

JS JOURNAL

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Baby cradles beat the babysnatchers as more supermarkets follow the JS lead

For two weeks it seemed as if the whole world was looking sternly at the food retailing industry and saying, 'What are you doing about baby-snatchers?' As snatch scares multiplied, so the outcry increased. 'Why don't supermarkets have pram parks, crèches and machine-gun toting nannies?' wailed the mums. Unlike many supermarket chains, JS had taken some positive action, and as a result there was a delighted reaction from press and public.

The reason for the delight? The JS baby cradles. Eddie Manly reports:

The introduction of baby cradles to JS branches has produced one of the biggest press coverages for the company that anyone can remember - excepting of course the recent share flotation.

In addition the cradles - which are trolley attachments designed to hold young babies - have naturally had a very favourable reception from mothers fearful that their babies might be taken while they're shopping.

The interest in the cradles started when baby Kristen Bullen was taken from her pram in Bromley, during June, and when there were subsequent baby snatching attempts in Bristol. It was about this time - early August - that JS started to put the attachments, originally known as baby carriages, into its branches following successful trials.

Press Officer Mike Conolly said that the press reaction has been overwhelming.

Throughout July and early August he had at least one press enquiry a day about the cradles. Said Mike: 'I have never seen a response like this. I was even called up at midnight by one daily newspaper who had just got to hear about them!'

Others please follow

In its July 12 issue 'The Times' wrote: 'It's good news that Sainsbury's are experimenting with a trolley attachment which allows mothers to take even the smallest babies into stores . . . Other supermarket chains please follow.'

It wasn't only the national dailies who were excited by the cradles. Provincial daily and local weekly newspapers up and down the country were also carrying the story - and most of them were favourable. Journalist Betty Hughes writing in the 'South Wales Evening Post' asked: 'Will other supermarket groups please take note of this timely piece of equipment?' The article also carried a picture first used in the June issue of the JS Journal!

However, there were a few

dissentions. Jane Lingwood in the 'Coventry Evening Telegraph' accused JS of only 'scratching at the surface of the problem'. She wanted supermarkets to provide nurseries.

This point was raised more than once by newspapers enquiring about the cradles. Told that legal, insurance, space, and staffing problems ruled this out as a workable solution, most of them agreed that the baby cradles were an answer to the problem of baby snatching.

TV and radio time

The cradles also got air time. Public relations manager, Peter Ireson, was interviewed on the radio programme 'Today' and BBC TV's 'Nationwide' programme on the subject. Mike Conolly spoke about them on a similar programme on Southern TV. Bridgwater was also featured on their regional television channel when the cradles were filmed in use at the newly-opened branch.

JS branch managers have welcomed them. Quoted in a local newspaper, Ilford manager, David Baker, said: 'The baby cradles have been a great help. We have had many comments from customers on how pleased they are that we have provided them. I think the scheme is a great success.'

One JS branch in the thick of baby snatching fever is Bristol. 'It's really got the mothers scared' said manager Doug Billings. 'You never see an unattended baby in a pram outside shops now. Even toddlers are being taken into the shops.'

He added: 'I've had a very good reception to the cradles. One of my customers remarked how pleased she was that somebody is doing something about the problem.'

Another customer at the Bristol branch, Mrs Lynda Longdon of Portishead, also praised the cradles. As she put her seven months old daughter, Amanda, into a carriage she said 'I think they are super. Mothers I know are much happier now that



Customer service assistant, Mrs Jean Gay, helps Mrs Lynda Longdon put seven months old Amanda into a baby cradle at the Bristol branch.

they can have their baby securely with them while they are shopping. Before, I used to leave Amanda with a neighbour but you can't always do that can you? And another thing - now with baby near me I find I can concentrate fully on my shopping.'

Baby slings too

Other supermarket chains have followed the lead given by JS. One is experimenting with a similar basket type arrangement - but which sits on top of the trolley. Another chain rushed in baby slings which go over the mother's shoulders and promised to provide something better at a later date.

The final word must be given to the man who designed the baby cradle.

No more space

He is Denis Wright, head of the work study section of branch planning services at Clapham, who said: 'When we first got press clippings of the cradles we started pinning them on to the notice board. It's a large one, but we still ran out of space! I am delighted that it has been in the press for so long - we thought it would just be a seven-day wonder. Nonetheless, we were confident from the beginning that this piece of equipment would be the basic solution to the problem of baby snatching.'



'I think I fancied him more when he was grocery manager.'

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Joe gets gonged— with a difference

Joe Newman has never been stopped by the police for a traffic offence in the 24 years he's been driving JS vehicles. So, when an unmarked police car, with its siren in full blast, appeared from out of nowhere and flagged him down, Joe was alarmed. He couldn't think of anything he might have done to be stopped.

But Joe's alarm was soon dispelled as Chief Inspector Ronald McCarthy first introduced himself and the road safety officer of Greenwich, Bill Edwards, and then congratulated Joe on his faultless driving!

'He told me that they had been following me for five miles' said Joe 'and that they couldn't fault my driving. At that I was most relieved! Then he told me that I had been chosen 'Driver of the week'.

The London Borough of Greenwich's 'Driver of the week' award was initiated to highlight not only bad driving but good driving.

The winners were chosen by Chief Inspector McCarthy and Mr Edwards by patrolling the borough in an unmarked police car and following drivers who were obviously driving well and carefully. Many drivers were stopped during the campaign but only eight were chosen for the award.

At a presentation ceremony on Thursday, August 2, at the Woolwich Town Hall,

the chief inspector said: 'On our July 25 patrol we first noticed Mr Newman when he passed a number of obstacles correctly and with care.'

'We then followed him for about five miles. His driving during that time was faultless. In fact his standard was such that he could have been on a driving test! After stopping him, and telling him he had been chosen for the award, we also had to congratulate him on the immaculate condition of his vehicle - more so seeing that it was nine years old.'

All careful

The last point was taken up by Borough Engineer Aubrey Toogood. Before presenting the award - a mounted medallion bearing the inscription 'For merit in road safety' to Joe - he remarked: 'Sainsbury's must be complimented for keeping their vehicles up to such a high standard.'

After the presentation ceremony, which was also attended by Mrs Newman and Charlton depot traffic manager, John Wilson, 'Driver of the week' Joe said: 'I'm really thrilled to receive this award, but it could have been won by any other driver at the depot. They're all careful drivers - especially during the long school holidays.'

Princess Wendy wins two competitions

It's like being a different person! That's how Wendy Tannahill describes entering beauty contests. She should know for this shapely Shirley cashier has just entered two while on holiday - and won both!

Twenty-five years old Wendy won the 'Holiday Princess' and 'Miss She' titles for the week she was at a holiday camp. The 'Princess' was for swim-suited beauty and the 'Miss She' for fashion and deportment.

Wendy has been with JS for two years and working in a supermarket has given her the confidence to enter contests like this. 'Since I've been at JS and meeting people and training other cashiers I've come out of myself', explained Wendy.

However, entering contests is not entirely new to Wendy, for she has regularly entered, and won, many for table tennis. She has also played for the Hampshire table tennis team.

Now Wendy has added success at the beauty game to her other attributes. But although she won both holiday titles, it is the entering, not the winning, that she says she enjoys most.

'It's lovely seeing all the girls dressed up and wearing nice make-up', she said. 'That's why I like to go in for them. When I'm there I feel like I'm someone different with my hair up and wearing



really super clothes.'

Wendy, who has a 34-24-34 figure ('When I'm doing my keep fit exercises' she jokes!) is now looking forward to her prize of a free week's holiday and to the semi-finals of both contests later this year.

New hardware venture shoots off to a good start

Hardware is going well. This fact emerged after the new lines - totalling 150 - had been on sale for two weeks at Bretton.

CW 'Jerry' Grindley, departmental director of the grocery division, commented: 'The surprising factor is that the take-up, over the period, has been right across the board. And sales have been better than anticipated.'

However, trading has not been even during the first two weeks, as Michael Mayes, assistant grocery manager, who is in charge of the hardware at Bretton, explains. 'Although less items were taken up in the second week they were the bigger items like kettles, toasters, and percolators', he said. 'It seems as if customers were just looking before coming back the second week to buy.'

'After all, if you're going to buy something costing six pounds or more it's natural to shop around first', he added.

Even then, a few customers raised doubts on the quality of the goods. 'I had some customers asking me if the non-stick pans were "seconds" because the prices were low', said Mr Mayes. Another customer concern was that JS might discontinue the collector sets - items that can be bought separately and eventually make a set - before they can complete the set.

But, generally speaking,

customers like the new line. Housewife Mrs Barbara Spalding, of Market Deeping, had just put a 35p Pyrex dish into her trolley when the JS Journal spoke to her at the Bretton store. 'It was a spontaneous buy', she confessed. 'Items like this are something that everyone could just pick up. But I would probably want to compare prices in a normal hardware shop for the more costly items. I think it's a good range of lines to begin with, though', she added, referring to the 48-ft. long illuminated display.

Another customer, Mrs Deborah Sweeney, a housewife from Helpston, near Peterborough, bought an automatic toaster costing £7.15. She was pleased with her purchase and explained that she had been looking out for one for some time. Of the hardware range she said: 'It's so convenient to be able to get everything under one roof.'

So, from two successful weeks at Bretton, where to now? There are no immediate plans to extend the range - it's too early for evaluation - although there might be a few modifications to the present range, says Mr Grindley. But there are plans to put the hardware into two more branches this month - Dudley and Edmonton - and into Telford when it opens next month.



Customers stop to inspect the hardware lines on the illuminated display at the Bretton store.



Charlton driver Joe Newman (right) receives his 'Driver of the Week' award from Greenwich borough engineer Aubrey Toogood. Looking on (in the background) are: John Wilson, depot traffic manager, Chief Inspector Ronald McCarthy, Bill Edwards, road safety officer, and Mrs Newman.

JS brew a stronger, better bitter

Beer fans will be delighted to know that a new, stronger, tastier JS beer is now in all JS off-licence branches. It is JS Extra Strong Pale Ale, which beer and spirits buyer, Philip Baxter, describes as a 'very good beer - with a good hoppy flavour and plenty of bite'.

The price is 22½p for a pack of three 9½ fluid ounce

cans, which works out at about 15p for a pint.

The beer, brewed specially for JS, is the only one of its particular flavour available. It was introduced to satisfy a growing taste for stronger beers from the public.

Philip Baxter, who admits to liking a glass or two himself, gives the new brew full marks.

It's softly softly after residents complain about music

Music will in future be soft and low during the night shift at Buntingford depot after people living in nearby London Road complained about the level of noise from the depot's Muzak system.

Personnel officer Len Robinson said: 'Immediately we received a letter of complaint from a Mrs Nolan early in July we lowered the volume and checked that the system was not being tampered with at night. When a few days later we received a letter from her husband and then one from a Mr Wildgoose, Alan Doy, the administration manager, and

I, arranged to visit both families at home.'

The Wildgoose's home (named 'Gooses Gander') is about 10 yards from the depot boundary. After the visit a party from London Road were invited to look over the depot.

'Of the ten people we showed around', said Len, 'only five had complained about the noise, the rest came along out of interest to see the depot.'

Len added that 'It all ended very amicably and we have asked them to contact us at any time night or day if the music becomes a nuisance again.'

JS housekeeper's cakes sweep the board at the Southampton show



A JS housekeeper has won eleven prizes for her cookery - yet until a few years ago she couldn't cook! Mrs Mary Dobson, the housekeeper at Bitterne, competed with 80 other entries in various classes, at the Southampton Show - a two-day event.

She got four firsts for her chocolate eclairs, sausage rolls, macaroons and sweets (of which she had to produce 15 different recipes), one second prize for brandy snaps, five thirds and a 'highly commended'.

When Mary got married six years ago cooking just wasn't her line, but she 'just picked up how to cook' to such a

degree that she became a full-time cook a year later. She joined JS two years ago.

It was the first time she had entered any competition for cooking when she competed in this year's Show. Her overall position for the trophy - awarded to the competitor with the most points - was fourth. She's not quite sure whether to try to win it in next year's show.

Her success seems to have had a bearing on sales at the Bitterne branch canteen. 'Everyone has said how pleased they are about it' said Mary. 'And sales have even gone up!'

Basingstoke driver has a lucky escape in fatal crash

Driver Ronnie Osborne from Basingstoke depot had a lucky escape when his lorry, loaded with 20 tons of goods, collided head on with a six-ton security bullion van near Reading at six in the morning on August 15.

The impact of the collision, which killed the driver in the other vehicle, threw Ronnie clear of the controls a split second before the cab telescoped. Had he remained in the driver's seat it is almost certain that he would have been crushed by the steering wheel, which ended up only six inches away from the back of the seat.

Nevertheless it took rescuers one and a half hours to cut him clear of the wreckage.

Ronnie ended up in hospital with multiple lacerations and a couple of nasty fractures. Although he was only in hospital for a week it looks as if he will be laid up for some time.

A JS driver for 11 years, Ronnie is one of the most popular men in Basingstoke and received a lot of visits from colleagues—as evidenced by the pile of cigarette packets by his bedside.

Other visitors included his family and the widow of the driver killed in the crash.



Above: Basingstoke driver Ronnie Osborne came out of this smashed cab—and lived. Incredibly, he was thrown clear of the wheel before the impact took its full effect and the only injuries he received were fractures and lacerations.

Left: Ronnie Osborne lies on a stretcher waiting to be taken to hospital.

Mystery trio holds secret of latest JS Vermouth

Over 20 Alpine herbs, infused in a light, fresh wine to a recipe known to only three producers is the secret of the fine delicate flavour of JS's Chambéry Vermouth, introduced at all the licensed branches at the end of August.

The growing popularity of Vermouth as a pre-prandial drink (one taken before a meal) prompted JS to increase its range of own brand Vermouths.

Chambéry Vermouth takes its name from an area around the foothills of the Alps. The City of Chambéry itself is roughly half-way between Grenoble and Geneva. The drink was invented in 1821 by Joseph Chavasse, a distiller. An Appellation Contrôlée was

granted in the early thirties to prevent producers outside the area copying it using a different recipe.

The beauty and serenity of the Chambéry countryside has been captured by the design studio on the label they have designed for the bottle. It is quite a departure from the usual own brand designs and depicts a pastel Alpine scene.

Unlike traditional Vermouths, which are made by soaking herbs in an indifferent wine, Chambéry has a light, fresh base wine in which herbs are gently infused.

How to drink it: JS wine buyer Andrew Nunn likes his Chambéry 'on its own and well-iced'. Price 80p a bottle.

New store has a ruin in its past



The new Oxford store, complete with a mediaeval ruin in the basement, opened on Tuesday, August 7th.

The 1207 square metre (13,000 square feet) branch replaces the 63 year-old counter service store in the High Street and is altogether more spacious. Situated in Westgate, a new multi-story shopping centre, it counts C&A and Selfridges as its neighbours.

Oxford is not an uncomfortably crowded store. It has wide aisles and, being situated away from main car parks and traditional food shopping areas, is relatively uncrowded, allowing shoppers to buy in unhurried comfort.

But that could change. The shopping centre's own car park, with space for over 1000 cars, will open in about a year's time, bringing with it a very brisk trade.

At present would-be shop-

pers by car are faced with conditions which are described by branch manager Roy Harrison as 'diabolical'.

'The nearest car park is five minutes' walk away with a full bag of shopping and after about 9.15 in the morning you can easily face a 20 minute wait to get in', he said.

'The result for us is a basket rather than a trolley trade.'

The store's own mediaeval ruin lies deep in the basement in a largish, badly lit cupboard. All that can be seen with the aid of a torch are the remains of some wall and a pillar. To the informed it is part of the gate to the old Greyfriars monastery, near the city wall, but to most people it's just a lot of old stones.

Access at present is limited only to bona fide students and archaeologists.

Open dating leads to a labelling revolution

Marking certain foods with the date they should be sold by is likely to become law in 1973.

Well ahead of any possible legislation, JS is switching to an open dating system for perishables and last month saw the completion of the first phase of the changeover to 'sell by' dating.

Public interest in open dating—a subject already of concern to many customers and consumer organisations—was heightened at the end of January 1971 when *The Sunday Times Magazine* published an article that 'cracked' the code dating systems used by many food manufacturers and then went on to show just how old some of the food on sale was.

Public concern was such that an enquiry into the code dating of food was held by the Government's Food Standards Committee.

The company's marketing policies and strict stock control and rotation have always ensured maximum freshness so the switch made little difference at the branches, other than getting used to the new system; in fact, checking to see that foods on display are within their shelf life, is now easier.

'It was a gigantic undertaking', said publicity manager Jim Woods, who with director Joe Barnes has had the job of co-ordinating the changeover programme. Said Mr Woods: 'Over 250 labels had to be re-designed and the whole range of weighing and pricing machines converted.'

Cataloguing the labels to be re-designed and preparing design briefs was the job of the studio services and progressing department at Blackfriars. Alf Whybra, in charge of the progressing, said: 'We started work on the new labels in March and should finish this month.'

For senior designer Neville Carter the biggest problem was getting all the new information on such a small label. As he explained: 'Most of them are only about 1½ x 2 inches and the spaces left for the price and weight must coincide with the print-out on the various machines we use—restricting the design even more.'

What's in it?

His task has not been made any easier by the fact that where legislation demands the new labels now must state ingredients and JS were also anxious to add storage information, such as 'keep cool, eat within three days.'

Arranging for the labels to be printed has kept the purchasing department at Clapham pretty busy. Said packaging buyer Colin Hockridge: 'Fortunately we've been using the same printers for years so they know what we want. We get good co-operation from them and this helps.'

The magnitude of the changeover is summed up by Arthur Dove in purchasing who calculates JS uses about nine million price and weight labels—a week!

Big clean up for HQ phones

An experimental scheme to clean and disinfect telephones at Blackfriars, Clapham and Streatham starts this month in response to numerous requests for cleaner telephone equipment. Blackfriars office manager Dick Hill said: 'Although disinfecting telephones as such does little to prevent germs accumulating—it is not very pleasant to speak into a dirty telephone.'

After investigating com-

mercial telephone disinfecting services, he decided to give a new system of chemically impregnated cleaning pads a trial.

The pads, similar to those found in aircraft for washing purposes, will be issued to all office telephone users, who will be able to give their telephones a wipe whenever necessary. The special chemical in the pads quickly renders the instrument germ-free and clean.

Fridge men keep their cool as the summer sets a sizzling pace

'At this time of year we are kept so busy our feet hardly touch the ground' says Ron Thomas of his job as one of JS's branch refrigeration service engineers.

'Most of the refrigeration equipment at the branches is working 24-hours a day, seven days a week' explains Ron 'so it's not surprising that in the summer when the weather warms up, and units have to work that much harder to maintain the temperature, the number of service calls goes up as well.'

Ron lives at Blackheath, South London, with his wife and two children, Deborah aged 15 years and Nicholas aged eight. There isn't much he doesn't know about refrigeration. He has been with JS for 11 years and before that he worked for an ice cream company, travelling around the country learning all he could about his trade.

He still travels around but now it's in a JS service van and his territory is that covered by the Bromley area office. During a day Ron could visit as many as six to eight branches - from Bexleyheath to Balham, from Catford to Croydon.

Senior engineering service assistant Roy Enoch is his main daily contact at Bromley. It is from Roy that Bromley's team of service engineers get details of the work in hand and which branch to go to next. Details of the first job of the day are usually handed out to the men the day before. But information on subsequent jobs is given to the men by telephone at the branch they happen to be working at.

Up on the roof

'It's the variety and the sense of freedom that I like about the job. I really enjoy my work,' says Ron.

Rain doesn't make his job any easier. 'In warm weather, rain can cause condensation and it increases the humidity which in turn can affect the equipment. Also a few of the shops still have units on the roof, to save space, and you can get pretty wet!'

It was raining hard on August 7 when Ron had an eight o'clock start at the



In between the cold displays at Lewisham, refrigeration service engineer Ron Thomas tops up a unit with gas.

Lewisham branch. Luckily it was an 'inside' job. One of the chilled meat display cabinets was showing a temperature of 40°F instead of between 29° to 31°F.

A word with the manager and the meat manager before looking at the faulty unit. 'It looks like it needs new valve plates' says Ron and collects his tools and spares from the van. A closer look shows that the gasket also needs attention and the unit is a bit low on liquid refrigeration gas.

The unit, British made but designed in America, is one of two rows of display cabinets facing outwards with a narrow aisle between. To repair the fault Ron has to lie full length on the floor. Some parts are difficult to get at and so he uses a mirror to reflect the back of the bit he is working on.

It turns out to be a long job that will take up most of the morning. 'This is not so bad' he says 'at least I am not working out in the shopping aisle and this early on a

Tuesday morning things are pretty quiet. Friday afternoons are the worst. You almost have to fight your way through to the units. And sometimes when you are working on the floor you have to be pretty diplomatic, particularly when someone puts their heel on your fingers or balances their basket on your head. I just missed being hit by a jar of pickles last week!

'I get asked where things are and to pass over a pound of sausages. It's the white overalls I suppose. You can't be sharp with customers, in a way you're a sort of JS ambassador.'

More lollipops

During the teabreak he meets up with Alan Hartnup, a mechanical fitter from Bromley area office, who is at the branch to fix a scissors lift that has an oil leak.

Back on the shop floor Ron completes the job. The unit also needs a new 'lollipop'

black dial temperature gauge. 'Kids pinch them' says Ron. 'I can replace as many as a dozen at one time at this branch.'

'Working on the floor between the rows of units you can feel the chill in the air but you get used to it' says Ron. 'Looking up you get an odd view of dozens of hands dipping in and out of the cabinets.' A toy spaceman descends followed by a schoolboy hand then disappears. The hum of the refrigeration motors mixes with the squeak of plastic as the packs rub together.

A telephone call to Roy at Bromley and Ron is off to Norbury. Three cold stores are low on gas, or to use JS engineer jargon a 'bit shy on gas'. Refrigeration engineer Ernie Jones reported the faults during a routine service check of all the refrigeration equipment at Norbury. He is still working at the branch so he and Ron get together and discuss the work to be done.

To get at the first unit,

which is a large low-temperature meat store, Ron has to find a ladder. It's an Italian unit and he has to work from the top of the ladder, replenishing the gas from a metal clad gas bottle weighing over 50 lbs. No mean weight to carry up a ladder and swing into a small space ten feet above the ground.

All at the branch

Lunch in the canteen at Norbury, where he is joined by Ernie Jones and Terence Francis, a maintenance plumber who has been called in to look at a leaky roof. It is quite an occasion for although the three men know each other it is seldom they all meet up at the same branch. 'You can go for weeks without seeing anyone' says Ernie.

Ron talks about his recent holiday in Cornwall, which explains the suntan. The conversation ranges over new cars, women drivers and the

latest James Bond film.

After lunch it's up among boxes of Milky Ways and Chocolate Florida Cakes to get at a chiller locker which is 'shy' on gas. 'This is nothing' says Ron looking down from his perch; 'at Woolwich the cold stores are so high you are working about 25 feet up.'

'The condenser feels a bit warm' says Ron 'I think I'll flush this one out with some acid to get rid of any build-up. It's a bit like removing the fur you get inside a kettle.' Up and down the ladder a few more times before the job is complete and then it's more ladder work for the third unit, which is also 'shy' on gas.

Burning smell

Ernie asks for a hand in the zero store. Says Ron: 'working for a long time in low temperatures you get really exhausted by the end of the day, because your body has to keep fighting against the cold.'

It's late afternoon and the sun is shining. Next stop 68 Croydon where a smell of burning has been reported coming from an Italian zero locker. Crouched precariously on top of the tall locker Ron quickly discovers that the fan motor has stopped. He frees it with some oil. Ron waits for the unit to start 'pulling' a temperature of around 30°F before he is satisfied all is well and suggests to the grocery manager that he waits until it's 'pulling' around 20°F before they refill it.

No more calls from Roy at Bromley. 'I will go over to Bexleyheath and fill up my gas bottles, I'm running very low' says Ron 'and I could get another call from Roy when I get home. I'm on call at the week-ends as well.'

What makes a good refrigeration man? Ron often has an apprentice working with him. One a while back drew his impression of what the perfect refrigeration man should look like. 'He drew a man with arms like an ape, with long thin fingers, short legs and eyes on stalks. He wasn't far out' says Ron.

News in brief

A cheque for £100 was given to Millfield School by Buntingford depot towards the cost of a minibus. Many of the pupils, aged between five and nine years, are the children of people who work at the depot. Depot manager Owen Thomas is on the school's board of governors.

Cinderella you shall go to the ball - along with 2,346 JS staff and their families. This is the record number of tickets sold by the SSA for an evening performance of the pantomime at Wembley

on February 11. Ring-side seats, usually over £1, were offered at 50p.

A bomb scare ruined lunches at Clapham on August 28 when it was evacuated after phone calls to the 'Evening News' and 'Evening Standard'. An Irish-sounding voice is reported to have said there was a bomb in Sainsbury's at Clapham.

Security man Jack Herreboudt said: 'The police asked people to take their bags with them. Any that were left we examined. We had already

checked the post room. It all took about 30 minutes.' As a precaution the Stockwell branch was also cleared.

Underwater cricket was almost the name of the game played at Buntingford on Sunday, August 5, when the match between Hoddesdon and Buntingford depots was rained off for the second time. The match has now been abandoned.

Our tame mathematician got his sums wrong last issue (page eight) when he calcu-

lated Bretton's sales area at 1,400 square metres. It is of course, as everyone knows, 2,364 square metres.

Ex-paratrooper Donald Knight stands, or rather walks to get at least £70 from staff at Basingstoke depot for his sponsored walk from John o' Groats to Lands End in aid of cancer research. Donald, who works for a Dutch diamond firm at Basingstoke, is a neighbour of Wilf Davies, chief chef at the depot. Said Wilf: 'This isn't the first sponsored

walk Donald has done. He enjoys walking. We hope to raise £100 at the depot if he covers the 1,000 miles.'

A slight hitch at Hitchin when four panels of the concrete mural (see page 8) were broken while they were being loaded at the builder's yard. New moulds were made and cast. Said the artists: 'It delayed the erection of the mural by about three weeks. Luckily the warm weather helped the curing process.' The store opened on July 31 and the mural went

up on August 6. Said manager Dave Holley: 'It has created terrific interest. A local artist said it was some of the best work he had seen. Nearly every customer asks about it.'

Keep the shops well lit - may have been the founder's last words but for one lady shopper recently the brightness of the Leamington branch was sheer extravagance. 'Do you need all these lights on?' she demanded, in an attempt to protect her interests as a very new shareholder!

Letters

Gristly bangers

From Anthony Gayfer
(engineer's costing)

I would suggest that the primary reason for the fall-off in sales of JS sausages (Gordon Simmon's Index as reported in July) is decline in quality.

When I started at Rennie Street in 1965 JS sausages were superlative and a friend from Preston in work study once remarked he hadn't realised just how good sausages could be until he tried ours. It was two years before I first encountered gristle in a JS banger; but these days it is as common in both our sausages and our pies as Liberal by-election successes.

The shortages last autumn have merely highlighted this problem; presumably regular shoppers had to go elsewhere and discovered that the alternatives were just as good, and easier to get, cheaper or both.

Joe Barnes, director responsible for marketing, replies;

Statistics when quoted out of context are usually more misleading than they often seem. Whilst the Gordon Simmon's Index suggested that the number of customers who mainly shop at JS for

sausages had fallen, an equally reliable market survey at the time of Gordon Simmon's report indicated that our share of the national market increased. Also the trend of complaints received from customers for gristle in sausages suggests that there are no more and if anything less than at the time of the Blackfriars factory.

Finally, as there have been three Liberal successes in by-elections over the last months, bearing in mind the number of sausages we sell, perhaps the writer is after all really paying us a compliment.

Cleaner phones

From Derek Wood (Screen printing, Blackfriars)

In the interests of hygiene I think that there should be regular cleaning and disinfecting of all office telephones.

There is at least one firm specialising in telephone cleaning at regular intervals and this is surely as important as any other cleaning service.

It looks as if your prayers have been answered. See the item on page 3—Editor.

Letters are welcome and should be addressed to the editor at the address below.

People

Appointments

C J Baker, formerly scheduling and development section leader, has been appointed planning and development manager, branch productivity.

S J Biddlecombe, formerly operations section leader, has been appointed operations manager, branch productivity services, Clapham.

J D Cornwall, formerly branch administration manager, has been appointed deputy manager, branch services, Blackfriars.

S J Goddard, formerly perishables warehouse manager, has been appointed night manager at Charlton depot.

L W Hurford, formerly deputy manager at Norbury, has been appointed manager at Addiscombe.

D M Lamb, formerly assistant buyer, has been appointed buyer in the produce department.

H Robinson, formerly deputy manager at Reading, has been appointed manager at Islington.

R J Bradford, formerly grocery manager at Wandsworth, has been appointed deputy manager at Chelsea.

P Carr, formerly provisions manager at Bedminster, has been appointed

deputy manager at Swindon.

R McCann, formerly grocery manager at Kilburn, has been appointed deputy manager at Ballards Lane.

M G Miles, formerly grocery manager, has been appointed deputy manager Muswell Hill.

B L Stanesby, formerly assistant buyer, has been appointed buyer in the produce department.

R Wilkinson, formerly deputy manager at Poole, has been appointed manager at Winton.

J Wilson, formerly assistant manager at High Wycombe, has been appointed deputy manager at South Harrow.

A P Clark, formerly grocery manager, has been appointed deputy manager at Haywards Heath.

B Thake, formerly deputy manager at Coventry, has been appointed manager at Rugby.

J Trendall, formerly deputy manager at Leicester, has been appointed manager at Solihull.

M F Wagstaff, formerly grocery manager at Lewisham, has been appointed deputy manager at Maidstone.

R Winson, formerly senior productivity officer, has been appointed scheduling and development section leader,

branch productivity services, Clapham.

G Challis, formerly grocery manager, at Northfields, has been appointed deputy manager at Aston.

J D Fairman, formerly grocery manager at Stockwell, has been appointed deputy manager at Victoria.

P M Sarratt, formerly grocery manager at Purley, has been appointed deputy manager at Norbury.

R Harrison, formerly manager at S. Harrow has been appointed manager at the new Oxford branch.

L Ryan, formerly systems analyst, has been appointed senior systems analyst, in the data processing department, Blackfriars.

E J Thompson, formerly grocery manager at Crawley, has been appointed deputy manager at Orpington.

Retirements

R E Gregory, district manager, Bromley area, retired on July 7 - 44 years' service.

J V Spragg, formerly district manager, Romford area, retired on August 24 - 36 years' service.

H S Follet, branch engineer Bromley area, retired on August 24 - 36 years' service.

Obituary

A G Fry, shipping manager at depot division Blackfriars, who had worked for the company since 1952, died on August 7.

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Buntingford's August spectacular gives the depot a day to remember

Brilliant blue skies and bright yellow cornfields provided a perfect backdrop to Buntingford depot's SSA Gala Day on Saturday, August 25.

It was the first time outsiders had been invited to take part and soon after lunch over 20 local organisations joined JS staff to set up side-shows and stalls on the depot's spacious playing field.

For deputy distribution manager Keith Curtis, who opened the Gala, it was like old times. Mr Curtis was depot manager from 1960, when Buntingford opened, until 1971 when he took up his present position at Blackfriars.

Oiled engines

Hundreds of Hertfordshire villagers mixed with depot staff to marvel at the K9 Commando Dog display, to wonder at the lovingly oiled engines of the Buntingford and District Mechanical Restoration Society, and to inspect examples of JS transport throughout the ages.

All eyes turned heavenward for the air spectacular put on by the Stevenage Model Aviation and Marine Society - one of the day's most popular events.

Children raced one another to collect a first prize of 25p (15p for second) from the seemingly bottomless pocket of personnel officer Len Robinson.

Punch and Judy, ring a fish, bowl a pig, skittles,

pony rides, a caged bird show, and so on and so on...

But the rural setting was perhaps epitomized in the horticulture tent. Dahlias as big as dinner plates, and the heavy scent of roses mingling with the smell of home-made jams and ginger bread.

Stupendous marrow

The incredibly beautiful chrysanthemums of driver Peter Downes recalled the splendour of the Chelsea Flower Show. 'I moved down here from Blackfriars, and spend every minute I can in the garden', said Peter, who has been with JS for 20 years.

Chargehand Eric Warren's giant onions vied with foreman Eric Clements' stupendous marrow.

Knocked down

At the end of a perfect summer's day the village atmosphere continued with an auction of some of the exhibited produce and home-made goodies. Auctioneer Charlie Doughty, who works in the canteen, was ably assisted by gardener Vic Tott.

Outside the fields were almost empty. But from inside the bulging tent Charlie could be heard crying, 'What am I bid, all grown locally - as fresh as you'd buy at Sainsbury's.'



Above left: Eric Clements shows off his prizewinning marrow and slightly less noble carrots, while Peter Downes looks deservedly happy about the five firsts and three seconds he took in the flower section. Between them Dennis and Betty Day got four firsts and a second, Betty's home-baking taking the lion's share. The cornucopia at their feet includes Eric Warren's cup-winning onions.

Above: A bird's-eye view for youngsters atop a climbing display erected by scouts.

Left: Entrants size-up the chances of getting that 25p first prize.

what's it like on it's feet...

... how is it slaughtered, dressed and refrigerated? These are things the fresh meat department want to know about the beef and lamb they buy for JS. In this article, the second in a series on buyers, JS Journal looks at the senior meat buyer, Bob Wallis, and the complicated business of keeping the branches stocked with thousands of tons of meat a year.

Words and pictures by
Eddie Manly

When he was fourteen, Bob Wallis joined JS as an errand boy at the old Cornfield branch in Eastbourne. But as much as he liked his job his ambition – albeit a small one at that time – was to work with meat.

So when the opportunity arose, he was to be seen cutting and boning meat on the butcher's block at the back of the shop. It's all a very long way from the depot meat preparation methods of today.

However, that errand boy is still very much involved with meat, for Bob is now the senior meat buyer for JS. As such he is directly responsible for buying, each year, millions of pounds' worth of all meats and offals (except pork) to be retailed through JS branches. Offals, like kidneys, livers, tongues and hearts, form an important part of JS meat sales.

Bob does most of his work – not at Stamford House – but from an office in Charterhouse Street on the edge of Smithfield, the London meat market. The office, typically furnished in JS style, is on the third floor of a drab looking building which houses a complete cross-section of the meat trade: an Argentine importer, wholesalers, manufacturers and retail companies.

Bob's day begins at the crack of dawn when he drives in from his Middlesex home to be at the market ready for trading at 5 am. But the next seven hours are not spent actually buying

meat for JS. Like the produce buyer, Tony Court, whom we featured in July, Bob's job is to gather information and ideas of market trends and prices.

Said Bob: 'By walking through the market you can begin to build up a picture of who's buying what. Sometimes it's only isolated things that may be seen but when related to other things happening in the trade, such as how much of a particular meat is being imported that week, the picture starts to become a complete one.'

Foot in the door

Although most of the meat is bought direct from importers and suppliers, like most other large groups, JS do buy a small percentage at the market. Even so, what is a small amount to JS is a substantial amount to a market wholesaler. Bob explained why JS bother to buy any at all: 'It is important for us to keep our foot in the door of Smithfield' he said, 'for our main purpose for being here is to keep our ears to the ground. Smithfield trading still has a great effect on world wide trends and prices. Such trends and values help us to assess the overall state of affairs within the trade.'

For the stranger, walking through for the first time, Smithfield presents an impressive picture. There are four meat halls – each the size of a football pitch and divided into neat sections for each trader. Each section

contains displays of sides of beef, whole lambs and pigs – rather like a multiplication of your local butchers side by side. But next to size, the most impressive thing is the activity. Everything seems to be moving. Wholesalers and traders opening boxes, arranging meats, buyers inspecting the meats on display, pitchers humping carcasses and, of course, the inevitable porters cheerfully wheeling barrows along the aisles.

Odd snatches of conversation heard as you walk through will probably be incomprehensible – unless you happen to know the market terminology. Like all trades, especially those in the Cockney markets, jargon and slang have become mixed together. To mention a few: TK means town-killed, a Bobbie is not a London policeman but a calf less than three weeks old, and a pony is not the four legged animal, it's a certain cut from a fore quarter of beef!

This world famous market has seen many changes in its one hundred years plus existence both in building and in purpose. One of the biggest changes has come in recent years with decimal currency. Comments Bob: 'Since decimalisation a somewhat sad element has crept into the meat trade.'

'Whereas, years ago, we used to battle for an eighth of an old penny per pound, it now seems common practice to bid in steps of as much as half a new penny per

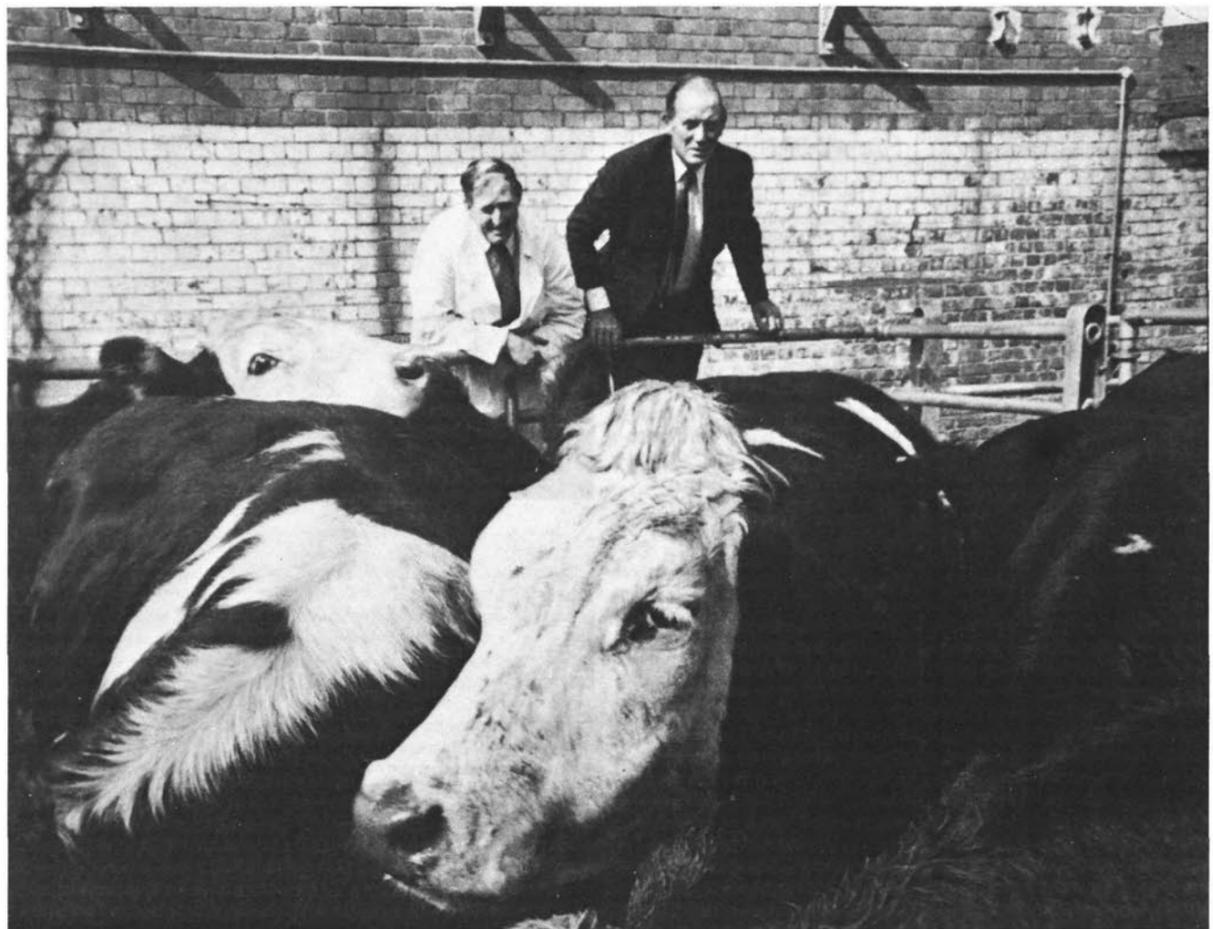
pound. When you think that, say 10,000 lambs bought at .1p per pound less than the asking price can save £400, you begin to realise just how valuable the savings of a fraction of a penny can be – when spread over all commodities bought in a year. And I am very interested in all the fractions of a penny that can be saved' said Bob.

But even though the meat buyers are continuously fighting rising prices any chances of cheaper meat, in the near future, seem unlikely. Record world demand, caused by more and more countries becoming prosperous and wanting more meat, is outstripping supply. This position will not improve until production can match demand.

Depot visits

Whenever possible Bob visits the depots and suppliers and makes sure that at least one visit is made a week either by himself or an assistant. At each depot there are meat quality controllers who are directly responsible to him for accepting all JS meats. Daily reports are sent to the buyers showing details of arrival temperatures, rejections and reasons for such rejections, and overall comments on each supplier's delivery.

'The quality controllers know meat intimately' says Bob 'and have spent many years in the trade.' Nevertheless he is a strong believer in buyers 'getting among



At an abattoir in Reading senior meat buyer, Bob Wallis, (right) is able to see what the animals are like – on their feet – before they are slaughtered. With him in the picture is 'Slim' Taylor – a cattle buyer for a JS supplier.

FEATURE

their commodity and letting their own eyes be the judge'.

Obviously buyers are unable to see every piece of meat that they buy, but, says Bob, 'if you are the chap being held responsible for prices and quality it is to your own advantage to see as much of it as possible'.

Bob puts quality well up his list of priorities and says that no matter what grade of meat you are buying you must ask yourself if it is the best within that grade band. 'Start thinking of price only when you have established that fact' he says.

Specifications

JS demands stringent controls by its suppliers and the specifications for home produced beef and lamb are very precise. 'What we want to know' said Bob 'is what the meat was like on its feet, how well it was looked after prior to slaughter, how it was slaughtered, dressed, and refrigerated.'

The specification given to suppliers defines breed, age, sex, weight, conformation, degree of finish, flesh quality, bone structure, slaughtering method, maturation period (with beef), and method of delivery. Beef flesh quality, for instance, is so defined: Colour to be of medium red - dark or pale colour is unacceptable, texture to be fine, soft, and moist to touch, and a degree of marbling (white marking in the flesh) is required.

However, just knowing the meat trade isn't all Bob has to know. He has to know people and part of his role as a buyer is to develop relationships between himself and the suppliers and producers.

Maybe this is easier in Smithfield than other markets - it certainly seems to be a friendly place.

The number of cordial greetings passed between Bob and the stallholders made this evident but, as he pointed out, in spite of all the friendliness there is a very serious undertone throughout the market. 'Bid them .4p less and watch their smile disappear' Bob emphasised.

Having an office at the market helps in developing these relationships. A wholesaler can enter the anonymous building, where the JS market office is, with confidence that no one will know for certain who he is visiting. 'It gives them a good cover' explained Bob.

He prefers to deal 'eye-to-eye' rather than use the telephone. 'It is easier to try and sum up what is going on in the other man's mind if you're looking at him, especially in the privacy of your own office' Bob said. 'Mind you, he also has the same advantage!'

It's honesty and fair dealing that the 46 years old buyer holds as essential qualities in buying. 'Integrity - to be trusted by all sections of the trade - is an absolute must' he states.

Fairness in trading is another attribute Bob holds dear, and says that the highest compliment that can be paid to any buyer is that he is hard - but fair. 'By all means a buyer should take full advantage of any given market situation - as the supplier will - but generally speaking the buyer must realise that both he and the supplier must make a profit' he said.

'There's absolutely no future in either party regularly trying to grind each

other into the ground over prices' Bob continued. 'If such a practice does persist there can only be one end - one will go broke or both will stop trading with each other.'

Licensed to kill

It's qualities like this that Bob looks for in his assistants, Spencer Morris and Bruce Standing. Spencer, who is the deputy meat buyer, also has a solid background in meat. His seventeen years with JS have all been spent in the commodity. Spencer has an additional qualification that must be unique among all JS buyers - he has a licence to kill!

It happened eight years ago when JS needed an extension of the meat buying department's quality control team. Spencer, who at that time was a junior buyer, was seconded to an abattoir to learn that side of the trade. He became competent enough for the local authority to give him a slaughtering licence! The next three years were spent making regular visits to every abattoir and supplier used by JS before handing over the position of abattoir liaison officer to his successor, Fred Speed.

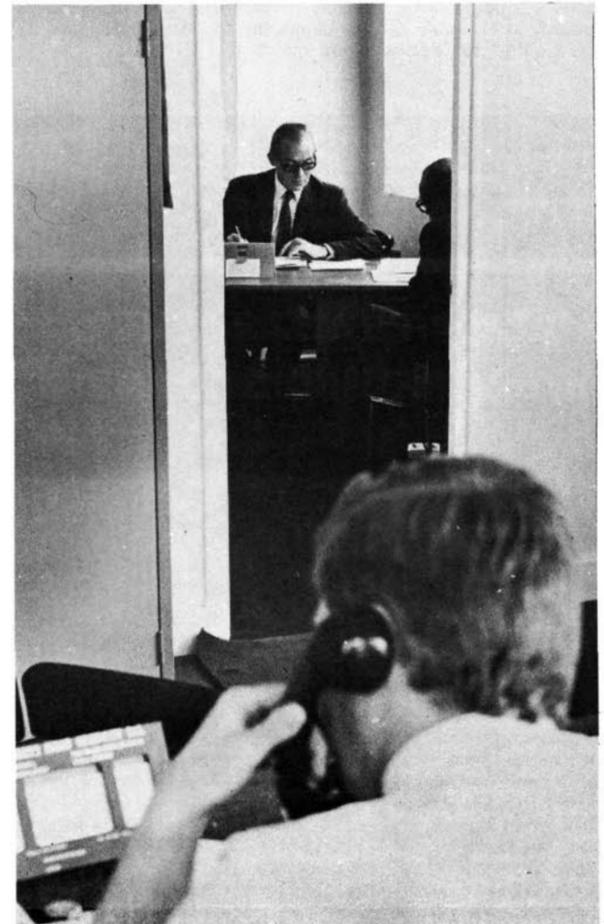
Bob Wallis has one final requirement of a buyer: 'Any buyer for a large company should always remember that he is, in many ways, acting as an ambassador for that company' he said. 'He should always act with dignity, but this does not mean he should be high-handed and adopt a very superior attitude. Far from it. He should always remember that he owes that company a definite code of behaviour.'



Above: regular visits to the depots are made at least once a week by the meat buyers. Chief meat quality controller, Laurie Higgs, (left) and Bob Wallis look at a shipment of New Zealand lamb at the Basingstoke depot.

Top: Bob discusses prices with a salesman in one of the four huge meat halls of Smithfield. Trading at the market has a great effect on world trends says Bob and, he adds, 'It's important for us to keep our foot in the door'.

Right: having an office at Smithfield, the London meat market, gives Bob the opportunity to talk business with wholesalers and importers 'eye-to-eye' in complete privacy.



Take one blank wall, some concrete, and...

Without song nor story – was what the famous American architect Frank Lloyd Wright thought about concrete. But the concrete mural unveiled at the new Hitchin branch on August 6 proves him wrong. It has song and tells the story of the trades and history of Hitchin.

The JS murals (Hitchin is the third) have become quite famous along with the designers Joyce and Henry Collins.

How the murals came about and how they are made is just as intriguing as the designs themselves.

Strong, simple, easily recognisable shapes are what Henry and Joyce are looking for when they start to research and design a new mural. If it is to tell a story or depict the history of a town, as the three JS murals do, this is very important.

The dimensions

Once the basic design had been decided upon and approved Joyce and Henry work with the architect to

produce a working drawing. This gives all the dimensions, and shows how the various panels fit together.

Concrete is so heavy that it is best to work to sizes that can be fixed reasonably easily. None of the panels can be lifted by one or even two men.

The main designs on each panel are taken from the working drawing and re-drawn full size on tracing paper. The images are then transferred onto a sheet of expanded polystyrene by 'pricking' it through with a sharp pen. At this and subsequent stages Henry and Joyce have to remember they are working inside out as well as in reverse. 'You have to keep your head with lettering' comments Henry.

The areas which are to be the raised areas on the finished panel are 'sculpted' by dissolving the polystyrene with a heated tool. Spoons, pastry-cutters, spanners, odd bits of metal picked up in the street – all have been used by the Collins' to produce a myriad of shapes and textures.

'We heat them up on the gas stove' says Joyce. 'A heated fork makes marvellous grass and as the prongs cool so the impression becomes shallower. It's very effective'. Covering every inch of the surface is not only aesthetically pleasing, it discourages graffiti.

A tricky business

Fine work is done with a variety of copper nibs, all made by Henry, and attached to a soldering iron. 'For figure work,' says Joyce 'you have to remember not to cut too deeply, particularly noses'.

Gauging just the right depth to achieve correct perspective is a tricky business.

'We try to do all the sculpting in one go' comments Henry 'burnt polystyrene has rather a distinctive smell'. Joyce's comments are more practical; 'Fine hairs of the stuff get everywhere, house-work is out of the question.'

Making moulds from polystyrene is not new but fixing mosaic tiles at this stage might well be. Usually mosaics are fixed to the finished surface but the Collins' have worked out a process whereby the tiles are stuck face down onto the moulds. When the concrete is poured on, it settles between the tiles, fixing them.

At Huttons, the builders' yard, the finished moulds are taken over by Charlie Mead and Jack Causton. Charlie is the concrete expert and it is his 'super' concrete that gives the murals their beautiful natural colouring and fine

surface. The concrete mix is Charlie's secret.

Jack fixes the moulds into wooden shuttering. This gives the depth of the panel, the edging by which it will fit with the other panels and the fixing bolts. He also lays a reinforcing mesh over the mould. The shuttered mould is then put on a vibrating table.

Left to cure

Concrete is put in layer by layer. Each layer is vibrated to bring the aggregate to the surface which, remember, is the back of the panel. A trowel is used for the first layer and a shovel for the rest.

When the concrete has hardened it is removed from the shuttering with the mould still attached. This is covered with damp cloths and left to 'cure'. It should be cured for as long as possible for this is what gives the concrete its strength.

Stripping the moulds from the concrete is a messy business. Jack and Charlie do them all at once. Stubborn bits of mould are removed with a solvent. 'Takes a devil of a time' says Jack 'concrete's got a fearful grip'.

When the panels are dry two coats of silicone are applied as a water repellent. The artists visit the yard to do any painting or any gold leaf work. The paint is similar to that used by signwriters and the gold leaf is the genuine thing. 'Strong heraldic colours work best' says Henry.

The murals have added to the artistic reputation of Joyce and Henry and they could, if they wanted, get quite a few commissions for them. But as Joyce Collins says 'I think it's successful because Henry and I really do work together. To turn into a business would be wrong. And we will keep doing it as long as it is a pleasure'.



Left: a panel from the Hitchin mural, with others in the background, at Hutton's yard. It shows the sun symbol designed by the Collins' for exclusive use on all the JS murals.



Henry Collins (left) and Jack Mead discuss the technicalities of turning the moulds into the living concrete panels. Right: real gold leaf adds a glowing richness to Hitchin's history.



'It all happened by chance,' says Henry Collins of the way in which he and his wife Joyce came to design the pre-cast concrete murals that are a distinctive feature of three JS supermarkets. The first was for Colchester where the Collins', who are both artists, live.

Early in 1969 when the Colchester branch was being built, the local planning authorities restricted the amount of glass that could be used on the frontage. The site faced a fairly narrow pedestrian walkway and a large expanse of glass was a possible hazard. This left Stanley Bragg, the local architect working on the job, with the problem of what to use instead.

A brick wall lacked imagination and would not give shoppers a very attractive prospect. He had seen examples of murals cast in concrete and how effective they could be. But was not sure how they were made or who made them.

By chance he met Henry Collins on the London train one morning. He knew that Henry and his wife had designed a number of murals, using canvas or plastics, so he discussed with him the possibility of working in concrete.

The idea of a concrete mural depicting some of the history of Colchester was put to JS management. JS said yes and the Collins' were commissioned to design it.

Henry and Joyce worked with Stanley Bragg on a process for producing the expanded polystyrene moulds, from which to cast the panels, that make up the murals.

Chance took a hand again when it was discovered that Huttons, the building firm working on the site, were also specialists in producing decorative concrete.

The know-how of Jack Causton and Charlie Mead at Huttons, and the design talents of Henry and Joyce, has proved a very successful partnership. 'We wouldn't work with anyone else now,' says Joyce. 'On the first mural we were all learning together. None of us were sure if it would come off.'