

John Spedan Lewis

Born 1885. Retailer who gifted his business to its employees.
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This life story of John Spedan Lewis was compiled and archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the John Lewis Memory Store at <https://johnlewismemorystore.org.uk>.

1. John Lewis Senior



John Lewis Senior as a young man in 1870.

John Lewis senior was born in 1836 in Shepton Mallet, Somerset. By 1844, at only 8 years old, he was an orphan, and he and his siblings were subsequently brought up by members of his extended family. John and two of his sisters probably lived with an aunt by the name of Christian Speed. Many hold that the 'Spedan' element of 'John Spedan Lewis' came from a reversed amalgamation of Christian Speed's name.

At the age of fourteen, John Lewis began an apprenticeship at a shop in Wells. After gaining much-needed experience in the industry, and travelling across the country from Somerset to Liverpool, Lewis moved to London, and became the youngest silk buyer in London at a shop owned by Peter Robinson on the corner of Oxford Street and Regent Street.

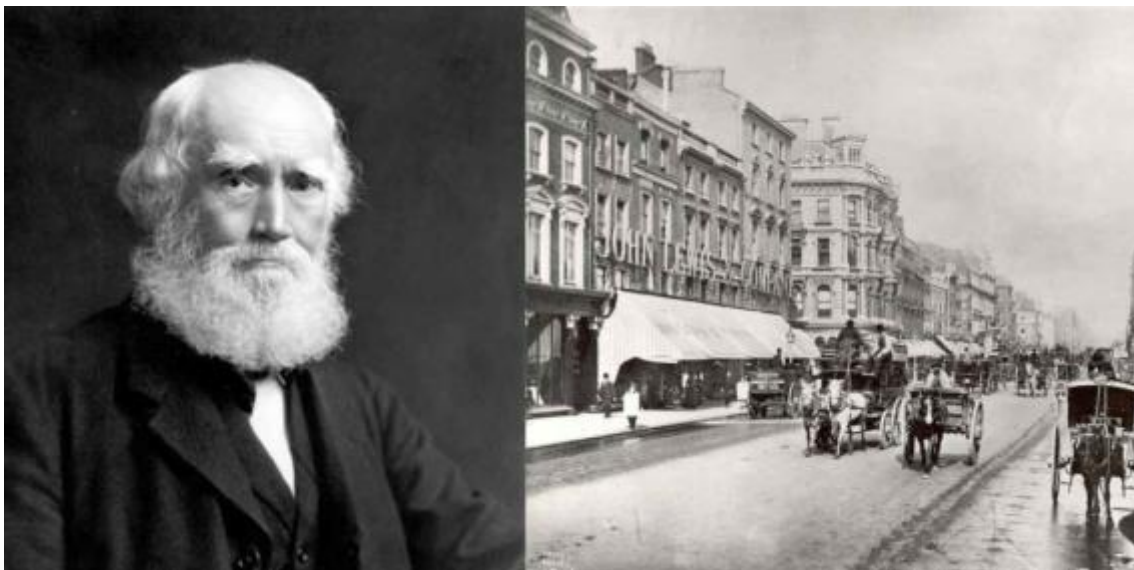
In 1864, after saving hard and being helped financially by his sisters, Lewis took the decision to go into business himself, and took the lease on a small shop at 132 Oxford Street. His first day's taking were recorded as 16/4d, equivalent to about £75 today.



A street view of Oxford Street from the late 1700's, showing the location of number 132.

The business started to grow and expanded into neighbouring properties. During the 1880s, much of the shop was rebuilt to accommodate the business' growth. John Lewis' trading policy was simple – a wide assortment, low margins, and fair dealing – and... he never advertised.

It was then in 1884 that John Lewis married Eliza Baker, a teacher who had been one of the first women to attend Cambridge University. They had two sons, John Spedan Lewis, born in 1885, and Oswald, born in 1887. After their education at Westminster School, both boys followed their father into the family business. Little did they know, one of the boys would revolutionise British retail and implement a business model that had not been seen before.



John Lewis Senior and the original Oxford Street shop in 1885 (right).

Three weeks in prison

Mr Lewis undoubtedly got the new century off to a bad start. In 1902, a legal dispute flared up between him and Baron de Walden that would last for over twenty years. Lord Howard de Walden was the ground landlord of the estate on which John Lewis was located, and the two argued bitterly about what Mr Lewis could and could not do with his shop.

Characteristically, Mr Lewis refused to back down. At one point, he was sent to prison at HMP Brixton for three weeks for contempt of court in 1903.

The dispute rolled on. In 1911, Lewis was sued by de Walden for libel, after large placards were erected in the windows of John Lewis voicing Mr Lewis' disgust at the whole affair.



Spedan Towers, Hampstead, the childhood home of John Spedan Lewis. The house was bought by John Lewis senior in the late 1880s. Apparently, whilst looking for a new home for his young family, he hired a hansom cab and drove out in a different direction each day with his wife. After one trip he returned home to tell her that one house she really liked had been sold, but later confessed it had been bought by him. He renamed it Spedan Towers, and the family lived there until his sons grew up. He commuted to his shop in Oxford Street each day, initially in his carriage and then in a Rolls Royce. He lived there until his death in 1928. It was then probably empty for some time and was sold in 1936. During WWII it was requisitioned and housed interned German scientists. In 1951 it became a nurses hostel and training establishment, and was demolished in the early 1970s after being bought by Camden Council.(Caption archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the London Remembers website at www.londonremembers.com.

2. Revolutionary Ideas

On his 21st birthday John Spedan Lewis (the eldest son of John Lewis Senior) received a quarter share in his father's business, valued at £50,000, which entitled him to a quarter of the profits of the Oxford Street shop. Shortly afterwards he also became a director of Peter Jones Ltd which had previously been bought by his father in £1000 worth of cash notes! The two younger Lewises encouraged the shop staff to take an interest in sport and started a staff magazine, the Byron Quarterly. This was the early edition of the Gazette magazine, which is still produced in the Partnership today and handed out to Partners weekly.

After a few years, Spedan became uneasy that he, his brother and his father were receiving more income from the family business than all their employees put together. After a riding accident forced him to have two operations and a long period of convalescence, he thought deeply about his own future and that of the business. He was eager to share his profits with his staff and to redistribute money which was being kept in reserve.



“The supreme purpose of the John Lewis Partnership is simply the happiness of its members.”

In order to do this, he decided to make the business into a limited liability company, distributing the profits to the employees in the form of shares in proportion to their pay. His father's reaction to this suggestion – and to his inevitable smaller share of the retained profits – was somewhat negative: ‘Who do you suppose would bear the carking cares of business for such a miserable remuneration as this would mean!?’

In 1914, John Lewis Senior handed over the entire managerial control of the Peter Jones shop to Spedan, who became the shop's chairman and its nominal managing director. He was then free to start putting his forward-thinking ideas into practice.

Spedan's first move was to shorten the working day by an hour and to start a departmental system of commission [He also set up the staff committees – the forerunner of the Committees for Communication – in which elected representatives of the rank and file held regular meetings with him in the absence of their managers].

Over the next few years he made further changes at Peter Jones, giving the staff a third week's holiday, taking on well educated people for management posts, and starting *The Gazette*. In 1919, he set up a staff council (the forerunner of today's Partnership, Divisional and Branch Councils).



Early staff councils were always well attended.

Spedan's first formal profit-sharing scheme was approved in 1920 and the first distributions were made that summer in the form of shares in Peter Jones Limited. From 10 April that same year, *The Gazette* began to refer to the staff as Partners, and the famous slogan 'Never Knowingly Undersold' was first used at Peter Jones in 1925.

Spedan's mother passed away in 1924 and in 1926, Oswald gave his brother his share in the Oxford Street shop, and control of both stores were passed to Spedan. Although, his father was still very much involved with the day-to-day running of the business. Spedan immediately started to apply his 'Partnership' ideals to the Oxford Street shop as well, and bought the Odney Club in Cookham, Berkshire (a Partner benefit that still remains today).

3. The Gazette

THE GAZETTE

OF PETER JONES, LIMITED,
SLOANE SQUARE, LONDON. S.W.3.

FOR THE PUBLICATION OF FACTS, OPINIONS AND IDEAS OF INTEREST TO
ANY ONE WHOSE FORTUNES ARE FOR THE TIME CONNECTED IN SOME
DEGREE WITH THOSE OF THE COMPANY.

SATURDAY, MARCH 16TH, 1918.

Our Policy, Rules of Correspondence, etc., are on the last page of this issue.

NOTICE FROM THE MANAGEMENT TO THE COMPANY'S STAFF.
Official Communications to this Paper are equivalent to House Notices, and must be
known by every one whom they concern.

TO MY FELLOW-EMPLOYEES OF PETER JONES, LTD.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

The main purpose of this paper you will see in a general way from the paragraphs on the last page, which are intended to appear always, or at least frequently. But I think it may be useful if in this first issue I try to put my ideas with regard to it more fully before you than can be done there.

There can be no doubt that large-scale industry has come to stay. Whatever may be the ultimate economic cause or causes, it is certain that in our own, as in many other occupations, men and women achieve their purpose better, that is to say they get a greater result for any given amount of effort, by working in large teams than by working in small ones. We cannot help seeing that the big factory can produce exactly the same thing cheaper than can the little factory, and that the big shop can likewise beat its little rivals by offering the public greater variety or better value or a combination of both. Some people argue that cheapness is not everything, and that the world might contain more happiness if goods were dearer but more men and women worked "on their own account." I think these people are wrong. I think they fail to see that cheapness is really human liberty: that, if everything were to be had absolutely free of charge, every one would be absolutely free, so long, of course, as the law restrained mere bodily strength as it does now; and that, this being so, cheapness is in itself wholly good and desirable.

Look at it like this:

Suppose 1,000 men, in order to support themselves and their families, have to make 1,000 wardrobes every year. Suppose that each man working by himself must be at work sixteen hours a day, seven days a week all the year through, to finish his one wardrobe. Is that man really free, although he is working in his own home and on his own account? Is it freedom to be obliged, on pain of starvation, to work sixteen hours every day of the year?

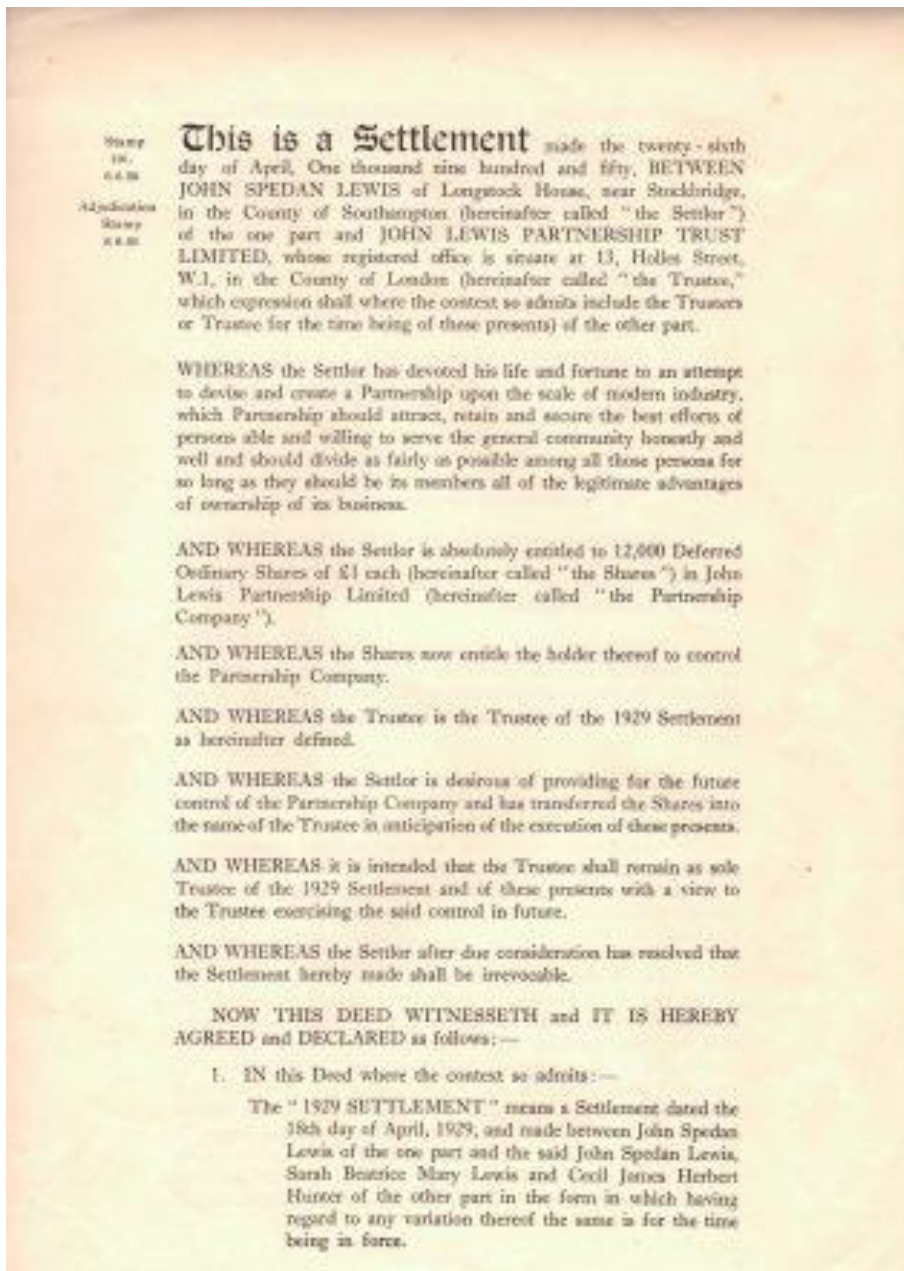
Now, suppose that those 1,000 men combine into one team and become each of them a specialist in one or two of all the different jobs that go to the making of a wardrobe, and use in one factory such machinery as cannot

The opening page of the first ever copy of The Gazette.

The Gazette was printed for the first time ever on Saturday 16th March 1918, and it has been published weekly ever since.

The Gazette served as an organ through which Partners could stay informed on the important aspects of the John Lewis Partnership. If they so wished, they could interact and directly impact the Partnership's very fabric. The paper was unique as through its Letters section, it allowed Partners to openly praise, criticise and vent frustrations on any subject that took their fancy.

4. The Partnership is Born



The first Trust Settlement, 1929.

On 18 April 1929, one year after his father had passed away, Spedan Lewis signed the First Trust Settlement, transferring his own shares in John Lewis Ltd, Peter Jones Ltd and the Odney Estate to a board of trustees on behalf of the Partners. He also created the John Lewis Partnership Limited.

Twenty-one years later, on 26 April 1950, Spedan signed the Second Trust Settlement, effectively 'giving' the Partnership to the people who work in it. By this act, he transferred all his remaining shares and his ultimate control to the trustees. The John Lewis Partnership expanded during the remainder of the 20th century into the business we know today.

5. Indoor Games and Amateur Dramatics

Indoor Games

Chess has always been taken seriously by the John Lewis Partnership. This was primarily because, as Sir Bernard Miller once noted, the game was probably the Founder's main love. John Spedan Lewis adored chess, and equally, absolutely hated to lose at it. Spedan Lewis believed that chess mirrored life and had real value as a 'training for business'. He told Partners in 1949 that success depended on

Knowing certain general principles and on sticking to these principles

It also encouraged forward-thinking and the implementation of strategy, and awareness of an array of possibilities.

It therefore should as little surprise that the Partnership employed many outstanding chess players. The late CHO'D Alexander, who worked in administration, was British Champion, and at one point beat the former world champion Dr Euwe in 1939, whilst playing for England against Holland.

Before World War II other Partners of note were Leonard Barden, a Learner (management trainee), who was the chess correspondent for the Financial Times, the London Evening Standard and The Guardian. Another keen chess player was William Gordon Welchman, who went on to be the Partnership's Director of Expansion and Research in the late 1940s. The remarkable Miss Vera Menchik, later Mrs Stevenson, was employed within the business too. She was the Womens' World Champion from 1926 until her death in 1944. She coached the Founder, and was later appointed, along with her husband, to manage the National Chess Centre at John Lewis, which opened in 1939. Sadly, the Centre was destroyed by the Oxford Street bombing only a year later. Mr Stevenson was apparently broken-hearted, became ill and died shortly afterwards.

The Partnership had a flourishing Chess Club for many years taking part in competitions across the country.

Those in the Partnership after more laid-back indoor pursuits have been equally well catered for down the years. The Founder was also a fan of Russian pool, and in fact, many a pool table down the years has



graced the Partnership rest-rooms. Board games were always popular, as they too exercised the mind and forced forward thinking. Some games popular in years gone by have unfortunately teetered out of existence, including the game Tipplee-Web, seen opposite in a Heelas toy catalogue from 1909.

Today, a multitude of indoor games are available to Partners, some better known than others. Scrabble, dominoes and Pictionary are all there, although for many, chess still arguably reigns supreme.



Vera Menchik.

Amateur Dramatics



A scene from the 1985 Dramatic Society classic the Good Wife.

To this very day, the John Lewis Partnership continues to put on both varied and exciting dramatic performances that thrill the actors and audience alike. The Dramatic society has a illustrious long history.

In 1929, The Lewis Partnership Dramatic Society as it was then known put on its very first performance, with a series of one-act plays. One critic noted of this string of performances:

Intellectual honesty prevents us from saying that we, personally, considered the pieces presented super-excellent in themselves. They were trivial, and we expect the LPDS will next time choose some sterner stuff

One particular highlight of the evening was the Partnership Song, whose last verse went something like:

Harries bought Lewis (Louise) an Austin 7.
They're Spedan away on the road to Evan(s),
With Peter and Joan
From the square called Sloane,
Just a cheerio family

By the 1970's, the Dramatic Society put on its first who-dunnit performance, with its production of Robert Thomas's *Trap for a Lonely Man*. Subsequent performances would see the rise of many stars, who would become Dramatic Society regulars and stalwarts. In 1985, the Partnership was trying its hand at restoration comedy. William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* was given the Partnership treatment. Despite the fact that all actors and actresses were hard working Partners, it has been noted since just how professional Dramatic society performances are. To this day, the Dramatic Society continues occupy a well loved and highly regarded position in the Partnership.



On stage: the cast of A Much Too About Nothing, 1994.

6. Leckford Abbas



John Spedan Lewis by the gates at Leckford.



Leckford Abbas in the 1920s.

Spedan Lewis and his wife Beatrice wanted to bring up their three children in the country. Spedan, a keen naturalist, was also determined to spend more time on his hobby and the Leckford Estate provided a perfect setting. In the late 1920s they purchased the house and surrounding land which formed the Leckford Estate. The village of Leckford formed part of the sale and Spedan Lewis then began a programme of improvements to the local

properties installing bathrooms and kitchens as well as making improvements to the farm.



They were later to move from the Abbas (above as it is today) to Longstock House, Stockbridge, Hampshire (below) and the Abbas became a holiday hotel for Partners which is still enjoyed today.



The land on which Longstock House now stands came into the possession of the Third Duke of Portland by marriage during the early 18th century. Tradition has it that he gifted the Manor of Longstock to Richard Bird, of Snoddington, the keeper of an inn at Andover, to whom he owed a debt for lodgings. Bird settled the manor on his daughter Elizabeth who married Ralph Etwall. Their sons Ralph and William began a hunting lodge which had rooms added to it piecemeal until a full house was completed by 1839. This house was rebuilt by William Etwall during the early 1850s. The Etwalls suffered financial difficulty and the new mansion had to be sold. It was purchased in 1863 by Joseph Anderson. He added adjoining land before selling the estate to Joshua East in 1869. His sons, neither of whom married, inherited the property which then passed out of the East family's possession in 1914.

Longstock was bought in 1914 by Mr D.L.Beddington who died before he had time to move in. The house was substantially modernised in 1915 with the installation of electricity and telephone. Mrs Beddington and her children lived there until her death in 1945 at which time it was bought by John Spedan Lewis.

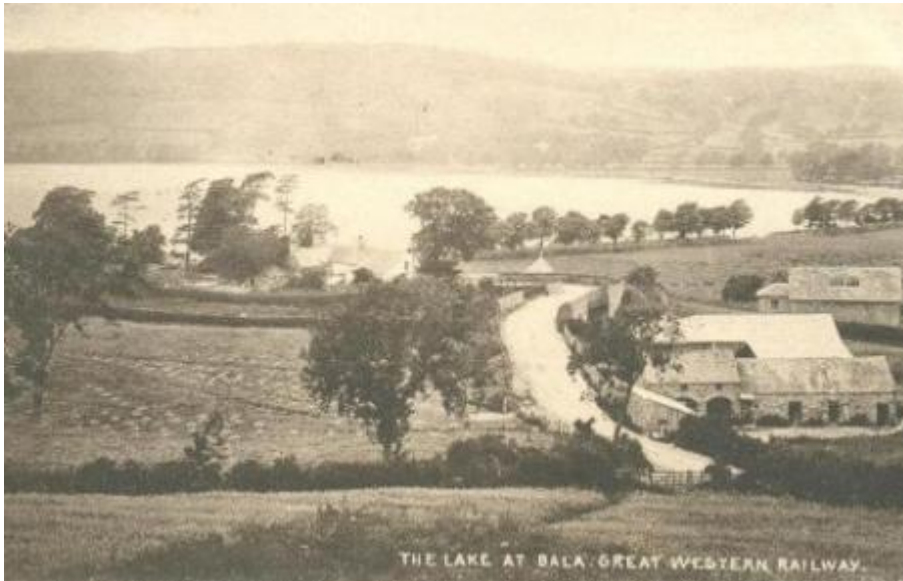
During the Second World War ten teenage girls and their teacher from the Municipal College in Portsmouth were billeted there. After they left John Spedan Lewis and his family moved in. Minor repairs and alterations were carried out to the house and Lewis remained in residence until 1961.

Realising that the house would be too large for him in retirement he moved to a more modest newly built house. Since 1961 Longstock house has been maintained for the use of the Partnership's senior management and their guests at the discretion of the Chairman.

7. Residential Clubs

Compared to other companies, the John Lewis Partnership is exceptionally benevolent to its employees, known as partners. Not only do the partners ultimately control the company, and enjoy an annual profit share proportional to salary, they have access on reasonable terms to several residential clubs which have been acquired over the years by the company. These are in addition to Leckford Abbas, described above.

Bala



Around 1800, Sir Richard Colt Hoare constructed a summer retreat, a single storey house overlooking Bala lake, the largest natural lake in Wales. Sir Richard (1758-1838) came from a wealthy family of bankers from Wiltshire, and he was thus able to indulge his passion for antiquities and scenery. He was an assiduous traveller, and used Fach Ddeiliog as a base of operations to avoid the inconvenience of moving from inn to inn.

Set in 70 acres in the stunning Snowdonia National Park, the Bala Lake Hotel, Spa, and Activity Centre boasts amazing surroundings and plenty of opportunities for guests to explore.

Guests can enjoy an array of fun and challenging activities led by friendly, qualified instructors. Brush up on your survival skills by learning camp craft from Bala's answer to Bear Grylls, or test your skills at archery, CyberTag, or laser clay-pigeon shooting. Try kayaking, sailing, climbing, gorge walking, or hire a mountain bike.

The hotel makes the perfect base camp from which to explore the delights of beautiful Mount Snowdon, the Welsh coastline, or the famous Welsh village of Portmeirion – all within an hour's drive.

Ambleside



Ambleside Park in 1978.

Known locally as Wanlass How, the land on which Ambleside Park now stands was owned by a local family called the Partridges. They sold it to John and Mary Brenchley who visited the area regularly for their holidays. The Brenchleys decided to have a house built there and construction commenced in 1841.

The main differences between the property as we can see it today and the house in the Victorian period were that the main entrance faced onto the drive and the veranda was open.

After their deaths the house was left to their three sons John, Julius and Alexander but the family sold it in 1859 to Mr John Brooks of Crawshaw Hall in Lancashire. He had made his fortune in the calico printing trade and spent some considerable time creating a lawn in the front of the house by roofing over the old quarry which lay to the front of the house.

Mr and Mrs Brooks left the house to James Marshall of Portal in Cheshire, who in turn rented it out for a while before it was sold on the MacIver family in 1872, who were a family of ship owners and mercantile traders from Liverpool.

They purchased 16 acres of surrounding land and turned the house into a mansion with four large reception rooms, 12 bedrooms, numerous outbuildings, coach house, stables and three adjacent cottages. The MacIvers' large family used Wanlass How as their holiday home, staying from July to October and making the most of the nearby lake for sailing, fishing and swimming. They even owned a steam motor launch called 'The Dodo'.

Despite mixed fortunes the family continued to use the house every year and it was here that David MacIver died in 1907. His widow Edith moved into the house permanently and soon became an active member of the local community belonging to many local institutions including the Ambleside Nursing Association and the British Women's Total Abstinence Union. She died at Wanlass How in 1940 at the age of 80.

After her death the estate was put up for sale and bought by a Mr Thomas Cooper Pattinson, a contractor from Windermere. The property was divided up and Wanlass How was purchased by the Midland Bank for £4,950 on behalf of the Liverpool Orphanage. Many children stayed there during the war and it was used as a children's home until 1953

It was then sold to Mr Philip Harvison, a knitwear manufacturer from Leicester. He saw the potential for using the property as a small production unit and with plenty of local labour available set about turning it into commercial premises with two flats upstairs and knitwear machinery installed on the ground floor.

The company was taken over by Marathon Knitwear and expanded into a newly built extension in 1962. By this time 120 local people, mostly women, were employed there but by the later 1960s the size of the venture proved too small to be viable and the factory closed.

In 1971, the property was sold to a hotelier who built on top of the extension creating Galava House where the bedrooms can now be found. The factory building itself was converted into a ballroom and the name was changed from Wanlass How to Ambleside Park.

The hotel continued to trade from 1972 until 1978, when the property was purchased by the Partnership.

Brownsea Castle



Brownsea Island, in Poole Harbour.



Brownsea Castle.

The history of Brownsea island, in Poole harbour, can be traced back over the centuries but the Partnership's involvement with the Castle dates to 1962, when the island was offered for sale to the National Trust.

In the earlier years of the 20th century the Van Raalte family had lived at the Castle and one of the family had been employed by the Partnership. Through this link, the Chairman, Bernard Miller, agreed to ask the Central Council to consider assisting the Trust with the purchase of the island in return for a lease on the Castle which could be renovated and used as a hotel for partners.

Three years later it opened and has been one of the most popular amenities available to Partners ever since.



Brownsea Island is a haven for Red Squirrels.



Daffodils at Brownsea.

Within the Partnership Archive lies a sale catalogue for Brownsea Island from the 1920s. Inside is a remarkable insight into the economy of the island almost 100 years ago.

“As the visitor strolls Eastwards from Maryland back towards the Castle, he finds himself following a path through deep woods and shoulder high bracken, past fields which at Eastertide are bright with daffodil and narcissus, here grown commercially with considerable success.” The industry began in 1908 when the decision to operate a commercial flower growing business was taken by the island’s owner Charles van Raalte.

12 acres of the island were cultivated with daffodils and narcissi the main crop. Many different varieties including Grand Monarch, Scilly Whites and Glory of Seyden were grown and as well as selling the blooms there was a steady trade in the bulbs too. About 20 tons of bulbs were sold each year reaching up to £90 per ton.

The mild climate suited the early flowers which were harvested and taken to Poole by boat and then on to London by rail. A former resident of Brownsea, Jack Batterick recalls the days when days were spent picking the daffodils and transporting them to Covent Garden for sale to the London market.

“We worked until it was too dark to see, continuously picking the succulent stems. On average 750 bunches were tied each night by every family on the island. For this we received ten pence for each hundred bunches and, by the end of the season, all of us, but especially the women, were exhausted.”

The trade continued until 1927 when the island was purchased by Mrs Bonham Christie who refused to allow anyone on to the island. The industry closed and the local people gradually left for a life on the mainland. Within a year the population was reduced from 270 to four.

So, idyllic as it may have seemed, life on the island was hard with little reward for a hard day's labour. Thankfully now most people who visit the island do so for rest and relaxation. They may walk around the island wondering about the ridges in the soil never realising the significance of the furrows in Brownsea's long history.

8. A Case Study in Employee Ownership

The following description by John Lewis of their employee ownership arrangements was archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the website of the Employee Ownership Association at www.employeeownership.co.uk.



Announcing the salary bonus for the partners (employees).

The John Lewis Partnership is the UK's largest employee owned business and parent company of two cherished retail brands – John Lewis & Partners and Waitrose & Partners, which are owned in Trust by their 83,900 Partners.

There are 51 John Lewis & Partners shops and 349 Waitrose & Partners shops across the UK, along with johnlewis.com and waitrose.com. There are also two international sourcing offices, a soft furnishings factory, various distribution centres, three Waitrose & Partners cookery schools, a content production hub, heritage centre and their own Waitrose & Partners farm.

Over 100 years ago Founder, John Spedan Lewis, began an experiment into a better way of doing business by including staff in decision making on how the business would be run. He set out the principles for how the business should operate and produced a written Constitution to help Partners understand their rights and responsibilities as co-owners.

Spedan Lewis wanted to create a way of doing business that was both commercial, allowing it to move quickly and stay ahead in a highly-competitive industry, and democratic, giving every Partner a voice in the

business they co-own. This combination, so ahead of its time, continues to make us what we are today.

The Partnership is one of a handful of companies to have a written Constitution. Uniquely, the Constitution places the happiness of its Partners (employees) and worthwhile, satisfying employment at the heart of its successful business. The Constitution also sets out the Partnership's democratic governance system.

The Partnership operates on democratic principles, sharing power with all Partners. Our first democratic council was set up 100 years ago in 1919. Today our democratic network of elected councils, committees and forums enables Partners to participate in decision making, challenge management on performance and have a say in how the business is run. We have over 3,000 specially elected representatives who feed into our three governing authorities – Partnership Council, Partnership Board and the Chairman, which run the Partnership.

Partners reap the benefits of employee ownership by sharing 'profit, knowledge and power'. Partners are able to feed their views to management through the formal democracy bodies and through the company's weekly magazine, the Gazette which is the longest running in-house magazine in the UK and celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2018.

9. Peter Jones



Mr Peter Jones, circa 1890.

Peter Rees Jones, the son of a Welsh hat-maker, came to London in 1867 and worked in several retail establishments across the city. He opened his first eponymous shop in Chelsea in 1871 in what is now called Draycott Avenue, the poorer part of the area. Whilst knocking two small shops into one the building collapsed, killing an apprentice and trapping his wife! It is said he received good compensation from the owners and continued to develop his trade.

The business thrived and in 1877 he decided to move to the more prosperous part of Chelsea and cater for the carriage trade. He took two small shops in the Kings Road, at the Sloane Square end, and then bought up more shops on the site as they became vacant.

By 1890 he was trading from No 2 to No 14 Kings Road and the business was performing so well that the original premises had been replaced by a handsome five-storied building of red brick.



Peter Jones, 2-4 Kings Road, 1877.

In 1893 an article in the Illustrated London magazine the business was described

“ as a monument to that gentleman’s untiring industry and pushy enterprise.” It went on to state: “ internally the lofty and beautifully appointed shops and show-rooms more than fulfilled the promise held forth by the exterior and the visitor passes from department to department, conscious of being in the midst of a stock which has few equals, and probably no superior, in London”

Mr Jones was a hard working employer but found time to look after the welfare of his staff. He was the first retailer in the country to provide seats for his female staff. The shops were also one of the first to be lit by electricity.

The Illustrated London article goes on to say that

“the residential quarters of the staff are replete with every appointment that is conducive to social enjoyment” A library, piano and two billiard tables, “for the male portion of the staff who love the scientific game of ball and cue” were provided.

The business also had its own fire brigade.



Peter Jones, King's Road frontage, 1890.

By 1900 the business was doing so well, with profits in excess of £10,000 over each of the last five years of the 19th century, that it was floated as a public company. Mr Jones was the Chairman and his two sons were on the board. By 1903 the profits had risen to £12,000 (£1million in today's money).

Mr. Jones then spent more time enjoying the fruits of his success, in particular his substantial art collection.

Sadly he fell ill in 1903 and by 1905 was dead. An obituary at his death stated “that he had never knowingly offended anyone”

His sons' did not inherit his business acumen and started buying up cheap stock and holding far too many sales. The shop faltered without him. In the spring of 1906 John Lewis entered the scene.

10. Waitrose

The Partnership bought Waitrose Ltd in October 1937. At the time, it was a London-based family business with 10 grocery and provisions shops employing 164 staff. Wallace Wyndham Waite, who had opened his first shop with Arthur Rose and David Taylor in 1904, was still in charge.



An early Waitrose shop.



Original Waitrose shop in Gerrards Cross.

The three men had started trading in Acton, west London. Their original shop soon expanded, and reopened in much larger premises in 1908, selling everything from fish to flowers. By 1920 there were more than 20 Waitrose

shops throughout London and the Home Counties, but many shops had closed by 1930 after a decade of more difficult trading conditions.

In the 1950s food retailing in England changed dramatically, as counter service gave way to self-service. The first self-service Waitrose opened in Southend in 1953, and the first Partnership supermarket followed in 1955, in Streatham, south London.

Over the next 20 years Waitrose refined its customer offering, building a reputation for good quality food, including pioneering organic foods and customer services such as Quick Check and Waitrose Deliver. The division also developed the internet food trade.



Queen Elizabeth talks with Waitrose Marketing Director Rupert Thomas as she looks around a Waitrose supermarket in 2016.
