In the long, and colorful history of Foy and Gibsons, the year 1959 must surely rank as one of the most progressive. It would require a great deal of space to recapitulate all of the achievements of the year, so it suffices to name but a few of the many events that specifically contribute to the story of the firm’s progress. The purchase of Bright and Hitchcocks, Geelong, of Myers, Bendigo, the decision to extend metropolitana activity by participation in the Chadston shopping project, the rise of more selling space in the great City Store, and the pioneering creation of the popular Roof Top Fun Park, supply dramatic evidence that managerial policy is bound up in terms of vision, courage, and capacity. These happenings emphasize the profound observation of Benjamin Disraeli “Life is not dated merely by years. Events are frequently the best calendars.”

PERSONALITY OF THE MONTH

In the brief history of this periodical we have often referred to the careers of leading executives of the Company. We have shown that their progress to positions of great eminence has not been the result of some fortunate chance, but by the proper exercise of natural gifts of perseverance, courage, and efficiency. The long history of Foy & Gibsons is studded with many such examples. No organization could be continually successful, unless there was a constant sequence of able administrators to apply constructive policy, to implement sound procedure, and to set the example by their own sustained effort. With such thoughts as these for a background, and with great pleasure, we present to readers of “Foy’s News-Service of the Month” the portrait of a man who comes within the category.

Mr. F. A. HOUGHTON

COMPANY DIRECTOR AND SECRETARY.

Frederick Allen Houghton, or, as he is more generally known, “Allen,” Houghton — was born in Northcote in 1918. He received his early education at local State Schools, and at the University High School. At the age of 15 years, he made his first venture into the realms of Commerce, when he was appointed as a junior clerk with the firm to which he has devoted his whole working life. During that year of 1933, Australia was in the throes of the Great Economic Depression. Thousands of workers were either unemployed, or on part time, purchasing power was greatly restricted, and new foun...
It was no surprise, therefore, to learn in 1955 of Mr. Houghton's appointment as a Director of Fox & Gibbons—an elevation thoroughly well-deserved, and one which set the seal of recognition on a career that commenced twenty-seven years ago. The story of successes would occupy only a little over a quarter of a century, and the attainment of such a goal is surely noteworthy for an executive still in his early 40's.

Mr. & Mrs. Houghton have a young family of two boys (John, aged 10 years and Keith, aged 7 years) and they are a respected couple amongst a large circle of friends.

We salute such a man, assure him of the high regard in which he is held, and conclude by asserting that the name of Houghton finds an honored place beside the many whose efforts have directly contributed to the prestige, and name, of our great organization.

THE STORY OF DESPATCH

To every great enterprise, there are many aspects. Some of these are the full view of the organization, whilst others are equally as indispensable—are not seen very sharply, but still pursue their steady ways with unswen vigor and quiet efficiency. All phases depend upon each other for a complete performance, and the combined value of the whole would be greatly diminished unless these same phases of the set task were coordinated in a thorough manner.

The point is emphasized by such examples as the following:

An outstanding human performance on the Stage would be greatly impared without the technical aids of effective lighting, apparatus, scenery, and the like. This applies also to many ancilliaries, such as the work of unseen artists or electricians, the effectiveness of an army is not limited to the prowess of its fighting men, but finds a very necessary stimulus in the efficiency of its supply columns, and other related ancilliaries; the creation of a speed record depends, entirely, on the skill and nerve of the driver, but relies, also, on the performance of skilled mechanics, on track-pit repair men, and on the humble efforts of the laborer whose strenuous efforts went into the construction of the speed-track itself.

If you concede the inferences in the foregoing to be logical, you must also agree that such reasoning applies with equal force to your own profession—the Retail Trade! All effort is not completed by the actual selling transaction between the customer and the sales assistant, although it will be admitted that this is the core of the retail selling operation. Many other ranks play their parts prior to, and after, the sale, and one need only emphasize such echelons as administration, buying, display, advertising, maintenance and cleaning—all of which combine to form a goodly portion of the complete mosaic.

One such important activity is that of Despatch, and this article seeks to convey some idea of the history, scope, and activity of a particularly busy Department. It seems superfluous to add that our Collingwood Despatch is a worthy, and vital, part of the great organization of Foy and Gibbons Ltd.

The available records of the Company do not state the actual year in which Despatch began to operate, and we know it today—as was established in 1880. From old photographs, however, and by reference to newspaper advertisements of that far-off day that advertised waggon deliveries to adjacent suburbs, it is reasonable to assume that large-scale transport operations were conducted at least as early as the period 1880-1890. Deliveries of bulk merchandise to the great Smith Street Store were in vogue long prior to the years referred to, but individual deliveries to customers was not practised to any degree prior to the establishment of a specific Despatch Department which presented a unique, and progressive, step in the development of Retail Trading.

In that by-gone era, the motor-car (or "horse-less buggy," as many called it) was a distinct rarity, and was generally regarded as a dangerous, and large, expensive plaything, only designed for the edification of eccentrics and dreamers. Practically all public, and private, transport was confined to the reliable horse. In many inner suburbs, horse-drawn trams had not yet been superseded by the revolutionary cable-tram, and electric motive power was only in its undeveloped infancy. Most streets of the metropolis area carried their complements of hay and corn stores, saddlers and harness makers, blacksmiths shops, and livery-stables—all essential aids to the horse-power of the period.

(Personal Paragraphs)

CONGRATULATIONS

To Mr. & Mrs. Bob Darby on the birth of their daughter — Bernadette — on 10/12/1959. Bob is employed in the China Department, and informs us that mother and baby are very well, indeed.

A recent engagement of great interest is that of Miss L. Raphael, Shirt Department, who has announced same to Mr. Noel Condon of Bacchus Marsh. Every good wish to an estimable couple.

A Central Travel Bureau has been instituted on the Lower Ground Floor, and the auguries are that this will be another successful venture. Miss Lane is the officer-in-charge of same, and she has been accorded a hearty welcome from all at Foy's.

All members of the staff will join in congratulating Mrs. Jenkins of the Tailoring workshop, best wishes for a speedy and permanent recovery from her present illness. The lady expects to be absent from duty for some time.

Amongst newcomers welcomed to the ranks during the month were the following—

Mr. J. McCarthy, Furniture; Mrs. MacIae, Sporting Goods, and Mr. Davies, Men’s Shoes.

We endorse the sentiments that have already been expressed to these gentlemen.

The popular Dorothy Ferguson, Fur Department, was married to Mr. John Kane (a former employee in the Men’s Clothing Department) on December 19th. May the future for this young couple be bright and prosperous.

Mr. Bob Alexander, Manager, Salaries Office, achieved the ambition of a (bowling) lifetime when he annexed the "A" Grade Singles Championship of his Club on 12/1/1960. Bob registered a fine performance to achieve this honor, and we wish is that he retains it for many years to come.

Readers will remember that the November issue of "News Service" forecasted a successful future for Foy’s Roof Top Fun Park. Events justified this prediction, and it can be truthfully stated that the Fun Park was an outstanding success. Tens of thousands of young children patronized it during its brilliant first season, and on its close on 6/2/1960, all associated with the enterprise indulged in a justifiable exchange of mutual congratulations. During its course, the Fun Park provided wholesome, open-air, amusement for all classes, and types, and the inspired presentation of a pair of budgerigars to a lucky child each day, was a sight to behold. The culmination—the presentation of a fully-equipped Shetland pony by "Zig" and "Zag" (of H.S.V.7 fame)—to a lucky entrant was a real "Highlight." Even better, and brighter, Park facilities are confidently anticipated later this year. The Management's benevolent policy of making the facilities of the Park available to under-privileged children, free of charge, and at certain arranged dates during the period of its operation, attracted favourable and wide comment.

We referred in a previous issue to the impending retirement of a very popular member of the Sales Staff, namely, Miss Elaine Ellis of the Frock Department. Elaine (in private life, Mrs. Max Rowbottom) was also a popular mannequin at Store parades. When this young lady resigned recently, she, apparently, inspired the poetic urge in one of our contributors, with the following result:

"She always looked well on the catwalk, A figure of beauty and grace, Her hair a lovely rich auburn, Framing her pale oval face."

This picture was that of our Elaine Who always compared with the rest; So — whatever she does in the future, We all wish her "All of the best."

In a spectacular cricketing career embracing over twenty years of prominent participation, the popular Ken Weaver, Manager, Men's Clothing Department, has made his own records. A number of "A" Grade pennant teams, and — until recently — Captain of Coburg Sub-District 1st Grade eleven, Ken retired from active competition prior to last Christmas. He was persuaded to resume competition with Coburg "B" Grade eleven, after a break of some years. Mr. Weaver's return has been marked by some outstanding performances with the ball. These reached their zenith on Saturday, 13th February, when Ken wrecked the Brighton Second eleven with the unbelievable figures of 14 wickets for 28 runs, out of 15 wickets that fell in both of Brighton's innings. This great performance included ALL ten wickets in Brighton's first innings.

Personal congratulations to a good sportsman and fine officer.
Additions to staff have been suitably welcomed, and “News Service” supports the welcome. Newcomers are—

Miss K. Thissen, Millinery;
Mr. J. Stankovic, Self-Service;
Mr. G. Fyvie, Self Service, and
Miss B. Simpson, Self Service.

Congratulations are in order for Miss Glenys Barratt, Office, who celebrated her majority just prior to Christmas.

COLLINGWOOD

The most important announcement for the period is that which notified the appointment of Mr. L. Marshall as Store Manager. He succeeds Mr. A. Griffiths, who has been promoted to the position of Controller, Men’s and Boys’ Clothing, at Cox Brothers Head Office. Sincere congratulations are proffered to both gentlemen.

Members of the Ladies’ Underwear and Dressing-gowns Departments at Collingwood, Prahran and City, still cherish happy memories of their first “get together” Christmas dinner, which was held at Menzies Hotel during the festive season. A great night was had by all, and this event promises to be a “must” in Foys social calendar for the future.

An engagement of interest is that of Miss Chappel of Soft Furnishings to the former Manager of the Electrical and T.V. Department — Mr. “Hughie” Bethune. Congratulations to an estimable couple.

Quite a number of staff have resigned recently, and we give them our good wishes for future success. Leaving staff include Mr. C. Martin, Misses M. Ferguson, H. Lee, S. Grivas, J. Denholm and Messrs. D. Woods and M. Waterworth.

A travel case was presented to Miss Lena Bajada by office staff to mark the occasion of her marriage to Mr. Frederick Gatt. Stuff conveyed, and we support, the nice things that were said during the presentation.

The popular Peter Rodriguez, Shipping Office, became a proud father on 4/1/1960, when his wife presented him with a fine son (Paul). All the best to the three members of an excellent family.

Newcomers to the ranks were numerous during the last four weeks, and we accord them a hearty welcome. These included:—

Mrs. V. Gillies, Underwear;
Mr. J. Richards, Manchester;
Mrs. A. Lewis, Mantles;
Mrs. C. Handberg, Credit Office;
Miss A. Allford, Hire Purchase;
Mrs. M. Henley, Hire Purchase;
Miss J. Bried, Hire Purchase.

COLAC

Although it is belated news, now, the Christmas tea — held on the evening of 12/12/1959 — was a great success. A most pleasant function resulted and “highlights” of the night were the speeches of appreciation made to the staff by Mr. L. Atyeo, Store Manager, and the response by Mr. U. Paine.

Congratulations are tendered to Mr. Keith Milne, Manager Haberdashery, on his recent engagement to Sister Laurel Kilby, of the Colac Community Hospital.

Staff unite in saying “Welcome Back” to Mrs. Joy Emmann, Despatch, after her recent illness, and to Mrs. Ivy Grant; also of Despatch, who rejoins the firm after a long absence. We wish well to both of these ladies.

Greetings for future prosperity are cordially given to the following additions to staff:—


Although the official proclamation will not be read by His Excellency, the State Governor, until 5/3/1960, Colac became a City on Australia Day. To fittingly mark this great occasion, plans are well in hand for the 1960 Kanyana Festival and, needless to say, the Store will be well to the forefront during the celebrations.

When Mr. Bob Freestone, Store Accountant, retired recently after 23 years of excellent service, he received presentations of a nest of tables and a car refrigerator. Even more important than these handsome gifts, however, were the sentiments of appreciation expressed by all at the function.

To these — “News Service” adds its quota.
Bendigo
A number of welcome additions to staff have arrived recently and we are glad to number in our ranks the following:

Miss Valmai Jevens—Office; Miss Jeanette Boulton—Young People’s World; Miss Glenis Burton—Manufacturing Office, Miss Susan Williams—Cosmetics; Mr. Leo Hogan—Basement. It is our sincere wish that employment in our organization is happy and prosperous.

The plans of our Managing Director—Mr. A. H. Lawrence, and, his respected wife, Mrs. Lawrence— for their forthcoming world tour are rapidly nearing completion. This popular couple plan to leave Australia early in March, and will away for six months. It is with the wish of all that Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence have a well-deserved and very happy holiday.

Congratulations go to Miss Zenda Anderson of the Carpet Department on the announcement of her recent engagement to Mr. Ken Taylor. The chorus of felicitations is an accurate guide to the high regard in which the young couple is held.

It is pleasurable to record that the recent painful accident suffered by Miss Beverley Kennedy, of Manufacturing, has not resulted in any permanent damage. Beverley had the misfortune to run a large nail into her foot whilst at work on Christmas Eve and this necessitated immediate hospital treatment. Except for a slight (and gradually decreasing) limp, the young lady has completely recovered.

The quickness of the hand deceives the eye. A satisfied customer in the Cafe left a 2/- tip behind on the table. A nearby customer rapidly sized up the situation, changed chairs very smartly, and ordered refreshments immediately with the gentleman’s 2/-.

Geoffrey Hocking—the 13-year-old son of Mr. Steve Hocking, Furnishings, recently won a radiogram as first prize in Kellogg’s coloring competition. Geoff, incidentally, has also been awarded a Scholarship at the Junior Technical School. Congratulations to a bright lad, and to his proud parents.

Proficiency seems to be the rule amongst the children of Store employees. Peter Hyden—son of Mr. H. Hyden, Second Floor Controller—was recently awarded a Scholarship enabling him to a 3 year Commerce Course at the Melbourne University. Again—Congratulations to all concerned.

Mr. & Mrs. John Briem were blessed, very recently, by the arrival of a healthy baby daughter. Mrs. Briem and the newcomer are very well. John is employed in the Electrical Department.

Another engagement of interest is that of Miss Lesley Land of Advertising, to Mr. Lindsay Jackson. The staff unite in their good wishes for the future to this young couple.

A welcome return to Store personnel is that of Mr. John Waite of Furniture, and all wish him well in his familiar surroundings.

As the result of the purchase of the store formerly occupied by Matthew’s Brothers, more space has now been made available to various Departments. Amongst the Departments that have gained considerably by this progressive move are the Carpet and Hyvon Department, the Shoe Department, and the Wools Department. The Fashion Floor has been extensively enlarged and, to this, has been added extra reserve space.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes to the relatives and friends of those whose deaths we record hereunder:

Mrs. Allen, daughter of Mrs. Gertrude, Accounts Branch.

Mrs. Goldie, mother of Mr. J. Goldie, Manager, Cleaning Staff.

Miss H. Hall, niece of Mr. K. Ninnies, Electrical Dept., Prahran.

Master P. Brooker, nephew of Mr. R. Rhodes, Shoes, Prahran.

Mr. R. Cown, father of Miss L. Cown, Haberdashery, Prahran.

Mr. Alex. Milne, father of Mr. Keith Milne, Colac.

Mr. Robert Brown, uncle of Mr. W. Caton, Colac.

Mrs. Harvey, mother of Mr. George Harvey, Merchandising Manager, Geelong.

Mr. Trigg, brother of Miss W. Trigg, Advertising, Geelong.
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