



**A HISTORICAL LOOK AT THE SHOPS – PAST AND PRESENT
IN THE COLCHESTER TOWN CENTRE AREA**



INTRODUCTION

Having written about walking around our town and others over Christmas and the month of January, looking at churches in Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, the weekend of 1st and 2nd February 2014, saw me writing and photographing the main shops in our town of Colchester and trying to find out the National History of the businesses. So here is my story again

99p STORE (84-86 Culver Street East)



99p Stores Ltd. is a family run business founded in January 2001 by entrepreneur Nadir Lalani, who opened the first store in the chain in Holloway, London, with a further three stores opening later that year. In 2002, Lalani decided to expand the business throughout the UK and has rapidly developed 99p Stores, operating a total of 129 stores as of March 2010 and serving around 1.5 million customers each week, undercutting their main rival Poundland by a penny. As of mid-2009 the company offered more than 3,500 different product lines throughout its stores.

Most of their stores are based in the south of the UK, although there are stores as far north as Liverpool and Hartlepool. The chain saw accelerated store expansion upon the collapse of Woolworths Group, where they took the opportunity to acquire 15 of these former stores, increasing their estate to 79 at that time. Landlords are now regarding 99p Stores as an anchor tenant due to the significant number of customers one of their stores can bring to a location.

Although the retailer made a pre-tax loss of £1.14 million in the year to 31 January 2007, they claim that, since then, consumers have become more cautious with their money and where they spend it, in response to the current economic conditions. The retailer has noticed an increase of customers from the wealthier AB social grade (a system of demographic classification used in the United Kingdom) during the recession. Customers tend to speak positively about 99p Stores, with most reviewers noting customer and product overcrowding as their biggest criticisms, yet still rate the chain 4.5/5 on average.

ARGOS
(17-33 Long Wyre Street)



Argos is a British catalogue merchant operating in the UK and Ireland. With 737 stores, it is the largest general-goods retailer in the UK. Together with sister company Homebase, it today forms part of the Home Retail Group, alongside Habitat. Argos owns numerous brands including the now defunct **Elizabeth Duke** (jewellery and watches), alongside electronic brands **Alba** and **Bush, Chad Valley**, and many others. Argos was once a FTSE 100 Index constituent in its own right but is today represented by its parent company Home Retail Group in the FTSE 250 Index.

The company was founded by Richard Tompkins who had previously established Green Shield Stamps in the United Kingdom. Whilst on holiday in the Greek city of Argos, he came up with the idea that people could purchase goods from his "Green Shield Gift House" with cash rather than savings stamps. He rebranded the original Green Shield Stamps catalogue shops as *Argos* beginning in July 1973, the first purpose-built store opening on the A28 Sturry Road, Canterbury in late 1973. Green Shield House was in Station Road, Edgware.

Argos was launched with thousands of staff, taking £1,000,000 during a week in November. Argos was purchased by BAT Industries in 1979 for £32 million. In 1980, Argos opened its **Elizabeth Duke** jewellery counter (named after a director's wife) and by 1982 was the UK's fourth biggest jewellery retailer. The Elizabeth Duke brand has since been phased out and replaced with the "Jewellery and Watches" brand.

The company was demerged from BAT Industries and listed on the London Stock Exchange in 1990. It was then acquired by GUS plc in 1998. It subsequently became part of Home Retail Group which was demerged from its parent company, GUS plc, with effect from 10 October 2006. It was announced in late 2009 that the Argos visual branding would be undergoing changes from 2010. This began on 23 January with the re-launch of the main shopping website, the websites claim to make shopping with Argos more accessible, the careers website and the release of the Spring/Summer 2010 catalogue were also relaunched.

All stores opening from the start of 2010 onwards received the new identity, with older stores being refurbished in the coming years. The company expects that the rebranding process will take "a number of years", at a cost of £70,000,000. As of July 2013, many stores are yet to be rebranded.

BHS
(77 Culver Street East)



BHS Ltd. is a British department store chain with branches mainly located in high street locations, primarily selling clothing and household items such as bed linen, cutlery, crockery and lighting. The company has 179 stores throughout the United Kingdom. BHS was previously a constituent of the FTSE 100 Index, but has been part of the Arcadia Group since 2009.

Founded in south London in 1928, **British Home Stores** expanded in the 1970s and 1980s including the opening of stores in the newly-developing wave of indoor shopping malls (such as The Mall Bexleyheath and Lakeside Shopping Centre). 1977 saw the firm launch a joint venture with supermarket retailer Sainsbury's to create hypermarkets using the SavaCentre brand.

Sainsbury's took whole control of SavaCentre in 1989 and has more recently converted the stores to the Sainsbury's branding. A downturn in business in the early 1980s was fought with a revamp of the stores and the selling of goods with higher profit margins. The company closed its only overseas store, in Dublin, Ireland, during this time. In 1985 the first overseas franchise store opened in Gibraltar. Such stores, not directly owned by the BHS company itself, now operate over Europe and the Middle East.

In 1986, BHS merged with Habitat and Mothercare to form Storehouse plc and soon afterwards, the *British Home Stores* registered company name and branding across its shops was replaced with 'BhS' (later *Bhs*, and since reverted to the all-caps BHS, which the company used in addition to the full British Home Stores name prior to the full rebrand) and a new corporate logo. The exception was in stores that displayed a 'historic' fascia, such as Edinburgh's Princes Street, which continued to feature the British Home Stores name in its original Roman type etched into the granite shop front.

British Home Stores, like many other major retailers, has followed a trend of opening stores at out-of-town locations since the 1980s. A notable example is the two-level store at Merry Hill Shopping Centre in the West Midlands (which formed part of an Enterprise Zone). This store opened on 14 November 1989. It ultimately replaced the store in nearby Dudley, which closed in June 1990 as a result of a sharp fall in trade since the opening of the Merry Hill store. The nearby West Bromwich store also closed around the same time, its fortunes affected by the Merry Hill development as well as smaller developments around nearby Oldbury which started with the SavaCentre hypermarket in 1980.

Personal view – My late parents use to spend their town visits on a Thursday having their coffee and breakfast there too. I recall on the occasion of either their 50th or 60th wedding anniversary which would have been 2 January 1993 or 2003, taking an hour off work to join them, and I was totally full after the ten item selection, we then went to St Botolphs church where they were married in 1943, but sadly it was locked up so I had to take their photo outside the building.

BOOTS (4-6 Lion Walk)



Boots UK Limited (formerly **Boots the Chemist**) is a pharmacy chain in the United Kingdom, with outlets in most high streets throughout the country and also in the Republic of Ireland. The company is a subsidiary of Alliance Boots, a parent company formed on 31 July 2006 by the merger of The Boots Company plc and Alliance UniChem plc. Its head office is in the Nottingham Support Office in Nottingham. Boots was established in 1849, by John Boot. After his father's death in 1860, Jesse Boot, aged 10, helped his mother run the family's herbal medicine shop in Nottingham, which became Boot and Co. Ltd in 1883, then Boots Pure Drug Company Ltd. in 1888. In 1920, Jesse Boot sold the company to the American United Drug Company. However, because of deteriorating economic circumstances in North America Boots was sold back into British hands in 1933. The grandson of the founder, John Boot, who inherited the title Baron Trent from his father, headed the company.

Boots diversified into the research and manufacturing of drugs with its development of the Ibuprofen painkiller during the 1960s. The company was awarded the Queen's Award For Technical Achievement for this in 1987. In 1994, Boots divested production to BASF and in 2006 sold the Nurofen brand to Reckitt Benckiser. In 1968 Boots acquired the 622-strong Timothy Whites and Taylors Ltd chain. Boots expanded into Canada by purchasing the Tamblyn Drugs chain circa 1978. Most Canadian Boots stores were converted to Pharma Plus in 1989, although a handful of locations remained as late as 1993, if not later. In 1982, the company opened a new manufacturing plant in Cramlington, Northumberland. In the early 1990s, Boots began to diversify and bought Halfords, the bicycle and car parts business in 1991. It also developed the Children's World business but sold it in 1996 to Mothercare. Halfords was sold in 2002.

Boots Opticians Ltd. was formed in 1987 with the acquisition of Clement Clarke Ltd. and Curry and Paxton Ltd. Boots Opticians became the UK's second largest retail optics chain. Boots diversified into dentistry in 1998, with a number of stores offering this service. Boots sold its *Do-It-All* home furnishings chain to Focus in 1998. Boots also made a venture into "Wellbeing" services offering customers treatments ranging from facials, homoeopathy, and nutritional advice to laser eye surgery and Botox but these services were abandoned in 2003, despite a launch that included a dedicated Freeview and Sky TV channel of the same name, and even redirecting web traffic from boots.com to wellbeing.com

In late 2004, Boots sold the laser eye surgery services to Optical Express. On 1 October 2005, rumours began to circulate that Boots and Alliance UniChem were planning a merger. The merger was announced on 3 October by the Chairman of the Boots Group, Sir Nigel Rudd. The CEO Richard Baker left the business, and the new group took on the name Alliance Boots plc. The merger became effective on 31 July 2006. The new group was subsequently bought by Kohlberg Kravis Roberts and Stefano Pessina, the deputy chairman of Alliance Boots, taking the company private.

On 19 June 2012, it was announced that Walgreens (America's largest drug store retailer) would purchase a 45% stake in Alliance Boots, costing \$6.7bn. The deal is a long term plan to give maximum exposure to both brands, Boots more so in America and, Walgreens more so in the UK and in China through Boots presence in the market.

Both companies will then seek to complete a full merger within three years costing an extra \$9.5bn. On 5 August 2013, The Guardian reported that Boots UK has 4,000 staff on controversial zero-hour contracts.

Personal view – In current times I tend to only use the store for photo development, but from early memories, the shop was original on the corner where Head Street turns into High Street, then it moved further High Street before locating to the Lion Walk precinct when that was built.

BURGER KING (11b High Street)
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Burger King, often abbreviated as **BK**, is a global chain of hamburger fast food restaurants headquartered in unincorporated Miami-Dade County, Florida, United States. The company began in 1953 as Insta-Burger King, a Jacksonville, Florida-based restaurant chain. After Insta-Burger King ran into financial difficulties in 1954, its two Miami-based franchisees, David Edgerton and James McLamore, purchased the company and renamed it Burger King. Over the next half century, the company would change hands four times, with its third set of owners, a partnership of TPG Capital, Bain Capital, and Goldman Sachs Capital Partners, taking it public in 2002. In late 2010, 3G Capital of Brazil acquired a majority stake in BK in a deal valued at US\$3.26 billion. The new owners promptly initiated a restructuring of the company to reverse its fortunes.

At the end of fiscal year 2013, Burger King reported it had over 13,000 outlets in 79 countries; of these, 66 percent are in the United States and 99 percent are privately owned and operated with its new owners moving to an entirely franchised model by the end of 2013. BK has historically used several variations of franchising to expand its operations. The manner in which the company licenses its franchisees varies depending on the region, with some regional franchises, known as master franchises, responsible for selling franchise sub-licenses on the company's behalf.

Burger King's relationship with its franchises has not always been harmonious. Occasional spats between the two have caused numerous issues, and in several instances the company's and its licensees' relations have degenerated into precedent-setting court cases.

The Burger King menu has expanded from a basic offering of burgers, French fries, sodas, and milkshakes in 1954, to a larger, more diverse set of product offerings. In 1957, the Whopper was the first major addition to the menu; it has since become Burger King's signature product. Conversely, BK has introduced many products which failed to catch hold in the marketplace. Some of these failures in the United States have seen success in foreign markets, where BK has also tailored its menu for regional tastes. From 2002 to 2010, Burger King aggressively targeted the 18–34 male demographic with larger products that often carried correspondingly large amounts of unhealthy fats and trans-fats. This tactic would eventually come to hurt the company's financial underpinnings and cast a negative pall on its earnings. Beginning in 2011, the company began to move away from the previous male-oriented menu and introduce new menu items, product reformulations, and packaging as part of 3G Capital's restructuring plans of the company.

The 1970s were the "Golden Age" of Burger King advertising, but beginning in the early 1980s, the company's advertising began to lose focus; a series of less successful ad campaigns created by a procession of advertising agencies continued for the next two decades. In 2003, Burger King hired the Miami-based advertising agency of Crispin Porter + Bogusky (CP+B). CP+B completely reorganized Burger King's advertising with a series of new campaigns centered on a redesigned Burger King character accompanied with a new online presence. While highly successful, some of CP+B commercials were derided for perceived sexism or cultural insensitivity. New owner, 3G Capital, terminated the relationship with CP+B in 2011 and moved its advertising to McGarryBowen to begin a new product oriented campaign with expanded demographic targeting.

CARD FACTORY
(8-9 Culver Walk and 22 Long Wyre Street)

Card Factory



Sportsworld Ltd t/a Card Factory is a chain of greeting card and gift stores in United Kingdom founded by Dean Hoyle and his wife Janet; the first store opened in 1997. The company currently employs around 6,500 people, mostly in front line positions in its stores. Their advertising claims they have not increased prices for ten years. Year-on-year sales rose 27% from 2008 to 2009 resulting in a £29.4 million pre-tax profit and a turnover of nearly £168 million.

Card Factory has donated £1m to Macmillan Cancer Support, the company's chosen charity. The company has been successfully prosecuted for Health and Safety infringements on a number of occasions. Incidents have included poor stock management, overstocking of their stores, damaged equipment, inadequate risk assessments and staff training. On 28 November 2008 it was announced that Card Factory had purchased about 80 of the 288 stores from failed greetings card company Celebrations Group (which trades as Card Warehouse and Cardfair) as part of a rescue package securing around 500 of the 1,800 jobs currently at Celebrations. On 8 April 2010 the sale of Card Factory to London based equity firm Charterhouse was completed for £350 million. On 14 July 2011, Card Factory purchased gettingpersonal.co.uk for an undisclosed sum.

CHRISTMAS STORE (High Street)



Personal view – Every Christmas in the St Nicholas Store, which was formerly used by the Co-op and JJB Stores, this is used to sell cheap Christmas items, this is open for just over a month each year, then remains empty for the other eleven months.

CO-OP (formerly Long Wyre Street)



The East of England Co-operative Society is an amalgamation of smaller societies from across East Anglia which have joined together over the years. Most recently, the **Colchester and East Essex Co-operative Society** merged with the **Ipswich and Norwich Co-operative Society** in 2005. The consumer co-operative movement has its roots in the early part of the nineteenth century and the principles of self-help and social equity that developed during the Victorian era. The first successful retail co-operative was established in 1844 by the Rochdale Pioneers. The Ipswich and Norwich Society was an amalgamation of the Ipswich Industrial Co-operative Society (founded 1868) and the Norwich Co-operative Society (founded 1858). The Colchester and East Essex Society was founded as Colchester Co-operative Society in 1861, expanding through merger with the Tiptree Self Help (1921), Clacton (1931), Coggeshall Heart in Hand (1945), Harwich, Dovercourt and Parkeston (March 1967), Maldon (Nov 1967), Witham (June 1970) and Earls Colne (Aug 1970) co-operative societies.

The Society operates convenience stores, pharmacies, opticians, funeral directors and travel agents (as The Co-operative Travel). It previously ran a dairy with doorstep deliveries, but this was sold to Dairy Crest in early 2008 and their department stores and a jewellery store were sold to Vergo Retail in 2009. In 2010 their car dealerships were sold to various owners. It is a corporate member of the Co-operative Group, sourcing its food through the national buying programme, the Co-operative Retail Trading Group.

Customers and employees pay £1 to join and receive a Dividend card, which effectively acts as a loyalty card, and must be presented at any transaction to receive points. These points are then allocated a monetary value, decided by a board, and based on the Society's profits that year. Membership is open to all those living or working in the Society's trading area. Members receive a share in the profits and in 2008 more than £4 million was paid out in dividends.

Personal view – A feature of the town's Long Wyre Street, for the full length of one side use to be the Co-op, but due to financial problems this was sold off in the early 2010's, although most of the local food outlets still remained in place, including the Square at Shrub End, which is where I do my weekend shop.

<p style="text-align: center;">COSTA COFFEE (12 Lion Walk and 5 Culver Square)</p>
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Costa Coffee is a British multinational coffeehouse company headquartered in Dunstable, United Kingdom, and a wholly owned subsidiary of Whitbread. It is the second largest coffeehouse chain in the world behind Starbucks and the largest in the United Kingdom.

Costa Coffee was founded in London in 1971 by the Italian brothers Sergio and Bruno Costa, as a wholesale operation supplying roasted coffee to caterers and specialist Italian coffee shops. It was acquired by Whitbread in 1995, since when it has grown to over 1,700 stores across 35 countries. The business has 1,375 UK restaurants, 2,500 Costa Express vending facilities and a further 800 outlets overseas. Bruno and Sergio Costa founded a coffee roastery in Lambeth, London in 1971, supplying local caterers and coffee shops with their slow-roasted blend Mocha Italia. Costa branched out to retailing coffee in 1978, when its first store opened in Vauxhall Bridge Road, London.

In 1995 the business was acquired by Whitbread, becoming a wholly owned subsidiary. In 2009 Costa celebrated the opening of its 1,000th store - in Cardiff. In December 2009, Costa Coffee agreed to acquire Coffee Heaven for £36 million, adding 79 stores in central and eastern Europe. By the end of 2010 the company had overtaken Starbucks in the UK, reaching a 37.6% market share measured by revenues.

DEBENHAMS **(34 Culver Street West)**

DEBENHAMS

STYLING THE NATION



Debenhams traces its history to 1778 when William Clark established a drapers store at 44 Wigmore Street in London's West End selling expensive fabrics, bonnets, gloves and parasols. In 1813 William Debenham invested in the firm which then became Clark & Debenham. The first store outside London opened in Cheltenham in 1818 and it was an exact replica of the Wigmore Street store.

In the following years the firm prospered from the Victorian fashion for family mourning by which widows and other female relatives adhered to a strict code of clothing and etiquette. When Clement Freebody invested in the firm in 1851 it was renamed Debenham & Freebody.

As well as its retail stores, a wholesale business was established selling cloth and other items to dressmakers and other large retailers. Many acquisitions of retail, wholesale and manufacturing businesses were undertaken in the remainder of the 19th century and offices opened in South Africa, Australia, Canada and China. Acquisitions continued into the next century and in 1905 Debenhams Ltd was incorporated. In 1919, the business merged with Marshall & Snellgrove and in 1920 purchased Knightsbridge retailer Harvey Nichols.

Seven years later the involvement of the Debenham family finally ended and the business became a public company for the first time in 1928. By 1950, Debenhams was the largest department store group in the UK, owning 84 companies and 110 stores. It continued to grow and in 1966 central buying was introduced for the first time. 1976 saw the acquisition of Brown's of Chester, the only store which retained its original name when all others were re-branded Debenhams in 1977 (this continues to be the case today).

From 1985 to 1998, Debenhams was part of the Burton Group. During that time the business was repositioned with the introduction of exclusive merchandise, most notably Designers at Debenhams which was launched in 1993 and a significant increase in the number of stores. In 1997 the first international franchise store opened in Bahrain. Following de-merger from the Burton Group, Debenhams was listed on the London Stock Exchange until 2003 when it was acquired by Baroness Retail Ltd. Debenhams returned to the London Stock Exchange in May 2006.

In September 2007, the company acquired nine stores from Roches in the Republic of Ireland. In November 2009, Debenhams acquired Magasin du Nord, the leading department store chain in Denmark.

EDINBURGH WOOL COMPANY (29 High Street)



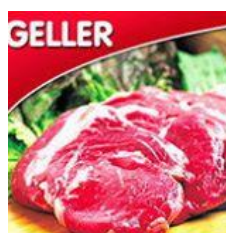
The Edinburgh Woollen Mill was founded by Drew Stevenson in 1946 as the Langholm Dyeing and Finishing Company, undertaking the dyeing of yarn on a contract basis. The development into retailing began in 1970, when the Group opened its first shop in Randolph Place, Edinburgh. In 1972 the first store south of the Border opened, appropriately enough at 81 English Street, Carlisle.

The company has had a number of owners dating from the early 1970s and was divested by Grampian Holdings in 2001. The business was taken over by a management buy-in led by Philip Day and, over the next few years Philip returned the company back to being an independent privately-owned business which is now owned 100% by the Day family.

The company had gone through a chequered performance history when it was acquired by Philip Day and he set about improving its store appearance, delivering excellent customer service in a friendly environment and creating a “first price right price” approach with the delivery of excellent quality and superb value for money products to our customers.

The company has grown substantially, it can now be considered as the best mid-market performer in the sector, delivering good consistent growth. The Group has continued to invest in acquisitions and in the recent years has added to its portfolio. It has acquired the assets of Ponden Mill and Rosebys (which have been re-branded as Ponden Home with 91 stores nationwide), Proquip (the famous sponsor of the Ryder Cup European Tour, specializing in the very best waterproof clothing) and most recently Jane Norman (the high street young fashion brand with 78 stores and a strong international presence). The Group turnover for 2009/2010 was in excess of £240m and the company operates in excess of 500 stores nationwide.

GELLERS (26 St John's Street)



Suppliers of premium quality, locally reared fresh meats. They also have a vast range of home cooked meats, pies, pastries and home made sausages. They are a traditional English family run butchers, established in 1966 by Jack Geller, now under the ownership of the Warnes family, master butchers since 1970. They supply premium quality meats to restaurants, hotels, public houses and the public 6 days a week, both locally in Colchester and throughout Essex !

GREGGS
(36 Long Wyre Street and 16 High Street)



Greggs plc (LSE: GRG) is the largest bakery chain in the United Kingdom, with 1,671 outlets. It specialises in products such as pasties, sausage rolls, steak bakes and sandwiches. Their sweet items included doughnuts and vanilla slices. It had its headquartered in Newcastle upon Tyne and is listed on the London Stock Exchange.

The first high street shop opened in 1952. Originally growing organically from its North East base, Greggs began to acquire regional bakery chains across the rest of the country from the 1970s onwards. By the 1990s it was the largest bakery chain in the country, after acquiring its major rival, Baker's Oven. Greggs was founded by John Gregg as a Tyneside bakery in 1939. It opened its first shop in Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne in 1951. When John died in 1964, the bakery was taken over by his son, Ian, assisted by his brother, Colin.

Major expansion began soon after, including the acquisitions of other bakeries such as the Glasgow-based Rutherglen in 1972, the Leeds-based Thurston's in 1974, Broomfields the Bakers, London, Bowkett's the Bakers in Kent, Took's the Bakers (East Anglia) and Manchester-based Price's in 1976. In 1994, the company acquired the Baker's Oven chain of bakers' shops from Allied Bakeries.

In 1999, Greggs rebranded its 100 Braggs bakers shops as Greggs of the Midlands and its Leeds-based Thurston chain as Greggs of Yorkshire. Starting in 2003, in an attempt to test the foreign market, Greggs opened a total of ten stores in Belgium; principally in Antwerp and Leuven. These have all since closed. On 9 December 2008, Greggs announced that all of its 165 Bakers Oven branded shops would be re-branded into the Greggs brand so that all the shops could benefit from the Greggs national advertising campaign. In March 2011, the company opened its 1,500th shop, in York. In May 2012, the company began selling frozen pasties through the Iceland supermarket chain. In January 2013, Greggs replaced its CEO Ken McMeikan with Punch Taverns CEO Roger Whiteside. McMeikan left the firm for Brakes Group. For the last few years, Greggs have had their uniforms provided by dedicated suppliers Workwear Express, who provide a range of branded uniforms for their 1,672 stores, matching the synonymous Greggs colour scheme.

H AND M (7a Culver Street West)



H & M Hennes & Mauritz AB (H&M) (Swedish pronunciation: [ˈhɛnˈnɛs ɔ ma.ʊˈrɪts]) is a Swedish multinational retail-clothing company, known for its fast-fashion clothing for men, women, teenagers and children. H&M exists in 43 countries and as of 2013 employed around 104,000 people. The first store was opened on the high street of Västerås, Sweden in 1947. It had 2,325 stores at the end of 2011 and 2,629 stores at the end of August 2012. It is ranked the second largest global clothing retailer, just behind Spain-based Inditex (parent company of ZARA), and leads over third largest global clothing retailer, United States based GAP Inc.

The design team in the company's Sweden office controls the steps of production, from merchandise planning to establishing specifications, and production is outsourced to approximately 800 factories in Europe and Asia. These facilities are used for horizontal division of labour, rather than being integrated. The company's founder Erling Persson travelled in 1946 in the United States and came up with the business idea back to offer fashionable clothing at great prices. In 1947 he opened his first shop Västerås, Sweden "Hennes", in which he exclusively sold women's clothing. "Hennes" is Swedish and means "for her" and/or "hers".

1968 hunting clothing retailer Mauritz Widforss was taken over, which led to the inclusion of a menswear collection in the offer and the name change to "Hennes & Mauritz" (H & M). In 1998, the company succeeded her initials "HM" to buy as an Internet domain HM.com.

HMV (16-17 Culver Street West)



HMV Retail Ltd, formerly **HMV Group plc**, is a British entertainment retailing company operating in the United Kingdom. It was listed on the London Stock Exchange and was a constituent of the FTSE Fledgling Index. The first HMV branded store was opened by the Gramophone Company on Oxford Street in 1921, and the HMV name was also used for television and radio sets manufactured from the 1930s onwards. The retail side of the business began to expand in the 1960s, and in 1998 was divested from EMI, the successor to the Gramophone Company, to form what would become HMV Group. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) prior to administration was Trevor Moore; he replaced Simon Fox on 3 September 2012.

HMV stands for *His Master's Voice*, the title of a painting by Francis Barraud of the dog Nipper listening to a cylinder phonograph, which was bought out by the Gramophone Company in 1899. For advertising purposes this was changed to a wind-up gramophone, and eventually used simply as a silhouette.

Acquisitions by the HMV Group have included Waterstone's in 1998 from W H Smith (sold in 2011), the music retailer Fopp in August 2007, and selected Zavvi retail outlets in February 2009. The group then branched out into live music venue management in 2009 by purchasing MAMA Group, though sold the group in December 2012.

On 15 January 2013, HMV Group entered administration. Deloitte were appointed to deal with the administration of the company. On 16 January 2013, HMV Ireland declared receivership, and all Irish stores were closed. A week later on 22 January 2013 it was reported that Hilco UK would buy the debt of HMV, a step towards potentially taking control of the company. The sale of HMV's Hong Kong and Singapore business to private equity firm Aid Partners was completed on 28 February 2013. On 5 April 2013, HMV was bought out of administration by Hilco UK for an estimated £50 million.

Personal view – if I buy a CD this is where I go, and occasionally spend time browsing here and in Chelmsford, looking for any bargains for sale.

<p style="text-align: center;">HOLLAND AND BARRETT (18 Long Wyre Street and 8 Pelham's Lane)</p>
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The logo for Holland & Barrett, featuring the company name in a white, serif font on a green rectangular background.

Holland & Barrett is a chain of health food shops with over 700 stores in the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, South Africa, Singapore and Malta. The company also has stores in The Netherlands, where they trade as "De Tuinen".

Holland & Barrett is the UK's leading retailer of vitamins, minerals and herbal supplements. Their stores are a familiar sight in almost every major city and town across the U.K, with new outlets opening up all the time.

Interest in natural food supplements has increased considerably over the last few years and Holland & Barrett has always had a commitment to its customers to provide high quality products at value for money prices.

Holland & Barrett is Europe's leading retailer of Vitamins, Minerals and Herbal Supplements. Our stores are a familiar sight in almost every major city and town across the United Kingdom and Ireland, where they operate over 620 outlets.

Holland & Barrett has the benefit of over 80 years of experience in the health supplement industry. They offer one of the most extensive staff-training programmes in the retail industry, an unparalleled range of natural health food products, as well as an intense commitment to quality goods at exceptional values.

They apply those many years experience in working to bring our customers the most advanced formulas nutritional science has to offer. Everyday their scientists, working with the finest ingredients sourced from around the world, are searching to develop the breakthrough formulas of the future.

The original values set down all those years ago remain the same today, with Holland & Barrett remaining committed to education & advice, wide product range, quality assurance and everyday low prices.

<p>ICELAND (St John's Street)</p>



Iceland began business in 1970, when Malcolm Walker opened the first store in Oswestry, England, with his business partner Peter Hinchcliffe investing £60 for one month's rent at the store. They were still employees of Woolworths at the time, and their employment was terminated once their employer discovered their job on the side. Iceland initially specialised in loose frozen food.

By 1975, there were 15+ Iceland outlets in North Wales, with the first supermarket-style outlet opening in Manchester a couple of years later. The firm's head office moved to Deeside, Wales, in 1979. Iceland was floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1984, when it had 81 outlets. In 1989, Iceland bought its competitor Bejam which was some three times larger in terms of business. By February 2004, the combined chain had 760 stores throughout the UK.

In January 2009, Iceland announced that it would buy 51 stores in the UK from the failed Woolworths Group chain, three days after the final 200 Woolworths stores closed their doors for the last time. The company has more recently made large scale changes its promotions. In the past "Buy One Get One Free" and Meal Deals (a selection of products for a set price) were common in stores. These have now been reduced and replaced with products offering bigger packs at the original prices. The pricing system has also been changed with many products having their prices rounded up or down to the nearest multiple of 25p, this is known as *Clear Cut Prices*.

2006 also saw a huge surge in 'Home Delivery' promotion. This service is now one of the main focuses of the company. When a customer spends £25 or more, they have the option of free same-day home delivery. On 6 October 2008, Iceland launched their "Bonus Card", a loyalty card and replacement for the original home delivery card. Customers receive offers and vouchers from time to time.

When the chain bought rival Bejam in 1989, they launched the TV-advertising campaign "Use Our Imagination," which included a song. The campaign was launched so quickly after the takeover that they had not time to convert all Bejam stores to the "Iceland" fascia. Because of this in the song for the commercial featured the line "We're at Bejam's too..." Iceland staff received new uniforms in June 2007. The uniform consisted of a red polo shirt with an orange band on the collar and sleeves, A black nylon jacket with the Iceland logo embroidered on it and black trousers. Another new uniform was introduced on 1 March 2011. It consists of a black shirt with orange, red and grey coloured stripes running down it and the Iceland logo embroidered on the sleeve, black and orange nylon fleeces and gilets with the logo embroidered, and black jeans. The new delivery drivers' uniform also consists of a large waterproof bomber jacket with the logo on the back, a baseball cap or 'beanie' hat and a striped scarf. Supervisors' uniform consists of black suit trousers and a silvery-grey shirt, and store managers have the addition of a suit jacket and red tie.

Personal view – I am a regular visitor there where I buy most of my food needs, ready meals, cheese, yoghurts, cakes, crisps, roast potatoes, fish and wine.

JACKS (5 St Nicholas Street)



Another piece of Colchester's unique past has now gone forever as Jack's Famous Supplies closed its doors for the last time on 2 February 2013. The store, which sold a combination of household items, camping gear, hardware, tools, clothes and shoes, had been struggling for some time and was only saved from closure last year when the owner made a plea for customers to support the store. However the reprieve was sadly short-lived and the store went into administration in mid-January in the hope that a buyer could be found to save the store. Sadly no buyer emerged for the store which announced it would close for the last time.

Jacks has been popular with the residents of Colchester shop for many years and has a reputation for selling goods at bargain basement prices long before the advent of stores such as Poundland and it is with sadness that we said goodbye to yet another iconic and unique Colchester landmark.

<p>KENT BLAXILL (129-139 Layer Road – formerly 102-103 High Street)</p>



Kent Blaxill has served the Colchester area since 1838, when it was founded as an oil and glass business on the town's High Street. Since then, their family-owned firm has expanded across eight sites over East Anglia, offering paint, timber, glass, ironmongery, tools landscaping, building supplies and much, much, more. They have also been known as a leading kitchen and bathroom specialist since 1963, when they moved from the Colchester High Street and opened their purpose-built site at Layer Road. Their showroom, affectionately known as Home Inspirations, has since built up an enviable reputation for quality and service and they specialise in helping people to find the kitchens, bathrooms, wall and floor coverings that are right at a suitable price.

Personal view – although I did visit the High Street site in the years ago, despite living close by, I don't think that I have ever been to the Layer Road one.

KFC (10 High Street)



KFC was founded by Harland Sanders, an entrepreneur who began selling fried chicken from his roadside restaurant in Corbin, Kentucky, during the Great Depression. Sanders identified the potential of the restaurant franchising concept, and the first "Kentucky Fried Chicken" franchise opened in Utah in 1952. KFC popularised chicken in the fast food industry, diversifying the market by challenging the established dominance of the hamburger.

By branding himself as "Colonel Sanders", Harland became a prominent figure of American cultural history, and his image remains widely used in KFC advertising. However, the company's rapid expansion saw it grow too large for Sanders to manage, and in 1964 he sold the company to a group of investors led by John Y. Brown, Jr. and Jack C. Massey.

KFC was one of the first fast food chains to expand internationally, opening outlets in England, Mexico and Jamaica by the mid-1960s. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, KFC experienced mixed fortunes domestically, as it went through a series of changes in corporate ownership with little or no experience in the restaurant business. In the early 1970s, KFC was sold to the spirits distributor Heublein, who were taken over by the R.J. Reynolds food and tobacco conglomerate, who sold the chain to PepsiCo. The chain continued to expand overseas, and in 1987 KFC became the first Western restaurant chain to open in China.

In 1997, PepsiCo spun off its restaurants division as Tricon Global Restaurants, which changed its name to Yum! Brands in 2002. Yum has proved a more focused owner than Pepsi, and although KFC's fortunes have waned in the US, the company has continued to grow in Asia, South America and Africa. The chain has expanded to 18,000 outlets across 120 countries and territories, with 4,400 outlets in China, which is now the company's most profitable market.

MANN'S MUSIC (123 High Street)



Mann's Music" was established 159 years ago in 1854 by Mr Frederick Mann. It is one of the oldest music shop in Great Britain, and possibly the world, under the same ownership.

Mann's is currently run by Tim Mann, the great great grandson of the founder. They moved to their current location in 1891 and have been there ever since. They retailed the first iron framed pianos before the first world war for less than half the cost of a modern day tuning!

Tim writes -

Over the last 159 years they have retailed virtually all musical products from Wireless Sets and Gramophones before the first world war for around 10 guineas, vertical and overstrung pianos for between 30 and 40 guineas in the twenties, Pathescope home cinema movie cameras in the fifties for £6:15:0. They now sell over 15,000 stock lines, from reeds and strings, to brass and woodwind, a huge stock of printed music, both electric and acoustic guitars and electronic and acoustic pianos. Indeed it could be said there are few music shops in the UK with such a large and diverse stock.

They have been offering the best prices on the top products to the general public since 1854; they are a family run business that has been operating for 159 years. Unlike our competitors we do not offer a price promise, because they have done your homework for you. You can choose products from this online catalogue knowing that you are getting the best possible price in the market place today.

They have listed 1000's of their most popular lines, however this catalogue is continually expanding to take in almost 15,000 items, so please visit them again soon. Everything they sell is backed up by experienced staff, and offered at the most competitive prices. If you can't find what you're looking for, email or ring them. Mann's Music is truly your one stop shop for everything musical.

MARKS AND SPENCER (38 High Street)

YOUR M&S



Travel back in time and discover some of the interesting facts that have helped to make them what they are today. Their company values of Quality, Value, Service, Innovation and Trust are not new – they are the principles on which our business was founded. Look through their Timeline and find out where they fit in, or visit Marks in Time, their specially created online experience.

Marks & Spencer is going back to its roots and opening a stall in the place where the famous brand first started at Kirkgate Market, Leeds, in 1884. In March 2013 Marks & Spencer will open a heritage and coffee shop right beside the famous M&S clock in the 1904 building of Kirkgate Market.

Based in Leeds, the M&S Company Archive is a vital business asset which acts to collect, preserve and utilise material relating to all aspect of the history and development of the company. The Company Archive contains a range of materials from the last 128 years including written records, staff publications, photographs and films, garments and household products, design and advertising material - find out more about their collection.

The Company Archive now boasts a public-facing exhibition area which celebrates the story of M&S and showcases historical and current star products to the general public. They also offer a Reading Room service for those wishing to consult particular items from the collection in more detail which will be supported by an online catalogue to support remote research and access to the collection.

Opened to the public for the first time on 16 March 2012, they offer a wide range of activities and events tailored to schools, families and adult learners to engage the public with the collection and with M&S.

Personal view – I am a member of the M & S system and visit there every week on a Wednesday night. They finance all my spending and in return I get “free” coffees and vouchers back from them.

NEW LOOK (Unit 5, Lion Walk)



New Look is a British global fashion retailer with a chain of high street shops in the UK, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, the Republic of Ireland, Malta, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Azerbaijan and Poland.

New Look was founded by Tom Singh. Since then the company has rapidly expanded and now operates across a chain of over 1,000 stores internationally and a staff of over 30,000. The group had a turnover of £1,147 million in y/e 2008 with profits of £180 million.

In 2008, New Look continued its expansion in the UAE and opened its largest store till then in Liverpool One Shopping Centre. In February 2009, its 40th anniversary year, it opened its first store in Russia.

In July 2010, New Look opened its Scottish flagship store in Glasgow Fort Shopping Park. The store is a massive 18,000 sq ft (1,700 m²). It was built on the site of a former Borders store.

The largest New Look store in the world opened in Dublin, Ireland on November 4, 2010 located at the Jervis Shopping Centre. It is the 29th New Look store in Ireland.

In 2004, after six years afloat, the company withdrew from the stock market and was taken back to being a privately owned business by founder Tom Singh and chief executive Phil Wrigley, and private equity investors Permira, Apax Partners and Quilliam Investments.

On 26 April 2007, a fire occurred at a New Look branch in Oxford Street, London. The subsequent investigation revealed an extensive catalogue of failings relating to fire safety precautions and measures. The company subsequently pleaded guilty to criminal charges and on 25 November 2009, was fined a total of £400,000 with £136,052 costs. In 2010, the fines were upheld by the Court of Appeal.

In 2007 New Look launched its first advertising campaign for three years. The same year it used online advertising for the first time and then launched its transactional website, which went live in December 2007 and currently carries women's wear, men's wear, Generation 915 for teens, kids, footwear, accessories, lingerie, maternity, tall, petite and Inspire (sizes 18–26).

PEACOCKS **(20-23 Priory Walk)**



Peacocks is a fashion retail chain based in Cardiff, Wales. The chain is a part of the Edinburgh Woolen Mill group and employs over 6,000 people. There are currently over 400 Peacocks retail outlets located in the United Kingdom; and more than 200 stores located in twelve other countries throughout Europe. Originally selling home goods and basic clothing, Peacocks has been re-branded over the years as a value fashion store. Richard Kirk, the former owner of the chain, worked hard to transform Peacocks into a major fashion player. The retailer won numerous awards, notably the Best Value Retailer award from Drapers. On January 2012, Peacocks entered administration and was bought by The Edinburgh Woolen Mill Group. Edinburgh Group also owns the Jane Norman chain, a fashion outlet for women.

Peacocks was established in Warrington in 1884 as a family-run business selling a wide range of goods. Over the years, Peacocks Penny Bazaar has expanded, opening more outlets and tailoring its look to keep up with the times and trends. It has remained a family business throughout the Peacocks family history.

In the 1940s, the company relocated to Cardiff, where its headquarters remain. The move had a profound effect on the development of the group, whose growing network was concentrated in south Wales and southern England for many years. In the early 1990s, Peacocks grew further and, in December 1999, the firm was floated on the London Stock Exchange.

In 2005, a £400M management buyout led by Richard Kirk was agreed to, supported and arranged by Echelon Capital and supported by Goldman Sachs and hedge funds including Och-Ziff and Perry Capital that own 55% of the new holding company. The company unlisted from the exchange on 1 February 2006, again becoming privately owned.

In line with the increased demand for value-for-money fashion, Peacocks began to provide high fashion women's wear, men's wear and children's wear. High Street outlets were revamped and placed together, with a steer towards prime locations.

POUNDLAND (4-6 LONG WYRE STREET)





Poundland's retailing concept is extremely simple: a range of more than 3,000 items, each offered for sale at only £1 each – representing AMAZING VALUE for money.

Their pilot store opened in the Octagon Centre, Burton-upon-Trent in December of 1990, followed by new stores in High Street, Meadowhall and other quality trading locations. Shoppers loved the concept, and so did fellow retailers and landlords. The stores proved to be a huge success. Meadowhall's success was repeated by further stores opening by the end of the year.

Personal view: This is a shop that I regularly visit in Colchester, or when I am in Chelmsford and Ipswich. This sees me stocking up with chocolate, crisps, kitchen and bathroom needs, all for the bargain price of £1 each.

Q D STORES (St John's Street)



At QD Stores they aim to not only provide their customers with best value and best quality practices; they also aim to empower their employees to deliver first class customer service and product knowledge.

Employees training and development is positively encouraged as an on-going process and a balance of in-house, correspondence and external training courses are actively promoted.

The company pro-actively encourages links with local schools and colleges through work experience and the 'Young Enterprise Initiative'. A comprehensive range of employee benefits support the competitively rated wage structure including such items as contributory Company Pension and Company Bonus schemes, all providing a progressive and successful working environment.

Our 'Value For Money' retailing concept has been carefully thought out, strategically planned and dynamically implemented.

The strategy is simple, consistent and successful. We work on low margins and high turnover. There are no gimmicks, no sales, just discounted goods on the shelves every day. It is what our customers expect and it is what they get. QD offers the family shopper over 40,000 product lines over a vast array of departments with goods ranging from all types of clothing, housewares, household textiles, lighting, audio, gardening and much more besides.

QD Stores first opened its doors in 1985 at Anglia Square, Norwich. Our 'Value For Money' concept was an instant success. We have now expanded throughout East Anglia and beyond, making us the largest privately owned store retailer in the Eastern Counties. Their ambitions are to spread even further afield through a carefully controlled plan.

RIVER ISLAND (11-14 Lion Walk)

RIVER ISLAND



River Island is a London-headquartered high street fashion brand, which operates in a number of worldwide markets. Set up in 1948 by Bernard Lewis and his brothers in London, it is to this day still a private company owned by the Lewis family.

In 1948, Bernard Lewis started selling fruit and vegetables, and then knitting wool from a Nazi-Luftwaffe bombed-out site in the East End of London. Joined by his three brothers, the chain expands to nine stores under the title Lewis Separates.

By 1965 Lewis Separates had an impressive 70 store empire in the UK and it was decided that the brand needed a new identity. Lewis Separates was re-branded to Chelsea Girl, the name chosen because at the time the King's Road in Chelsea was the hub of fashion, music and popular culture. Chelsea Girl became the first UK fashion boutique chain, using strong colours, bold fashion imagery and pop music to reinforce the brand.

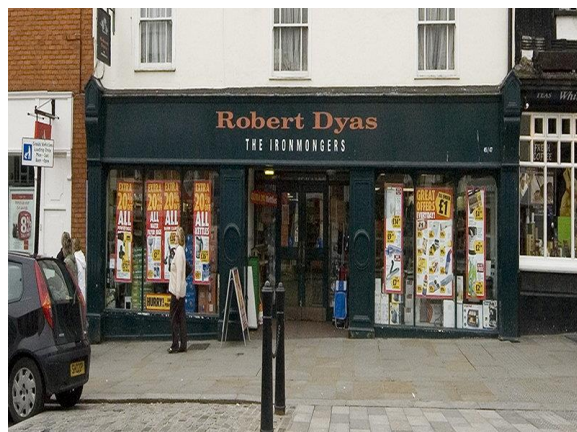
In the late 1970s, two of the brothers left the business, leaving Bernard, David and their families in charge. They formed the Lewis Trust Group, for which David ran the other businesses covering hotels, property and investments, leaving Bernard to run the retail operation. This allowed the company to expand into menswear in 1982 with the launch of Concept Man stores, before they were merged with Chelsea Girl to become one retail brand under the name of **River Island** in 1988.

In 1993 the brand opened its first shop in Republic of Ireland. Since then it has expanded into a dozen markets including Russia, Poland, and various countries in the Middle East.

River Island's instore card is operated by GE Capital Bank. In 2010 River Island launched Kidswear. In 2011, Chelsea Girl was re-introduced as a capsule collection within River Island stores.

River Island now has a global portfolio of over 300 stores in the UK, Republic of Ireland, Russia, the Netherlands, Poland, Belgium, the Middle East, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Singapore alongside a successful transactional website riverisland.com which ships to over 100 countries worldwide.

ROBERT DYAS (45-47 HIGH STREET)



Robert Dyas is a UK retailer founded in London in 1872. The stores provide ranges of house wares, small electrical appliances, gardening products, kitchen wares, DIY, and consumer electronics throughout 98 stores, mainly in Greater London and South East England.

Robert Dyas emigrated from County Meath, Ireland setting up his own business in the city of London 1872. He opened his first shop with an inheritance of just £5 and by the time of his death at the age of 66 he had established 18 stores. His sons took over after that, followed by his two grandsons who died in 1961 and 2002. Robert Dyas survived several catastrophes including the Great Depression and the Blitz in which the head office, warehouse and 18 stores were destroyed.

In 1997, Robert Dyas's head office and warehouse burnt down in Croydon; the head office is now in Leatherhead, Surrey. In March 2004, Robert Dyas was bought by Change Capital Partners, a private equity firm headed by former Marks & Spencer chairman Luc Vandeveld. By spring 2009, the company had come close to collapse with rumoured debts of £30 million, but was saved by a management buyout backed by Lloyds Banking Group on 8 April. By September that year, the firm had taken steps to secure its viability through a debt-for-equity deal that gave its lenders a majority stake in the chain.

In 2010–2011, Robert Dyas introduced a revamped style for their stores, and also increased its online offering and the use of in-store web kiosks. In July 2012, Theo Paphitis bought the company. Robert Dyas currently operates around 96 standalone shops. Stores vary in size from a large 9,000 sq ft (840 m²) right down to 1,250 sq ft (116 m²). These are mainly found in London and the south east of England, but also exist as far away as Bristol in the West and Solihull and Kenilworth in the West Midlands.

The product range is primarily focused on housewares and light DIY. Core departments include kitchenware, kitchen appliances, cleaning and laundry products, garden care, outdoor leisure and DIY tools and materials. Some home office and technology lines are also stocked, consisting of items such as telephones, printers, and accessories for computers and audio-visual items.

SAINSBURY'S
(11-14 Priory Walk also at 1 Western Approaches)

Sainsbury's
You make the difference



Sainsbury's was founded in 1869 by John James Sainsbury and his wife Mary Ann Sainsbury in London and has grown to become one of the UK's largest retailers.

J Sainsbury plc is the parent company of **Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd**, commonly known as **Sainsbury's**, the second largest chain of supermarkets in the United Kingdom with a share of the UK supermarket sector of 17.7%. The group's head office is in the Sainsbury's Store Support Centre in Holborn Circus, City of London. The group also has interests in property and banking.

Sainsbury's was founded in 1869 by John James Sainsbury and his wife Mary Ann Sainsbury (née Staples), in London, England, and grew rapidly during the Victorian era. It grew to become the largest grocery retailer in 1922, pioneered self-service retailing in the UK, and had its heyday during the 1980s. In 1995, Tesco overtook Sainsbury's to become the market leader, and Asda became the second largest in 2003, demoting Sainsbury's into third place. In January 2014, Sainsbury's overtook Asda to become the second largest supermarket.

As of May 2011 the largest Sainsbury family shareholders are Lord Sainsbury of Turville with 4.99%, with Judith Portrait the trustee of various Sainsbury settlements and charitable trusts holding 3.92%. The largest overall shareholder is the sovereign wealth fund of Qatar, the Qatar Investment Authority, who hold 25.999% of the company.

Personal view – In recent years a two storey Sainsbury store was relocated and built at Tollgate, which is reported to be the largest in the UK and my recollections of when I was very young was that it was a looped shop with two entrances and they joined up at the bottom, and it was in here that Ron Harden from church worked when it was in the High Street.

SANDS AND SON (3 Bank Passage)



Sands and Son was established in 1872 and is probably better known as the “Bag Shop” in Colchester, along the passage next to Barclays Bank on the High Street. They specialise in leather goods, including hand bags, wallets, purses, briefcases, holdalls and jewellery boxes. Also in luggage and travel goods.

Personal view – this was one of my late mother’s favourite shops when she was looking to buy a new handbag or purse.

SAVERS
(2 Long Wyre Street)



Founded in the UK in 1988, Savers has hit a high note in the marketplace with its focus on fast-moving toiletries products. The company's name was changed to Savers Health & Beauty in September 1996, to reflect an enhanced product range and more contemporary image than the original Savers Drugstores. Savers' "mega-discount" format accentuated by simple store design, strong logistics and low operating costs were in sync with the values of A.S. Watson, which acquired the company in 2000, boosting its fast expansion.

Savers has since expanded aggressively and currently runs over 230 stores, extending throughout England, Scotland and Wales from its historical base in the North East of England. Savers aims to be the most competitively priced health & beauty products and household goods retailer on the High Street. Its clean, crisp store settings with friendly, well-trained employees focus on retailing high-quality brand-name products. Most stores now have fine fragrance counters, selling high quality, good value ladies and gents fragrances.

Savers' commitment to all aspects of store operation gives it a competitive edge in offering value and quality to the customer. Stores are carefully laid out to provide an ideal retail environment, focusing on its tidiness, cleanliness and consistency. Focusing on these strengths, Savers will continue to seek out opportunities to significantly enhance its store base in the coming years.

Personal view – it was a shop that I had not ever used until recent times when I found out that they stocked candles that changed colours as they burned.

SUBWAY
(156d High Street, 3 Sir Isaac's Walk and 8 St Botolph's Street)





The story began in Bridgeport, Connecticut, USA during the summer of 1965. Fred DeLuca, an ambitious 17-year-old high school graduate, was looking for a way to make enough money to pay for his university tuition. The solution came at a BBQ during a conversation with a family friend, Dr. Peter Buck. Dr. Buck suggested to Fred that he open a submarine sandwich shop - having seen a sandwich shop in his hometown become a huge success.

With a \$1,000 loan from Dr. Buck, the partnership was formed and Pete's Super Submarines opened in August 1965. The first year was a challenge and a learning experience for the young entrepreneurs. They opened their second location a year later and quickly realised that marketing and visibility were going to be key factors in the success of the business - the third outlet was in a highly visible location and it's still serving sandwiches today. The name was shortened from Pete's Super Submarines to SUBWAY® and the familiar bright yellow logo was introduced.

The next step was to formulate a business plan that outlined the SUBWAY® brand's goals. In an effort to reach those goals, SUBWAY® outlets began franchising, giving others the opportunity to succeed in their own business venture. The first SUBWAY® franchise opened in Connecticut in 1974.

UK and Ireland History

- The first SUBWAY® store was opened in the Republic of Ireland in 1994 by David Morrissey
- In 1996, the first UK SUBWAY® store was opened in Brighton by Murray and Maria Speirs
- Fred DeLuca attended his first media tour of the UK in 2001 when the SUBWAY® franchise reached the 50 store mark.
- In 2002, the SUBWAY® brand opened its 100th store in the UK and Ireland
- By the end of 2003 the number of stores in the UK and Ireland had doubled to 200
- In July 2003 the SUBWAY® brand became the largest specialist sandwich chain in the UK and Ireland, according to a report by Mintel
- By mid-2004, there were 300 stores
- By February 2005, there were 400 stores
- In May 2005 Jared Fogle, who famously lost 17.5 stones eating nothing but Subs for a year, embarked upon a week-long media tour of the UK and Ireland

- By mid- 2005, the SUBWAY® brand hit the 500th store mark with the opening of a store at Bristol International Airport
- In 2006, the 600th store opened in Huntingdon, home town of the Earl of Sandwich
- In August 2006, the SUBWAY® brand announced that it had more stores open in the UK and Ireland than Burger King, KFC and Pizza Hut
- In January 2007, the SUBWAY® brand was awarded the coveted Number 1 franchise opportunity spot in Entrepreneur magazine's annual "Franchise 500" rankings - the 15th time it has won the award in the past 19 years
- The SUBWAY® brand supports the Department of Health's 5 A DAY programme - by choosing all the salad ingredients for your Sub you get one of the five servings of fruit and veg recommended by the Department of Health
- In January 2008, the SUBWAY® brand was recognised as the Number One Global Franchise opportunity by Entrepreneur Magazine
- By July 2008, there were over 1,250 stores open in the UK and Ireland
- In 2009, the SUBWAY® brand entered into a partnership with leading national charity Heart Research UK to encourage people across the UK and Ireland to eat better and lead healthier lifestyles
- In May 2010, the SUBWAY® brand launched SUBCARD®, Europe's first fully mobile-enabled QSR (Quick Service Restaurant) loyalty programme across the 1,400 SUBWAY® stores in UK & Ireland
- In June 2010, the SUBWAY® brand won Specialist Sandwich Bar Chain of the Year Award at the prestigious "Sammies Awards 2011"
- At the beginning of 2012 there were 1,423 SUBWAY® stores in the UK, almost a fivefold increase on the 2004 store count, and 99 stores in Ireland.
- In January 2012 SUBWAY® President and co-founder Fred DeLuca visited the UK and announced plans to increase the number of SUBWAY® stores in the UK and Ireland to 2,000 by 2015, creating around 6,000 new jobs
- The SUBWAY® brand has endorsed all four of the UK Government's Responsibility Pledges, committing to reduce salt, eliminate trans fats, display nutritional information on menu boards and cut calories across the product range.

<p style="text-align: center;">SUPERDRUG (22-24 High Street and 25-26 Priory Walk)</p>

Superdrug ☆



Superdrug Stores PLC (trading as **Superdrug**) is Britain's second largest beauty and health retailer behind Boots. Superdrug – part of the A.S. Watson Group which in turn is part of the Hong Kong conglomerate Hutchison Whampoa – is a UK-based company with over 850 stores, which since 2006, includes Ireland. The company has two large Distribution Centres, one in Pontefract and one in Dunstable. Both Distribution Centres serve Superdrug, Savers, and The Perfume Shop. The chain employs over 12,000 people. Every store sells perfume, and over 220 stores include pharmacies with pharmacy consultation rooms. Additionally 19 stores contain nurse clinics offering health checks to many people every day.

In 1964, Superdrug was incorporated under the name of 'Leading Supermarkets Limited' by the Goldstein brothers in London, both of whom had experience working in the grocery retail industry. Later that year the business adopted the present name. The first official Superdrug Store opened in Putney, London on the 26 April 1966. By 1968 there was a total of three stores trading, Putney, Croydon and Streatham, also in the same year Superdrug acquired its first distribution centre, which was situated in Wimbledon.

The chain grew rapidly and expanded to a chain of 40 stores by the early 1970s and in 1971, The Rite Aid Corporation, an American drugstore chain, acquired 49% of the business. In 1981, there were 300 Superdrug stores in the United Kingdom and they opened their 11,148 m² (120,000 ft²) distribution centre and office complex at Beddington Lane in Croydon. This particular distribution centre closed in July 2007 and the southern distribution operation moved to Dunstable, although the head office remains in Croydon. The northern distribution operates from Pontefract.

In 1983 the business was floated on London's Unlisted Securities Market stock market. In 1987, Superdrug was sold to Woolworth Holdings (now known as Kingfisher plc) for £57 million. This allowed accelerated growth of the brand through utilization of Kingfisher's surplus high street property portfolio and substantial financial assets. In this year Superdrug acquired Tip-Top, a discount drugstore chain which had a large presence in the north of England and Scotland, and Share Drug Stores plc, a southern based chain. These acquisitions and a continually aggressive expansion programme saw the chain grow to 600 outlets throughout the UK.

Superdrug continued to grow over the next 8 years increasing profitability and market share. In 1995, the company began a rebranding programme which saw it leave behind its discount heritage and move upmarket, with a new corporate identity – under the banner "the real beauty is the price" – and new larger stores in prime retail locations.

This led to a marked increase in prices in order to fund a higher cost base. This left the chain vulnerable to attack from new discount chains such as Savers and Wilkinson, who were rapidly expanding at the time and the supermarkets such as Tesco and Asda who were growing their presence in the high margin non-food sector.

Facing increasing pressure from supermarkets and new discount chains Superdrug was sold to Kruidvat, a drugstore operator from continental Europe to allow Kingfisher to focus on its DIY and electrical chains.

Kruidvat was subsequently sold to AS Watson, the retail and manufacturing business of the Hong Kong conglomerate Hutchison Whampoa in 2002. AS Watson are also the parent company of Savers, the UK's number three drugstore chain.

As part of the rebrand, a store-by-store review was conducted of both Superdrug and Savers stores. As a result, several of Superdrug's smaller stores were converted into Savers, and approximately 200 Savers stores were converted into branches of Superdrug.

In 2006, Superdrug entered the Republic of Ireland, and began rolling out its "next generation" stores, the first of which opened in Uxbridge. These focussed on cosmetics and fragrance above all else, and used plasma screens throughout the store. Superdrug announced their intention to create 150 more next generation stores in 2008.

In February 2010 Superdrug became a BUAV approved retailer, joining several other High Street chains in pledging its own brand products will be free from animal testing. This does not however cover products made by other brands sold in store.

Superdrug was a leading lobbyist in a 10-month campaign lobbying the UK Government to lower VAT on Condoms, the campaign was successful, resulting in VAT being lowered from 17.5% to 5% on condoms in 2006.

Superdrug also signed up to the Governments skills pledge, to ensure that all the young people who work for the Company, have received the necessary vocational and educational skills through a modern apprenticeships scheme, Superdrug aims to provide this throughout its unique Team Academy Programme. In October 2010, Superdrug launched their first television advertising campaign for 10 years in a bid for customers to rediscover the brand in time for Christmas.

During 2010 Superdrug, went into partnership with sister company The Perfume Shop by trialing shop in shop concessions. The partnership was trialed in 11 Superdrug Stores, including; Aylesbury, Milton Keynes, Bury, Glasgow, Westfield London and Kensington High Street.

On 12 August 2010, Superdrug announced it was launching an Overnight Miracle serum. The Swiss Apple formula is part of Superdrug's own label range, Optimum. The formula originally only available in high end beauty ranges, ranging from £122 to £225. Superdrug's version contains the same ingredients as the more expensive ranges and will cost just £9.99 when first launched and will rise to £14.99 in October.

In October 2010, Superdrug launched their first Television advertising campaign for 10 years. On 3 September 2010 Superdrug, announced they had signed a deal with Joanna Page the star of Gavin & Stacey, to make her the face of Superdrug. The campaign will be brand focused and not just about the products, and ran from October 1 through, and into 2011 with Christmas variations. On 2 March 2011 Superdrug came 4th in consumer poll carried out by Verdict Research. Superdrug came in the top five UK retailers according to the survey carried out on more than 6000 consumers, naming Superdrug the best for Personal Care. The top spot was taken by Department Store John Lewis, closely followed by Ikea and Waitrose.

During 2012 Superdrug went into partnership with Pro Skin Clinics, which has enabled Superdrug to offer specialist skincare clinics in-store. Treatments on offer range from laser hair removal to facials. Superdrug planned to have 50 Clinics by the end of 2013 starting with High Street Kensington and Oxford Street stores and then concentrating on recently refurbished stores. The premium treatments easily fit in with Superdrug's value-led pricing, as treatments are charged at competitive prices.

On 23 July 2012 it was announced that Superdrug, had made it into the Top Five of the Non-food retail category in the Institute of Customer Service's, UK Customer Satisfaction Index (UKCSI). Superdrug scored 84.8 to put it in good company with the likes of John Lewis, ASOS.com and Amazon

<p style="text-align: center;">TESCO'S (Greenstead Road, Highwoods and other locations)</p>



Tesco PLC (LSE: TSCO) is a British multinational grocery and general merchandise retailer headquartered in Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, England, United Kingdom. It is the second-largest retailer in the world measured by profits (after Wal-Mart) and third-largest retailer in the world measured by revenues (after Walmart and Carrefour). It has stores in 12 countries across Asia, Europe and North America and is the grocery market leader in the UK (where it has a market share of around 30%), Malaysia, the Republic of Ireland and Thailand.

The company was founded in 1919 by Jack Cohen as a group of market stalls. The Tesco name first appeared in 1924, after Cohen purchased a shipment of tea from *T. E. Stockwell* and combined those initials with the first two letters of his surname, and the first Tesco store opened in 1929 in Burnt Oak, Middlesex. His business expanded rapidly, and by 1939 he had over 100 Tesco stores across the country. Originally a UK-focused grocery retailer, since the early 1990s Tesco has increasingly diversified geographically and into areas such as the retailing of books, clothing, electronics, furniture, petrol and software; financial services; telecoms and internet services; DVD rental; and music downloads. The 1990s saw Tesco reposition itself, from its perception as a downmarket "pile 'em high, sell 'em cheap" retailer, to one which appeals across a wide social group, from its Tesco Value to its Tesco Finest ranges.

This was successful, and saw the chain grow from 500 stores in the mid-1990s to 2,500 stores fifteen years later. Tesco is listed on the London Stock Exchange and is a constituent of the FTSE 100 Index. It had a market capitalisation of approximately £24.4 billion as of 15 January 2012, the 15th-largest of any company with a primary listing on the London Stock Exchange.

Personal view – as I do not drive a car, it is a store that I do not use as much as I would like too. However three or four times a year, I make the trek by bus down to the Hythe to stock up with tins or jars of coffee and soup.

THE WORKS (8 Long Wyre Street)

The Works



The Works is a UK-based retailer primarily dealing in discount books. In addition to books, The Works also sells arts and craft items, gifts, toys and games, stationery, and audiovisual goods. As of September 2011, The Works has over 300 stores across the UK. In 2007, The Works acquired 26 outlets of the Bargain Books and Bookworld chains after their parent company went into administration. The Works itself entered administration in 2008 and was subsequently purchased by equity firm Endless.

T K MAXX

T.K. maxx



T.J. Maxx, sometimes referred to as **TJ's**, is an American department store chain owned by TJX Companies. With more than 1,000 stores, T.J. Maxx is a major clothes retailer in the United States. Under the name **T.K. Maxx** it operates stores throughout the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany and Poland. By the end of 2012, there were 343 stores in Europe.

The company is part of the TJX Companies, which also owns Home Goods and Home Sense, and 'off-price' retail chains Marshalls in the United States and Canada, and Winners in Canada. It offers men's, women's and children's apparel and shoes, as well as other areas such as toys, bath and beauty, accessories and home products ranging from furniture to kitchen utensils.

In 1976, T.J. Maxx was founded in Framingham, MA, as a nameplate of the Zayre discount department store chain. When Zayre sold their own nameplate to Ames, a rival discount department store, Zayre was renamed as "TJX Companies, Incorporated".

The first European store opened in Bristol in 1994. The company modified the name to **T.K. Maxx** to avoid "confusion with the established British retail chain *TJ Hughes* (which is not affiliated with TJX)".

In 2003, T.K. Maxx became locked in a dispute over its plans to open a store at Piccadilly Circus, London. It had signed an agreement in February 2009 to occupy a 20,000-square-foot (1,858 m²) unit, formerly used by Virgin Megastores and later Zavvi, with a £1.55 million a year rent. The freehold to the land is owned by the Crown Estate which had the final decision over allowing the company to move into the unit. The Crown Estate rejected the plans, saying that it did not fit in with the strategy it had for the site which was meant to give the area an upmarket appeal. The decision was met with condemnation from publicist Max Clifford who launched a campaign in conjunction with Look magazine to persuade the Crown Estate to allow the store to open in the unit. T.K. Maxx went to court to appeal against the decision but failed, as Dutch retailer The Sting has now taken the building as their first UK store.

In 2007, T.K. Maxx began a slowing down of new store openings within the UK. Focus was given to revamping older inner city stores or relocating them. This decision led to the creation of the Maxx Maxx concept, a new department store format that saw T.K. Maxx get away from its budget reputation into a large store format with a wider product range.

The first store in Germany opened on 4 October 2007 in Lübeck. The chain hopes that this will be more successful than the company's earlier attempt at opening stores in the Netherlands between 1999 and 2001.

In August 2008, T.K. Maxx opened its first central London store on High Street Kensington, on the site formerly occupied by Habitat. In March 2009 its e-commerce site was launched at first only selling handbags. The range of products has now been expanded and includes other accessories. As from early 2011, UK stores ceased to charge for carrier bags, as the public reaction to charging was the number one customer services complaint.

Personal view – it is amazing when you look around our town, how many shops that I have never been in or rarely use. This is another one, but once, whilst searching for a new summer time anorak, I managed to buy one there. Having finally found a new coat, sadly when I got to work the next day, someone had left me a new coat in the office, for assisting him with his cricket club accounts.

<p>TOWNROWS (INCLUDING THE SALE SHOP) 1-21 Long Wyre Street and 86 Culver Street East</p>



Townrow department stores have been a family run company since 1871 when our first store was opened for business in Braintree (Essex) and where our Head Office is now located.

Through their dedication to customer service, quality and style they have grown our business, and now trade from four locations in Essex and have also recently opened a store in St. Ives, Cambridgeshire. This store is on the site where the Co-op use to be situated for many years in the Colchester town centre.

<p>W H SMITH</p>



WHSmith plc (known colloquially as **Smith's**) is a British retailer, best known for its chain of high street, railway station, airport, hospital and motorway service station shops selling books, stationery, magazines, newspapers and entertainment products. Its headquarters are in Swindon, Wiltshire. Smith's is listed on the London Stock Exchange and is a constituent of the FTSE 250 Index. It was the first chain store company in the world, and was responsible for the creation of the ISBN book catalogue system.



The WH Smith logo until the early 1990s, featuring the then-familiar cube of letters. W H Smith signage displaying the modern blue and white design.

In 1792, Henry Walton Smith and his wife Anna established the business as a news vendor in Little Grosvenor Street, London. After their deaths, the business — valued in 1812 at £1,280 —(about £72185 in 2012, adjusted by inflation) was taken-over by their youngest son William Henry Smith, and in 1846 the firm became **W H Smith & Son** when his only son, also William Henry, became a partner. The firm took advantage of the railway boom by opening news-stands on railway stations, starting with Euston in 1848. In 1850, the firm opened depots in Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool. It also ran a circulating library service, 1860-1961. The younger W H Smith also used the success of the firm as a springboard into politics, becoming an MP in 1868 and serving as a minister in several Conservative governments.

After the death of W H Smith the younger, his widow was created Viscountess Hambleden in her own right; their son inherited the business from his father and the Viscountcy from his mother. After the death of the second Viscount in 1928, the business was reconstituted as a limited company, in which his son, the third Viscount, owned all the ordinary shares. On the death of the third Viscount in 1948, the death duties were so severe that a public holding company had to be formed and shares sold to W H Smith staff and the public. A younger brother of the third Viscount remained chairman until 1972, but the Smith family's control slipped away, and the last family member left the board in 1996.

Personal view – another shop I use to go in regularly, which I believe was in the High Street at one time, but nowadays, I rarely go into.

WILKINSONS





Wilkinson or **Wilko** is a British high-street chain with over 365 stores, selling primarily homewares and household goods. Founded in 1930 as *Wilkinson Cash Stores* by James Kemsey Wilkinson, the company has remained largely in the hands of the founding family. When Tony Wilkinson, the son of the founder, retired as chairman after 45 years in 2005, he was replaced by his niece, Karin Swann, and his daughter, Lisa Wilkinson.

The Wilkinson product range concentrates on household essentials, including homewares, textiles, DIY, cleaning products, health and beauty lines, stationery, confectionery, pet products and kitchen and bathroom goods. A large proportion of the range is made up of own-label products sold under the *Wilko* brand.

Seasonal ranges are introduced on a rotational basis, with garden tools and plants in summer and Christmas decorations from September to January. Toys are now a permanent addition to the seasonal line, however, the company does increase the number of toys during the Christmas period.

During 2007 the company introduced a grocery range and a "food to go" offering in some larger stores. In November 2007, the company opened its first convenience style store.

The first Wilkinson store was opened in Leicester in 1930, increasing to a total of nine branches by 1940; the Beaconsfield store can be seen in the background in the 1945 film *Brief Encounter*. By the end of the 1980s Wilkinson had a total of 78 stores, increasing to over 150 by the time of the founder's death in 1997.

Wilkinson opened their first Scottish outlet in Castle Douglas on 23 January 2009 in a store formerly occupied by The Co-operative Group. Stores were subsequently opened in Scotland that same year in Motherwell on 17 July, in Irvine in November and in Clydebank on 2 December. During 2010, the latest stores planned for Scotland set to open are Hamilton, Kilmarnock, Greenock and Livingston.

By October 2009, Wilkinson had a total of 359 stores nationwide, with stores averaging in excess of 17,000 sq ft (1,600 m²), and employed over 22,000 people. By June 2012 they had 370 stores with further concept stores planned initially in Crawley and if successful leading to a further 3 stores in the pipeline nationwide, with its Castleford store being confirmed to receive this concept rebrand.

The expansion plan - originally for 500 stores - has been reduced owing to the problems with the UK economy. The company has two distribution centres:

- D.C.1 & Head Office - Now known as SC1 (Service centre one)

Called JK House (including a store for current team members only) it is based in Manton Wood, Worksop, Nottinghamshire. Construction began in autumn 1993. Ballast Nedam Construction - a dutch construction company was chosen to construct the steel framed large distribution centre which cost approx £16.5 million to construct. When opened on 12 December 1994, it had the fastest sorting system in the UK. The DC1 is situated just south east of the former Manton Colliery which closed in 1994. The DC1 as of 2012 employs approximately 1,800 employees. The DC1 has its own fuelling station for the company's fleet of vehicles: Canute Lorries, shunters and other HGV's which operate within the DC. The DC1 is equipped with several different types of forklift trucks which operate throughout the distribution centre. As of 2013 the DC1 (distribution centre one) site has been renamed to; SC1 (service centre one)

- D.C.2 - based in Magor, South Wales.

Wilkinson has a trend of taking over redundant former stores rather than building new ones, particularly in the West Midlands; notable examples include the former Kwik Save store in Great Bridge (May 2008), the former Safeway store in Halesowen (early 2007) and the former Marks & Spencer store in Dudley (July 1991). The opening of a store in Dudley was an example of a trend of the retailer to take over large units in town centres left vacant by the relocation of big retail names to out of town locations, as Marks & Spencer had closed its Dudley store during 1990 in favour of a new store at the nearby Merry Hill Shopping Centre. The Dudley store was so successful that a £250,000 expansion to the upper level of the building (initially only the ground floor was used) was completed three years after its opening. By this stage, Wilkinson was one of Britain's fastest growing retailers.

Personal view – when I visit town, the shops I go in, except when looking for presents at Christmas, is limited to just a few, and this is one that I go to on a very regular basis for envelopes, surgical tapes, deodorants and household needs. It was a store that my cousin knew about, from her living in the Nottingham area, before it moved to Colchester.

The whole site of this store and Iceland, with the car park above, at one time did house Tesco's and if I go back many years, it use to be the Eastern National Bus depot in the town.

WILLIAMS AND GRIFFIN
(152 High Street)





Williams & Griffin is a large high street department store situated in Colchester, Essex, England. Independent for much of its history, it was formed from the merger of *H.E. Williams & Co Ltd* (an ironmonger and agricultural machinery business) and another Colchester family business, *H.L. Griffin & Co Ltd* (a furnishings store), in April 1963. In 2007, Williams & Griffin won "Best Independent Department Store of the Year", sponsored by *Drapers*. The award was picked up by Colchester's MP, Bob Russell, who proposed an early day motion on the topic, but was shortly thereafter sold to the Fenwick chain of department stores. Current departments include fashion, toys, gifts, housewares and furniture, as well as a top-floor restaurant.

H. L. Griffin & Co had its beginnings early in the nineteenth century, when a William Griffin set up as a linen draper along with a business partner with the surname Barrell. It was not long, however, before Griffin was independent and adding haberdashery to his business, with premises at 5 and 6 Botolph Street; they were extended in number 7 in the 1840s. At the same time a shop on the High Street was opened (number 50) but this closed after a few years, making way for premises on Head Street. In March 1855, William Griffin Senior retired, leaving the business to his son William, which was now styled "Griffin and Son". Another son, George Lainson Griffin, set up another drapery business on Botolph Street whilst a third, John Edward Griffin, set up as an auctioneer, valuer and estate agent on Queen Street, the same profession to which William Griffin Jr. also turned his hand after selling his drapery business in 1861.

In the 1870s George set up a High Street Shop; not long afterwards he was succeeded in this by his son by Henry Lainson Griffin (1855–1916), certainly before 1891. Henry was primarily an upholsterer, the second of five children born to George and his wife Caroline Collins, of Stanway, Essex. Certainly, the company swapped its Colchester High Street premises on February 1, 1900 for new ones on Head Street, where it remained until 1963. Originally dealing in the sale or let of both soft furnishings such as "eider down quilts, coal vases etc" and houses, the former was its only enterprise at the time of merger with H. E. Williams. Its logo was a griffin; this remained in the weeks following the merger, despite the accompanying company name being altered.

H. E. Williams & Co., an ironmonger and agricultural machinery business, was founded by Herbert E. Williams (1862–1920) before 1882 as *Williams and Co*. It was registered as a limited company in 1922. It traded both at High Street premises (which now form the modern site of Williams & Griffin), and later also at roomier premises on Cowdray Avenue further from the town centre, from where it sold most of its tractors and other farming equipment.

In 1950, after the sudden death of the then chairman and the managing director (also a large shareholder), the company was taken over by Kenneth Ireland (1915–1971), a farmer from nearby Feering, it was run from 1972 by his son Bill. At the time of the merger, the company sold ironmongery, kitchenware, electrical, radio and TV and nursery goods from its High Street premises.

In April 1963, the two firms merged form a combined enterprise employing 110 people. The Griffin premises were soon sold (within two years), and the output merged to create a single department store. Other acquisitions included *A. & E.P. Baker* in 1964 (a local ladies fashion store) and *Heasman & Son* (a jewellers on the High Street founded before 1907).

In 1966, the Griffin family sold out - their representative on the board, Jack Griffin, wished to retire due to ill health, and his sons wanted to go their own separate ways. The majority shareholding was therefore taken up by the Ireland family, and in 1969 the final vestige of the previous businesses - Williams' Cowdray Avenue farm machinery sideline - was sold to Eastern Tractors after two years' worth of discussions, though the Ireland family kept ownership of the site. At this time, Williams & Griffin's turnover was valued at £400,000. In 1981, however, the decision was reversed and Williams & Griffin opened a garden centre on the site under the guidance of Patrick Ireland, which ran until 1990, when the site was finally sold off, and Patrick Ireland retired.

In 2007, Williams & Griffin won "Best Independent Department Store of the Year", sponsored by *Drapers*. The award was picked up by Colchester's MP, Bob Russell, who proposed an early day motion on the topic.

It remained in the control of the Ireland family until its sale in March 2008 to the Fenwick chain of department stores. Current departments include fashion, toys, gifts, housewares and furniture, as well as a top-floor restaurant.

Personal view: It is not a shop that I have been in for many years now, but I am pretty certain that mum's brother Bill Dawkins use to work for Griffins when it was in Head Street.

<p style="text-align: center;">WOOLWORTHS (now closed – formerly High Street and Culver Precinct)</p>

The Woolworths logo, consisting of the word "WOOLWORTHS" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters, centered within a red rounded rectangular background.



There were also a number of fires on the mainland. Several central London stores suffered minor damage that was never explained. Then, in Autumn 1973, the store at 40-50 High Street, Colchester, Essex burnt to the ground. A fire in the stockroom spread to the walls of the customer restaurant on the upper floor. Some customers refused to evacuate even when the flames became visible. One elderly lady insisted on finishing the pot of tea that she had paid for.

Reflecting on these incidents today, little was learnt. Woolworth had no sprinklers, its procedures were archaic, and the causes of the fires were not established. It was the efficiency of the Fire Brigade that prevented loss of life rather than the precautions or extinguishers. The focus was on reinstating the store, and indeed F. W. Woolworth & Co's 1976 Annual Report treated the incident as a positive:

A wonderful recovery in Colchester. The new Colchester store is an example of how quickly and positively we can react in an emergency situation.

A disastrous fire in the Autumn on 1973 completely destroyed the existing store in the High Street. Within just a month, a temporary store was opened in premises nearby. All staff were retained - if there was not space for a girl to keep her job in Colchester she was taken by the firm to work in a store elsewhere in East Anglia. Meanwhile the store was completely rebuilt and the new Colchester store opened on October 3rd 1975 with a gain of 2,500 square feet of selling space and a more comprehensive range of merchandise.

Woolworths in 1980 was in Colchester High Street. It was rebuilt after a fire in 1973. It spent some time further along the street in temporary premises where the SpendRite shop is in the picture, which oddly enough burnt down a few years later and was rebuilt and replaced by Andy's Records for several years.

Personal views: Many years ago it was a shop I went in a lot, but did have a reputation, that the service by the staff was not great, as they were always busy chatting to themselves. However a very memorable but unfortunate event happened in October 1973 when it was rumoured that IRA incendiary device had been put in the store and a massive fire took place, and it was a devastating ruin of a building was left. I made a scrapbook of the disaster from the paper cuttings. It then reopened at the bottom end of the High Street towards the Castle for a while, also later went back into the High Street before moving into the Culver Precinct, but ultimately the whole company went into administration. I believe that they still have an online service.



As our local paper was to report – tills are ringing for the last as High Street icon Woolworths closes down after almost a century of trading in Colchester, for more than 94 years and is officially shutting after making 75 people redundant. Boxes of left over stock including toys and household goods were sold off for £5 in the shop entrance, whilst staff finished clearing up and the fixtures and fittings were also sold off too.

<p>FRANK WRIGHT AND SON (43 Crouch Street)</p>
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Personal view – one of the features of waiting for a bus in Crouch Street, is looking across the road to the Butchers on the other side of the road, where the meat and poultry can be seen hanging in the window.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

There were numerous other shops in the town from the past which I could mention but unfortunately very little history could be found about them, so all I can show is a few photographic shots of the buildings.



Markhams (Priory Street)



George Farmer (High Street)



Charles Brown (East Street)



Stead and Simpson (Long Wyre Street)



JJB (High Street)



Barratts (High Street)

And so another book is complete, and a new topic will have to be research in my next writing venture