

HIGHLIGHT



The House Magazine of
R. T. TANNER & CO. LTD.

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NEW SERIES NO. 91

OCTOBER 1974

Tanner's Quarterly Trade Journal

Following upon the consistent appeals in our Journal during the last twelve months regarding the organised collection of waste paper, we were particularly pleased to receive a copy of a letter issued by the Director of Public Works, Leeds City Council: —
July 1974

“Dear Householder

Separate collection of Waste Paper

For many years the Leeds City Council have collected waste paper salvage from commercial premises for resale to Industry. Because of a world shortage, much has been written recently about the need to conserve raw materials by re-cycling waste products. Wood pulp is one such material which is imported into this country for the production of paper and board. By the processing of waste paper and cardboard essential savings can be made in the use of wood pulp.

The Leeds City Council, therefore have decided to extend the waste paper and cardboard collection service to include domestic premises. This will be done by providing a vehicle and crew who will operate separately from the refuse collection team.

The collecting vehicle will be in your area on Wednesday, 24th July, 1974 and thereafter on the same day at fortnightly intervals. May I ask you to co-operate with your local authority by placing your waste paper and cardboard *outside* your front door or garden gate, where it can easily be seen by the salvage collectors, early on the day of collection. To assist the Department's employees and prevent nuisance, paper and cardboard should be securely tied in a bundle or placed in a cardboard box.

All clean paper is suitable, including newspapers, magazines and cereal and detergent cartons. Care should be taken to ensure

that the paper salvage is free from all other waste materials. The latter should be placed in your dustbin.

This is an opportunity for householders to:—

- (i) Contribute to the National effort by the conservation of raw materials.
- (ii) Assist in reducing the cost of refuse disposal.
- (iii) Help in increasing the Council's income and thereby reducing the rates.

SAVE WASTE PAPER—SAVE A TREE

Yours faithfully,

*Assistant Director of Public Works
(Cleaning Division)."*

May this effort be copied in many other areas, and thus help in the ways suggested in the letter, but above all by assisting in ensuring more supplies of paper and board.

The Post Office

We are regularly fed on details of the dreadful shortage of staff besetting the Post Office, the rapid deterioration in service, and the huge losses being built up in spite of astronomic price increases in all services. These losses are being written off by the Government, which is the polite way of saying that every one of you who pays income tax or V.A.T. are having to contribute to the loss.

Having seen many of these sorting offices and been indoctrinated with details of the time and staff saving which follows on the installation of such machines we came upon an article in the "Economist", which blows this myth to smithereens and no doubt

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CROXLEY TRANSCRIPT

In spite of irregular deliveries from the mill, we hold good stocks of most colours and white in SRA 2 in A, B and C sheets.

Tanners for Transcript

explains the position in which the Post Office puts itself physically and financially: —

“The post code system is in a bad way, too. Most of the 42 per cent. of people in Britain who have been religiously using their six-digit code have been wasting their time. Except for 12 Post Offices, serving under 10 per cent. of the population, letters are still sorted in the old way by hand. They are: —

Aberdeen, Brighton, Cambridge, Croydon, London EC district, Huddersfield, Newport, Norwich, Preston, Sheffield, Southampton and Stoke-on-Trent.

What is worse, the system only works properly when a letter is posted from one of these 12 to another, or inside one of the 12. In theory, the six-digit code (mixed letters and numbers because however awkward they are for mere humans) is converted at the inward Post Office into invisible phosphor dots stamped on to the envelope. A sorting machine then automatically puts the letter into the correct bag for the town to which the letter is addressed. When it gets there, again in theory, another machine reads the phosphor dot code and sorts the letter into the bag of the individual postman who delivers letters to the street concerned.

Unfortunately, the Union of Post Office Workers has embargoed the installation of further machines since May, 1972. It wants a substantial lead-in payment, and the machines, which were being installed at three other Post Offices, Cardiff, London WC district and York, are standing idle. The most the union will allow is for the machines at the original 12 Post Offices to sort letters at the same rate as they were doing in May, 1972.

So far the Post Office has offered around 30p a week against a claim for £1, which, if paid in full, would add another £6m. a year to the deficit. The earliest that a decision to operate the machines can be taken is at the union's conference at the end of October, and that will depend on whether the Post Office feels it can increase the offer. Even when there is agreement, the usefulness of postal codes will spread only slowly. The first 12 machines, which are made by Plessey and G.E.C., cost £5m. in 1972 before inflation took off. Public expenditure of the sort that would be necessary to put one of these machines in each of Britain's main Post Offices is out of the question at present. A question for the Post Office is how much it has cost industry and commerce since 1972 in waiting and typing almost totally useless postal codes on to Britain's letters.”

To add to this absurdity the Ministry of Works as it then was named bought some six years ago a large area adjoining our office and works in Crayford running to some five acres for the

use of the telecommunications department of the Post Office. This was in addition to the large area of the trading estate opposite which they already occupy. As far as can be seen the buildings are still virtually unused and the parking area which is sufficient to hold 200 vehicles comfortably never has more than 24 vans parked overnight at any one time.

With this area went a wide strip of land running right across the back of our factory but of no value to anyone, as it cannot be built upon, and in fact the Ministry have wired it off from their land. We have complete access to it, and require it as a car park and turning area for vehicles.

The irony of the case is that we were negotiating with the previous owners to purchase this land, when the whole area was sold to the Ministry, and we immediately registered with them our offer. After many written and verbal requests for a decision the matter died of sheer frustration. However, in August we received a letter asking if we wished to be considered if they decided to dispose of the land. It is difficult after six years of procrastination and frustration to refrain from telling them to take a running jump.

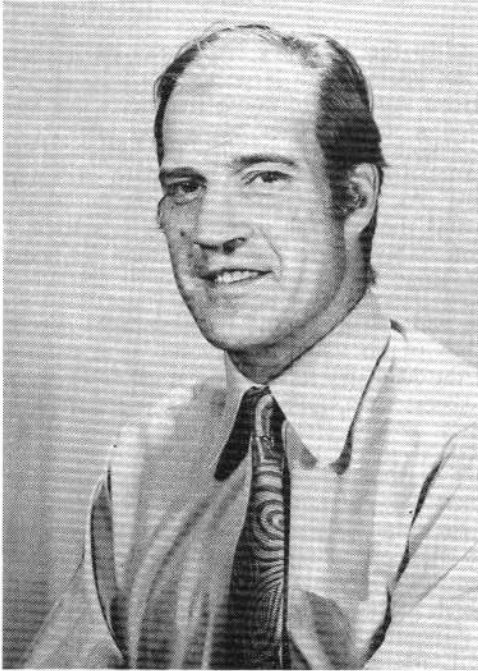
We consider this factual story illustrates the dreadful inertia of nationalisation, and highlights the fearful waste of money on public services, whose only idea to recoup losses appears to be to increase all prices as fast as possible.

Scrap Book?

We like the following reprinted from the “Sunday People”: —

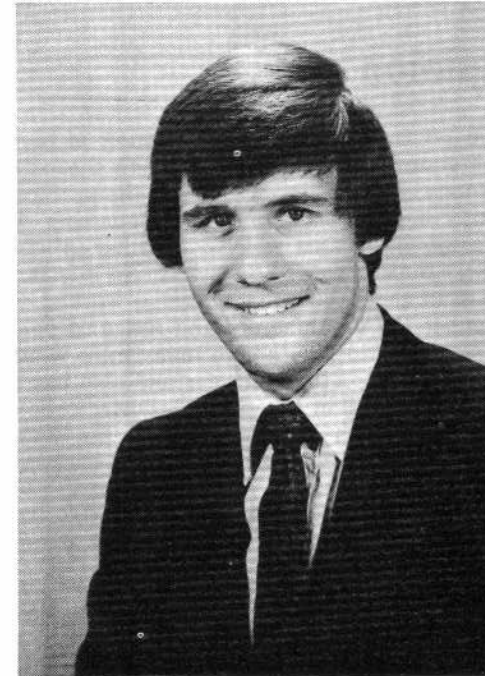
“Who says there is a paper shortage? Top seller in America, called The Nothing Book, costs £1.25 and it has 160 blank pages.”

STOCK SALES DEPARTMENT



Anthony R. Tanner

Joined the Company in 1957. He is the great-grandson of the founder. He is a Director, and controls the Stock Sales Dept.



Wm. Wallford

Joined the Company in 1969, left in 1971 to join his father's stationers business, and returned in 1973.

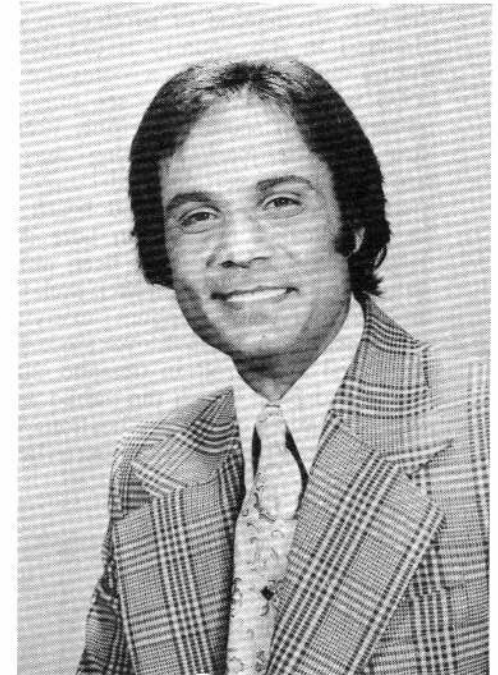


Paul Dalton

Has been eight years with the Company. Rather naturally called 'Whiskers'.

Cyril Harris

Joined early this year, and is responsible for arrangements for van distribution.



In Our Opinion . . .

Where do we go from here? This question is permanently on the lips of everyone remotely connected with the paper trade, and no doubt in many other trades. However, the problems in our trade are sufficiently large enough to keep us guessing, and if we cannot find the answer in an area which is familiar to us, how can we hope to expound outside our trade? And yet it is in this very area that the future of the paper trade is being worked out in the long term. Remember the manufacture and usage of paper in the widest sense is a service industry, though many mills would like to disagree with this statement. However, it is and also has been true that prosperity or depression in the paper industry follows in the wake of the situation ruling in all other industry, but always about six months in arrears. If as seems to be forecast everywhere that this country and in fact the western world is about to plunge into a slump, our trade must follow after the usual delay, though on this occasion some of the conditions are different from normal.

The big difference is that we start off with a great shortage of paper, and no slump in the paper trade ever commences with a shortage. Over-production and under-usage is the first criterion, but although the astronomical price increases may cause a halt to the ever-increasing demand for paper, in the short term it is still a growth industry, and in the long term will continue that way. Surplus production or production even sufficient to meet existing demand in this country is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future unless there is a complete turn-around in pulp supplies. 1975 will in our opinion see pulp in even shorter supply than at present, so it seems incredibly unlikely that paper will become a drug on the market during the next 12 months. True there are supplies of certain grades now readily available, but these are mainly in the machine and brush coated art paper, used mainly in periodicals. The reason here is not hard to find, in that the large publishers have not been able to produce the weeklies due to union troubles; the small circulation papers fearful of a shortage stocked up with supplies many months ago and have been experiencing indigestion ever since in trying to finance these stocks; a general falling off in demand due to heavy price increases for paper and print which the public were not prepared to accept, and this has caused many publications to revert from weeklies to fortnightlies, and monthlies to quarterlies.

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Envelopes & Pockets

Paper & Boards

Consequent upon the fluid situation in raw material prices, it has not been possible to reprint price lists.

The prices ruling at present can always be obtained from our representatives or sales staff.

As soon as the situation clarifies, we will reprint and issue price lists.

But what of the grades which are still in more than short supply? Woodfree cartridge, writings, multi-purpose papers, pulp boards, bonds and banks particularly those of 45 GM2 are all extremely difficult to obtain, and demand is still very strong. Agreed there are supplies available from foreign sources, but prices are way above those now being charged by British mills, though who knows how long it will be before we catch up?

We have no cause to alter the opinion we have been voicing throughout the year. In the short term there is likely to be a lessening of demand towards the end of the year due to lowering of business activity and the cost of paper and print. In 1975 and onwards, provided there is no world-wide slump, and this fear we cannot dismiss lightly, we consider that paper will continue in short supply, though once prices have reached the average of world-wide costs, then overseas supplies will become more readily available to make up the shortfall.

Obituary

It is with great regret that we have to inform you of the sudden death of our representative Edward Prisley on 16th August, 1974.

Ted joined the Company in 1947 from the sales office of Horton Kirby Paper Mills, and represented this Company in the City and Eastern Counties.

He was taken ill some two months ago with a heart condition, but after a spell in hospital he gave every appearance of recovery, although he was anticipating taking early retirement.

He leaves behind a widow and two sons, to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

CROXLEY SCRIPT

Supplies of White Croxley Script, Duplicator and Copies Bond are reduced by 50 per cent. for the second half of 1974. With the impending shut-down for holidays, this situation is unlikely to improve in the near future.

If we cannot supply you with your requirements of this paper, we may be able to help you with an alternative.

We will notify you accordingly.

The Envelope Trade

We as a nation are beginning to realise that there is an acute shortage of paper, but this situation is as nothing compared to the envelope position.

It is almost impossible to obtain even small supplies of envelopes or pockets from any stationers' shops, and we have frequently seen delivery dates from large manufacturers showing 40 to 56 weeks. We are no paragons of virtue, and our delivery dates are quite terrible, but we would never get into this position, and would prefer to say we cannot accept further orders of that kind. How can anyone foretell what is going to happen in a year's time?

The fundamental causes are not too difficult to analyse. Firstly, all manufacturers have suffered severely from material shortage. No longer were mills able to carry out a contract programme of X tonnes in A, B and C sizes each month. You got X - 50% tonnes of size C one month and X tonnes of A size the following, and possibly X - 25% of B size the next month, if you were lucky.

Secondly, there has been a general shortage of labour, which was made considerably worse at the commencement of the year with the three-day week followed by the period of the SOGAT industrial trouble, smartly followed by the holiday period. Thirdly, commercial envelopes and pockets have been a strong growth market throughout the last 12 months.

It is small wonder therefore that today manufacturers are inundated with orders which they are unable to programme with any degree of certainty, and delivery dates have to be given mainly to safeguard oneself or in the hope of killing it at birth.

We ourselves are approaching the position rather differently. We have rationalised our qualities and sizes to the bare minimum and are concentrating very long runs on the most popular sizes. By this method we are looking for increased production, and to be in a position to offer something even if it should be in a slightly different size with a delivery which is realistic. Even so, deliveries are stretching out far further than we like but at least we are trying to meet and overcome the situation.

Several wholesalers and large stationers have overcome the shortage by importing from the E.E.C., but at a price. It only goes to prove that the envelope trade reached the same position as paper making, in that prices generally have for years been too low and insufficient money has been earned to ensure proper investment in the industry.

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TIME IS MONEY

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Tanners keep up with the times