

Nostalgia Corner

by Jim Brown

Let's dash down to the 'Internash'

This month's photograph is of the time when Faringdon had many more grocer's shops than at present, and also when the large national combines thought it worthwhile to have a branch shop in the town.

The International Tea Company Stores Ltd., to give it its full title, has a poster in the door saying it was the biggest grocer's in the world. To the people of Faringdon and district it was more commonly known as The Internash. The shop was in the Cornmarket, and was a grocer's before the International Stores came, and is now Shoe Saver — having gone from grocery to clothing to shoes and also a few name changes.

The date is around 1910–1912 — certainly before the first world war, as for most of that war a lady was manager. That lady later became the wife of a local baker, Mr Tommy Hicks. I know a lot of you will say that the Internash was in the narrows, where Rollers is now, and that's true! The Inter moved there around 1920, when Frank Liddiard gave up the premises.

Recognise anyone?

I don't know any names, nor does Mr Lloyd who loaned me the photo — so if anybody can recognise any of the six people in the photograph, please let me know.

The staff are smartly turned out for the photographer. The manager even has an apron to fit and button to his spotless jacket, and the other main assistants have a spare piece to turn over at the top and hide the string holding it up. The young lad looks to have enough for a complete spare apron! Notice, also, the fringing on the bottom of the apron: this is a form of uniform for grocers — if a man has a fringed apron on, you can guarantee he is a grocer. The lady in the white uniform dress is a counter



assistant, while the lady black is the cashier. She sat in a separate cubicle, and handled all the money, the bills coming to her possibly by a spring-loaded aerial monorail system.

Lard boy

The young lad's job was more than likely that of Lard Boy — his job consisting of cutting up the large blocks of lard, butter etc., and weighing it up into quarter, half and one-pound pieces, then wrapping them in prepared wrappers; also, weighing up bags of sugar and salt, etc. The fats would come in wooden barrels, while sugar etc. came in sacks of 1 cwt.

He probably had to clean the brass sign on the front every day, and he may be due for promotion or, worse, the sack — for a notice above the cashier reads: Wanted, A Presentable Lad. Let's hope it was to help in the store with those heavy barrels and sacks of goods.

The prices in the windows are interesting, and may well make the younger people wonder. But the wages in those days were very poor — a soldier at this time was paid one shilling a day! The labels read: candied orange and lemon square, 4 for 1d or 2d per half-pound; strawberry jam 8½ per 2lb, but raspberry was only 6½, pineapple cubes 4½ a tin, International jelly squares 2d, a lemon squash and lime juice cordial 8½, 1½lb packs of Ceylindo tea are 1s 6d for a perfect tea or 1s 8d for a premium

tea. Sylvan Glen Creamery advertises the finest butter in the world for 1s, probably a 1lb pack; a large tin of apricots is 7½ — the same price as a medium tea of Alaskan salmon. But a tin of pears would set you back 9d.

These prices, remember, are in old 'real' money. The youngsters will have to ask mum to convert to new pence. A lot will say "Ah, the good old days!" but were they really? Even at these prices, a lot of people went to bed hungry.

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