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SUNDAY 5
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ROBIN COLVIDGE & ISABELLE FLORY

WEDNESDAY
20 JULY

GILBERT & SULLIVAN
CHRISTMAS ROUND DONALD ADAMS
BY JEAN TEMPERLEY

PAVILION THEATRE

BOX OFFICE



outing to Cromer 1986



Clickers, Walter Edwards & Son Ltd, 1925

The Story of the Norwich Boot and Shoe Industry



Made in Norwich

The Story of the Norwich Boot and Shoe Industry is published by Norwich Heritage Projects which is a totally independent non-profit making organisation with the simple aim of encouraging an appreciation of the heritage of our beautiful City of Norwich.

The Story of the Norwich Boot and Shoe Trade

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Norwich Heritage Projects is a small group of enthusiasts who combine local historical resource and expertise with modern technology to take a fresh look at the rich and varied heritage of Norwich.

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Front cover photographs (left to right):

Top Row

(L to r) Pamela May, Margot Fonteyn and Len Waspe c1952

Kaye Sisters and Martin Miller (front right), 1958
(L to r) Princess Elizabeth and Geoffrey Holmes, Edwards & Holmes, 1951

Middle Row

Conveyor belt, Riverside, Norwich, 1961

Norvic, St George's Plain, 1946

Stockroom, Start-rite, c1975

Bottom Row

Closing room, Sexton, Son & Everard, 1959

Title page: See pages 92 and 97

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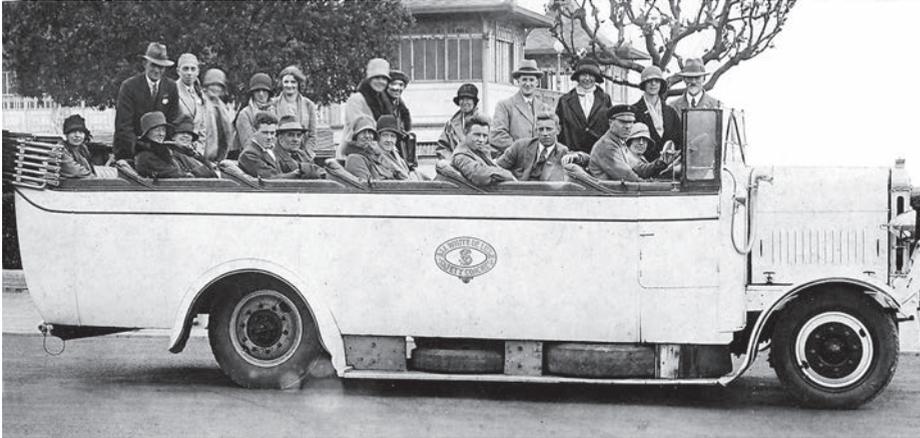
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Foreword



*Charabanc
outing, Howlett
& White, 1920*

After completing our book on Norwich Pubs and Breweries in 2011, we were looking for a new project when Vic Hopes, a veteran of the industry, suggested that we might like to take on the Norwich boot and shoe trade. We soon found that since Wilfred Sparks wrote 'Shoemaking in Norwich' in the 1940s, other books had concentrated their efforts on the history of specific firms rather than the industry as a whole. It therefore seemed an ideal subject to research.

From the start we were amazed at how little had been recorded about the industry, particularly about the period since WWII. This was despite the fact that it was very clear from the response to the excellent oral project on the subject completed by the Costume & Textile Association (between 2006 and 2008) that there was massive interest in the subject.

In our previous undertakings we have aimed to bring history alive by including personal stories and images, but these have been mainly used to add colour to written sources. For the boot and shoe trade they have often been used as our starting point. Therefore, great thanks have to be given to all who have shared their memories and lent us their family photographs. Collectively our contributors had vast experience in the shoe trade, having cumulatively clocked up well over a thousand years of service.

ARCHANT } Our next major source of material was from Archant, who very kindly gave us access to their extensive newspaper and photographic archive. This enabled us to chart the final years of many of the major firms as headline after headline reported their demise. Their reports also gave a contemporary view of local opinion at the time.

Then of course there was the question of the shoes. To fully understand the industry it is important to see the beautiful footwear that was made in Norwich. Throughout the book we have shown the lovely shoes that were manufactured in the City. Here we have to give particular thanks to the Bridewell Museum who allowed us access to their fabulous collection.



Nor must we forget the Norwich footwear firms that are still operational. Start-rite, the Florida Group, Freed of London, Broadland Slippers and Bowhill & Elliott all welcomed us into their workplaces, enabling us to bring the story right up to date.

These are just a few of the many people and organisations that have given us permission to use their material, for which we are very grateful. Further information on all who have contributed can be found in the bibliography, acknowledgements' page and photo credits.

Although this is by no means a text book, elements of the trade can be somewhat confusing. To clarify the situation we have included the following:

- Brief details of the contributors who shared their memories can be found on pages v to vii
- An explanation of the company names as used in the text is on page viii
- A glossary which explains the various terms used throughout is provided on page 254.

Lasting Memories

In 1934 Walter Moll moved from Switzerland to Norwich with his father, who was responsible for overseeing Ballys' partnership with Haldinsteins:

'By the time war broke out, I was at Gresham's school in Holt from where in 1940, together with my schoolmates,

I was evacuated to Newquay in Cornwall. At the time, as a foreigner, I had a grey book in which I had to register every move I made, and even had to report to the police station once a week. The ironic thing was that I became a sergeant in the school's Officer Training Corps, where I was allowed to carry a gun whilst still reporting to the police weekly!'



Walter Moll, c1955

Graham Howlett recalls a family story about his father Arthur, a director at Batson & Webster:

'During the war it is told that my father was very good at obtaining items that were difficult to find. The story goes that he realised that the Americans, who had a big presence in Norwich,



Arthur Howlett, Oulton Broad, c1950

had a very high demand for condoms. So he hit on the idea of supplying them. He finished up with three changing-room lockers full of them in his office. When the factory was bombed these lockers headed for the sky, and when they were high over Magdalen Street they opened and their contents rained down on the unsuspecting public below. My father was absolutely staggered at what had happened, but undeterred he put in for war damage for his lost "stock", describing it as "items for staff recreational use". It is said that he got all of his money back.'



Betty Barnard (right), Great Yarmouth, c1950

Betty Barnard started work at Shorten & Armes in 1940 when she was a girl of 14:

'During the war when the government took over our factory we had to transfer everything into Howlett & White's [Norvic's] factory on St George's. I remember one day we were coming down the stairs when a bomb was dropped a few yards away, if it had landed on our building I hate to think how many would've been killed. We spent a lot of time in the shelters which were at the side of the factory. We never went down when the siren first went but only when it changed to the "crash warning tone", which meant that the planes were definitely coming our way. At that point we grabbed what we could and ran. The problem was that when we were in the shelters we couldn't work, which meant that we couldn't earn. I remember one week we spent so long in them my wage was just half-a-crown.'



*Meadows, Great
Yarmouth,
c1954*



*Bally, summer
outing, c1960*



Barfield & Richardson, Skegness, 1949



Meadows, Peacock Street, c1952



Kirbys, summer outing, c1924



*Barfield & Richardson,
Clacton,
1952*

Norwich Fashions: 1890-1920

c1895



1900



All made by James Southall & Co.

1911



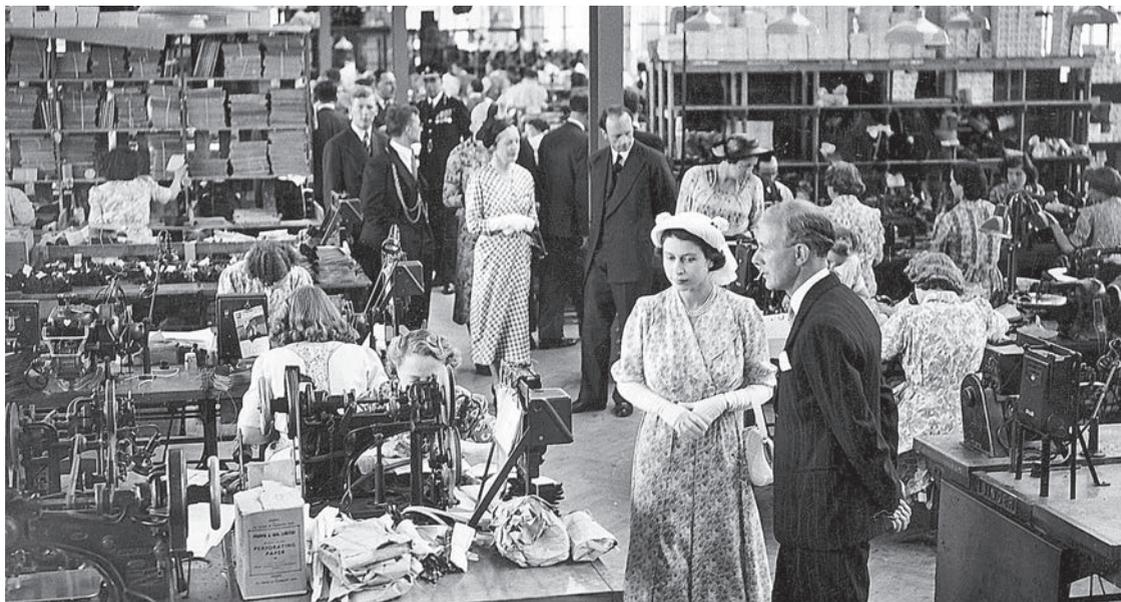
1905



1905



Royalty



Princess Elizabeth accompanied by Geoffrey Holmes, closing room, Edwards & Holmes, 1951

The Norwich shoe factories have played host to many eminent visitors, the most important of whom was the Queen who toured the Edwards & Holmes' factory on the 18 June 1951, when still Princess Elizabeth. The visit is still imprinted on Jean Smith's memory: 'When Princess Elizabeth visited she stood behind us kids as we were machining, and I broke a needle and thought: "Oh no!" I still remember exactly what she

wore...' When leaving she was presented with a pair of hand-made, gold-kid evening sandals. Although these were possibly the first shoes manufactured by Edwards & Holmes that the princess had worn, when Prince Charles visited Start-rite in 1992 everyone present knew that he had worn a great many of their shoes. In fact many of the operatives he met could proudly tell him that they had made them!



Princess Elizabeth, Edwards & Holmes, 1951