



Brothers celebrate 25 years in the motor accessory trade

by Paul Savill

WHEN the two Chivers brothers opened their car accessory shop in the High Road one Saturday in 1968, it was raining and by the end of the day they had taken exactly £10.

When *The Archer* visited them one Saturday recently they were somewhat more reticent about their takings!

accessory shop. "Indeed," said one customer, "the only thing that seems to be missing among these thousands of bits and pieces is a couch for us to recline on and tell them all!"

A sceptic might say that the giving of such information is all part of this kind of business, but let us face the fact that we have all been to such shops where they do

THE CHIVERS' CLINIC

That, however, was the only thing they were reticent about. Indeed, the Chivers brothers are so voluble that people flock to them with their car problems.

CAR CLINIC

All sorts of nasty symptoms are related to brothers Lawrie and Roger: "You see there was this terrible smoke coming out... oil everywhere... funny noises...

not or cannot!

"Mind you," adds Lawrie (at 6ft 7ins the taller of the two), "in so helping we often talk ourselves out of business... one customer came in thinking he wanted a new battery, or starter, or alternator, when all he needed was £1.50 worth of cable."

RAGS TO RICHES

With an area of 2,000 sqft the Chivers' shop is packed with stock right up to the ceiling. A quick estimate puts the number of different types of items at a staggering 50,000 with an approximate worth of £45,000.

When they set up in business 25 years ago the shop had only £500 worth of stock. It looked so sparse, in fact, that Lawrie used to "pad it out" with empty oil cans.

To launch the business they borrowed £2,000 from an uncle and Lawrie had to sell his beloved



The way it was... Lawrie Chivers prepares to wash windows shortly after shop opening in 1968.

Triumph TR2 for £200. He then jacked in his electrical engineering job and Roger his car repairing job a few months later.

Down the years the brothers have had their share of laughs with the customers.

There is the story of the woman who filled up her windscreen washer with engine oil and wondered why it did not work, and the man who poured three gallons of oil into his engine instead of seven pints and could not understand why it was overflowing.

"Or to cap them all," adds Lawrie, "the customer who wanted

a really good tow rope for his broken-down car - which had no brakes!

COMMUNITY HELP

The shop recently won the Accessory Shop Award for North London in a competition held by Car Accessory Trader magazine, and the brothers are active members of the East Finchley community.

In conjunction with local police they are providing car maintenance classes for women. The

thinking is that women are safer with well-maintained cars because they do not break down so often and leave them stranded.

In conclusion, Lawrie adds a lament: "The fight to save the High Road is on. The multiples are kidding the shopper that they are cheaper on all things. They are not - only on some of them. So shoppers should always try the small shops for price. Use us or lose us."



Roger and Lawrie Chivers Photo by Julietta Wagman

more a sort of a whine than a screech... occasional banging..."

Perhaps "car clinic" would be more apt a description than car

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Gardening
Pruning
by Paul Savill
THE season for mists and dehiscent horse chestnuts is here, and now is the time for all good gardeners to groom their shrubs.
The purpose of pruning at this time of year is simply that: grooming. It is to get rid of the overgrown look and prepare it for wintering.
Light pruning is what is needed and if care is not taken the result can be an eyesore of a plant, or at least, that was how my neighbour from Lauradale Road described my effort last year when I laid into my dogwood.
DOGGONE DOGWOOD!
"Dogwoods are grown for their winter bark, so you should only have trimmed the top. All hard cutting should be done in the spring."
Naturally, he was right. He always is. That is why he is so infuriating. But his pruning advice is worthwhile and here it is:
Correct timing is essential and a mistake can lead to the loss of a whole year's flowers. Timing, however, depends on individual flowering habits.
The golden rule is: those plants which flower on the new season's growth are pruned in late autumn or later. Those which flower on the previous year's growth are pruned immediately after flowering.

Rose bushes are a good example of plants which flower on the new season's growth, so soon will be the time to cut them back by about one third. Then cut them hard back in the spring. Another example is the butterflies' favourite, buddleia davidii. Reduce by about a third and cut it hard next spring to two to three buds from the base.
My neighbour continued: "On the other hand, its relative buddleia alternifolia produces flower sprays on the previous year's shoots. These flowers should be removed as soon as the blooms fade during the summer. This also applies to hydrangeas, but the shrubs benefit from the removal of all stems of three and more years in the spring."
"Hold on," I interrupted. "This is getting complicated. I thought you were going to keep it simple."
"It is" he replies, "providing you remember the golden rule."
There lies the problem. I have repeated it to myself all day and I still get it the wrong way round...
PS It seems that the only safe time to prune a shrub hard is in the spring. When you do, remember that it will benefit from 5cms (2 ins) thick mulch of garden compost or decayed manure, plus 55gms (2oz/ 2tbsps) per sq.m/yd of general fertilizer such as Growmore.

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