

# JS JOURNAL

JULY 1973

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## Flotation price values JS at £117m

The news members of the public and employees had been waiting for broke on Tuesday July 3 when, at 4.30 in the afternoon, an announcement went up on notice boards all over the company that JS was going public. This was followed quickly next day by a personal letter from the Chairman to employees.

Ten million ordinary shares, approximately 12.4 per cent of the share capital, are on offer and the application list will open on Thursday July 12.

Preferential treatment of employees, within the rules laid down by the Stock Exchange has been arranged and ten per cent of the shares offered to the public have been earmarked for staff if they wish to apply for them.

### Biggest ever

Each share has a price tag of 145p, putting a total value on the company of £117 million. JS, Britain's largest private company, will be the biggest ever to be floated on the Stock Exchange.

All the shares offered for sale are being provided by

members of the Sainsbury family or from settlements made by them. Once the offer for sale is complete, some 27 per cent of the share capital will be held by financial institutions charitable settlements made by the Sainsbury family, employees and the public.

Overall control will remain firmly in the hands of the Sainsbury family, who promised last October and again in March that flotation would in no way affect the family control of the company, its trading policy or its management style or marketing philosophy.

### Turnover to rise

At the present time JS is forecasting an increase in turnover of not less than the 13 per cent achieved by the company in the 1972-3 year.

The prospectus also refers to plans for opening 16 new supermarkets and three major extensions in the current financial year.

The capital expenditure will be financed from cash flow, the proceeds of sales of branches closed down and from bank borrowings.

The announcement that JS was going public brought a lot of new words, most of them normally banded about only in financial circles, onto everybody's lips.

Here, for those not normally clued up on the workings of the Stock Exchange, is a simple guide to some of the terms relating to the flotation of JS.

### A stake

**Share:** There are about 80 million shares issued in JS, each one with a face value of 25p. Each share gives its owner a one eighty millionth stake in the company together with the right to vote at company meetings and the right to any dividends paid

on the share capital of the company.

Shares, including those bought by employees' on pink forms, can be freely sold on the Stock Exchange at any time through a bank or a stockbroker.

### An invitation

**Flotation:** The act of inviting the public to buy shares in a company whose shares have not been previously quoted on the Stock Exchange.

**Underwriting:** The system whereby certain City institutions, for a fee, agree before a company issues shares to the public to buy any shares not taken up by subscribers.

**Prospectus:** The formal document setting out the history of the company and giving information about its finances and future prospects in order that the public can decide whether or not to invest. Employees considering making an investment should study this document carefully.

**Dividend:** The yearly amount paid by the company to its shareholders out of its profits, normally in two half-yearly instalments.

### Expectations

**Price/Earnings ratio:** The price/earnings ratio - generally known as the P/E ratio - is an indicator of investors' expectations about a company's future profits and dividends. It is calculated by dividing the company's share price by the profits per share (after payment of corporation tax) it has earned for shareholders - see fig.

A high price/earnings ratio for a company (relative to other companies) implies that it is held in high regard by the market taking into account its record of past growth and future prospects.

**Gross Dividend Yield:** The 'gross dividend yield' is calculated by dividing the dividends paid per share (before deduction of income tax) by the price per share.

At present the JS average gross dividend yield is about 3½ per cent.

This means that for every £100 invested at the issue price an investor will get a return of £3.94, on which he will have to pay tax.

### Late News...

Because of possible difficulties in the distribution of national newspapers, due to a dispute, a last minute television commercial was made on Saturday July 7 and screened the following evening to give details of the share offer.

In the event the three newspapers concerned were published - but lost a collective 127,000 copies.

In addition to the commercial, copies of the newspaper advertisement were printed during that week-end and distributed to JS stores and most branches of Midland Bank.

### These figures are theoretical and do not relate to JS

#### Price/Earnings ratio

Share price : £1.50 per share	
Number of shares : 1,000,000	
Profits before tax	£150,000
Corporation tax at 50%	75,000
Profits after tax	75,000
Profits per share - £0.075 (£75,000 : 1,000,000)	
Price - earnings ratio - Share price (£1.50) : Profits per share (£0.075) = 20	

## Woolwich entertains prices Minister

Woolwich branch provisions manager, John Saunders, (right) explains how a light pen works to Mrs Peggy Fenner, a junior Government minister, when she visited Woolwich branch on Tuesday July 3. With Mrs Fenner is AGM Archie Booth.

Prices were obviously uppermost in Mrs Fenner's mind - she is popularly known as the Government prices watchdog - as she closely inspected the shelves and cabinets.

What also caught her eye - after seeing the depot and head office part of the operation earlier in the day - was the transmitting end of the branch ordering system.

Said Mrs Fenner: 'This is the first time I've seen computer ordering from start to finish. I can see how, by using this highly sophisticated system, costs and prices can be reduced. It's all very interesting'.

After her tour she had lunch at the branch.



## Percy is champ again

Percy of Glenfarclas, JS's prize Aberdeen-Angus bull, followed his successes at the Royal Highland Show in May with top honours at the Royal Show, on July 3.

Three year old Percy was judged to be the best bull in his class and overall champion of the Aberdeen-Angus section, at both shows.

JS bought Percy last year for £6,000 at Perth. Rory Edward, manager of the herd at Kinermony, Banffshire, hopes Percy will pull-off a hat-trick by winning the Great Yorkshire Show too.

JS's pedigree cattle are sold all over the world - quality control on the hoof, you might say.

## Plenty of openings

It will be a bumper time for branch openings in the four weeks from July 17.

Five branches will be opened - just falling short of the 1969 record when six new branches were opened between November 11 and December 2 of that year.

But with a total area of 6,797 sq metres (73,155 sq feet) it's probably the largest amount of JS shop space

ever opened in such a short period.

First on the list, (areas in brackets) is: July 17, Bridgewater (1,220 sq metres/13,132 sq ft), July 24, Swindon (1,440 sq metres/15,500 sq ft), and July 31, Wood Green (1,778 sq metres/19,138 sq ft).

But with a total area of 6,797 sq metres (73,155 sq feet) it's probably the largest amount of JS shop space

# JS JOURNAL

## Young Dave leaves to see the world

A young JS manager trainee has given up a promising career to, as he puts it, 'seek a challenge'. He is 20 years old David Cousins of Erdington and at the end of June he left to go on a hitch-hike tour of Europe - and perhaps the world.

David explained why he felt he must go: 'I obviously gave a great deal of thought about giving up my career at JS. It was not an easy decision - especially as I could become an assistant manager by August. But all I can see is my future planned out for me, without any great challenge.'

'That's really why I want to go - to seek a challenge - and prove all the sceptics wrong.'

The idea of hitching around the Continent came from two old school friends of David's. They have been living and working in the South of France for some time. On their last visit home, it was their story of plenty of hotel work that really gave David itchy feet.

### Tough going

However, he doesn't pretend it's going to be an easy life. 'I know it's going to be hard going' he admitted 'but I've always wanted to travel and this will be a good jumping off point.'

He plans first to hitch hike to a resort near Cannes and work for two or three

months in a hotel. With the money saved, he hopes to hitch hike through the rest of Europe. Then it's on to Germany by the cheapest means (as hitching is discouraged there) so he will be in Munich for the World Cup.

If all is going well he hopes to work a passage to New Zealand. From there he will be heading for South America, USA and Canada. That's if he hasn't - by that time - decided to stay put in one place en route. 'I've an open mind' David said. 'If I like a place I shall stop there'. Going with him on his travels is his brother.

### Assured future

Branch manager, Peter Purslow is sorry to see David go. He said: 'When David came here he was a shy and inward lad. Now he's come out of himself and during his 19 months here he has put in a lot of hard work. He has done well and has an assured future with JS.' He added: 'But even though I tried to persuade him to stay I know he's really got to get this out of his system. I was sorry to see him go.'

When David left on his travels he left with at least 200 regrets... the girls at nearby Anstey College of PE for girls! 'I'll miss most of the girls very much' said David with a regretful smile.



## Painters give wall a sparkle



Les Watson and Grace Springthorpe with two of their own paintings at present on exhibition in the depot's staff canteen.

Les Watson and Grace Springthorpe both agreed that the newly painted staff canteen at the Basingstoke depot needed some decoration - especially as a mural that had been on the wall was not being replaced. With 15 or 16 prolific painters working at the depot, they thought it was about time their work was seen by a wider audience. They were given permission to hang paintings by the staff on the walls, but when they did they got an unexpected reaction from the canteen customers.

'The first time we put up the paintings' said Grace, secretary to the depot manager, 'it even stopped the queue for the midday meal! Since then every new showing gets a good reaction, and plenty of criticism.'

Grace first discussed the idea of hanging paintings in the canteen, with Les, who is the lamb line manager, and Ian Willis of the cost office. There are several people at the depot who regularly paint and they decided to put the idea to them. They got a good response and after the initial 12 paintings had been hung, four paintings are changed every month.

'It's been very popular up to now' said Les 'but we are now running out of paintings.'

Since the paintings have been on show about 14 have been sold - although this was not the aim. And there have been many requests for the Basingstoke artists to copy favourite picture postcards.

## 12,000 housewives give JS thumbs up

JS come top of the class for quality and cleanliness. This is the verdict of 12,000 housewives surveyed as part of a regular market research exercise.

The Gordon Simmons' Trade Index, to which JS subscribes, also shows JS leading the other established chains on price image, although Waitrose have a better image for premises and for 'other management'.

Asked about 'crowding' the housewives, not surprisingly perhaps, rated JS bottom, with Waitrose, Key Markets and Liptons in the first three positions.

These image ratings are the product of averaging the responses of the 12,000 housewives surveyed to questions about nine major food chains. One interesting product of the survey is the good image the housewives have of Asda, a recently established chain - largely in the north and overlapping very little with JS at present. They only have large new stores which look good, are spacious and provide working economies which can be reflected in prices.

For quality and cleanliness, however, where JS lead everyone, Asda only rate third place, with Waitrose second.

### Friendlyness

For efficiency our image is second to Asda, with Co-op and Fine Fare in third and fourth place. For friendlyness we only manage third place, with Asda again in the lead and the Co-op in second place this time.

Customer loyalty was also surveyed and provides food for thought - and no doubt argument. Comparing the latest survey with previous years it appears that fewer customers now go into a JS

store specially to buy certain goods. The decline in the number of shoppers who always go for our sausages and dairy products was particularly marked.

The experts point out that it is difficult to interpret the findings on customer loyalty without reference to what is happening with other supermarkets. Nevertheless, one cannot help speculating that recent steep rises in food prices must have made housewives more inclined to 'shop around' than before, and that the particularly marked change in response to sausages and dairy products might be the result of unusually severe supply problems last autumn with sausages and particularly large rises in dairy prices.

On a more general note, the Gordon Simmons survey asked housewives what they thought was the most important feature of supermarkets. From a list of over 20 headings they rated cleanliness as most important, with low prices, freshness, high quality and no waiting next in order. Bottom of the list was trading stamps.

Lastly car customers. Overall, the percentage of grocery expenditure brought home by car has increased from 24 per cent in 1970, to 27 per cent in 1971 and 29 per cent in 1972. For JS, however, the figures are 38 per cent in 1970, 46 per cent in 1971 and 53 per cent in 1972. Fifty-five per cent of our sales were made to customers who travelled more than a mile to shop.

These extracts from the survey are only part of the picture, so its unwise to draw too many conclusions from them. Nevertheless, JS still has the best image for quality and cleanliness. This is offset by the sad reflection that we only rate third place for friendlyness.

## Geneva course for two JS stewards

JS Driver Philip Woodham from Buntingford depot, and leading warehouseman Roy Stratton from Basingstoke, flew to Geneva last month as members of the first group of British shop stewards to visit the International Labour Organisation.

The ILO, formed in 1919, is a government/employer/trade union organisation, whose main aim is to promote world peace through better working conditions.

The trip to Geneva was the first venture to be sponsored by the Ernest Bevin International Study Group Scheme. About 20 companies, of which JS is one, contribute to the scheme which was set up jointly by the Transport and General Workers' Union and a number of leading British firms to mark the Union's golden jubilee last year.

During their week's stay the British stewards attended lectures, discussions and the

ILO's annual meeting. Roy Stratton, who works in the non perishable warehouse at Basingstoke, said: 'We were there to find out how the ILO works and it seemed to me that it is trying to do for the rest of the world what the unions in the UK are already doing. I think the work being done in Britain is ahead of that of the ILO.'

It represents over 100 countries and things move slowly. I heard that it took 43 years to get one item ratified.'

He said he found the visit rewarding: 'for me it helped put things into perspective. Our problems are so localised and small things tend to get out of proportion. I would like more shop stewards to go and see for themselves the work being done by the ILO.'

Both were impressed by the devotion and enthusiasm of the ILO workers and thought the trip was well worthwhile.

## June is No 2 — and gets a tenner



Nineteen years old June Pratt, a display assistant at Harlow, needed lots of encouragement to enter the town's first ever 'Miss Harlow Stores' contest. She got plenty - from her husband, Steve, and from the other girls at the Harlow branch.

Which was just as well, for June, an attractive brunette, went on to win second place in the contest, held in May.

June won a £10 prize which she put towards a week's

holiday, spent at Yarmouth last month, with husband Steve. He also works at the Harlow branch as a senior skilled tradesman. June married Steve six months ago after meeting him at the branch where she has worked since leaving school 3½ years ago.

Four stores each entered three girls in the contest.

The two other JS girls, who entered the contest, were Karen Chalk and Pat Crisp.

## New wine 'just cropped up'

'A full-bodied red wine with plenty of guts' is how JS wine buyer Andrew Nunn describes Beames-de-Venise, one of two French wines introduced this month at a few of the bigger branches.

Beames-de-Venise is the fifth in a range of better quality wines from lesser known areas in France. The first four were reviewed last month.

This latest wine is from north-east of the village of Châteauneuf du Pape. It is produced mainly from Grenache grapes and comes in a 'Normande' bottle, which has square and not sloping shoulders.

It should be served at room temperature and is a good accompaniment to spiced foods. 'Garlic for instance' says Andrew Nunn 'won't kill it.' Price 83p for a 72 centilitre bottle.

The second wine this month is Gaillac Perlé. A crisp, dry white wine with a

slight natural sparkle. It goes well with most foods and should be slightly chilled. But not too much, as over-chilling will kill the sparkle.

This wine says Andrew Nunn 'just sort of cropped up. While lunching one day at the Gaillac cellars with my boss, Ron Perry, and the JS Midi wine suppliers, Perlé was served with the meal. And we decided there and then that it was just the type of wine that would be appreciated by a number of our customers.'

He describes it as an honest wine at a modest price, 63p a 72 centilitre bottle. The bottle is a 'Veronique' which is slender with steeply sloping shoulders.

Gaillac wines, although comparatively unknown in this country at the moment, were a favourite at the English royal courts during the 18th century. The cellars at Gaillac are said to be over 1,000 years old.

## Holiday friendship in black and white

'... then we explored and found a ruined church in some woods... then we built a little fire and then... is it time to go to the beach now?...' Christine aged eight (right) and Lena aged 11 full of wonder at the things they have seen and done during their holiday by the sea at Deal, Kent at the beginning of June.

Christine and Lena are two of the children from Southwark who benefited from the 'sponsor a child' holiday campaign run by the staff at Blackfriars.



## New variety of lettuce on the way

When the temperature rises so does the demand for all the crisp and cool things that go to make a salad. But, surprisingly, JS sales over the year show that the demand for some salad items, particularly tomatoes and cucumbers, are not affected in the same way when the temperature drops. Salads, it seems, are popular all year round, whatever the weather. A few years ago salads were regarded as a part of the summer diet. It has now become a year round commodity - more housewives are working and a salad is easy to prepare.

affected by heat - they wilt and the centres go slimy. Continuous research is being conducted to find different varieties and in the near future we expect to be offering the public a new variety, known as 'salad', which is a cross between lettuce and an endive.

JS also sell large quantities of Class 1 summer tomatoes which normally come from one source, Guernsey, where we are able to plan our requirements and, at the same time, control the quality of the fruit we receive; on odd occasions we add Holland to our list. Cucumbers during the summer are normally from English growers, but here again we use Holland as a source of supply when the demand exceeds the English availability.

### Peak condition

Making sure that lettuces, tomatoes and the like are at the branches when they are wanted and in peak condition is a skilled job for the buyers. Lettuce, for instance, is at its most difficult when the demand is at its highest - during a warm spell. JS summer lettuces are all home grown and sometimes the demand exceeds the supply. Lettuces more than most things are

Holidays abroad and eating out have helped to make the British salad more exciting. Green peppers are sold in the majority of branches throughout the year; salad onions, radishes, watercress, celery, crisp lettuce, round lettuce, cos lettuce - the list is almost endless - Anyone for salad?

## The Common Market scare that never was

A scare that the British poultry industry - suppliers of most JS eggs and poultry - could have been severely hit by competition from within the EEC never materialised, says poultry department director Malcolm Hughes.

'Just before we joined the Common Market last February' he explained 'the cost of raising poultry in this country was considerably less than the cost in the six old EEC countries.'

### High tariff

'In order to even off the prices between UK and Common Market products a kind of 'compensatory award' was payable to any EEC producer importing poultry into the UK and by any UK producer wishing to export to the old EEC countries.'

'It would have meant that the UK was paying a high

tariff to export, while the EEC were receiving a subsidy to sell eggs and poultry in the UK at lower, more attractive prices' he said.

The result was that just before we joined the European Community British egg and poultry producers were poised, deep in gloom, awaiting an onslaught of foreign import.

### Crop failure

They never arrived. Following the failure of last year's Russian grain crop and a world-wide shortage of fish meal, two of the basic ingredients of poultry feed, which accounts for about 60 per cent of the cost of rearing poultry, the price of feedstuffs shot up in the UK, thereby removing the price differential between the UK and the old EEC.

At the same time eggs went into short supply

because a lot of producers had been killing birds without replacing them, and the result was that with fewer eggs about, market prices rose, allowing the farmer to recoup the increased cost of feedstuffs.

European producers, faced with a similar situation, concentrated on supplying their own markets, although our own shortage, plus the fact that traditional suppliers like Poland, Hungary and Finland have been priced out of UK shops since we joined the Common Market, would have left room for more EEC imports.

### Inelastic

The egg market is traditionally regarded as being 'inelastic'. The average Briton tends to eat about 250 eggs every year, and this demand remains roughly the same,

regardless of price movements up or down. So although prices have rocketed by 80 per cent in the last year, demand has slackened comparatively little.

Tom Brewer, senior poultry buyer, regards the current price comparison as 'horrible' but adds that it is a fair price, representing the high production cost with a reasonable margin for the producer and yet still giving good protein value for money for the housewife.

Currently egg prices are falling slightly owing to seasonal factors (the hens themselves caused a market surplus by laying over the bank holiday period when there was nobody to buy the eggs in the shops), and Malcolm Hughes stresses that with no overall weakness in the egg market, prices could return to their old levels within a week or so.

## Depot cheque helps the kids learn

A cheque for £500 was presented by Buntingford depot manager Owen Thomas to the Ward Freman School, Buntingford, at a joint depot committee meeting held at the depot on July 6. The cheque, received by headmaster Patrick Nobes was the second annual gift towards the school's environmental studies programme.

Over 20 of the boys and girls at the school are the children of people who work at Buntingford depot. When the school, which opened last July, is fully established it will cater for about 2,000 all-ability pupils (the Hertfordshire term for comprehensive) aged between 13 and 18 years.

Before the school opened Patrick Nobes asked local firms and organisations to take part in a 'foundation benefactors' scheme. Sainsbury's responded and it was agreed that the company would make an annual donation towards the school's environmental studies.

### Useful background

The school's environmental studies syllabus includes the growing of food, the development of livestock and the way in which food is prepared and packed for distribution. For this reason it was thought that JS's operations would provide a useful source of background information, trips and contact with suppliers. Groups of children and staff have already visited Buntingford depot.

Some of last year's £500 gift from JS was used to send about 30 children, in two groups, for a week to Swanage. At Swanage they were able to study in small groups

some of the most interesting geological formations in England. The course was run by university lecturers and with local experts or teachers with knowledge of the subject.

'The money from Sainsbury's' said Patrick Nobes, 'makes all the difference to trips like this. It means the children can have proper accommodation. Instead of spending their evenings doing chores or helping to prepare meals they can get in an extra couple of hours valuable study.'

### Coaster trip

Two boys have just returned from a week aboard a cargo ship travelling from London to a Scottish port. Patrick Nobes said: 'Here the money enabled us to provide the boys with far more film than we could have otherwise afforded. The photographs they took will form the basis of further studies and the boys will probably lecture the rest of the school on their trip.'

The scope of environmental studies is so wide that Patrick Nobes and his staff are having a hard job deciding how to make the best use of this year's gift. Money will probably be allocated to buying livestock and various pieces of scientific equipment for the environmental studies wing.

'Sainsbury's has very kindly provided us with a list of firms we may wish to visit' said Patrick Nobes. 'Among the suggestions we are thinking about is a tour of a vineyard. Another is a ten-day visit to dairy, meat and canned food firms in Holland and Northern France.'

## Greenwich festival takes a look at Charlton

Administration officer, Alan Carney, (right) showing round some of the 13 members of the public who visited the Charlton depot on June 19. The visit was arranged as part of the Greenwich Festival Week. Also showing visitors around that day was Keith Lumb, safety and training officer.

After the tour many of the visitors remarked on the size of the depot. One was surprised at the speed food is processed through the depot.

The following day there were 25 more visitors including African delegates of the International Council of Women Conference which was being held in London.

Acting as guides for the afternoon were Eddie Bell (non-perishables area manager), George Marshall (project control manager), and Alan Carney.



## Letters

### The eternal tax question

From Mrs V Miller (home economics, Blackfriars.)

Can someone please explain why, when you join the company, the tax deducted from the first month's salary is only one week's contribution? Therefore when you leave the company you must repay three weeks tax AT YOUR PRESENT SALARY!

It follows that if, for example, you join at £500 per annum and leave at £3,000 per annum, the tax repayment is a considerable shock.

Unfortunately this arrangement is legal (I've had two accountants check it). Is there any way we can ever hope to persuade the company to change this unfair system?

Mr Frank Netscher, chief accountant replies:

The tax year is of 365 days duration and runs from April 6 of one year to April 5 of the next. The JS financial year is of 364 days duration only and the most recent financial year ran from March 11 1972 to March 10 1973. It will therefore be seen that the gap between the year ending dates has been widening each year.

If we take the most recent tax year and financial year by way of example, the first salary payment was made at the end of Period 1 on April 7 1972. In theory we should have applied the tax tables appropriate to week 1. This would have meant that the tax calculations would have assumed only one week's tax allowance and, as a consequence, an inflated amount of tax would have been deducted. Instead we applied the tax tables for week 4, thus giving four weeks allowances against four weeks pay.

Similarly, at the other end of the year the final payment for the financial year 1972/73 was made on March 9 1973 and if we had applied the tax tables appropriate to March 9 this would have been week 49 of the tax year. Staff would therefore have only received 49 weeks allowances in 1972/73. To correct for this the tax phasing is changed so that it is in line with the JS financial year.

It follows, therefore, that a newcomer to JS must have his tax phasing adjusted. Conversely, when someone leaves, we have to revert to the application of tables which accord with the date of leaving or final payment. This is the reason for the current method of PAYE calculation.

Let us now cover the question of 'unfairness'. Each year the tax authorities send a tax return to everybody for completion. It is on the details included in that return that the final tax liability of an individual is assessed; there may have been a change in someone's family circumstances which had not previously been advised to the tax authorities - one gets married or a child is born. Previously untaxed income has also to be included. This means that an individual's tax liability for a

given year will be assessed on all the income that he has received during the course of the particular tax year in question and having taken account of all the allowances to which he is entitled during that tax year. If he has paid too much PAYE by deduction from salary, he will get a refund. If his tax code number was properly calculated by the tax office the tax deducted from salary payments for the year should be correct. This will apply in the year in which an employee joins Sainsbury's, as it will in a year when an employee leaves Sainsbury's.

#### More good news

I hope this convinces those previously in doubt that the system does not operate to the disadvantage of any employee. In fact it is worth noting that in each JS 52 week year, employees receive 365 days tax allowances against 364 days pay - a marginal tax advantage! But there is better news still. In 1975 the end of Period 1 will fall on April 5 1975; this effectively means that Sainsbury's staff will receive 14 salary payments between April 6 1974 and April 5 1975. The Inspector of Taxes has confirmed that we will be able to allow a further four weeks allowances in that year (by the application of the same tax code on a 'week 1' basis). This will clearly be an advantage to all JS staff at that time.

I think that your correspondent really means to use the words 'Pay three weeks tax' not 'repay three weeks tax' and 'the tax payment' is a considerable shock' rather than 'the tax repayment is a considerable shock.'

#### Down the chute

From Mr CS Lundy (Barkingside)

Many stories of JS circulate at 25 Club dinners and retirement parties. For sheer cheek this one tickles me.

Some years ago the manager of 296 Holloway, Mr Goshawk, was in the cellar-warehouse checking goods coming down the chute from the pavement above. Suddenly, instead of groceries, a passing male pedestrian arrived feet first.

Mr Goshawk quickly picked the bewildered chap up from the floor, brushed him down, slipped half a crown into his hand saying 'all right boy' and ushered the poor chap up the stairs and out of the shop before he could say a word.

Customer complaints department would have been proud of this settlement on the spot.

Who was the unfortunate young man in the early 30's who paused on the Blackfriars Bridge, resting his flat (basket) of sausages on the parapet, only to see the basket go over the side into the river? When 114 Ilford was short of sausages, the manager would detail one of the living-in boys to catch a train about 6.00 am to pick up a basket of sausages from the Blackfriars factory.

Incidentally, which family can claim the record for the longest combined service to JS? I must make one exception of course, the Sainsbury family, who would win hands down. I had the pleasure of knowing the three Davis brothers: - Bruce, meat supervisor, Frank, head butcher and later meat examiner at the depot and Percy, shop manager. Each did over 40 years together and the total must be around the 130 mark.

#### Button Boots

From Mrs SE Smith

I would like to call your attention to the letter from Mrs MJ Becker published in the June, JS Journal, concerning my late husband, Mr SE Smith.

I fear this dear lady is definitely labouring under a false impression as there is no truth in her letter whatsoever.

Mr SE Smith never, and I repeat never wore, 'button boots', or made his own cigarettes or ever smoked one.

I am amazed that such a letter should be published before verifying the truth of it - more especially - about an official with 45 years' service with the firm. Also was it necessary in a previous letter for HT Jones to add 'the dreaded' Mr SE Smith? - I feel sure there are many JS veterans who hold him in high esteem.

I feel extremely hurt over these accusations and would be glad if you will kindly publish this letter in the next JS Journal.

From Miss J Corney (Veteran)

Regarding the letter sent to you by Mrs Becker. The word should read 'disciplinarian' not 'dreaded'. I cannot remember that Mr SE Smith wore Button Boots, but if he did they would have been well shone. Please Mr Editor will you vet carefully in future any letters received criticising any loyal JS employees now deceased?

#### Editor's note

I think I should make it clear that the JS Journal correspondence column is meant to be a platform for readers opinions, and these are not necessarily those of either the editor or indeed the JS Board.

While we make very strenuous efforts to check material published in the main body of the JS Journal, it would clearly be very difficult to check the veracity of all the letters we receive, particularly those from the veterans referring to events long since passed. However I would like to apologise to Mrs Smith for any distress the letter about her husband may have caused.

#### Swindon citified

From LJG Phillips (Veteran)

Whilst visiting my daughter's home at Cricklade some three months ago, my grandsons, Mark (9) and Paul (6) informed me that Swindon was soon to become a city.

I then asked them what Swindon would be required to have when it became a city; for some moments it was quite obvious they were giving my question deep thought, and then their faces simultaneously lit up with a triumphant look, and with one accord they shouted 'Sainsbury's'.

It is hardly necessary for me to add that their mother has always - I wonder why - been extremely biased in favour of JS, and is eagerly and patiently awaiting the Swindon opening.

Editors note; Swindon with some 15,000 square feet of space will open at 9.30 am on Tuesday July 24. We hope to see your grandchildren there!

#### Boddy's Bridge

From Mr HF Ransom (Veteran)

I have been in touch with a number of local people living in Upper Ground; the story goes that, near the 'Angel' pub was a bridge and if anyone found a body in the river and carried it over the bridge, they received one shilling from the coroner's court.

Hence Boddy's or Bodys Bridge.

#### Apathetic Managers

From Mr SK Hull - (Bell Green)

Congratulations to Anthony Gayer for his perceptive views on 'sainsbury management' expressed in the June JS Journal.

His overall conclusion that management have for years been rather apathetic regarding company policy is correct. In the most part they accept policies without referring them to their colleagues farther down the responsibility chain, clarifying the implementation of these with the stock attitude "We don't care how you do it - just get it done". This, of course, is basically wrong, if not only from a management point of view, then certainly from a moral one.

The simplest test of success in any bureaucratic organisation is to see which way, if any, the views of others are communicated up or down the management structure, be they popular or unpopular ones.

Regrettably, most communication is the latter-down: with the emphasis being on destructive criticism and not constructive criticism.

In conclusion, may I quote Mr Hoyer-Millar in May's JS Journal; "Labour relations" (and management)" are sciences and not acquired arts".

I would add to this one simple ethic; Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

No matter what your personal views on the management of the company are, I hope the publication of this letter will convince you that JS is making an attempt to encourage communication upwards as well as downwards.

We hope to cover the whole subject of management style in a later issue - ed. Letters are welcome and should be addressed to the editor at the address below.

## People

### Appointments

R Harrison, formerly deputy manager at High Wycombe has been appointed manager at South Harrow.

J Irestone, formerly reserve manager at Wandsworth has been appointed manager at West Wickham.

L Wright, formerly manager at Upton Lane has been appointed manager at 40/44 Walthamstow.

A F King, formerly deputy manager at Bury St Edmunds has been appointed manager at Kings Lynn.

A G Bacon, formerly grocery manager at Worthing has been appointed deputy manager at Bognor.

D Billings, formerly manager at Edgware has been appointed manager at Bristol.

J R Wilkins, formerly branch security officer, Kingston Area has been appointed area security manager.

C Etheridge, formerly reserve manager at Wandsworth has been appointed manager at Fulham.

G Adams, formerly grocery manager at Gloucester has been appointed deputy manager at Redditch.

E Hughes formerly reserve manager at Kilburn has been appointed manager at Paddington.

J Prendergast, formerly manager at Paddington has been appointed manager at South Harrow.

A Doy, formerly night manager at Charlton Depot has been appointed administration manager at Buntingford Depot.

L German, formerly acting management accountant in management accounts has been appointed management accountant.

J Smith, formerly security officer in central branch security has been appointed area security manager at Ealing.

### Retirements

E Broughton, senior skilled tradesman, Croydon, retired on January 30 - nearly 50 years' service.

Mrs K Lawson, chief display assistant, Central Croydon, retired on January 30 - 34 years' service.

J May, senior store serviceman, Croydon, retired on February 24 - 45 years' service.

J Nanzer, reserve manager, Wood Green, retired on February 17 - 44 years' service.

E Griffiths, deputy warehouse manager, Buntingford depot, retired on March 9 - 45 years' service.

A E Vincent, motor engineers manager, retired on March 9 - 47 years' service.

S Pope, personnel officer, Blackfriars, retired on March 9 - 45 years' service.

Miss I Whiteside, staff relations officer, Blackfriars, retired on March 9 - 31 years' service.

L Franklin, manager, St. Albans, retired on March 10 1973 - 43 years' service.

T Reed, deputy manager, Fulham, retired on March 10 - 49 years' service.

H Jordan, quality control supervisor, poultry department, retired on March 10 - 44 years' service.

The following employees have also retired. Length of service is shown in brackets.

Mrs I Stagg (10), Mrs F Wise (5), Mrs E Spring (7), Mrs W Boon (6), Mrs R Pack (5), Miss H Dinwiddy (13), Mrs R Muszynski (14), Mrs F Peake (18), Mrs M Nash (18), Mrs M Raymond (17), Mrs E Hawkins (3), Mrs L McKenzie (5), J Chittock (3), Mrs I Ryan (5), Mrs B Baker (4), Mrs E O'Donoghue (21), S Brown (7), Mrs E Ekins (10), Miss A Wilson (17), Mrs I West (12), Mrs M Ludlow (7), Mrs N Judd (5), Mrs H Andrews (5), Mrs M Batchelor (19), Mrs N Blackwell (2), Mrs Q Ley (15), Mrs G Rogozinski (6), Mrs E Wyld (4), Mrs E Turnbull (8), Mrs A Bradford (5), F Nightingale (2),

### Obituary

S Dunsworth, was a warehouseman at Romford from 1964 up to the time of his sudden death on March 1.

Mrs J Clayton, who had been a display assistant at Swiss Cottage since 1966, died on April 3 following a lengthy illness.

J Potter, works department Basingstoke depot, who had been with the company since 1938, died on March 4.

J Bell, warehouseman at Buntingford depot, who commenced with the company in 1968, died on March 9.

Mrs E Fuller, part time display assistant, Feltham, died on March 30 after 17 years' service with the company.

## JS JOURNAL

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# FEATURE

## Back to the good old bad old days

Good food, good wine... a chance to meet old friends. The veterans get together, reported in the last JS Journal, had all three, so not surprisingly once lunch was over and the coffee cups pushed aside, reminiscences flowed easily and amusingly.

Here, anonymously, to spare the blushes of retired JS folk, who might not know they were being listened to, are some of the things we overheard...

When I first came on the firm in November 1938 all the boys had to be in by ten o'clock, but they never were; they used to climb up the drain-pipe and get in that way.

Then they got brought over the coals and of course they had to mind their P's and Q's because things weren't like they are today. There wasn't much work then so people were glad to get a job. They had to stick to their jobs and do the work properly.

I remember when the war was on and I was at Barking and we were sleeping in the cellars, the maid and I. We had a terrible air raid one night which blew the whole of Blake's Corner up and the maid and I out of our beds. We landed on the floor of the cellar.



Later in the morning a gentleman walked in with a young man and a book. He was writing and he said 'Well madam, how are you?' I said 'look I've not time to talk to you' I said 'we are only just getting the gas going to give the girls a cup of tea and I've not had a cup of tea since six o'clock last night'.

In between that he was trying to get words in. He was saying 'but madam' and he never got a word in 'cause I kept insisting 'I have not time to talk to you'. Then all of a sudden he says 'But madam I'm RJ'.

I was just going to say 'well I don't know who you are' but suddenly the penny dropped and that did it: I just started to cry because of what we'd gone through all night and I always remember him putting his hand on my shoulder and saying to me 'We're only here to see how you are.'

'Are you alright?' he said. I said 'we will be when we've had a cup of tea!'



'My penny, my boy!'

I knew the original one, Mr JJ; I worked for him. Once he came into the Cricklewood branch and said 'get that ticket 'eggs were cheaper' quickly off the window and put on 'eggs are cheaper'. He said 'I'll show you how to do it. My boy, get a penny, an old penny, and wet it and scrape it off like that'.

He said 'you got a penny?' I hadn't so he said 'well get it off quickly' and he gave me a penny.

He had a little grey horse dragging a little cart around like Queen Victoria used to ride in; that was about in 1912 or something.

Anyway he said he was just going and he used to walk like this with little tiny steps and he was getting into his little old carriage when he suddenly came back and said 'My penny my boy!' And he had his bloody penny back.



Working conditions in those days were harder but everyone enjoyed working more than they do now. There was a sense of comradeship in those days; you'd see one fellow in a bit of a hole and you'd nip over and help him. I don't know whether it is so or not today.

There was no such thing as overtime then, and we worked anything from 12 or 14 to 16 hours, whatever the manager thought was necessary.

I would be lucky of a Friday or Saturday night if I got home at 11 o'clock. I remember on my very first Friday night it was 11 o'clock and the manager said to me, 'you live near here sonny don't you?' I said 'yes, just round the back', and he said 'ah good, will you drop an order in for me on your way home?'

So I collected this parcel to deliver on my way home and it was for Lansdowne Street, which was another 20 minutes walk away from my home, and then I had to walk 25 minutes back so I got home at five past 12. That was my first Friday night on the firm.

In those days if you had a job of work you were thankful that you'd got a job and on Sainsbury's as a boy of 16 you got more money than you would at any other job.

When I joined JS, there was a queue of applicants from the shop door along the main street and down the next street; and there was only two people engaged that day out of the whole queue and I was one of them.

They were advertising for tall, well educated youths and there must have been over 100 applicants.



'This is a funny way to the swimming baths'

I met my husband at Sainsbury's. I went into the branch one day to buy some bacon for somebody else. I didn't want him to serve me, I wanted his friend with the big brown eyes. He said 'I'll serve you' and I said, 'oh alright' and he said 'you look miserable today' and I said 'so would you if you had to work on Bank Holiday'. (I was a window dresser at the time). He said 'well how about coming out with me' and that was how it all begun.

(Husband): It was about the only regret I've had in my life! It's a very funny story as I only met him because my mother was away; I was only 15 at the time and he was 16 or 17.

In those days I had a lovely hand-knitted bathing costume. I was going swimming with my sister and her boyfriend and when he asked me out I said 'I'm meeting my sister and we are going swimming' so he said 'alright' and arranged to meet me at Lewisham. It was a lovely hot day.

He said 'we'll go this way' so I said 'alright' but this is a funny way to go to the swimming baths and I've got to meet my sister.

But off we went to the Gaumont Cinema and he said we would have tea. Tea, well! So of course I had to have this tea, and he bought these tickets and I thought it was very posh in the front row of the dress circle so I had to sit and swelter in my dress and hand-knitted bathing costume all that day and I didn't have the courage to say I had to meet my sister.

When we came home I said 'we'll get on the bus' 'cause I had to be home by ten. 'Oh we'll walk' says he, and he walked me all round Peckham Rye Park and when I got home my sister was just going to phone the police...

... and I'd been sweltering all day in my hand-knitted bathing costume!

It's quite true what they say - it's the older staff that made this firm. It was that type of work and the type of chappie you worked along side that made it worthwhile. We've had some marvellous times.

Now say you was going to Bournemouth. They used to send about three or four motors down to Bournemouth and we all went down together, follow the leader sort of style, stopping in your various all-night cafes. The journey took four and a half hours and you had a nice laugh and joke and it was enjoyable. You enjoyed your job and you did your job well.

I'll always remember this incident: I'd been out since six o'clock in the morning picking up poultry over the market and I come back at quarter past 10 at night (this was Christmas time). I'd been at work all day and when I got back to the garage the foreman said, 'you'll have to go up to Blackfriars to pick up a ton of poultry'. They'd forgot to put the poultry on to the van for Bournemouth.

So he says go up to Blackfriars and pick this ton of poultry up (it was all in big hampers then) and go and chase the drivers up and put it on their van. I got to Winchester and Nobby Clarke one of the drivers, big tall fellow, Big Nob they used to call him, was having a little sleep you see. I woke him up in the pouring of rain and I said 'Bloody you, leaving your poultry behind', but it wasn't their fault see. I put it on his van, turned round and I got back to the garage at seven the next morning.



'Bloody you, leaving your poultry behind'

I didn't know what to do, there was no foreman there at the time and they didn't start work until seven thirty so I thought to myself, I'll go home. So I went home, had two hours kip and I come back at nine and the guv'nor said 'well how did you get on? What time did you get home?'

I said 'seven o'clock' so he said 'what you doing here now? Go home to bed!'



'I came in and found them with nothing on'

'They were all nice boys to me. I remember once, it was my half-day and I came back unexpected. They were all running around the kitchen with nothing-on after their bath. When they saw me they covered themselves with towels. I suppose that wouldn't matter much nowadays.'

'When I read about some of the boys I've looked after in the Journal, it gives me a nice feeling. I like to see them get on.' (JS ex-housekeeper)

## in at the kill...

... that's produce buyer Tony Court's hectic world with its last minute operations that can suddenly turn an ordinary produce line into a promotion. JS Journal's assistant editor, Eddie Manly, writes of a day spent with a senior buyer of the produce department. It's a day that starts with an early visit to Covent Garden, continues with meetings at Hoddesdon and Blackfriars and ends with a telephone call to California.

Six in the morning. The railway stations are - for nine to five people - unusually quiet. In the London streets there are more cars parked than on the road. A curious tension is in the air - as if the capital is laying in wait for an invasion.

Footsteps echo along empty sidestreets and, here and there, a few shopkeepers quietly prepare for the day. But just up from this quietness in the Strand the air becomes full of noise.

Porters hurry by, boxes perched uncertainly on their heads. A barrow narrowly misses an idle bystander. A lorry spews out black diesel exhaust fumes. Swearing and cussing rends the air. A pub door opens and a smell of beer (and tea?) spills out onto the pavement. It mixes with the sweet smell of fruit and

earthy smell of vegetables. This is Covent Garden at six in the morning.

Among all this activity there are small groups of men looking at produce and talking quietly. Some of these will be small greengrocers getting their stock for that day's trading.

Others will be buyers for large concerns, like JS senior buyer Tony Court. But what is he doing in Covent Garden when JS buy most of their produce direct from importers, growers, and in some instances by direct importation?

'I am sounding out for a promotion for next week' he said. 'As the weather reports are good and the Bank Holiday follows, it should be a good salad trading week. The idea is to get the whole-

saler's feeling of what the trade will be like next week' Tony explained. 'They have their ears to the ground. We don't necessarily use the wholesalers, but their information will be extremely useful'.

He moves out of the way of a porter bearing down on him with a barrow, laden with boxes of apples, and walks through the centre of the market. Already wrappings and boxes are littered about.

### Down in the umber

'We get our information' Tony continued 'by building up a personal relationship'. He steps into a dimly lit shop and asks where the salesman is. 'Down in the umber mate' was the

reply - 'y'know, umbrella - cellar.'

Back in the street the early morning sun is shining. Singing comes from the direction of the 'Nags Head'. 'Time for a cup of tea' said Tony opening the pub door. (So that's why there was a smell of tea with the beer!) Over a cup of the strong tea Tony explains why he comes to the market.

'I'm not here to buy produce but to get ideas' he said 'but this is only part of the job. When I get back to the office I will have to use the telephone to talk to growers, various importers and some produce boards.

'The market has some important functions. It tells you the current values of produce which you have to know, and take into account, when you're fixing prices



Long before most people are eating their cornflakes, produce buyer, Tony Court, is in Covent Garden gathering information. This information will be used to fix prices and assess promotions.

with farmers and importers. You must consider that 90 per cent of our produce is received by direct purchasing. Naturally there are advantages to be gained, such as the produce itself being fresher. There's less handling - we receive it palletised - and there are similar advantages to our suppliers. So I accept that the market still plays its role in our everyday activities.

'Many people consider "The Garden" to be the focal point of the trade. Remember, very few organisations do not operate through this centre in one way or another'.

## Talk, talk, talk

A commotion by the pub door interrupts him. Someone has had too much to drink. It's seven o'clock.

Tony continued: 'It is vital for us to know what is going on. One hour in "The Garden" can give us an up to date picture of what's happening in this trade throughout the world. But you will only get this information if you've got the confidence of the wholesalers. That's why you have to talk, talk, talk. And to know what you are talking about.'

'We have been here for many years; long before we had a fruit and veg depart-

ment, we were buying toms and cucs. From these earlier days came the foundation of our good relationship with the market as a whole'.

Outside the 'Nags Head' he meets assistant buyer Bryan Stanesby. Bryan has also been at 'The Garden' since the early hours. They cross the road and go into the market centre again.

The aisles are very narrow and Tony and Bryan have to keep dodging those porters, who by now seem determined to run everyone down with their loaded barrows! The two buyers step into a small shop and look at grapes.

Apparently the South African season is ending and because there is a shortage they are looking for alternative supplies. 'These grapes are far too old' Tony says, 'you can see by the stalk. There's no life, it's dead. By the time they get to the housewife they will be past JS quality'. Produce buyers, it would seem, have to be part farmer, wholesaler, quality controller, shop manager and customer.

It's eight and time for breakfast before going to Stamford House. The streets are busy now as commuters come into London.

On the third floor of Stamford House Tony sits at his desk confronted by

memos, telephones and a pile of cost cards. 'We are not only buyers' Tony explains 'we also have a department to run'. They have indeed, for at the Hoddesdon depot, the programme control, supply control, quality control and repack and pre-pack stations, are all a part of this department.

Bryan Stanesby comes into his office to discuss the next week's produce appraisal report. The report is a forecast of what produce will be available next week and what the trends might be. It will be fully discussed at the weekly meeting held at Hoddesdon on Wednesday afternoons.

## Nuts in May

'This is our crystal ball exercise' says Tony 'but when next week comes things might be completely different. The weather plays an enormous part in this department; at times it can be our enemy or our friend. At the same time though we have to be working on today's availability of produce'.

Bryan and Tony get half-way through the report when the phone rings. Tony answers it and discusses nuts. Bryan waits to get on with his report, which will need revising, before it is telexed to Hoddesdon in time

for the meeting. 'That's a good example of what I mean by not just dealing with today' said Tony replacing the receiver. 'We are now in May, and that call was to do with nuts for Christmas'. After many more interruptions Bryan gets his report finalised at last.

In the car on the way to Hoddesdon Tony talks about how the produce buyers spend millions of pounds for JS a year.

'When we buy, say, apples from a supplier, we know we must satisfy the customer and show a reasonable profit for JS. The volume of trade is a multiplication of that. I do not decide how much to buy, that is decided by our supply control section'.

What's his criteria when buying a commodity? 'I ask myself a question: would my wife go into a JS store and buy it? If the answer is no then we don't have it' said Tony. Also, one must look at the life left in the commodity.

'Produce is one big compost heap - everything is dying - and we're talking in terms of days from when we buy to when it's in the home. That's why it was necessary to reject those grapes.'

'Produce cannot be learnt from a book. Very rarely are there two seasons the same for any commodity.'

There are no qualifications that substitute the pure experience of dealing with the actual articles themselves'.

At Hoddesdon, Tony goes straight into a meeting with supply control manager David Williams where they discuss a new office layout, the training of clerks, the computer and the proposed working arrangements for Elmdon produce depot. The business finalised, they both walk through the depot to the management rest room. This is the weekly meeting where section heads, buyers and produce director Harry Haslam discuss the appraisal report.

## Where the action is

'It's a unique meeting' claims Tony. 'I don't think there's another regular meeting within JS where the atmosphere is so informal'.

Why Hoddesdon? 'This is the obvious place to meet' said Tony 'it's where most of the produce distribution departments are'.

Among the items, next week's salad promotion is fully discussed and agreed on. The meeting lasts an hour and afterwards Tony has a chat with senior quality controller Stan Russell.

Tony ends his visit to Hoddesdon with a meeting with the depot manager,

Derek Graham, and David Williams. Back in the car he turns on to the A10. The traffic is very heavy - but going in the opposite direction.

'No two days are the same' he says. Of course the weather plays an enormous role in our activities. It can be a nice summer's day which would mean salads, the following day rain - and vegetables. We are able to take advantage of an immediately available commodity and, in one hour, what seems to be an ordinary line suddenly becomes a promotion.

'Immediate action at the last minute gives us an advantage over our competitors. It is an "in at the death" department' said Tony.

Back in town the streets are once again emptying. Tony heads for Stamford House again. It's about the right time to call California about a water melon shipment. It's six in the evening.



Left: checking for quality is a continuous process and doesn't end at the buying stage. Quality controller, Ray Morton, and Tony Court inspect pineapples at the Hoddesdon Depot.



Below: the weekly meeting at Hoddesdon. Held in the management rest room - and involving all sections of the produce department - this meeting discusses what produce will be available, prices and promotions for the forthcoming week.

Right: mind your backs! Tony Court and Bryan Stanesby - both well used to dodging the porters as they dash through the market with their loaded barrows - in the centre of 'The Garden' looking at grapes.



## Fire sweeps through Basingstoke depot

Fire swept through the packaging store at Basingstoke depot on June 26 bringing production to a halt. 'It was a miracle no-one was hurt' said lamb line foreman Tony Gerrard, one of the first on the scene.

Mike Smith, acting foreman in the cleaning department, was the first to raise the alarm. At about eight-thirty on Tuesday evening he was walking from the bacon department to his office, which is just off the packaging materials store on the first floor, when he noticed flames coming from a stack of boxes. 'Suddenly the whole lot went up' he said, 'It was no good trying to put it out. It had got too much of a hold so I ran to raise the alarm. I tried two or three fire alarms but they didn't seem to work. All this time, and everything happened so fast, I was shouting for people to get out. I warned the girls in the bacon department to get out.'

### Office shambles

The following afternoon (Wednesday June 27) Mike was still around seeing if he could help out, clearing up the debris or sweeping away the thousands of gallons of water left by the firemen's hoses. Mike said: 'My office is a shambles, I was going back to fill-out my time sheets when it happened. I'm the only one around here at the moment with a white hat left.'

'When I got to the store from the lamb line' said Tony Gerrard 'flames were all up one wall. The smell of burning plastic film was terrible, the lights were out and what with that and thick smoke you could hardly see.'

A friend telephoned deputy accountant Ken Millingham at home. 'When he told me about the fire I jumped into the car to see if I could run any errands - take people home, things like that. I could see the smoke from my home, thick and black and plenty of it.'

Trainee accountant



Top: Smoke pours from the Basingstoke depot as a crowd gathers, anxious for news.

Far left: The morning after: firemen clear up,

Left: Alarm-raiser Mike Smith.

Marvin Gregory said: 'My parents live about three miles away and they could see the smoke.'

Women fled the production departments, leaving behind coats, handbags and in some cases shoes. 'They were wonderful' said Tony Gerrard 'no panic, no arguing. It could have been a lot worse if they hadn't behaved so well and followed the fire drill.'

Cars arrived within minutes to take people home. Statistics quality controller Val Dinneen arrived with her husband. 'Some of the women couldn't get their own cars started because their

keys were back in their lockers. My husband went round starting their cars for them with a bit of wire.'

### 'Binoculars - the lot'

Sightseers on foot and in about 200 cars prevented Doug Roshier, lamb line foreman on the day shift, from getting into the depot on the night of the fire. 'I couldn't believe my eyes. There were whole families with chairs, tables and of course binoculars - the lot. If an ambulance had wanted to get to the depot, well...'

First fire officer on the

scene was Divisional Officer Alfred Gore of the Hampshire Fire Service. 'All told' he said 'there were eight fire engines, about 70 firemen, 24 in breathing apparatus and six special appliances. These included a water carrier holding about 2,000 gallons.'

According to Officer Gore the fire covered an area of about 40 by 50 yards. 'It took us roughly an hour to surround the fire and three hours to bring it under control.'

Dense black smoke hindered the work and Officer Gore described conditions as 'pretty wet'. 'I did hear'

he said 'that a couple of maintenance men were thought to be unaccounted for. But I heard later that they had escaped over the roof.'

Depot manager Angus Clark said: 'Of the five production units only the cheese line was able to start work the next morning' (Wednesday June 27). The beef line got going partially by about 10 am and was operational by the afternoon.'

Incredibly the staff at the depot were able to get the lamb line and grocery packaging line back in production by the end of the week, less than three days

after the fire. Even the bacon line, which suffered the most damage, was producing a few joints by Thursday June 28. Angus Clark said 'We were producing rashed bacon and a few more joints by early the following week.' (July 3 or 4).

The fire destroyed all the packaging films and plastic materials used to wrap bacon. Graham Nichols, department director, supply control, said: 'The situation could have been desperate. The bacon plant was very badly damaged.'

Stores of packaged groceries, rice and the like, were completely destroyed, not so much by the fire but by the gallons of water and foam used on the flames.

### Rain poured in

'All the depots are working with a will to make up the shortages, but adds Graham Nichols 'following so hard on the strike, the fire could not have happened at a worse time.'

Heavy rain on the night after the fire hindered the clearing up programme. The store was next to the roof, which collapsed, and without a roof the rain poured in. Staff once again rallied round with mops and buckets.

Everyone, including the fire officers, praised the work done by the staff at the depot. Angus Clark said: 'It was the efforts of the staff that got the recovery programme going.'

A telegram from Mr JD to Angus Clark read: 'I want to express the appreciation of the board to you for the calm and efficient way in which you and your depot staff dealt with the fire last night... Well done.'

Police and forensic experts are working to discover the cause of the fire which is as yet unknown. A rough estimate of the damage is put at £200,000.

## Engineers' strike halts depots

The engineers' strike, which started at Charlton depot on June 21 and spread to all other JS depots over a payment for time when the men were 'off the clock' due to a refusal to accept instructions from supervisors, was resolved on June 26 when all depots resumed normal working.

The issue at stake in this strike, which disrupted supplies to most stores served by the depots, is, according to personnel director Roy Griffiths 'just the tip of the iceberg.'

Talks are now in progress to try to resolve the other more fundamental issues of difference between the company and the works engineers.

These are basically the use of estimators, which the

company maintains are necessary both to enable work to be planned and as a basis of a new payment system, and the management's right to use certain documentation to record maintenance work, which the company regards as essential for effective engineering work, and for the safety of employees.

Supplies to branches of perishable goods were maintained by using existing alternative depots, increasing direct deliveries, and by creating 12 emergency depots.

Supplies of non perishables were hit and by June 29 branches were out of stock of some 70-80 lines.

By the end of the first week in July the situation was returning to normal.

## Cheese store isn't the same after 47 years



'It's changed beyond all belief' said 71 years old Mrs Winifred Squires as she looked around Stamford House one day last month. And it's not surprising - for the last time Mrs Squires saw the inside was 47 years ago!

Mrs Squires, who now lives at Wallington, Surrey, worked nine years for JS as an audit clerk but left in 1926 to get married.

After her tour Mrs Squires (centre) sat down to lunch with Ken Hands of poultry supply and control and his mother, Mrs Amy Hands, a neighbour of Mrs Squires. 'This used to be a cheese store' remarked Mrs Squires of the staff restaurant.