personnel Director Mrs. Stella Adams presents a carriage clock to Southampton's Mr. Monty Ticehurst to mark his 25 years with the company. Mr. Ticehurst joined us at Coventry in display, later becoming manager. He moved to Southampton in November 1978 in the same capacity.



Mr. Arthur Dodd, a carpet fitter with Chester Store receives his 25 year award, a carriage clock, from Mrs. Adams.



Mr. John Booth joined T.J. Hughes's Studio team just over 25 years ago — and to mark the occasion he received a carriage clock from Mrs. Adams. Mr. Booth, pictured here with his wife (right) has spent the last 18 years at Southampton in charge of their studio.