

PRE-CHRISTMAS
LATE NIGHT SHOPPING

After two years of having a "Men's Night" - one late night before Christmas - we decided to expand the idea for Christmas 1969. In two ways. Firstly, we would welcome male shoppers to the store but - instead of refusing entrance to female shoppers - we would be delighted to serve them, too. Secondly, instead of opening late only one Thursday before Christmas, we decided to keep our doors open until 8.0 p.m. every Thursday in December before Christmas.

Was the effort worth the extra costs involved? Did we have to keep open late? Did customers appreciate special shopping hours?

The answer to the first question is: yes, the extra sales more than offset the extra costs. At Uxbridge, for example, the first late-night was rather quiet but even so, we twice over covered our costs. On the second late Thursday we covered our costs five times over and our sales that evening were 50% higher than they had been in the 6.0 p.m. - 8.0 p.m. period the previous week. The sales versus costs equation was even more satisfactory the third late-night Thursday.

At Slough we covered our costs nine times over on the first Thursday and fourteen times over on the second Thursday. Because of the success of the experiment we did not dissect the 9.0 a.m. - 6.0 p.m. and 6.0 p.m. - 8.0 p.m. sales figures on the third Thursday: we know, however, from a quick analysis that the costs-sales equation on the third Thursday was the most positive of all.

In addition, the Wednesday all-day openings for the weeks before Christmas proved highly satisfactory.

D.C.Suter,
Managing Director.