



Talk about Dianne.....

Originally from Ilford, Dianne moved to Rettendon in the mid eighties and is now very much part of the rural community. Her involvement extends from playing indoor bowls, various Church activities and booking clerk for the village hall as well as enjoying the occasional luncheon with female friends.

I've been told that life revolves around her extended family that encompasses not less than ten grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. but she shows no sign of aging because of them. Dianne has been at the shop for over fifteen years now, perhaps it's the light hearted entertainment that keeps her looking so good.

The Last Word.....

As we approach Christmas I should like to once again thank everybody for their hard work and commitment to the shop. I really do mean it when I say that it would not have been possible without your input. Hopefully we can continue to build upon the foundations that Audrey laid over the last twenty one years and raise the profile of "Charity Shops" in Essex.

Personally I would like to wish you a very Blessed Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. Enjoy your well deserved break with friends and family in order that you might return afterwards, refreshed and eager to attack the mountain of unwanted gifts that will have appeared on our door step.

Talking Shop Issue 1

By now you will have gathered that I'm not an advocate of putting posters on walls and whilst they may well convey a worthwhile message, to me they lack character. Following on, I accept that it's never going to be easy getting everybody together at one time in order to talk about how best to manage and run the shop, hence this newsletter that will hopefully be published every quarter.

Let me start by saying that much of how we work has been carried over from the days of Muscular Dystrophy, however unlike them we do not have a "head office" to oversee us, regretfully there some people who still can't comprehend that we do what we do on a voluntary basis with no personal gain and as such we must be open to scrutiny at all times from anybody who wishes to delve deeper.

The best way to ensure this is with total transparency, simple procedures like the sales, expenses and bookwork that I do being published regularly and audited by the accountants. In store we need to ensure that items being removed from the premises by helpers for washing or testing are notified to a third party and all internal purchases are priced independently and rung into the till by somebody else.



Mister Gees

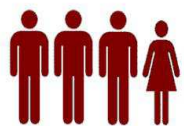
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There is very little that I can say at the end of our first full trading period other than THANK YOU, one and all, income for the last four weeks was five thousand and fifty pounds, exceeding even my wildest expectations. This is something that everybody involved can take credit for, sorting, pricing, merchandising and selling, they are all of equal importance.

Roseanna told a customer who remarked on the spacious layout of the shop and quality of merchandise that we aimed to be the Selfridges, of the Charity Shops, I might have preferred Fortnum's but why split hairs.

With the large volume of donations that are arriving daily the opportunity to "cherry pick" is for us to take. Our next objective is to offer the best value for money, not only in South Woodham Ferrers but in mid Essex. If we can achieve this reputation I'm sure that people will travel quite a distance to shop on Warwick Parade.

There is still a bit of fine tuning to be done with our product range, presentation and pricing, we will get there in the end but only with your invaluable feedback and input only then the benefits will show not only in the till but in the pride we can all take from being part of the success story.



Mister Gees

Foundation

Something that I have at last managed to do is to get a breakdown from the till that shows exactly how much the sales from each group contribute to the daily total.

Obviously these figures are dependant upon each item being entered as accurately as possible when sold, this is never going to be one hundred per cent but the closer to it the better.

It may well change after Christmas but certainly over the last two weeks Bric a Brac and Toys & Discs have accounted for over 60% of the total sales from less than 25% of the selling space, with Ladies and Children's clothing accounting for less than 30%. These are figures that will obviously need to be considered when we next look at the layout.

Mrs Whizz, or Eileen is on the mend and I have asked her to return when she is up to it in order to sort out the jewellery section. There are quite a few pieces in store ready to be offered for sale when I get my finger out and purchase a proper display cabinet.

Before we know it the days will be getting longer and the rails will be stocked with lighter clothing ready for spring. So between now and then I shall keep looking and listening in order to fill up the next issue of Talking Shop, but don't leave it up to me, please feel free to make suggestions and share your thoughts, sometimes the answer to a maiden's prayer is no, but unless she lets somebody know what she is praying for it will never ever be yes.