

# RETAIL NEWSAGENT

## SIX MONTHS IN

The benefits of  
four different  
gantry options

TOBACCO DISPLAY BAN  
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Crafting our new range  
'We're building loyalty  
with special ale orders'

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NEWS • CONVENIENCE • PROFIT

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# Sales splash on holiday washout



- Indies buck bank holiday trade decline with extended hours and special deals to boost sales by up to £2,000.
- Retailers work hard to win trade following three days of torrential rain which saw shoppers shun high streets. Page 5 >>



CONVENIENCE

## 'Innovate to attract young customers'

Be first to act on  
new trends to beat  
falling food sales,  
says Spar boss.

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NEWSPAPERS

## i double terms deal

Exclusive offer  
for Scottish NFRN  
and Superleague  
members. Page 7 >>



**Talking shop** Rochdale MP and chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Small Shops Group Simon Danczuk (third left) paid a visit to Paul Stone's (left) Rochdale Spar store to address retailers' concerns around carrier bag charges, the National Living Wage, PayPoint and Sunday trading. "I was very impressed by the Spar model and the regional guilds they build and we talked over retailers' concerns about upcoming legislation," he said.

PRICING

## 'We don't rip off hospital shoppers'

Indies hit back after  
on-site multiples  
accused of over-  
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NFRN calls for carrier  
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Vol 126 No 36  
FOR TRADE USE ONLY





# The Top Trends in Convenience Retail

and how to capitalise on them

**Trends due to hit the convenience sector during the next 18 months will change the landscape of local retailing and alter the direction of your business.**

Whether it's the rise of the franchise, the growing demand for specialist product ranges or the increasing need to diversify your store offering, it's crucial to understand the innovations that are right for your business.

As a respected media and content provider with a firm commitment to the convenience sector, News UK will lead the discussion on how to capitalise on such trends at this year's **Local Shop Summit, held at Lord's Cricket Ground on Wednesday, 14 October.**

Learn what new developments in the industry mean for you, and how you can integrate them in your store.

**Greg Deacon, News UK** says, "Customers are leading the decisions made by business owners. Create loyalty by investing in the trends that make your shop relevant to them and their everyday routine."

The LSS is a great opportunity to discuss how to ensure you're getting the basics right, and what the footfall drivers of the future will be with peers and experts from News UK. Most importantly, you will take away all the information and support you need to capitalise on the upcoming top trends.

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## LEADER



Because you continue to invest in us, it means we can keep investing in producing quality journalism and a quality magazine



CHRIS GAMM

Editor

@ChrisGammRN

For many years, great journalism meant print content focused on breaking stories, communicating ideas and uncovering truths. This has been at the heart of RN for 126 years in order to give you the tools to run your business more successfully.

Today, it is more relevant than ever. We have the biggest team of journalists serving independent retailers and, because you are our paying customer, we can report stories in ways other titles can't.

I firmly believe this is why we are still relevant today and why our print sales continue to grow, with 11% more of you buying RN each week than two years ago.

Because you continue to invest in us, it means we can keep investing in producing quality journalism and a quality magazine, and the circle continues.

But, conversely, you, like most people, want a choice in how you consume information. This is why, every day, the RN team produces exclusive content for our website betterRetailing.com which adds value to the printed magazine.

And it's why events like the Local Shop Summit are so exciting. On 14 October, you have the chance to take part in a Question Time-style debate to learn about several of the most important industry trends and discuss how you can make them work for your business.

It will offer all the things you love most about RN, but in a live format where you can meet your peers and swap ideas with other industry experts to take back to your stores.

And if you can't be there, you can, of course, read all the best tips and ideas from the day in RN.

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CUSTOMER QUERIES ARE AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMUNICATE YOUR AVAILABILITY AND SECURE REPEAT CUSTOM

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# NEWS

## IAA's top 100 retailers

The Independent Achievers Academy (IAA) will announce its top 100 retailers on 8 September. The IAA, run by Newtrade, recognises excellence achieved by independent retailers across the UK. Later this month, leading suppliers and industry experts will decide which retailers have performed best in each of the Academy's 12 categories. The awards shortlist will be announced on 14 October and the 12 category winners and overall best shop will be revealed at the IAA Gala Dinner on 30 November.

## Latvian tobacco agreement

Imperial Tobacco has signed an agreement with the Latvian State Revenue Service to tackle the illicit market. The Memorandum of Understanding is the first to be signed between the Latvian authorities and a tobacco company. Imperial said a recent KPMG report revealed Latvia had the highest proportion of illicit trade in the EU last year.

## Living wage criticised

Sainsbury's former chief executive Justin King has criticised the decision to introduce the National Living Wage, saying it will "destroy jobs". Speaking on Radio 4, he said that as wage costs rose companies would make workforces more productive. "There will be less people producing the same output," he said. The National Living Wage comes into force next April, with a minimum pay level of £7.20 per hour.

## Lucozade heads into Orbit at London's Olympic Park

Australian YouTube celebrities How Ridiculous took shooting basketball hoops literally to new heights by attempting to make shots from the top of the UK's tallest structure, the Orbit at London's Olympic Park. Their efforts were filmed and posted online as part of a publicity stunt for Lucozade Energy's new Find Your Flow marketing campaign.



**Spar MD says act now to halt falling food retail value** 'This isn't a blip, it's a structural change'

# Get inventive and spot trends to raise profits

by Chris Gamm

Convenience stores must become the "mother of invention" and stay in touch with young people, because grocer price-cutting will take value out of food retail for many years to come.

The warning came from Spar managing director Debbie Robinson this week, who said: "Discounters are taking value out, the multiples are doing the same and profit is going with it. This isn't a blip, it's a structural change."

She attributes the symbol operator's success to being quick to capitalise on trends, including foodservice, which she called "the key to the future of convenience".

"We were brave, we looked at who can help us and learned from some of the biggest and best names in foodservice, like Costa and Subway," said Ms Robinson, speaking at a press briefing at James Brundle's Spar store in Homerton, east London.

"Independents must bring something differ-

ent and personalisation is a key trend for Spar. The florist and superb cafe in this store work because of the hospital opposite. It wouldn't work in every store, but it would offer growth potential in some locations."

In-store children's areas, licences for on-premises alcohol consumption and pop-up shopping are all trends that Ms Robinson said entrepreneurs must be at the leading edge of.

"A retailer might have a passion for vintage furniture or clothing. Why not

sell art in a c-store? Being modern and relevant is a must," she said.

Meanwhile, Spar is trialling stores in motorway service stations to increase the brand's reach, starting with Strensham North Roadchef, which focuses on bread, cakes and meals for commuters.

The group also announced that it is returning to TV this month with ads on Channel 4 and Watch, while a new Christmas deal will be unveiled every week between 1 October and 24 December.

## Business rates reduction of up to 42%

Retailers could benefit from a business rates reduction of up to 42% when new rateable values for businesses come into effect in 2017, according to new research.

Law firm Colliers International has estimated

five towns in the north east will be among the top 20 beneficiaries.

Mohammed Khalid of Lifestyle Express in Stockport, one town that could receive a rate reduction of around 35%, said he has been paying "way over the

odds" for too long.

"When rates are high you have to cut staff and do things yourself," he said. "With some rate relief I can think about changing that and even looking towards a refurbishment."

The revaluation is normally every five years, but with this revaluation stretching to seven, it means retailers have been forced to pay a further two years of rates based on 2008's inflated property prices.

Offers and extra hours help local shops steal sales from supermarkets £2,000 up on 2014

# Indies shine on despite bank holiday washout

by Steven Lambert

Independent retailers weathered the bank holiday 'washout' with one-off promotions and longer opening times to grow profits and steal trade from the supermarkets.

Local stores told RN that sales were up by as much as £2,000 during the long weekend despite prolonged spells of torrential rain and scores of customers spending time away from home.

The comments fly in the face of media reports of wet weather driving bank

holiday shoppers to larger stores.

Retail analyst Springboard claimed footfall on the high street fell 0.1% during the weekend, while visitors to retail parks grew 8.5%.

However, Bhavesh Parekh, owner of Kwik Save in Little Lever, Bolton, said he took an extra £400 by staying open for an additional three hours on bank holiday Monday.

"We closed at 6pm this time last year, but we decided to stay open until 9pm this time. People were

really grateful for it because the Tesco next door to us was closed at that time," he said.

"Overall, our bank holiday sales were up £2,000 compared to last year, despite the weather being dreadful."

Bay Bashir, owner of Lifestyle Express Belle Vue Convenience Store in Middlesbrough, took advantage of early spells of sunshine to grow sales of soft drinks and alcohol.

He said: "We had a deal on Heineken where shoppers could buy a case and

get a free barbecue, which went well.

"Trade was down on Monday due to the rain, but overall we were up 5% to 6% on last year, so I can't grumble."

Other store owners also reported steady trade, with Serge Khunkhun of Premier Woodcross Convenience Store in Wolverhampton and Dean Holborn of Holborn's in Surrey claiming sales were comparable to that of a regular weekend despite consistent bad weather in their respective areas.

## Sun TV campaign

The Sun newspaper's TV campaign has kicked off with a month-long drive to promote its print offering.

New weekly pullouts, giveaways and an X Factor tie-in TV advert are all part of the campaign, which aims to boost sales during a key selling period.

Alongside four X Factor editions of Sun's TV magazine there will be a mass TV giveaway and the Sun will have its very own Small Screen - video content playing out every Saturday with children acting out the week of TV. The campaign will be supported in-store with PoS material.

## Gantries removed

JTI removed gantries from two shops last week after they were caught selling illegal cigarettes and rolling tobacco.

The Kiosk in Sheffield and Keighley Newsagents in Keighley were both ordered to pay hefty fines after the illicit products were discovered by local trading standards teams.

Charlie Cunningham-Reid, UK head of corporate affairs, said: "If this type of crime continues, customers will lose trust in their local shops as the false impression grows that all of the independent trade is rife with 'dodgy cigarettes'."

### It's Sangha Street...

Retailer Paul Sangha (second from right) and his sons Sat (far left) and Steven (far right) have rejuvenated an entire shopping parade in Thornaby, Yorkshire, with the addition of a new hairdressers, bookmakers, fish and chip shop and One Stop store. The franchise business was officially opened to the public by MP for Stockton South James Wharton last Friday.



## Raising hospital shop prices 'will backfire'

Large retailers who hike up prices in hospital shops are "shooting themselves in the foot" say independents offering "competitive" prices.

WH Smith and Marks & Spencer were accused by patients and campaigners of exploiting a captive market last week, by mak-

ing hospital patients and visitors pay more for items. They blamed higher running costs including higher rents and staff wages for longer opening hours.

However, Charlie Beatty, owner of Antrim Hospital Shop at Antrim Area Hospital, says for most products his prices are on

par with his local Asda. He said: "The likes of airports rip people off, but if people are visiting relatives and using the shop - and we have relatives who shop here maybe up to 10 times a day - they won't come back if you're not charging the right prices. Then you lose footfall. I think they

are shooting themselves in the foot."

Meanwhile, Juliet Metclafe, manager of the Leighton Hospital League of Friends shop, said high prices in hospital shops were unfair. Her store ensures prices charged are below the normal retail price in local shops.

## Nisa will talk milk

Nisa has responded to milk farmers' protests in Scunthorpe by promising talks with the campaign group Farmers for Action.

The move has been announced after Nisa became the first convenience group to be targeted by around 50 farmers who protested outside Nisa's distribution centre last month.

# NEWS BUSINESS

## Tesco market share at 10-year low

The UK's big four supermarkets are continuing to lose market share to discount rivals Lidl and Aldi, according to the latest figures from Kantar Wordpanel.

Tesco's share of the UK grocery market hit a 10-year low as the multiple recorded a drop in sales for the fifth month in a row.

Sales at the supermarket fell 0.9% in the 12 weeks to 16 August while its market share also dipped from 28.8% to 28.3%, its lowest level since December 2004.

During the same period, Asda's sales declined by 2.5% while Morrisons' were also down 1.1%. In contrast, Aldi and Lidl saw their sales rise by 18% and 12.8% respectively.

## Bestway app hits 10,000 downloads

A mobile app developed for Bestway has reached a milestone with users downloading it 10,000 times.

The app, which was produced in conjunction with RNF digital, boasts functions including previous order history and a built-in product scanner with real-time product catalogue and availability details.

Dawood Pervez, Bestway marketing director, said: "To have the app downloaded 10,000 times is not only a great success for the group, but also shows how customers are embracing new technologies to help them trade more profitably."



## Spar and Jet get together in south Ayrshire rebrand

Spar and forecourt operator Jet have unveiled their first dual-branded store, which opened in south Ayrshire this month. Jet Maybole, a former Premier business, has made several improvements to its on-site shop, including quadrupling the floor space and adding a post office, Lottery and Costa coffee services. Brian Connolly, owner of the business, said: "Running this size of store, we needed guidance and Spar has really helped us throughout the redevelopment process."

**Big DL also adds brands to its e-points reward scheme** News UK, Birds Eye and Tetley sign up

# GoKart's stock ordering app launches on Android

by Steven Lambert

Retail stock replenishment app GoKart is targeting more independent stores with the launch of an Android version and a new wholesaler partnership.

The technology will be available on Android-enabled devices from this week, which GoKart founder Anx Patel said would allow easier ordering for multi-site retailers.

"We're really excited about our latest version of GoKart," said Mr Patel. "Our development of

GoKart is led by our users, and it is their input that can be seen in our latest release.

"What this means is that each link of our supply chain can now help individual businesses with targeted help, rather than the one size fits all message we've become used to."

At the same time, GoKart announced it is working with London-based suppliers Y&C Wholesale, the first kosher-approved wholesaler in the UK.

Mr Patel said: "Specialist

wholesalers like Y&C enable independent retailers to have a true point of difference in tune with their local customer base, something the multiples really struggle to do."

Meanwhile, retail technology firm Big DL announced it is incorporating a number of high-profile brands into its e-points reward scheme to drive sales for convenience retailers.

The company said it will partner with News UK, Birds Eye, Tetley, Molson Coors and other suppliers

to introduce more product deals for shoppers through its app and beacon technology.

Big DL previously announced it has launched its technology in several symbol group chains, including Londis, Spar, Nisa, Premier and Simply Fresh.

Chief executive Matt Norbury said: "Having shown impressive results during its pilot roll out, we are confident in Big DL's impact on both sales and customer experience in participating stores."

## Lantmännen spots six bakery trends

Lantmännen Unibake claims it will help retailers and food service providers grow sales of sweet bakery lines by £59m during the next five years with its latest category management plans.

In its latest research, the company has identified six

trends it believes will be key to increasing awareness and profit from bake-off, thaw & serve and scratch bakery goods.

These include 'Rise & Shine', which looks at highlighting breakfast products such as croissants to target 29% of people who

eat breakfast on the move once a month.

Lantmännen is also urging retailers to introduce more premium options and lines suitable for lunch boxes and evening purchases. It adds that 55% of all sweet bakery goods are consumed with a hot drink.

Marketing manager Rachel Shoosmith said: "Targeting six key sweet bakery category motivators over the next five years presents a significant growth opportunity for operators who can capitalise on these insights and shape their strategies accordingly."

## NEWSTRIDE

**Drive to boost i sales north of the border** 'Great example of supplier working with NFRN'

# Independent terms deal offers double delights

by Gurpreet Samrai

Scottish NFRN and Menzies Superleague members are being given the chance to double their terms in an exclusive offer being run by the Independent.

More than 1,500 retailers will receive double terms on all sales of its i newspaper – 20p per copy – for the two weeks between 7 and 19 September, on the proviso they sell more during that period than the

previous week, 31 August to 5 September.

Retailers will receive posters to support the promotion and are encouraged to display copies near the till and double-face the title.

The publisher will also be handing out free copies at major travel points and posting copies through letterboxes, both with vouchers for a week's worth of free copies included to "drive footfall into stores".

Rob Stacey, sales and marketing manager, said: "This all follows on from an increase in sales and engagement the i experienced on the back of both the referendum and recent general election.

"We are committed to building on this success, to build sales across all independent retailers throughout Scotland.

"As such we will have an increased merchandising presence across the

country and extra editorial resource to complement this activity."

The Scottish offer follows a successful trial of the promotion in Devon and Cornwall in June.

Brian Murphy, head of news at the NFRN, said: "This promotion is a great example of a supplier working with the NFRN to grow their sales and we look forward to extending this opportunity to our other districts."

## Two new winners for Topps

Collectables publisher Topps is set to launch two new products to capture the back-to-school market.

The Shopkins sticker and album collection will launch on 17 September based on the popular grocery-themed characters from the world of Shopville. The album is aimed at girls aged five and over. There will be 230 stickers to collect and the starter album retails at £2.99.

Later in September, Topps will launch Match Attax Collector Guide. The football swap card magazine will feature limited edition cards with 160,000 in supply in total. Each pack contains



five standard cards, four collectable cards plus one limited edition card and there will be four editions of the magazine, each one featuring five Premiership teams.

There are 20 Premiership teams in total.

Mark Dudden, owner of Albany News in Cardiff, said: "At this time of year I go through all my summer

stock of magazines and weed out the non-sellers. As soon as children go back to school, the swap cards start selling well and that becomes my focus."

## Women's weeklies merge

Two women's weeklies have merged with the aim of pushing print circulation beyond 100,000.

OMG! Magazine, published by ACH Publishing, has taken over Essex-based Love It. It has been running since 2006, when it recorded a figure of 400,000, but its circulation has been steadily declining to around 53,000 currently.

The magazine's new editor Paul Carter said he wanted to take the new title, which will cost 65p, past the 100,000 readership mark.

## Boost for ST rugby

The Sunday Times Scotland is to step up its sports coverage in advance of the Rugby World Cup.

The newspaper has appointed experienced rugby writer Mark Palmer as its dedicated Scottish rugby correspondent to cover all the action at home and abroad. The paper is also increasing its business coverage with the appointment of former business editor of the Scotsman, Michael Glackin, as Scottish business correspondent.

## Shoreham respects

As a mark of respect, 12 sister dailies turned their mastheads black in memory of the 11 people killed at the Shoreham air disaster last month.

Johnston Press newspapers in Sussex made the decision after the vintage Hawker Hunter jet crashed on the A27 during the Shoreham Airshow.

A percentage of the purchase price of the newspapers will also go to the victims and their families.

## Mags and papers still top readers' choice

Print magazines and newspapers still top readers' choice of accessing media content, the National Readership Survey has revealed.

The survey, which is

released every quarter, estimates quarterly print and digital data alongside annual mobile and tablet readership.

The survey found that 83% (42.8 million) of British

adults read a print magazine every month, while 72% consume newspaper or magazine content via their mobile or PC.

Research manager David Hart said: "With each

release we see a very slight decline in the print figures, but those numbers are still high and in most cases still account for the bulk of the consumption for a lot of brands."

# NEWS

## PRODUCTS

### Chilling out time for Coors drinkers

Molson Coors is giving away cold-themed prizes to shoppers under its latest on-pack promotion running on Coors Light.

The 'Subzer-O° Adventures' activity will see codes appearing on 3.8 million participating Coors Light cans and bottles.

Buyers can enter these codes on the Coors Light website to see if they have won one of the prizes, which include glacier hiking in Iceland and Olympic bobsledding in Austria.

It continues the theme from Coors Light's last campaign, which included the beer brand giving away 450,000 'Stay Cold' drinks coasters to consumers.

### Limited editions for Amber

JTI has unveiled the second wave of limited edition tins for its Amber Leaf rolling tobacco.

The new packs have been designed by letterpress artists and will 'celebrate the craft of rolling', according to the company.

The 12.5g pouch, which will come pre-filled with rolling papers, is available for the next four to six weeks.

Jeremy Blackburn, head of communications at JTI, said: "The success of last year's limited edition tins with existing adult smokers means they are a must-stock for all retailers looking to maximise their sales."

**Humorous ads emphasise 'cultural relevance' of a cuppa** Latest brand development

## PG Tips ready to brew up £5m of Monkey business

by Steven Lambert

Unilever is aiming to attract younger shoppers to the tea sector with a huge £5m campaign supporting its PG Tips range.

The marketing scheme will encourage the public to 'Keep It Tea', and will include the brand's popular Monkey character starring in a series of four 10-second TV adverts running from now until November.

The ads will include playful digs at the TV show Masterchef and trends such as smoothies and coffee bars, and will be used to show the 'continued cultural relevance' of tea, according to Unilever.

Kate Hearn, senior brand manager at PG Tips, said:



"Through our Keep It Tea campaign and new packaging we are making PG tips more relevant to shoppers, especially younger people.

"By making black tea more appealing to today's consumers, we will be supporting not only PG tips but

the category as a whole."

It marks the latest attempt by Unilever to widen the appeal of PG Tips this year.

The brand underwent a complete packaging overhaul in June to give it greater standout on

retailers' shelves, which it claimed was its biggest milestone since the launch of its pyramid bags in 1996.

PG Tips was expanded further in July with the addition of three new flavours - Assam, Earl Grey and English Breakfast.

## KP to cash in on pre-Christmas nuts rush

KP Snacks is ramping up activity on its nuts range in the Christmas run-up with new flavours and packs.

The firm revealed it is bringing back its KP Nuts caddy pack in three flavours - Dry Roasted Peanuts, Honey Roast Peanuts and

Jumbo Salted Peanuts (RRP £4). It will be joined by the latest flavour being added to the KP Nuts XL range, Crunchy Coated Sweet Chili and Lemon (£4).

KP Snacks said the move will take advantage of the fact that 40% of KP Nuts

sales take place during the festive season.

Matt Collins, trading controller at KP Snacks, said: "Research shows that consumer spending is increasing year on year, so we know there is a huge opportunity for retailers to

drive sales and profits at this vital time of year."

Meanwhile, KP is giving a seasonal makeover to packs of Pom-Bear Snowmen and Hula Hoops Stars (both £2.19) and will also launch Salt & Vinegar Reindeer Bites (£3).

## Richmond announces rugby-themed sausage trio

Kerry Foods is following up last week's Fridge Raiders Scrum'my Chargrilled Chicken with another rugby-themed launch for its Richmond sausages.

The firm is adding three limited edition Richmond

flavours this month, at the same time as the nation prepares to tune in to the Rugby World Cup.

The new variants - Scrum Cumberland, Line-out Lincolnshire and Penalty Pork & Leek - will be comple-

mented with a packaging makeover for Richmond original sausages, which will carry designs featuring rugby imagery.

Joe Hunter, Richmond brand manager, said: "We are confident that our new

limited edition variants will grow the sausage category during a period featuring key sporting events in the UK."

The limited edition lines will be available in packs of eight and will be supported with PoS material.

### Hot products for your shopping list



Amber Leaf rolling tobacco comes in new limited edition tins



Cold-themed prizes feature on Coors' on-pack promotion



KP has new flavours and packs ready for pre-Christmas sales

## PRODUCTS

**Joint promotion on Doritos, Walkers and Pepsi Max** Chance to win tickets to group games

# PepsiCo is 'Game Ready' for Champions League

by Steven Lambert

PepsiCo is gearing up for the return of the UEFA Champions League with a new football-themed promotion running across its Doritos, Walkers and Pepsi Max brands.

The 'Game Ready' promotion launches next Saturday and will offer shoppers the chance to win trips to Champions League matches during the group stages. PepsiCo is giving away one match trip each day until

12 November, with customers able to enter by using codes on participating crisp and soft drink packs. It will also offer winners money to cover travel expenses and accommodation in a four star hotel.

It marks PepsiCo's first consumer activity around the Champions League since being unveiled as an official partner of the tournament for the 2015/16 season in June.

It is also the first time the company has run a

campaign simultaneously across both its food and beverage brands across Europe.

Kathryn Swarbrick, head of marketing at PepsiCo, said the Game Ready campaign would give the manufacturer and retailers "great opportunities" to grow brand awareness and sales during the event.

"The UEFA Champions League is consistently one of the most exciting football tournaments in the world and it's great to kick off our new sponsorship with a

campaign that gives football fans the opportunity to take a trip to see football live in the stadium. Our Game Ready campaign is built around the nation's love for football and we expect it to be extremely successful," she said.

PepsiCo is backing the scheme with a multimedia marketing campaign and PoS material, along with TV sponsorship, stadium branding and interview backdrops during Champions League games.

## McVitie's Halloween treats

United Biscuits (UB) is helping retailers take advantage of the £300m Halloween market with a new range from its McVitie's Cake Company business.

The seasonal line-up includes the brand's first sharing carton, a 'Trick or Treat House' pack (RRP £2.50) containing two Jaffa Cake Bars in Halloween-style packaging.

UB is also bringing back Spooky Zingy Orange and Scary Lemon & Slime Jaffa Cake Bar flavours (£1).

The manufacturer said overall Halloween sales are expected to grow by more than 12% this year, with retail sales value for its cakes set to hit £1m.

It also follows on from rival snack company Premier Foods unveiling updated Halloween packaging and new lines for its cake range.

Claire Hooper, senior brand manager at McVitie's Cake Company, said: "Only a decade ago, consumer spending on Halloween constituted just £12m and now the industry is worth more than £300m. This represents a major opportunity for cakes."

## Quaker runs TV ads for granola

Quaker Oats is returning to TV screens this month with a campaign promoting its granola cereal products.

The ads will be used to promote Quakers Oats Granola, Warm & Crunchy Oat Clusters and Whole-some Crunch lines under the strapline 'Quaker. Keep the goodness going'. It will also highlight the products' benefits as being a high source of fibre and helping to lower cholesterol levels.

Duncan McKay, senior marketing manager at Quaker, said: "With only two in 10 UK households consuming granola today, the sector has enormous headroom for growth."



### Rugby stars out for Heineken's World Cup 2015 launch

Heineken kicked off its Rugby World Cup 2015 campaign with a star-studded event at London's Somerset House last Wednesday, with guests including former players Will Carling, Jonah Lomu and Matt Dawson (pictured above). More than 900 people attended the show, for which the venue was transformed into a rugby stadium and featured a live set from British band Everything Everything.

## Budgens' fresh fish

Budgens is widening its range of fresh and breaded fish with new lines from supplier Kirwin Bros.

The products range from smoked salmon and breaded fish cakes through to scallops and haddock filets, and are available to be delivered to stores six days a week.

### Hot products for your shopping list



Quaker Oats is back on TV with ads for its granola cereals



Budgens now offers a range of Kirwin Bros fish products



Scary Jaffa Cake bars return in McVitie's Halloween campaign

# NEWS

## REGIONAL

### Bottled benefits

Lancashire retailers have reported soaring sales of bottled water following the discovery of a vomiting and diarrhoea bug in tap water supplies.

More than 300,000 homes have been affected, with residents unable to drink or brush their teeth with unboiled tap water since the beginning of August, when traces of the parasite cryptosporidium were discovered in the water supply.

Lee Hardacre, manager of Spar Penwortham in Preston, said his store's soft drinks sales were up 52%, with the bulk of the increase attributed to bottled water sales.

In the three weeks to 23 August, 8,075 litres of water were sold at the shop, with around one in every three customers buying water, he said.

Last week, United Utilities declared it was safe for thousands of homes to drink tap water, but around 150,000 remained affected as RN went to press.



### Spar man's close shave for charity

Spar store manager Richard Harries 'braved the shave' and raised £650 for Macmillan Cancer Support. Mr Harries shaved off his hair and beard, had his legs waxed and wore make-up to work at his Milford Haven store. He said he took part in the event because his mother had cancer and he understood the importance of the support the charity provides to cancer sufferers and their families. The donation included a £150 match fund from the Blakemore Foundation.

**Store owner estimates additional £20k per year to raise wages by 30p** 'Perks are affordable'

## Retailers offer 'perks' in light of living wage costs

by Helena Drakakis

Retailers who wish to retain staff but are not able to pay the recommended living wage are increasingly offering additional perks to supplement their employees' wages.

Leanne McGowan of Icon Stores, Aberdeen, told RN that while she would like to pay staff the recommended living wage, she estimates it would cost her an extra £20,000 per year to

raise wages by 30p.

To bridge the gap and retain her workforce, she has opted to offer her staff a range of perks such as AA breakdown cover and a Tastecard. The benefits are accessed via a scheme called Perkbox, which launched in the UK in June and allows small business owners to offer staff discounts and benefits only previously available to corporates.

High Wycombe retailer Raaj Chandarana said he

also offers his staff benefits, including mobile phone insurance, two for one restaurant deals, cinema vouchers and cashback at many high street stores.

He said: "I will always abide by the law. When the minimum wage increases I will fall in line. Until then, I will also do what I can to keep staff loyal and improve their morale."

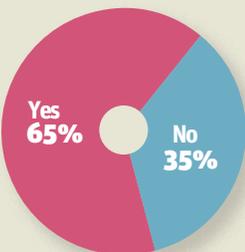
"I've found giving them perks is affordable and they like it too. Anyone who is

able to pay their staff a living wage must be charging their customers way over the odds, so this works for me."

The national minimum wage currently stands at £6.50 and will rise to £6.70 next month. The National Living Wage of £7.20 for over-25s will be introduced in April 2016.

The current recommended living wage, set by the independent Living Wage Foundation, is £7.85.

### RN READER POLL



If you are a scratchcard-only store, will you opt out of paying £50 a month for the full Lottery service?

### NEXT WEEK'S QUESTION

Do you think your staff would accept perks over higher pay?



Have your vote now

Go to [betterretailing.com](http://betterretailing.com)

## Cilla Black tributes lift sales

Newspaper sales in Liverpool rose significantly following the death of singer and TV presenter Cilla Black.

Following the news of the star's death on 3 August, the Liverpool Echo, the city's main paper, ran a special tribute edition which resulted in a sales uplift of 5,000 copies.

A further sales increase

of 1,000 copies was reported the following day, as reaction and tributes were printed, while the inquest and the announcement that the Liverpoolian's funeral would take place in the city resulted in an additional 3,000 copies of the Echo being sold.

Coverage of the star's funeral in the Trinity Mirror title, which highlighted

how the city had joined together to bid farewell to 'our Cilla', also sparked a sales increase.

The headline on this edition captured one of Cilla's famous catch phrases 'Lorra lorra love' and sold an extra 5,500 copies.

Garry Critchley, owner of McNaughton's Newsagents, said: "We were



significantly busier, being right on the funeral route, and without doubt sold a lot more newspapers."

## REGIONAL

**NFRN calls for English levy to include all businesses** 'Introduction of levy alone is not enough'

# N. Ireland single-use bag use rises by 8.2 per cent

by Gurpreet Samrai

Figures that reveal use of single-use carrier bags has increased by 8.2% in Northern Ireland in the second year since the introduction of a levy have prompted a fresh call for all businesses to be included in England's upcoming charge.

The statistics, released by the Department of the Environment last week, showed that despite an

initial decrease in the first year of the levy (from 300 million to 84.5 million), the number of bags then rose by almost seven million to 91.5 million in 2014/15.

The findings have prompted a fresh call from the NFRN for small businesses to be included in the upcoming English levy, which will require all businesses in England which employ 250 or more staff to charge a minimum of 5p for

single-use carrier bags from 5 October.

Small businesses can voluntarily adopt the charge, but the NFRN and Association of Convenience Stores believe all businesses should be included.

Paul Baxter, NFRN chief executive, said: "These figures show that despite the best efforts of the Northern Ireland Executive to reduce the amount of single-use carrier bags being used, the

introduction of a levy alone is not enough.

"The NFRN is concerned that by excluding small businesses in England the Westminster government's levy will not have the desired outcome."

The NFRN is encouraging its members to introduce a voluntary levy and has produced a poster retailers can display to make their customers aware of their intention to charge.

## Lancashire Telegraph and The Sunday Herald post rises

The Lancashire Telegraph was the best-performing UK regional daily in the first half of 2015, according to regional ABC figures published last week.

It was the only regional daily to post a year-on-year increase in print circulation, at 1.6%.

Channel Island dailies the Guernsey Press & Star and Jersey Evening Post had the next best performances at -3.7% and -3.9% respectively.

Meanwhile, The Sunday Herald was the only paid-for weekly title to record a circulation rise with an increase of 15.5% year on year to 29,009.

## Scottish Grocer's Federation has new president

A high-profile industry figure with a multi-award-winning store is set to become the next president of the Scottish Grocer's Federation.

Dennis Williams, who has a Booker Premier store in Edinburgh, was appointed vice-president last week. Mr Williams will become president when Abdul Majid steps down next year.

Meanwhile, Iain Wilson was appointed junior vice-president. Mr Wilson has two Nisa stores in Dundee and has worked for a number of leading suppliers including Kellogg's, Coca-Cola and SmithKline Beecham.

## Brierley Hill shop offers free food

Shopkeeper Chas Singh is dishing out free home-cooked food for cash-strapped local people every Sunday evening at his Premier High Street Convenience Store in Brierley Hill. Between 50 and 70 people regularly take up the offer, which includes curries, samosas, fruit and hot and cold drinks. The initiative costs Mr Singh between £100-150 a week, but he says he is determined to keep it going for as long as he can.



## Pennington One Stop expansion keeps it in the family

Pennington retailer Umesh Gola marked his first anniversary with the One Stop Franchise with the completion of a major expansion. The shop, which has moved from its previous unit in the parade of shops he owns, has trebled in size to 1,614sq ft and extended all ranges including chilled, grocery, frozen and alcohol. Mr Gola kept his store trading during the 12-month expansion, and added 'working with Khushal's' to the shop's signage to name it after his son.

## Illicit tobacco sales cause closure woes

One in eight corner shop owners have considered closing their shops due to lost sales caused by the illicit tobacco market, a new survey has revealed.

The survey by the Tobacco Retailers' Alliance (TRA) also found that more than half (57%) are aware of

smuggled and counterfeit products being sold in their area. A total of 73% of the 256 retailers surveyed also believe that smuggling and cross-border purchases will increase in the next 12 months. This coincides with the introduction of regulations banning the

sale of cigarette packs of less than 20 and packs under 30g of hand-rolling tobacco.

Suleman Khonat, Blackburn retailer and the national spokesman for the TRA, said: "These results are deeply concerning. The UK is awash in illegal

tobacco driven by the high taxation on tobacco products which makes the UK such a magnet for tobacco smugglers. This is all very alarming for the future of small retailers who generate about a third (30%) of their turnover from tobacco products."

# OPINION

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## YOUR SAY Which council policies supporting local shops should be a priority in your area?

### Chris Rolfe

The Market Square Food & Wine, East Grinstead, Sussex

Parking and business rates should definitely be priorities. I think our town has some of the highest business rates.

The other end of town has loads of empty shops so it would help to fill those.

We used to have 20 minutes free parking outside the shop, but they're charging for that now which makes it much more difficult for people to park and people complain about it.

We have parking at the back of the shop so we're lucky, but it does affect other businesses' footfall.

### Vip Measuria

One Stop at The Prior Way, Borrowwash, Derbyshire

Parking should be a priority -



having a parking area for my customers would increase my business.

Also, the council stipulate to premises licence holders that they have to have a number of cameras as part of their CCTV systems.

When things happen outside your store the council and police come in and ask shopkeepers to spend hours of their valuable time shifting through CCTV footage.

We play a part in the community and would do it, but the council should also put its own

CCTV up around the village so they can monitor the streets themselves.

### Jay Patel

Jay's Budgens, Crofton Park, London

The burning issue is the opening of all these minimarkets and supermarkets like Sainsbury's. The council should consider safeguarding local small businesses when looking at these applications. But the local authority just says there's no way you can stop them.

## YOUR STOCK How have you expanded your range to attract affluent shoppers?

### Bintesh Amin

Blean Village Londis, Canterbury, Kent

We have a premium range of vodkas and whiskeys for the top end of the market, but we actually cut our selection so we have a balance between the premium market, the standard everyday stuff and own

brand products.

More affluent shoppers tend to come in to just grab something and go, because they're shopping online and using delivery options.

We're in an affluent village, but most of our customers are working-class people. It doesn't work in our shop, but we do have an offering for them.

### Bay Bashir

Lifestyle Express Belle Vue Convenience Store, Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire

We will be doing a refit early next year and are looking at how we can attract more affluent shoppers.

We are speaking to suppliers, Blakemore and others to see what needs to be improved. We are trying to increase our fresh and chilled offering.

### Bal Ghuman

A K Convenience, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

Fresh produce is something that Booker has helped us with greatly. They have expanded their range of fresh meat which has helped.

We also stock things like prosecco, quality wine and premium lager. What's also important is presentation, being clean and tidy, and having a friendly atmosphere, because when it comes to people spending money it's not always about price.



## LETTERS

✉ letters@newtrade.co.uk  
☎ 020 7689 0600  
@RetailNewsagent



The opinions on this page do not necessarily represent those of the editor

Letters may be altered by the editor for reasons of clarity or of length

## CAMELOT SELLING ME SHORT ON SCRATCHCARDS

I have been having a problem with Camelot, which has not been loading my scratchcard terminal with new cards for the past three months.

I have 12 dispensers – six are full, but six are empty.

I telephoned Camelot and was told I was supposed to have been sent some, but they must have got lost. Camelot suggested I double-face the six types of card I have. But I have three £3 cards and two are missing, so I will need to triple-face the cards I have got.

The system clearly doesn't work. As it is computer-generated it is not possible to report out-of-stocks. But at the same time Camelot is introducing a new system rolling out the full Lottery service to 9,000 scratchcard-only stores. How do we know these retailers won't have the same problem?

This has been going on for months and it's not good enough. I have been a Lottery



retailer since day one and I feel mistreated.

**Davendra Patel**  
This N That,  
Plaistow,  
London

**A Camelot spokesperson responded:**

*"A member of the team will get in touch with Mr Patel to discuss his concerns and explain why his stock levels are set how they are. We are confident our automated replenishment system is working effectively across our estate."*

### My deliveries are the worst they have been in 45 years

We have been newsagents for nearly 45 years but have never encountered such poor delivery times as we are experiencing at the moment.

We open at 5am. Our agreed RDT is 5.50am, which, up until 14 months ago, never caused a problem.

Deliveries were made by a contract van driver who generally arrived between 5.15am and 5.45am. When reruns occurred they were often before 7.00am when our deliveries go out.

Now we constantly get deliveries after 5.50am and often as late as 6.30am. This cannot continue. I've already had to employ ex-

tra staff to ensure rounds are ready before the paperkids go to school. Tesco Express, which is less than 10 metres from me, and the Co-op, 100 metres away, receive their papers before their opening time of 6.00am.

This means my customers buy their newspapers from the supermarkets while I am still waiting for mine to be delivered.

I have spoken to Menzies to ask why our papers are delivered late and am often told they were late from the publishers, yet that doesn't explain why the supermarkets, which open an hour later, have received theirs at least half an hour before me.

Where is the support for independent retailers who do all the work delivering guaranteed sales of news seven days a week? Without us, the supermarkets will

demand direct supplies and there will be no need for wholesalers.

I request an urgent review of this matter and await details of how service to my business will be improved.

**G R Bowden**  
Richards Newsagents  
17 Northwich Road  
Weaverham  
Cheshire

**Menzies did not respond to RN's request for a reply to this letter.**

### Anger over my missing supplements

Last Sunday, we received no Express magazines and only half our Sun magazines because Menzies forgot to pack them. We had to deliver the papers without the supplements and had customers asking for them for days afterwards.

Telephoning Menzies at least a dozen times and feeling like I was talking to a brick wall made it worse.

These problems are damaging my business. Please Menzies, improve your service.

**Sean Mashru**  
Tarpots Newsagents  
Benfleet, Essex

**Menzies did not respond to RN's request for a reply to this letter.**

### I'm also having credits issues with News UK

I was interested to read Manish Mehta's letter last week about his problems with News UK processing his returns credits, because I have the same issue.

Last week, I sent 10 copies of the Sun back and was credited for eight. I checked them, so I know

my numbers were right, but it's my word against News UK's.

This happens far too regularly, but running a busy store means I can't spend ages on the phone sorting credits out, and there's no one I can forward my complaint to.

I would be interested to hear how many other retailers are struggling with this.

**Nainesh Shah**  
Mayhew News,  
London

**A News UK spokesperson said:** "At News UK we pride ourselves on our first class operations that are fully focussed on customer satisfaction and delivery. We are confident in our systems and continue to work with our all our retailers to ensure we deliver the best customer service. If retailers have any concerns they can contact our dedicated customer services team on 01992 221 800."

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# JOHN EASTWOOD

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As children go back to school, parents will no longer be buying certain high-sugar soft drinks from Tesco's kids' aisles. But how are headline-hitting health concerns affecting purchasing habits in this category? John Eastwood looks at four major brands to find out

## Are your sales still sweet?



**T**esco's recent decision to remove certain high-sugar soft drinks from children's food and drinks aisles brought ever-growing and widely-reported concerns that sugar content is fuelling health problems in young people back into the headlines.

So for this month's column, I decided to look at soft drinks sales in our 2,600 independent stores to judge how four major brands which offer a mix of full sugar, diet, low-calorie and no-sugar variants have performed since 2011. I analysed sales, share of sales and distribution to discover whether, in the midst of these ever-present headlines, shopping habits have changed.

To begin with, I examined the overall soft drinks market, excluding water, to chart the performance of drinks that are considered to be healthier options. This year to date, this healthier sector accounts for 13.6% of the market, up from 12.6%, in 2014.

Looking next at the total Coca-Cola brand, 2015 figures to the end of July show a decline in value sales of 3.7%. Original Coca-Cola and Diet Coke variants fell by 6.1%, Vanilla and Cherry remained unchanged, while sales of the other low-calorie brands, Coca-Cola Zero and Life, improved by 66% or £2m, helped,



**This healthier sector accounts for 13.6% of the market, up from 12.6%, in 2014**



**Do you have a good range of healthier options?**

no doubt, by high-profile activity to back the launch of the latter.

The rise of Diet Coke's low-calorie stablemates is evident in distribution figures too. Original Coca-Cola and Diet Coke are sold in 99% of the sample stores, a figure that has remained fairly consistent since 2011. Since then, however, Diet Coke's share of sales of these two original brands has fallen from 36% to 33%. To some extent this has been offset by the growth of Coca-Cola Zero and Coca-Cola Life. Both of these brands still have lower distribution, but Coca-Cola Zero is now sold in 57% of shops, up from 47% a year ago, and Coca-Cola Life is now sold in 44% of shops after launching in the UK last year.

This pattern can also be seen in sales of Irn-Bru, where 76% of sales came from Scotland in the first seven months of the year.

This brand has a very well-established diet offering, but in 2011 a sugar-free variant was introduced which has enjoyed considerable success, substantially at the expense of Diet Irn-Bru.

In 2011, Diet Irn-Bru accounted for 20% of the brand's sales. This has now fallen to under 6%. This situation is distribution-driven, since Diet Irn-Bru is now available in 46% of Scottish shops as opposed to 91% a year ago. At the same time, Irn-Bru

Sugar Free's distribution has risen from 90% to 98%.

Unlike Coca-Cola and Irn-Bru, however, Red Bull's lower-calorie options have failed to command a significant share of the total brand's sales. This is despite the launch of Red Bull Zero Calories alongside Red Bull Sugar Free last year. Sugar Free is available in 50% of shops, as it was a year ago, whereas Zero Calories has fallen to 11% distribution, from 16% in July 2014.

Lastly, how has the brand most commonly associated with the Tesco story fared? It seems as though the crusade against sugar in soft drinks and Tesco's recent announcement have particularly harmed Ribena's sales. This year, Ribena sales have fallen by over 20% in convenience, with the decline shared equally between regular Ribena and Ribena Light. However, distribution of standard Ribena has remained steady, at 96%, while Ribena Light's has fallen from 29% to 27%.

There is little doubt that while sales of traditional full-sugar variants remain robust, demand for healthier options is growing, albeit steadily. In many cases, however, availability of these products in independent stores is poor or non-existent - a situation retailers need to address. ●

*John Eastwood is a data analyst for EDFM*

# INDUSTRY PROFILE

 **Steven Lambert**  
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 @StevenLambertRN

## Kerry Foods

Retailers of every kind are looking to move into the lucrative fresh and chilled market. Clare Bocking says Kerry Foods' 'Building a Nation of Chilled Experts' activity is about helping stores to achieve this aspiration



### RETAIL NEWSAGENT Can you give us a brief update on your 'Building a Nation of Chilled Experts' activity?

**CLARE BOCKING** Since the launch of Chilled Experts, we've been going round to all the symbol group operators, talking with top people about how their retailers can grow sales of chilled products.

We have also been looking to work with retailers from each symbol group to create testimonials that show other stores what a good fresh and chilled offer looks like. It's still a work in progress but we want to make sure that the initiative is a core part of every symbol group's chilled growth plans.

### RN How have you been growing awareness of the scheme among unaffiliated retailers?

**CB** We've been sharing our advice with Booker and Bestway. We've also been working with Bestway's regional development teams and meeting their business development executives to show why the growth of chilled is essential to the growth of the independent trade.

With Landmark and Today's, because they don't have a centralised chilled logistics network, we will be sharing information with retailers via van sales reps through the Fresh to Store service.

### RN Can you give us examples of how the activity is benefiting independents' chilled sales?

**CB** We are seeing the most success

through our 'build the basket' category - one of three categories we are focusing on - where retailers are building up their existing fresh and chilled offering.

We have been able to help them understand customer missions, how to cross-merchandise chilled with other categories and so on. These retailers have made the initial move and now want to take it to the next step.

### RN What would you say to retailers who see chilled food as being a risky proposition for their business?

**CB** The hardest part is encouraging retailers who are at an entry level in chilled to really embrace the category. We know that the industry

# “

**There's a dramatic shift in mindset if we want to get the c-stores to get to 80% turnover**

is evolving and people are shopping very differently.

What they expect to find in a convenience store is completely different to 12-18 months ago and chilled is almost becoming a benchmark category in these stores.

We're trying to take that perceived risk of chilled away with our campaign.

### RN Retail experts say fresh and chilled goods could represent as much as 80% of a c-store's turnover by 2020. Do you agree with this?

**CB** It is an aspirational figure and there will be stores that will become 'destination chilled'. However, around about 4% of an average wholesaler's revenue comes from chilled at the moment. From a retail perspective that's quite small. When you look at an average symbol, chilled is around 10% to 15% of their turnover. There's a dramatic shift in mindset if we want to get the c-stores to get to 80% turnover.

### RN How will you look to support Chilled Experts in future to further benefit independents?

**CB** In any change programme, it's a slow and steady process. To support this, we need to make sure our chilled brands are in the right packs and offer pricemarking to help add value, as well as making sure we drive product innovation that fits the category.

It's more about evolution than revolution if we want to make this sustainable.

## \*\* Company CV \*\*

**Company** Kerry Foods  
**Convenience sales director** Clare Bocking  
**Profile** Kerry Foods is on a mission to unlock £1.5bn of chilled food sales for convenience retailers by 2018 following the launch of its 'Building a Nation of Chilled Experts' blueprint in April, which is designed to cover all levels of retailers' chilled food expertise.

**Latest news** This month, the firm has unveiled its rugby-themed Mattessons Fridge Raiders Scrum'my Chargrilled Chicken flavour to grow sales around the Rugby World Cup.



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# PRICEWATCH CIDER

## PRE-MIXED CIDER PRICES AROUND THE UK

PRODUCT	AVERAGE	RRP	RETAILER 1	RETAILER 2	RETAILER 3	RETAILER 4	RETAILER 5
<b>Frosty Jack's</b> 3l	£4.15	£4.29	£3.50	-	£4.49	-	-
<b>Strongbow</b> 2l	£3.33	£3.35	£2.99	£3.79	£3.25 (Promotion)	£3.35	-
<b>Strongbow 15-pack</b> 440ml	£12.68	£13.49	£10.99	-	-	£10.00	-
<b>Lambrini</b> 1.5l	£3.45	£3.49	£2.99	£2.79	£3.49	£3.49	-
<b>Strongbow 4-pack</b> 500ml	£4.11	£4.19	£4.00	£3.99	-	£4.19	-
<b>K Cider</b> 500ml	£1.45	£1.55	-	£5.29 (4-pack)	£1.50	-	-
<b>Scrumpy Jack</b> 440ml+13.5%	£1.36	£1.49	-	£4.49 (4-pack)	£1.39	-	-
<b>Bulmers No.17</b> 568ml	£2.32	-	-	£2.20 (2 for £4)	£1.50 (Promotion)	£1.79	-
<b>Strongbow 4-pack</b> 568ml	£5.36	£5.65	£5.00	£4.99	-	£5.65	-
<b>Strongbow Dark Fruits 4-pack</b> 500ml	£5.35	£5.65	£5.00	£4.49	-	£5.65	-
<b>Kopparberg Mixed Fruit</b> 500ml	£2.47	£2.59	£2.00	£2.20 (2 for £4)	£2.29 (3 for £5)	£2.30	-
<b>Kopparberg Strawberry</b> 500ml	£2.46	£2.59	£2.00	£2.20 (2 for £4)	£2.29 (3 for £5)	£2.30	-

## Pricing strategies

### RETAILER

# 1



**NAME RAJWINDER KAUR**

**STORE** Lifestyle Express Newhouse Mini Market

**LOCATION** Kilburnie

**SIZE** 1,800sq ft

**TYPE** main road

We're doing really well with our ciders. About three months ago I had a Heineken rep come in and offer me good advice on where to position my drinks. Since then I've reordered and seen sales grow. Now, all my fruit ciders are together, and my dry ciders and sweet ciders too. I often sell below the RRP because I want to attract footfall. I offer dry cleaning and hot food and we've got a post office too. Cider buyers always buy something else, so I'm thinking of knock-on sales.

### RETAILER

# 2



**NAME MIN MYINT**

**STORE** Bargain Booze,

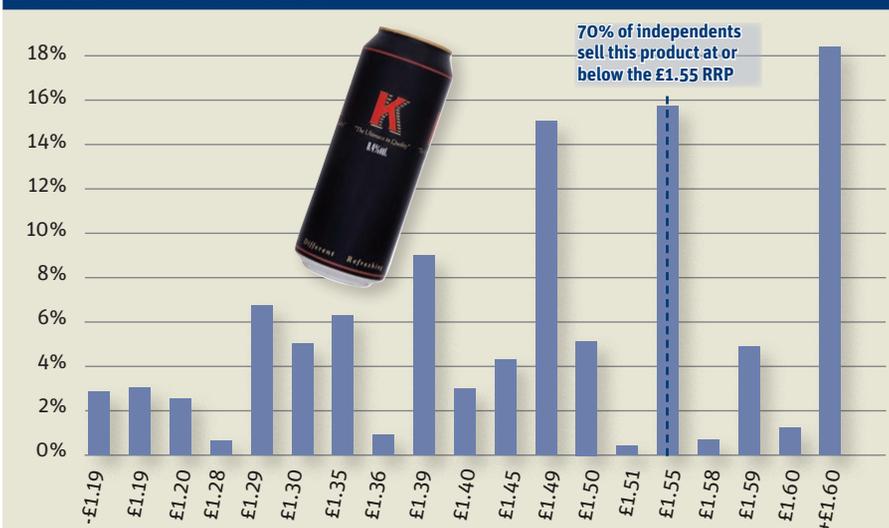
**LOCATION** Bermondsey, London

**SIZE** 600sq ft

**TYPE** main road

We have some very good cider deals from Bargain Booze, with Kopparberg and Bulmers bottles at two for £4, and we also have special promotions of three for £5. We've only been open for six weeks but these are helping to bring people back to the shop because we're seen as offering good value. Margins on cider are not the biggest but we sell it in large quantities, which makes up for it. Our bestsellers are K Cider, Scrumpy Jack, Bulmers and Kopparberg.

## K CIDER Price distribution %



Average selling prices and best-selling products rankings are sourced by EDFM Ltd from EPOS data from over 2,000 independent retailers throughout the UK. The prices given on this page are the prices at point of purchase.

RRPs are sourced from Booker and are correct at time of going to print.

 **Nadia Alexandrou**  
 nadia.alexandrou@newtrade.co.uk  
 020 7689 3350

**RETAILER****3****NAME** VIP MEASURIA**STORE** One Stop at The Prior Way**LOCATION** Borrowwash, Derby**SIZE** 1,800sq ft**TYPE** neighbourhood

We have some flexibility with pricing, but generally it's the same price across all One Stop stores. We have offers on some new flavours at the moment including Bulmers Zesty Blood Orange, as well as some of the new Thatchers and Savanna Premium Cider Dry. The Bulmers are selling really well, as well as the Strongbow Dark Fruits.

**RETAILER****4****NAME** NADEEM HANIF**STORE** F&K Stores**LOCATION** Rotherham**SIZE** 1,000ft**TYPE** council estate

In a three-mile radius we have 13 other competing independent stores so we need to keep an eye on our prices. In cider, sales of Rekorderlig and Kopparberg have been steadily increasing while sales of Bulmers have fallen. We display ciders in a large fridge alongside our beers and lagers. Lagers are our top sellers with super-strengths next. Cider probably fulfils our third category and we tend to stick to RRP. There are times when we do knock our prices down and run special offers. Given our competition it's important that we generate footfall.

**RETAILER****5****NAME** BINTESH AMIN**STORE** Blean Village Londis**LOCATION** Blean, Kent**SIZE** 2,000sq ft**TYPE** neighbourhood

My best-selling ciders are flavoured brands like Kopparberg and Magners. In cans, Strongbow Dark Fruits, original Strongbow and Scrumpy do well. I set my prices in the mid-range to compete with other shops around here as there are a couple of other Londis stores, a Spar and a supermarket nearby. I like to use round price points where I can. Cider is always on offer so I bulk-buy and take a hit on margins. I've recently moved my alcohol around so that ciders are grouped together and multipacks are now for sale in the chiller.



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## ACADEMY IN ACTION

Follow up



## Merchandising

Wrigley's Raj Jadeja visited Amit Patel's store in Stratford, London, in March to help him merchandise it effectively. We catch up with Amit to see the results

### Amit's action plan



-  Put confectionery sharing bags on a single display and increase the number of best-selling sweets
-  Organise a cleaning schedule to take place during quieter times of the day
-  Personalise the counter-top display by including bespoke price labels

### Amit says

"We have grouped our sharing bags together which has created space to add more confectionery lines on our counter. Our sales have gone up since we have been using one of Wrigley's counter-top displays, which is helping us to sell more gum.

"I've also downloaded some online tools to help with our cleaning schedule, which we do when the shop is quiet.

"We recently had a mystery shopper visit and they were surprised at how clean the store was, even when it was so busy."

### Your action plan



Visit [betterRetailing.com/IAA](http://betterRetailing.com/IAA) to find out more about Amit's visit from the IAA, to develop your own action plan and see similar results in your store

# RETAILER PROFILE



## A Tun of great ideas

By offering eye-catching deals, providing friendly banter and excellent services, like Oyster cards, Jimmy Tun's foray into retailing has got off to a good start. And with Bargain Booze, and his family, he has found supportive partners. **Steven Lambert** reports

**A**fter moving from Lytham St Annes to London and looking for new opportunities away from the pharmacy sector, Jimmy Tun decided to open a Bargain Booze store in Bermondsey in July.

Despite the fact he has been operating for just under two months, the business has already established itself within the local community and is seeing steadily increasing sales, with weekly turnover standing at around £13,000 and growing by £500 every week.

Jimmy says: "I'd been looking around for a new business and my financial adviser suggested I go with Bargain Booze.

"I got in contact with Conviviality and, soon after, was in meetings with the area manager and the chief operating officer. I was impressed with the support they were providing, so I went with them."

Working alongside his cousin and business partner, Min, Jimmy has sought to endear himself to residents from the start with eye-catching deals, additional services and by taking on special orders from shoppers.

He says: "Some of our most popular deals are Smirnoff 70cl bottles at £9.99, four Foster's pint cans for £4 and Campo Viejo wine for £4.99, which are all quick sellers."

These are highlighted with an abundance of PoS material, with special offers also displayed on gondola ends and a promotional

stack located near the rear of the business.

In addition, the front counter and a central shelving unit are used to stock confectionery and snacks, while crisps are placed in baskets underneath the chillers to encourage impulse sales. "Link purchases have become very important for us," says Jimmy.

Meanwhile, Oyster card payments and a large range of XO vaping kits and e-liquids are also encouraging repeat visits.

"We're open 8am to 11pm every day, and having Oyster has been helping to attract more people in the morning," says Jimmy. "We're also seeing a growing market for our e-liquids."

Jimmy says he has been keen to promote a family feel within the business. His wife, Sophie, and sister, Esther, help out and his parents, Kyu and Sithu, also provide support.

This has been especially important, he adds, because of his location. The store sits a short walk away from the New Den, home of Millwall Football Club.

"Many of the locals are Millwall fans and it can get pretty rowdy around match days.

"But people who come in can see we're a family-run business and we do like to have a bit of banter. We've had no issues."

Jimmy has also gone the extra mile for customers in several ways by taking up shopper requests for niche alcohol products.

He says: "We had one customer who asked



**I've increased my selection of speciality ales off the back of suggestions from customers"**

**JIMMY TUN**



**Jimmy Tun caters for his customers' needs by ordering in niche alcohol products**



**"I got in contact with Conviviality and, soon after, was in meetings with the area manager and the chief operating officer. I was impressed with the support they were providing, so I went with them."**

#### **VISIT MY SHOP**

#### **Bargain Booze**

1C Ilderton Road  
Bermondsey,  
London  
SE16 3JU



if we could get them Natch cider. I said we could, so long as they were prepared to pay a minimum of £10 for stock, and they ended up buying the whole case.

"We had another who was getting married and wanted 14 cases of Kosi Bay wine. When he had a few issues picking it up, we delivered it straight to him."

Looking ahead, Jimmy is planning to grow awareness of the store with a leafletting campaign during freshers' week at the nearby King's College and Goldsmiths campuses.

He is also looking to introduce other grocery lines, such as milk, based on customer feedback, but adds he does not want to stray too far from the off licence model.

"We have a convenience store next door and the family have been running it for 30 years, so we don't want to step on their toes," says Jimmy.

And he is already thinking of opening a second store in Essex, an area he feels would be an ideal fit for the Bargain Booze model.

Jimmy says: "It's still early doors and it has been challenging, but I think with where we're heading and the support we've received from Conviviality, there are even more opportunities out there." ●

**Want to see more of Jimmy's store? Go to [betterretailing.com/jimmy-tun](http://betterretailing.com/jimmy-tun)**



# THE RN INTERVIEW

The display ban had little effect on sales but BAT is supporting retailers through the challenges of the Tobacco Products Directive and plain packaging. Tom Gockelen-Kozlowski reports

## Ron Ridderbeekx



**Ron Ridderbeekx says the display ban hasn't affected sales**

**I**f I ran a project for BAT and couldn't tell my boss what the impact had been it wouldn't wash. I'd be sent packing."

Ron Ridderbeekx, head of legal and external affairs for the tobacco giant, is sitting down with RN almost exactly six months to the day since smaller stores in the UK entered the dark market and says he'd love the government to review the results of the tobacco display ban against its stated objectives.

"I think it's important for a government to make a decision, implement it and review the results," he says.

While law makers don't seem that preoccupied with the impact of just one of the many tobacco regulations they've passed in recent years, the same cannot be said for retailers.

Mr Ridderbeekx says BAT has seen no shift in overall sales since the ban was implemented on 6 April, but other expected effects are burdening retailers.

"It's a big hassle for retailers. It's a bother that costs time."

In addition, he says the effect it has had on gantries means many retailers have had to think carefully about presentation - whether or not they've already worked with a supplier on their solution.

"Retailers need to think about how they want to manage their stores.

Dealing with the display ban doesn't have to be expensive and the cheapest option is to simply buy a shower curtain," he says. "Do they want their store



to look cheap and cheerful or to look good, though? They need to be careful about how they present it to customers."

A key resource for suppliers is their sales teams, who feed back information on how stores have handled market changes, and Mr Ridderbeekx says he's heard of no differences in the ways that retailers have coped in Scotland, where regulations are tighter, and England.

Yet one less obvious effect of the dark market on retailers has been that staff retention is now even more vital, with each new employee taking time to learn where every product is housed on the gantry.

"The job has become more skilled," Mr Ridderbeekx says.

The skill level needed for a c-store cashier if they are to abide by regulation will only rise in the next 18 months as both the Tobacco Products Directive (TPD) and plain packaging come into force.

It's one reason why not only BAT's sales team, but also its online category advice initiative MORE, is such a priority for its UK operation.

Interview by **Tom Gockelen-Kozlowski**  
 email [tom.gk@newtrade.co.uk](mailto:tom.gk@newtrade.co.uk)  
 tel 020 7689 3361



**With more upcoming legislation staff training and retention is even more important**

“We’ll be communicating through the MORE programme and want to get retailers’ feedback on what they need from it. Our reps are also going to be equipped with all the information store owners need to know about all the changes that plain packaging and the TPD will bring.”

Mr Ridderbeekx believes BAT is uniquely well placed to support retailers through the challenge of plain packaging.

“The big advantage we’ve got is that we’re the market leader in Australia where plain packaging is already in place, and I believe we’ve got the best relationship with retailers there.

“We’re talking to our Australian colleagues to get ready now. One of the things we have seen is that illicit trade has gone up. If it’s gone up in a country so far away from other places as Australia then it’s going to be even easier for criminals to smuggle in products to a country as easily accessible as the UK.”

Sales, however, appear unaffected by the changes. “Retailers there say that it’s a massive pain but that

they’re not selling any fewer cigarettes than they did before,” he says.

Plain packaging comes into force in May 2016, after which all cigarettes produced for the UK market must be branding-free, but Mr Ridderbeekx thinks the year-long sell-through period will prove valuable for retailers and suppliers, especially as it gives time for slower-selling niche products to be sold.

Will suppliers take advantage of this delay and maximise production of bestsellers too, meaning the market will be able to stay ‘branded’ for longer? Such a move doesn’t appear to be practical.

“We run a supply chain across Europe and the TPD means we’ve got 20-odd countries which all need to comply with similar requirements, so our main priority is compliance,” says Mr Ridderbeekx. “We have a limited number of factories already operating at near full capacity.”

Getting prepared for all this is a process that is proving very expensive, he adds. “There’s a lot of machinery that’s now redundant as it can’t meet the new require-



## The UK is a very important market and we’ll keep investing in our brands and in our retailer support

ments. Some needs to be refurbished, while new machinery needs to be installed.”

With so many difficulties facing tobacco manufacturers, is there not a risk that they will decide this simply isn’t a profitable enough market to invest in anymore? Mr Ridderbeekx says no.

“There’s huge commitment on our part – we’re not about to give up and take our ball home. The UK’s a very important market and we’ll keep investing in our brands and in our retailer support,” he says.

Indeed, although the end of branded cigarette packaging might make many retailers worry that product development will also cease, Mr Ridderbeekx says it is likely to become only more vital to suppliers. “It’s going to become more and more important because consumers become more demanding. Taste becomes one of the few differentiators between products.”

This is another reason why he’s confident that BAT is well placed to take advantage of the new regulatory world. “Our products are great quality and have performed well in recent years, particularly Pall Mall and Rothmans, which continue to grow.”

So while the industry is unlikely to toast the health lobby and the collection of MPs and MEPs who helped force through the latest round of regulation, there is a lot of confidence that this essential convenience category will weather the coming storm.

“There will still be value in brands, consumers will still want the value they associate with them and BAT will still be fighting to get market share from our competitors. That won’t change.” ●

### After plain packaging was introduced in Australia, illicit tobacco trading increased



# TOBACCO



For six months smaller shops have operated under display ban regulations. What impact has this had on the market? **Nadia Alexandrou** profiles retailers with different gantry solutions to find out key ways the ban has affected their businesses

## Display ban impact

### Overhead gantry

**Jack Powell**

P&J News, Sandown, Isle of Wight



**Profile** With over half of his customers tourists, Jack saw the display ban as an opportunity to further establish himself as a tobacco specialist with products people couldn't find elsewhere. By installing an overhead gantry through the NFRN he was also able to widen his range of high margin and fast-selling tobacco accessories, and display them where the gantry used to be.

#### What I've noticed since the ban

More people are just asking for the cheapest cigarette on the gantry and brands which offer value, such as Rothmans and Players, are faring best. With customers looking for savings, rolling tobacco continues to grow in popularity and rolling machines, along with other accessories, are performing very well.



**With customers looking for savings, rolling tobacco continues to grow in popularity**



#### Benefits of my gantry

##### 1 More space to expand and sell tobacco accessories

"We now have lighter displays and cigarette cases on top of our core range."

##### 2 Products are in front of my staff

"This allows customers to be served without staff turning their backs on the store."

##### 3 Quick transaction time

"We put the most popular products in the most accessible place and have not changed the layout since. Staff now know where items are without looking up."



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\*\*Deal applies to Pall Mall Double Capsule 18s and 10s non-price-marked and price-marked packs. For a limited period of time only. While stocks last.  
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# Smoking kills

# TOBACCO



Marco Sinforiani's self-made gantry

## DIY solution

### Marco Sinforiani

Sinforiani Bros, Ayrshire, Scotland



**Profile** As a registered member of the Association of Independent Tobacco Specialists (AITS), tobacco makes up 50% of Marco's sales. As his shops' point of difference, he decided to go against the grain in Scotland of getting letterbox flaps, and constructed a solution himself, and covered the front of each tobacco line with a plastic rectangular card.

### What I've noticed since the ban

In Scotland shops that don't sell tobacco are allowed to display accessories, meaning discounters which stock lighters, filters and papers are at a real advantage. There are other discrepancies too. As a registered specialist, I'm allowed to display loose tobacco and cigars, but not pipes for smoking tobacco. The advantage of being one of two registered specialists in Ayrshire, however, is that the visibility I am permitted has made customers more aware of my services and cemented my reputation.



**As a registered specialist, I'm allowed to display loose tobacco and cigars**

### Benefits of my gantry

**1 Gives us a unique point of difference**

"Our gantry captures the attention of customers and sales reps, giving me an edge over the competition."

**2 Freedom to determine your own range and layout**

"Not having signed up for a manufacturer's gantry means I have no contractual obligations to them."

**3 Products are easy to locate**

"I've colour coded all the cards to signpost smooth, originals, menthols and capsules so staff can locate them more easily."

## Sliding doors

### Eugene Diamond

Diamond's Newsagents, Ballymena, Northern Ireland



**Profile** Eugene has run Diamond's Newsagents for 35 years and sees tobacco as a core part of his business, with tobacco making up 20% of his total sales. Signing up to a JTI gantry with sliding doors has allowed Eugene to benefit from the manufacturer's support and resources. He also uses other external sources such as his local council to keep up to date with this market.

### What I've noticed since the ban

Sales of cigarette makers, filter tips, and papers have shot up. I get one customer who now buys 15 boxes of filters and papers in one go. If a new piece of legislation or supplier statistic comes to my attention, I make sure all members of staff are aware of it and, since the ban, the local council sent out informative leaflets while I've tried to have longer discussions with sales reps about the category. >>



**I've tried to have longer discussions with sales reps about the category**



Eugene Diamond's JTI gantry

### Benefits of my gantry

**1 Easy to tailor merchandising**

"Sliding doors allow us to organise our cigarette brands symmetrically, so any way you open the door, you still have access to the same brands."

**2 Provides space to display signs**

"I use it to display various tobacco signs, and I know others use it for advertising, even though I don't."

**3 Availability of good planograms**

"I use JTI's, which I have stuck to strictly since the ban, and the layout works really well."



## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

The Sales and Distribution agreement between Philip Morris Limited (PML) and Imperial Tobacco (ITL) for PML factory-made cigarette (FMC) brands will cease on 18th October 2015.

The transition process will see PML assume responsibility for all activities in the Independent and Symbol trade channels for all of its brands from 1st September 2015, with the exception of any retailers that currently buy PML FMC products directly from ITL.

In order to ensure a smooth transition of the business from ITL to PML, representatives from both PML and ITL will be in contact with their business partners shortly. If you have any specific questions or queries, or do not have a PML representative, please contact our dedicated Customer Services Centre on 0207 076 6100 or [pmuk.customerservices@pmi.com](mailto:pmuk.customerservices@pmi.com), or the PML Communications Manager, Kate Campbell at [kate.campbell@pmi.com](mailto:kate.campbell@pmi.com)



# Smoking kills

# TOBACCO



The Scottish regulations are more restrictive than elsewhere

## Letterbox flaps

**Adeil Hussain**

Family Shopper, Premier, Motherwell, Glasgow



**Profile** Having two shops in different locations – with one based in a council estate (Family Shopper) and the other on a busy high street (Premier) – has had an impact on the way each business has reacted to the display ban. Consequently, Adeil has spotted the trends and turned them into opportunities in each store.

### Key changes

I've discontinued pricemarked cigarettes for my Premier store as customers cannot compare prices. In my Family Shopper, I've found a correlation between the dip in tobacco sales and an increase in e-cigarettes. They've possibly also benefited from the Scottish rules which state that tobacco accessories have to be hidden. My sales of accessories have definitely gone down since the ban.

### Benefits of having letterbox flaps

#### 1 Compliant solution for covering gantry

"Using this system allows me to stick safely within Scottish legislation restrictions."

#### 2 Customer appreciation

"The government claims this will help prevent children from smoking and because of that customers are mostly supportive of the changes."

#### 3 Less price comparison between brands

"It's harder for customers to compare prices on the gantry, which means less complaints when manufacturers raise prices."

## PRODUCTS LAUNCHED SINCE THE DISPLAY BAN

Manufacturers have stayed true to their word and have continued to bring new products to the market since the display ban. Here we give you a timeline of products launched in a dark market

### July



- Limited edition packs of Sterling, Silk Cut and Mayfair cigarettes (JTI)



- Sterling and B&H Blue Superkings 18-packs (JTI)
- Pack redesign for JPS range (Imperial Tobacco)
- Players Crushball Kingsize in 10-packs

### May

- Limited edition packs of Camels (JTI)



- Pack redesign for Amber Leaf Signature (JTI)



- New pack design for Hamlet cigars (JTI)
- Launch of capsule cigarettes Players' Crushball (Imperial Tobacco)
- Launch of Carlton Superkings Menthol



- B&H Blue Kingsize and Superkings 10-packs (JTI)

### April



- GV Midnight and GV Sunrise added to GV RYO range (Imperial Tobacco)
- Pack redesign and rebranding of Lambert & Butler (Imperial Tobacco)
- Marlboro Gold Touch rebranded and updated to Marlboro Touch (Philip Morris)



- Launch of Break Little Cigars (STG)
- Inclusion of papers in JPS RYO range (Imperial Tobacco)

### June

- Limited edition packs of B&H Dual and Silver (JTI)



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# TOBACCO

## VIEWES FROM THE INDUSTRY

We asked leading suppliers for their perspectives on the effects of the display ban and for best practice advice on operating in a dark market

### Jeremy Blackburn

JTI, head of communications



#### Has JTI noticed any major changes since the display ban?

From what we've learned from retailers and sales reps, the display ban has had more of an impact on the operational side of things than actual tobacco sales. The continued growth of RYO and value products is consistent with market trends that were there before last April and therefore not a direct result of the display ban.

#### What can retailers do to protect their sales in the dark market?

Our sales team has found that checking the availability of a tobacco range first

thing in the morning has now become a top priority for many retailers, whereas before those checks were on things like sandwiches and milk. It's vital because if, for example, a customer has queued up for five minutes only to find out you're out of stock of their cigarette brand, they will soon get fed up.

#### How have you supported retailers during this time?

Since the ban, our reps have taken more of a business advisory role, often offering guidance on best practice and how to introduce products in a dark market. In addition, our goal when creating the JTI Advance website was to provide a 24/7 sales rep that offered the same level of insight and advice

for operating in a dark market.

### Tony Lyles

Sales rep, Ritmeester



#### What has been your impression of the effect of the display ban?

Spending most of my time on the road selling cigars to retailers, I've seen all sorts of gantry solutions and ways shops have adapted to the display ban. As a category which can quite easily drop off the radar, I've found that it's often down to the efforts of the retailer on how well they maintain their cigar sales since the ban.

#### What have been the main challenges for the cigar market?

January and February

before the display ban were really tough for cigar sales, as half of the stores had already fitted doors and the other half hadn't, so trade was unequally distributed to those with open gantries. After April, however, all stores were the same and sales went back up.

#### What advice do you have for retailers operating in this market?

Embrace product development and ensure you know about it. We introduced price-marked packs 18 months ago and now the demand for them is absolutely huge. Whether asking about prices or your range, customers' queries are an opportunity to communicate your availability and secure repeat custom.

As retailers nationwide have now had six months to operate in the dark market, we asked our four retailers to provide tips on boosting sales and category management that you can use in your store.

#### Put reminders in place to maintain a full gantry

Put a plastic card in front of the fifth last cigarette of each line to know when you should start re-stocking. Keeping note of your stock in a log can also help avoid selling out of products.

#### Offer a delivery service

If you're a specialist, destination store offer to send products to customers who can't buy them locally - you'll find they often phone up a couple of weeks later asking for more.

#### Keep the faith with niche products

Even though this is a declining market, the demand is still there and you don't need many customers to make a profit. Have brochures with a list of tobacco products around which customers can see on request.

#### Let your MP know your issues

Follow up any issues with operating in the dark market with your MP or MSP, such as inconsistencies with rules around the display of tobacco accessories.

#### Reassess your pricing strategy

While many retailers will need to remain price-competitive, others have been able to raise prices and now have margins of between eight and nine percent.

#### Keep up with market trends

Take note of changing trends and act on them. This includes embracing the growing e-cigarette category. ●

## The gantry survivors

Much of the talk since the display ban has been about the continued rise of value, whether with RYO or cigarettes. Here's two other sub-sectors that remain vital to your gantries.

### Premium brands

#### Why stock them?

Premium cigarettes have some of the most recognisable brands in the world, Marlboro maintaining its position as number one international cigarette brand. In a dark market your tobacco customers will expect you to have these big names in stock.

#### Who's buying them?

Many customers will be willing to pay more for the quality, taste and brand that they're used to but alongside these are the so-called 'weekend millionaires' - people who want to buy a premium cigarette for their nights out but want value for other times. In short, then, the answer is 'everyone'.



There is still a place for non-value products in your range



**The opportunity was always there to become a destination store**

### Niche brands

#### Why stock them?

Many retailers feared that the display ban would mean an accelerated decline in their sales but for those willing to invest in having a full range, the opportunity was always there to become a destination store. Niche and specialist brands are essential for building a full range.

#### Who's buying them?

Loyal customers who want something different and are willing not just to pay for it but to drive past numerous other stores if they know that yours is the one guaranteed to have their brand in stock.

E-cigarettes are a growing market trend



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# CRAFT MAGAZINES

In the ever-changing world of crafting, magazine publishers are moving swiftly to produce new content and titles for the newsstand. **Tom Gockelen-Kozlowski** put six of their sales tips to two RN readers to see how great retailers make the most of this sector

## Create better sales

**C**raft magazines are, according to Immediate Media, a “huge market” and with half of British women regularly getting involved with a craft-based hobby, it’s not difficult to see why publishers and retailers are excited by the potential these newsstand essentials offer.

Kerry Lawrence, publishing director for Immediate Media (whose brands include Simply Crochet, Simply Sewing and Knit Today) says that, like other vibrant areas of the magazines market, there is pressure on publishers to keep pace with changing customer behaviour and to keep offering new and better content to ensure readers stay enthralled.

“Craft is a cyclical hobby and very trend-led, making it essential for magazines to be fresh and innovative. We pride ourselves on the quality of our magazines and ensure that we keep them at the top of their game through regular editorial refreshes and redesigns,” she says.

To prove the point, the company has just redesigned Knit Today to increase its appeal to the ‘mature knitting market’ and has a new title, Today’s Quilter, hitting shelves in just over a week.

Of course, an ever-adapting market creates challenges for retailers too, and to take advantage, they must ensure they regularly review their ranges, maintain their market knowledge and utilise the sales-boosting materials available.

So RN has taken some of the insights that Ms Lawrence has shared and put them to two brilliant magazine retailers. Do they recognise the trends? How do they grow their sales? It’s time to find out...

### Kate Clark

Sean’s News,  
Upton upon Severn



#### Trend 1

### Women friendly

“The readers of craft magazines are predominantly women and they come from a wide range of age groups, backgrounds and ability levels.”

**KATE CLARK** “I absolutely agree with this. I have five old ladies who pick up card maga-



**Craft is very trend-led, making it essential for magazines to be fresh and innovative**

zines and a number of regulars who buy quilt titles, papercraft titles and lots more. Some customers ask for shop save or I arrange deliveries to ensure I keep making those sales.”

#### Trend 2

### Build a planogram

“The key to retailers gaining incremental sales is getting planograms right. It is important to make sure that similar titles are positioned next to one another.”



Attract customers with strong displays of new titles and autumn specials



**KATE CLARK** “We work with Smiths News and use their planogram as a base, but I do make a few adjustments based on my local area and my regular customers. I know what makes them tick and chat to them every day.”

### Trend 3 It’s beginning to feel a lot like Christmas

“From now until November, craft magazines can see a 30% to 40% sales uplift thanks to the key Christmas season. Make sure that these special editions are given maximum standout.”

**KATE CLARK** “It’s only just September, but with a lot of these crafts it takes time to make them so people do start making Christmas cards and things like



The Art of Crochet has sparked interest in other crochet titles

### CRAFT MAGAZINES IN NUMBERS

**69%**

The number of British women aged 16-plus who have crafted in the last 12 months

**51%**

of women have a regular crafting hobby

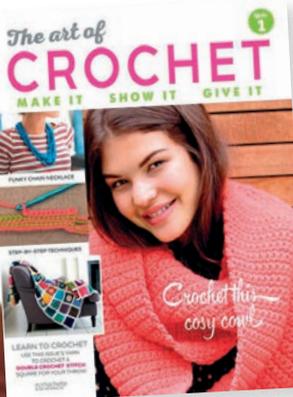
**30-40%**

The sales increase craft magazines can expect to see between August and November

**109**

The number of craft magazines available through Smiths News

Source: Immediate Media and Smiths News



that early. We’ve just had one title in that’s full of Christmas articles and ideas and I’ve put that prominently in my display to attract attention.”

### Jon Powell

The Newsagent, Newport



### Trend 4 Keep it fresh

“Due to the fast pace of the craft market, it is important to continually launch products. In the last few years we have launched four major craft titles and are about to launch Today’s Quilter.”

**JON POWELL** “Crotchet magazine sales have grown since the Art of Crochet and Art of Knitting partworks came out. Around three months ago I got Make it Today! Patch, Sew, Create in. I thought it wouldn’t sell, but I’m selling five or six of them a month. Because of that, Smiths now sends me related magazines on patchworking, crochet and other projects, and they sell well too.”

### Trend 5 Everyone loves a freebie

“Covergifts are an essential part of the editorial mix, giving time-poor readers an instant creative fix, a new

tool for their stash or more creative inspiration.”

**JON POWELL** “Covergifts work on patchwork and knitting magazines, and I find people will pay more for them if there is a gift on the front too. Popular Patchwork has material on the front, and I’ve sold two already, for example, and I’ve got another magazine giving away wool to make tea cosies.”

### Trend 6 Size matters

“Twice a year, many of our craft titles will produce bumper packs or ‘event issues’ to ignite interest on the newsstand and drive sales.”

**JON POWELL** “With Christmas specials, anything works well. Make it Today! Patch, Sew, Create is £7.99, for example. It’s already popular, but I expect it will sell really well at Christmas.” ●

### Top 20 craft magazines

- 1 Simply Knitting
- 2 Knit Today
- 3 Cardmaking & Papercraft
- 4 World of Cross Stitch
- 5 Let’s Knit
- 6 Simply Crochet
- 7 Sew
- 8 Quick Cards Made Easy
- 9 Patchwork & Quilting
- 10 Crafts Beautiful
- 11 Cross Stitch Crazy
- 12 Papercraft Inspirations
- 13 Cross Stitcher
- 14 Let’s Get Crafting
- 15 Knit Now
- 16 Love to Make Women’s Weekly
- 17 Mollie Makes
- 18 Making Cards
- 19 Sewing World
- 20 Simply Cards Papercraft



# PREVIEW



### Irn-Bru's perfect match

Irn-Bru is giving football fans the chance to win the 'Ultimate Match Day Experience' in an on-pack promotion.

**RRP** 69p - £1

**Outers** various

**Contact** 01236 852400



### Burton's in Xmas mood

Burton's Biscuit Company has launched a range of Cadbury Christmas biscuits, including Cadbury Delights.

**RRP** £1.79 - £5

**Outers** various

**Contact** 01727 899700



### Aero's in fashion

Nestlé has teamed up with fashion designer Matthew Williamson to create limited edition wrappers for its Aero range.

**RRP** 62p

**Outers** 36

**Contact** 01904 604 604



### New Merryteaser lines

Mars has unveiled new lines in its latest Christmas confectionery range, including a Maltesers Merryteaser Reindeer sharing bag.

**RRP** £1.29 - £3

**Outers** various

**Contact** 01753 550055



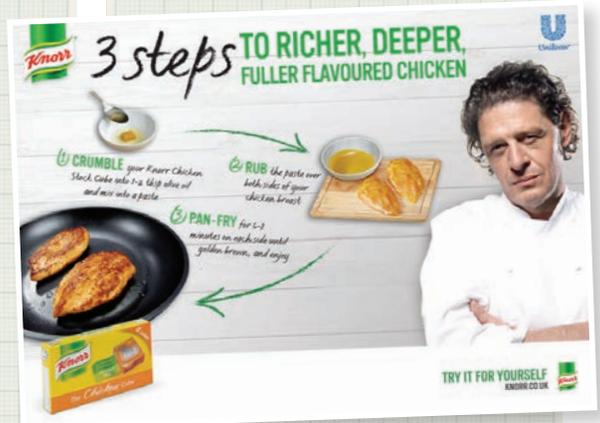
### Dairy drinks debut

Arla has entered the dairy drinks market with the launch of Arla Protein Drinks and Arla Flavoured Milk.

**RRP** £1.89

**Outers** not given

**Contact** 0845 762 6434



### Knorr's chef credentials

Unilever is investing £1m in its new Knorr 'Chicken Challenge' TV campaign featuring chef Marco Pierre White.

**RRP** various

**Outers** various

**Contact** 01293 648 000



### Ultimate Galaxy

Mars Drinks has added two products to its range – Galaxy Ultimate Marshmallow Hot Chocolate and Galaxy Ultimate White Hot Chocolate.

**RRP** not given

**Outers** not given

**Contact** 01753 550055



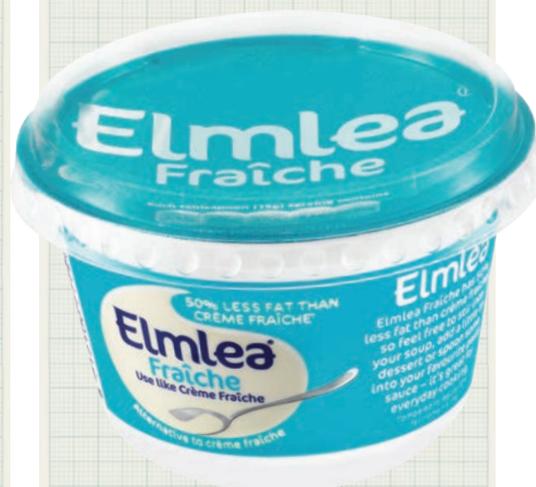
### Sticky situation...

United Biscuits has introduced Golden Sticky Lemon Pudding and Sticky Marmalade Pudding flavours to its McVitie's cake range.

**RRP** £1.55

**Outers** not given

**Contact** 0800 138 0813



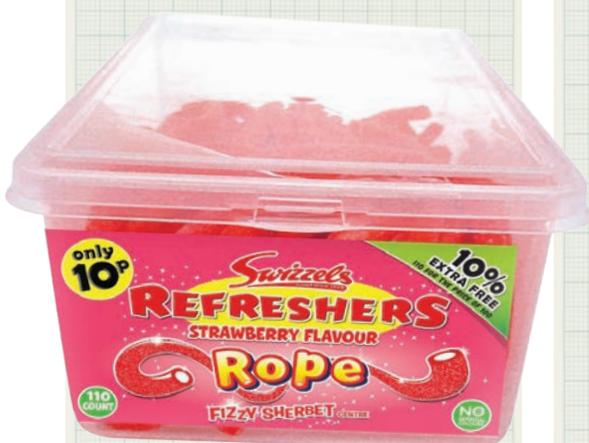
### Elmlea's Fraiche idea

Elmlea has launched Elmlea Fraiche, which it claims contains 50% less fat than standard crème fraiche.

**RRP** 79p

**Outers** not given

**Contact** 01293 648000



### Tie up more sales

Swizzels has extended its confectionery range with the launch of Refreshers Rope in Lemon and Strawberry flavours.

**RRP** 10p

**Outers** not given

**Contact** 01663 744 144



### Cool as a Qcumber

Qcumber has unveiled its low calorie Premium Mixer available in 200ml bottles and four-packs.

**RRP** £3.65

**Outers** 6

**Contact** gcs@q-cumber.co.uk



### Ready for rugby?

Kerry Foods has launched rugby-inspired flavour Scrum'my Chargilled Chicken ahead of this month's Rugby World Cup.

**RRP** £1.29 - £1.49

**Outers** not given

**Contact** 01784 430 777

# THIS WEEK IN MAGAZINES

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020 7689 3358  
@NicolaStewartRN



## All aboard

# NEW BOATING TITLE WILL SAIL RIGHT TO THE TOP

Fans of all things nautical have a new magazine full of news, reviews and features - the century's first new classic boating title

**THE FIRST NEW** classic boating title to launch this century, Classic Sailor Magazine, will be the definitive guide for the classic boating and motor-boating world. It will contain the latest news, boat reviews, gear and accessories, as well as interviews with sailors who have interesting nautical stories to tell. The October issue will have an exclusive feature on comedian and TV presenter Griff Rhys Jones' experience of entering the Fastnet yacht race. It will also look at 21 Great British boat designers, list some of the best places in France for dinghy sailing, explore the maritime heritage of the East coast of England and explain the best techniques for jib sailing.



**CLASSIC SAILOR**  
On sale 2 September  
Frequency monthly  
Price £3.95  
Distributor  
Marketforce  
Display with Sailing  
Today, Classic Boats

## Round up



**HELENA DRAKAKIS**  
Magazines  
reporter

# POWER OF THE PLAYGROUND

It's the end of the summer holidays, and for many parents it's time to fish out the pencil case, polish the shoes and dust off the school blazer.

Yes, it's back to school time, and it's also the time of year when supplements and parenting magazines will be running special features. Admittedly, sales of many magazines in the school-age sector have fallen in recent years with the rise of online sites like Mumsnet and Netmums.

But mother and baby and school-age titles have plenty of great content to tempt readers at this time of year. Junior magazine, for example, has features on putting the primary school uniform to the test, and finding the ultimate hardwearing sports kit. Other magazines, like Parenting Magazine and the Green Parent, will be featuring their back to school advice, as well as women's magazines and weekend supplements.

There are other ways to make the most of this time of year too. One retailer told me he looks to what children will want to get their hands on when they go back to school.

The playground is king - and collectables, swap cards and stickers continue to be powerful currency there.

Launches include Match Attax Premier League trading cards and Shopkins sticker collection. Batman trading cards shift too, as do Panini sticker collectables, with an England team special out just in time for the Euro 2016 qualifying campaign.

If there's a new craze going on in the playground you can be sure children will be in asking if you stock it soon enough.

**DESIGNED TO BE DISPLAYED TOGETHER**



**On sale 10 September**



## PLAY & LEARN PAW PATROL

All paws on deck for this action-packed issue of Play & Learn. The magazine contains puzzles, posters, stickers and things to make, as well as a free gift. It is designed to entertain pre-school children, who can enjoy reading about the antics of Marshall, Chase, Rubble and all the other pups.



**On sale 2 September**  
**Frequency monthly**  
**Price £3.99**  
**Distributor Seymour**  
**Display with CBeebies, Peppa Pig, and Fun To Learn Friends**



## SLIMMING WORLD

Slimming World magazine's latest issue is designed to appeal to anyone looking to give their slimming campaign a fresh focus. The October magazine, on sale 3 September, is full of new food ideas - including a free 50-page recipe covermount. There are also real-life slimming stories, from six very different slimmers, to help renew inspiration to reach a weight loss target and much, much more.



**On sale 3 September**  
**Frequency monthly**  
**Price £2.75**  
**Distributor Seymour**  
**Display with Healthy Food Guide, Weight Watchers, Women's Health**



## DIGITAL CAMERA

Digital Camera is bringing out a giveaway issue. It includes a free video course to teach readers Photoshop, normally sold for £19.99, plus eight tips cards to master key photographic techniques and video training on light-room and photography skills. There is also a camera shopper e-book gear guide, an in-depth guide to mastering raw format and tips on how to make money from photography.



**On sale 11 September**  
**Frequency monthly**  
**Price £4.99**  
**Distributor Seymour**  
**Display with Practical Photography, Amateur Photographer**



## FHM COLLECTIONS ISSUE

This issue of FHM will be bagged with a free collections supplement packed full of fashion content, interviews and more. Hollyoaks star Jorgie Porter, who plays Theresa McQueen in the soap, will feature on the cover and the issue comes full-sized and polybagged to stand out on the shelf. With the men's monthly market dropping in sales this is one opportunity to improve performance in-store.



**On sale 3 September**  
**Frequency monthly**  
**Price £3.99**  
**Distributor Frontline**  
**Display with Loaded, Zoo Weekly, Front**



## BOB THE BUILDER

Inside the new-look Bob the Builder magazine which goes on sale on 9 September, readers can get to know Bob and the team, build their own version of Bob's new mobile office and join in helping to build a new Milkshake Bar in the Big Build Book. The issue contains stories, colouring, posters and stickers, plus a free gift.



**On sale 9 September**  
**Frequency monthly**  
**Price £2.99**  
**Distributor Seymour**  
**Display with Thomas the Tank Engine, CBeebies**



## Bestsellers Music

Title	On sale date	In stock
1 Mojo	29.09	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 NME	09.09	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Uncut	22.09	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Classic Rock	09.09	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Record Collector	10.09	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Q	29.09	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Prog	09.09	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 Rock Sound	16.09	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 Uncut Series	22.09	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 Rolling Stone	16.09	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 Vintage Rock	15.10	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 Classic Pop	17.09	<input type="checkbox"/>
13 Rolling Stone Presents	11.09	<input type="checkbox"/>
14 Iron Fist	22.10	<input type="checkbox"/>
15 Fireworks	15.10	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 Big Cheese	25.09	<input type="checkbox"/>
17 Alternative Press	15.09	<input type="checkbox"/>
18 Revolver Worldwide	29.09	<input type="checkbox"/>
19 Music Heaven	17.09	<input type="checkbox"/>
20 American Songwriter	08.10	<input type="checkbox"/>

Data supplied by **SmithsNews**

Football stickers are coming home.

# ENGLAND

OFFICIAL STICKER COLLECTION 2016

**STARTER PACK: £2.99**

**STICKER PACKET: 50P**

## ON SALE NOW!

IN ALL GOOD NEWSAGENTS

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# THIS WEEK IN MAGAZINES



## WOODTURNING

Woodturning is the world's best-selling magazine for woodturners, read by enthusiasts in over 60 countries worldwide. To celebrate its 25th anniversary, the October edition comes with a free copy of the first issue of Woodturning. Projects include how to make a puzzle, a peg wooden doll and a suspended vessel. The issue will retail at the higher price of £4.50, instead of £3.95.



**On sale 10 Sep**  
**Frequency monthly**  
**Price £4.50**  
**Distributor Seymour**  
**Display with The Woodworker, Woodworking Crafts**



## THE GREATEST REIGN SPECIAL SOUVENIR

On 9 September, the Queen will reach an astonishing milestone: she will surpass Queen Victoria's reign of 63 years and 216 days to become Britain's longest serving monarch. To mark the occasion, the Mail on Sunday will publish the most luxurious souvenirs in the newspaper's history.



**On sale 10 September**  
**Frequency one shot**  
**Price £6.95**  
**Distributor Associated Newspapers**  
**Display with Royalty Monthly, Majesty, Royal Life**

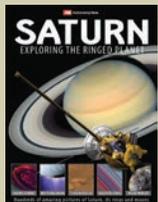


## DOCTOR WHO - THE COMPLETE HISTORY

Dr Who - The Complete History goes behind the TV cameras to document the making of the world's longest running science fiction series from 1963 to the present day. Scripts, casting, film locations, studio recordings, broadcast, ratings and merchandise are covered in detail for every adventure, along with full story details and profiles of the cast and crew, all illustrated by colour and black and white photographs.



**On sale 9 September**  
**Frequency fortnightly**  
**Price £1.99 (Part 2: £6.99; thereafter: £9.99)**  
**Distributor Marketforce**  
**Display with Dr Who Magazine**



## ASTRONOMY NOW - SATURN: EXPL. THE RINGED PLANET

This 196-page magazine has hundreds of amazing pictures and will look at Saturn itself, its rings and many of its 62 moons. Through the eyes of NASA's Cassini mission, readers will explore the moon Titan, fly through water-ice geysers on Enceladus, climb the mountains of Iapetus and much more.



**On sale 5 September**  
**Frequency one shot**  
**Price £9.99**  
**Distributor Comag**  
**Display with Astronomy Now, Sky & Telescope**



## DISNEY CAKES & SWEETS: VILLAINS SPECIAL

This special issue is aimed mainly at women over 25 and will be filled with Halloween ideas and have exclusive Disney baking equipment and silicone moulds of Maleficent and Diablo the crow. It will be accompanied by a 28-page magazine featuring easy-to-follow recipes from Disney villains.



**On sale 3 September**  
**Frequency one shot**  
**Price £10.99**  
**Distributor Comag**  
**Display with Cookery and Kitchen magazines**

## Industry viewpoint

Richard Edwards  
 Editor, SFX magazine



## PRINT WILL SURVIVE - SCIENTIFIC PROOF

Ever since the dawn of the internet, we've been told that the end of printed magazines is coming, that they can never compete with something that spreads information around the world in seconds.

The media has never been purely about speed, however. Indeed, the fact that everything is online instantly can actually be a massive opportunity for trusted print brands.

SFX has been the UK's biggest-selling science fiction and fantasy magazine since it launched in May 1995. It has a loyal readership who trust that our writers know their stuff and love the genre as much as they do - our opinions do matter to them.

In an era when the internet is essentially white noise, where a million voices scream out over news sites and readers can access a wealth of comment threads and social media about the latest movie trailers and casting announcements, a magazine like SFX comes into its own.

We're there to sift through the information overload, to analyse the most important news and present it all in an informative, entertaining way that really engages readers. Making our editorial clearer and easier to navigate was the driving force behind our recent redesign. Our readers know that if we're writing about a release, it's worth their attention - and with sci-fi and fantasy currently conquering the world, that should keep them coming back for more.

**Top tip**  
 Any newswire can report the "facts", but in a monthly publication news needs something more. Expert analysis will lift any magazine.

### COMING UP IN NEXT WEEK'S RETAIL NEWSAGENT



## NEWS AND MAGAZINE SPECIALIST MARK ANSELL TALKS NEWSSTAND SALES GROWTH

Plus, RN columnist Bintesh Amin on preparing his store for autumn and winter, and The Retail Data Partnership on its new customer loyalty scheme



## Partworks

Title No Pts £

### Amercom

Great British Locomotives 41 48 **8.99**

### Amermedia

Military Vehicles 45 48 **5.99**

### DeAgostini

Build the Millennium Falcon 35 100 **8.99**

Cake Decorating 181 180 **2.99**

Cake Decorating Relaunch 130 165 **2.99**

Dinosaurs & Friends 28 60 **5.99**

Official Star Wars Factfile 84 120 **2.99**

Something Sweet 86 90 **2.99**

### Eagle Moss

3D Create & Print 33 90 **6.99**

Batman Automobilia 70 80 **10.99**

Build A Solar System 2 104 **0.99**

DC Chess Collection 95 96 **8.99**

DC Comics Graphic Novel 2 60 **2.99**

Disney Cakes & Sweets 104 120 **4.50**

Doctor Who 54 70 **7.99**

Knit & Stitch 138 176 **5.00**

Marvel Chess Collection 45 64 **8.99**

Marvel Fact Files 129 150 **3.50**

Military Watches 41 80 **9.99**

Star Trek Off. Starships Coll. 54 70 **9.99**

### Hachette

Art of Crochet 1 120 **0.99**

Art of Knitting 32 90 **2.99**

Art Therapy 24 100 **2.99**

Black Pearl 86 120 **5.99**

Build the Mallard 53 130 **7.99**

Build the U96 53 150 **5.99**

Classic Pocketwatches 80 80 **8.99**

Judge Dredd Mega Collection 17 80 **9.99**

Marvel's Mightiest Heroes 45 60 **9.99**

My 3D Globe 35 100 **5.99**

Your Model Railway Village 93 120 **8.99**

### RBA Collectables

Amazing Dinosaur Discovery 27 80 **5.99**

My Zoo Animals 2 60 **1.99**

Precious Rocks, Gems & Minerals 32 100 **5.99**

Real Life Bugs & Insects 50 85 **5.99**

## Collectables

### Topps



**Disney Frozen Activity Cards**  
Starter **£4.99**  
Cards **£1.00**



**Merlin's Official Premier League 2015**  
Starter **£2.00**  
Cards **£0.50**



**Disney Frozen Fashion Pack**  
Packets **£1.00**



**Minions**  
Starter **£2.99**  
Stickers **£0.50**



**Hero Attax Marvel Avengers**  
Starter **£4.99**  
Cards **£1.00**



**Minions**  
Starter **£4.99**  
Cards **£1.00**



**Lego Friends**  
Starter **£2.99**  
Stickers **£0.50**



**Rugby Attax**  
Starter **£4.99**  
Cards **£1.00**



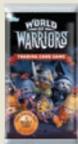
**Match Attax 2014/2015**  
Starter **£3.99**  
Cards **£1.00**



**Skylanders Trap Team**  
Starter **£4.99**  
Cards **£1.00**



**Match Attax Extra**  
Starter **£3.99**  
Cards **£1.00**



**World of Warriors**  
Starter **£4.99**  
Cards **£1.00**



**Match Attax SPL 2014/15**  
Starter **£4.99**  
Cards **£1.00**



**WWE Slam Attax Rivals**  
Starter **£4.99**  
Cards **£1.00**

### Panini



**Avengers 2: Age of Ultron**  
Starter **£2.99**  
Stickers **£0.50**



**Inside Out**  
Starter **£2.99**  
Stickers **50p**



**Big Hero 6**  
Starter **£2.99**  
Stickers **£0.50**



**Road to UEFA Euro 2016**  
Starter **£4.99**  
Stickers **£1.00**



**Disney Cinderella**  
Starter **£2.99**  
Stickers **£0.50**



**Sofia the First**  
Starter **£2.99**  
Stickers **£0.50**



**Disney Frozen My Sister, My Hero**  
Starter **£2.99**  
Cards **£0.50**



**UEFA Champions League Adrenalyn XL**  
Starter **£4.99**  
Cards **£1.00**



**Disney Frozen Photocards**  
Starter **£3.99**  
Cards **£1.50**



**UEFA Champions League**  
Starter **£2.99**  
Stickers **£0.50**



**Disney Frozen Winter Magic**  
Starter **£4.99**  
Cards **£0.75**



**2015 FIFA Women's World Cup**  
Album **£1.50**  
Stickers **£0.50**



**Dragons**  
Starter **£2.99**  
Cards **£0.50**



**Ultimate Spider-Man**  
Album **£2.99**  
Stickers **£0.50**



**Jurassic World**  
Starter **£2.99**  
Stickers **50p**

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**News, Con Store** **Derbyshire**  
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**Staffs** **01782 711022**



**News, Con, Off-lic, Lotto** **Flintshire**  
**Freehold £295,000 Ref: G31985NW**

Unopposed coastal village location  
 Impressive plot, garden, large garage  
 Retirement sale, 30 years same hands  
 T/over £5,600pw plus Lotto, huge scope



**News, Con** **Northamptonshire**  
**Freehold £385,000 Ref: T30295SM**

Town centre shop, good location  
 Rent £12K p.a., 2-bedroom s-c flat  
 News bill £600 p.w. counter news  
 T/kg £10,500 p.w. plus Lottery £2300 p.w.

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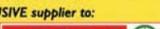
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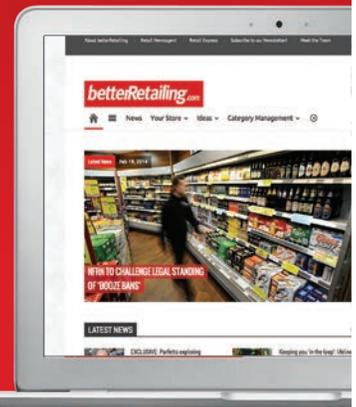
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# EXTRA! EXTRA!

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## Back in the day

# 101

YEARS AGO

5 September 1914



"Nothing more suitable for gaining the attention of the public and stimulating sales could have been selected than the handsome photogravure of Lord Kitchener," said the publisher of partworks series The Great War, which gave away the gift with the part four of the collection.

# 50

YEARS AGO

4 September 1965



The newstrade is readying itself for a technological breakthrough - the world's first "computer-set" colour newspaper. Intrigued journalists were invited to view a trial copy of the Evening Post, produced on a dummy print run by machines that printed one line per second.

# 25

YEARS AGO

8 September 1990



Sleuths at WH Smiths in Gloucester went undercover to unearth a news supply pirating operation in Cheltenham. After covert tracking and photographing of car number plates, a newsagent was found to be selling 2.5 quires of illicit papers. The operation was brought to an abrupt end.

## Saying it with, er, flours

As romantic gestures go, delivering a big bunch of flowers to your other half is a pretty popular option.

But imagine Paige-Ellen Williams' surprise when, after dropping big hints along these lines to her boyfriend Richard Selway, she received a delivery of 12 bags of flour instead.

The story of the delivery - which at first appeared to be a case of a drop to the wrong address - has gone viral after it transpired this was neither

a mistake nor a Bake Off-inspired cookery project.

"I was teasing Richard a few weeks ago telling him I deserved to have flowers delivered to the house after a pretty challenging day.

"I completely forgot I'd said anything to him about it," Paige-Ellen told Wales Online.

"It wasn't until the delivery driver left that I realised every single carrier bag was full of flour and the penny finally dropped."



## Latest 'colouring' journey

We've brought you all manner of adult colouring books over the past few months - the zen ones, the animal ones, the postcard ones - but our latest offering comes from an entirely unexpected source.

The Ordnance Survey has become the latest publisher to foray into this lucrative new market, by producing ready-to-colour black and white maps of UK cities including London, Southampton, Milton Keynes and Cardiff.

Extra Extra thinks these new maps could prove a valuable training tool for new newspaper delivery staff who need to get to grips with their routes.

Or maybe, since the Ordnance Survey says colouring its maps in is a great thing to do if you need to relax, they could also be therapeutic after dealing with your least favourite customers.

Whatever next though, we wonder? "Relaxing" adult colouring books given out free to retailers with letters about carriage charge increases?



## VIEW FROM THE COUNTER with Mike Brown



At the beginning of August we enjoyed a family holiday walking in the Godfather's footsteps in Sicily.

It was our first family holiday for two years. With the intensity of this job 364 days of the year it's important to spend time together as a family.

It was blisteringly hot as Sicily was in the grips of an unprecedented heatwave - even the locals were complaining. Despite the heat we enjoyed an excursion to the cliff-top town of Taormina with its ancient Greek theatre and a spectacular trip to the crater of Mount Etna, Europe's tallest active volcano.

The final leg of the journey was in a bus with open sides. We flew up the mountain Indiana Jones style in a thunderstorm. Everyone was tossed from side to side and thoroughly soaked when we reached the summit.

My youngest daughter, Emma, plays cricket for Yorkshire girls' U13. On 20 August she played for Yorkshire at the County finals at Denby, Derbyshire, beating Essex in the final to be crowned County champions. At the moment there has never been a better time to be involved in girls'/women's cricket and I hope she achieves her goal of playing sport professionally.

The next review of our carriage service is scheduled to be implemented with effect from the week ending 26 September. At the moment I pay £53 per week. With the massive fall in fuel prices surely the template should be adjusted accordingly downwards. To cover my HND commitments in the van I am using £40 less diesel than a year ago so Menzies will be enjoying the same bonanza.

Menzies is keeping us informed as we prepare for north of England network changes when magazine distribution moves from York to Wakefield at the beginning of September. Stockton is the last house to be incorporated in the new structure so fingers crossed any problems will already have been ironed out.

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