Centre for Retail Research

Union Building, Rose Lane, Norwich NR1 1BY - telephone: 0845 122 7058 (Int: +44 84 51 22 70 58) - e-mail: research@retailresearch.org

Who's Gone Bust in Retail? (updated 29/3/18)
Shopping for Christmas 2017 (Updated 22/1/18)
Royal 2018, Prince Harry, Meghan & Baby Cambridge III (NEW 5/12/17)

Who's Gone Bust in Retailing 2010-18?
March 2018

2018
Note that this list and similar lists for 2007 to 2010 relate primarily to medium or large retail businesses. We do not include takeovers unless we see this as being equivalent to business failure. Please read the legal stuff below. As we all know these days, failure is often a temporary inconvenience; we are not suggesting that these businesses no longer survive, simply that they have experienced difficulties and the people with slide rules have moved in at some time.

We have put the pre-2010 list of companies in administration into the Section on Previous Reports.

2007-2018 Review

	Companies failing	Stores Affected	Employees Affected
2018 (March)	12	476	8,036
2017 (12 months)	44	1,383	12,225
2016 (12 months)	30	1,504	26,110
2015 (12 months)	25	728	6,845
2014 (12 months)	43	1,314	12,335
2013 (12 months)	49	2,500	25,140

2012 (12 months)	54	3,951	48,142
2011 (12 months)	31	2,469	24,025
2010 (12 months)	26	944	10,930
2009 (12 months)	37	6,536	26,688
2008 (12 months)	54	5,793	74,539
2007 (12 months)	25	2,600	14,083

Analysis of the Main Retail Failures 2008-2018

The Centre has analysed the main retail failures in the period since the recession. There are 29, with 11,601 stores affected and 1438,914 employees. They range from Blacks Leisure in 2008 to BHS in 2016, Store Twenty One and Palmer and Harvey in 2017 and Toys 'R'Us in 2018. Woolworths was the biggest casualty in this period with 820 stores and 30,000 staff and BHS the second largest. These figures are based on the CRR's own research over this period. Further details can be downloaded here.

Legal Note:
this listing of UK retailers who went into receivership between 2005 and 2018 is based on research carried out at the time and our understanding of their business affairs then. Some of these companies recovered and came out of administration; some were bought by other businesses; some were sold as going concerns but changed their name; for some, the name was bought and this is still used, but under different ownership; and others ceased to exist. The presence of any business in this historical listing must not be taken to imply that it no longer exists, its name is not used or that such business, if still trading, is impaired in anyway.

Failures in 2018

- **Claire's,** the U.S. parent company of UK Claire's Accessories, applied for Chapter Eleven protection from its creditors on 19 March. It has 5,300 sites in the U.S., many of which are concessions in shopping malls. It is known there for its pre-teen jewellery [or jewelry] and claims to have pierced 100 mn pairs of ears since 1978. The corporation is currently trying to shift $1.9 bn of debt placed on it by successive private equity buyouts and hedge funds and to reorganise the corporation. There are no current plans to close any outlets. Claire's Accessories UK is not affected.
- **Countrywide Farmers,** the rural supplies Co-operative, went into administration in March following the decision of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to initiate a detailed investigation into its proposed merger with Mole Valley Farmers. Countywide employs more than 700 people and sells farm supplies, animal feed, energy, gardening, household products from 48 stores and depots. It has 4,000 mainly-farmer members. It sold its LPG business a few days before going into administration. The CMA was concerned that if the merger went ahead there would be insufficient competition in the south and the south west and lack of competition for things like outdoor clothing, hand tools and pet food. The CMA is the body that waved through the giant merger of Tesco and Bookers, but viewed an agreed merger to save Countrywide Farmers, its workers and its members as an anti-competitive act. Would the French authorities have allowed such an event to happen in their country? Almost certainly not.
- **Toys 'R' Us UK,** the UK's largest toy and children's games/leisure products supplier, went into administration on the last day of February 2018 after failing to find a third-party buyer for the business. Its problems started when its US parent went into Chapter Eleven last December. Toys 'R' Us agreed a CVA with creditors last December on the basis that one-quarter of stores would be closed, making 800 staff redundant. The Pensions Regulator held out for better terms for its pensioners until the very last moment. In February HMRC sought to recover £15 mn in unpaid VAT and this finally tipped the company into administration. There is a £37 mn pension deficit which presumably will now become the responsibility of the Pension Protection Fund. There are 105 stores and 3,200 staff. In the past it has provided support for the American and European arms of

Toys 'R' Us, but it is now legally unable to retrieve any of its funds from the U.S.

- **Maplin,** the electrical/electronic component and gadget business, went into administration on the same day as Toys 'R' Us, having failed to find a buyer. There are more than 200 stores and 2,500 staff. Brinkwire has stated that credit insurers QBE and Euler Hermes, nervous about its financial position, withdrew credit insurance and this ended Maplin's trading relationship with Tech Data, the UK's largest tech distributor. Over Christmas, the loss-making company's sales fell by 7%.
- **Berwin & Berwin (B&B),** the menswear group, had been bought out of administration by EWM (Edinburgh Woollen Mill). Eight hundred people work at B&B, whose brands included Lambretta, Paul Costelloe and Baumler. All B&B inventory and 36 concessions have been taken over by Formal Tailoring 1885 Limited, which is part of the EWM group. B&B was the major supplier to Austin Reed and Jaeger, both of which plunged into administration with the brands being bought by EWM. B&B products will be stocked across EWM stores. The Hungarian and German subsidiaries will also be run by EWM.
- **Cloggs,** the specialist footwear retailer owned by J D Sports, is to be wound up in Spring 2018, according to Drapers. The company started in a Birmingham market. It now has three stores and a strong online presence. The problems of rising costs and weak consumer demand are common in the footwear trade, as shown by the failure of Brantano, Jones The Bootmaker and Shoon in 2017.
- **Warren Evans,** bed, mattress and furniture retailers in London and the South East of England, went into administration one week after putting itself up for sale. There are 14 stores and a warehouse with 287 staff. Trading at Christmas was good, although Warren Evans has been losing money for some time under the pressure of rising costs and shrinking customer spending. The company was known for its ethical stance. However, administrators have announced that customers that have paid for beds will no longer receive deliveries.
- **Justice Jewellers,** Winchester, is to close its store after trading in the city centre for almost 20 years. It leapt to global attention last year when it suffered a £250,000 robbery. Its reasons for closure were the shift of trade from the high street to online, but also the Christmas Market which did little for traders in luxury goods and 'blocked the streets and car parks' driving his customers away. The company intends to trade online in future.
- **Juice Corporation,** the owner of designer brands Elizabeth Emmanuel (wedding dresses etc), Joe Bloggs, Gabicci, Rawcroft and Loyalty & Faith, went into administration at the end of January. In the past it launched celebrity ranges for Brian Lara and Naseem Hamed. Although the group made profits, it had failed to make inroads into the fashion market particularly now that UK consumers were becoming slightly more austere in their buying patterns. There are 61 staff. The administrators are seeking a sale of the group rather than breaking it up.
- **Joe Bloggs,** the designer brand (above) once known for its wide Madchester-style jeans (who writes this stuff?), has gone into administration as part of Juice Corporation.
- **East,** the fashion brand with 34 stores and 15 concessions, went into administration at the end of January for the second time in two-and-a-half years. Last time it was bought out of administration in a pre-pack that closed 15 stores. There are 320 staff.
- **Nice 'N' Naughty Leisurewear,** a retailer of sex toys and intimate apparel, went into administration in January caused by cash-flow problems. The company was bought out of administration by its previous director. There are nine stores and 26 staff.
- **Barkers,** the pet grooming chain owned by Pets at Home, is to close by March 2018. There are seven stores in upmarket areas like Ilkley and Marlow. All 55 staff are to be offered positions with Pets at Home. The company reported that although the proposition was popular with customers, the store operating costs were too high.
- **Joe Delucci's Gelato,** Warwick ice-cream retailer and wholesaler with parlours in 18 shopping centres, went into administration early in January and was bought out by a group of investors, including the former operations manager, saving 38 jobs. The company had been hit by stagnant consumer demand, high costs following sterling's depreciation and additional business rates backdated for three years by HMRC.

Failures in 2017

- **Pixiphoto,** a chain of photo shops aimed at mother-baby snaps closed down in July and the company's assets, client list, and images were sold to a third party. 34 stores closed. Apologies for missing this from our list for July.
- **Dickinsons Furnishers Ltd,** which closed stores in Alnwick and Carlisle in September 2017 to concentrate on its contracting business and online sales has gone into administration (December 2017) putting 32 jobs at risk. It was founded in 1878.
- **Australian news.** Oroton the Australian handbag designer and retailers went into voluntary administration at the end of November. There are 59 stores which continue to trade. The company was founded 79 years ago.
- **Shoon,** the footwear retailer, went into administration in November, putting 95 jobs at risk and heavy losses for its suppliers. Its stores in Winchester, St Albans, Leamington Spa and Guilford have closed and stores in Bath and Salisbury (and concessions in Bratts and Northwich) have been sold to The Shoot Shoe Company. It previously went into administration in 2012, when it had 23 stores. Turnover fell by 20% last year although profits rose.
- **Buy As You View,** otherwise *Dunraven Finance*, which rents out TVs and other consumer electronics on a hire-purchase system went into administration in September. There are 260 employees and 40,000 UK customers. The company is known for giving credit to distressed purchasers. A proportion of these deals have gone wrong. Additionally the company was criticised for installing regulators at clients' houses which could ration their viewing if payments were not kept up.
- **Roamers and Seekers,** a small UK clothing outlet for Hong Kong suppliers, set up by former Superdry design manager in 2015, went into administration.
- **Palmer and Harvey,** the major wholesaler of 12,000 food, alcohol and tobacco products, went into administration in November, making more than one-half of its employees immediately redundant. There are 4,000 employees. P&H is the wholesaler for more than 90,000 independent and symbol stores and petrol filling stations.
- **Feather and Black,** the bed and linen retailer, went into administration at the end of November. It is associated with the same company that owned MultiYork. There are 123 employees and 24 stores and concessions.
- **MultiYork,** the furniture and homeware retailer with 50 stores, went into administration towards the end of November. The company's majority shareholder is Charles Wade (Wade Furniture). MultiYork had been making losses for some time. Its sales last year were £50 mn, but profit was £0.479 mn against a £0.714 mn loss in the previous year. Normally a business would wait till after Christmas before going into administration, but the results must have been so poor that there was little choice. The company had been rescued once before in 1995.There are 547 people working in its stores and furniture is manufactured in Thetford, Norfolk.
- **Mango Bikes,** an online supplier of custom-made cycles, went into administration in November, caused by rising input prices for components and specialist materials and by intense competition. There are five employees.
- **J H Donald,** an Ayrshire electrical retailer with five stores, went into administration in November. It trades as part of the Euronics voluntary group and has 32 employees. One store has already closed. The others are running clearance sales. The company was founded in 1952.
- **Palmer & Harvey (P&H),** the employee-owned major UK tobacco, chilled foods and alcohol supplier to 90,000 stores, is in talks with its suppliers to avoid administration. Tesco's takeover of Booker (it supplies Tesco) is likely to create a major rationalisation of all grocery wholesaling. It is the major tobacco wholesaler in the UK, which explains why Imperial Tobacco is in talks with the company to mount a rescue deal and did the same in April 2017. There are 4,000 employees.
- **Franchisees Topshop and TopMan in Australia and New Zealand** have gone into administration following general problems with their businesses down under. The UK operations are of course unaffected.
- **Toys 'R' Us in the US and Canada** have sought protection from their creditors, while they

reorganise. The UK stores are unaffected.

- **Just for Pets,** the 25-store petfood and petcare business, went into administration in mid-September as a result of poor trading and a large fall in profits. It is part of the Llansantffraid-based Wynstay Group, an agricultural supplies PLC, which include specialist country-store type shops established west of a north-south line passing through Banbury.
- **Greenwoods,** the rather old-fashioned menswear retailer established 150 years ago as a hatter and now with 65 outlets in the UK, went into administration in early September. It has a large formal-wear suit hire business trading as **1860**. It has been through a series of revamps and downsizing over the last 20 years and had more than 200 stores in the late 90s. Currently it has 318 staff. The company was purchased out of administration by Versatile International Trading which has closed 22 stores , creating 88 redundancies.
- **Basler UK,** the fashion retailer, went into administration at the end of August following the administration of its German parent along with other foreign subsidiaries. The German parent is seeking a buyer. Its failure to find one has produce the present outcome and formal liquidation proceedings have started. Basler UK has three own-brand stores, a factory outlet, 17 concessions and supplies its brand to more than 100 wholesale customers. The Group also owns St Emile.
- **Surfstitch,** the value online Australian retailer that also operates UK and U.S. websites, went into administration as a response to legal cases relating with alleged misinformation of investors. The websites Surfstitch, SurfDome and Swell have not so far been affected by the administration.
- **Beadworks UK,** a wholesaler and retailer of beads, gemstones, chains and related costume/haberdashery items, went into administration in August.It is hoped to find a buyer. There are 14 staff and two sites.
- **Spymaster,** retailer of James-Bond style spy- and anti-spy products and devices, has gone into administration. It started 26 years ago and operates from a stand-alone store, online and two concessions. Its merchandise includes drones, covert cameras, bugging devices, body armour, vehicle tracking equipment and military watches, small hovercraft and miniature submarines.
- **Zatchels,** a satchel and bag manufacturer and retailer based in Leicester, went into administration on the last day of July and was bought out by its two founders. It had been operating under a CVA. There are 50 employees.
- **Cadogan and Co,** upmarket fashion store in Winchester for 20 years, went into administration in July, presumably sharing the malaise common to fashion in the last three years, and closed down in August. Nine people worked in the store.
- **Rare Fashion,** the online company trading as '**Rare London**', went into administration at the end of July 2017. The company's products were sold by Asos, Topshop and Next as well as the company's own site. It was closed the next day, all 56 staff being dismissed. It had previously gone into administration in 2013 with 100 redundancies. It was an important supplier of bridalwear and fashion of a certain kind. There are likely to be hundreds or thousands of customers who will lose most or all of what they have paid.
- **Store Twenty One,** the budget fashion and homewares store (see below) has finally closed its stores and opted for liquidation, involving the close and sale of its 125 stores and redundancy for its employees. Three months ago it had 1,010 employees but staff numbers had been pared to the bone and were already down to 900. For several years the company seems to have adopted a policy of late payment of suppliers. Some landlords have put in bailiffs once or twice to get their rent paid. The action that led to the company's failure started early this year when HMRC attempted to appoint an administrator because of non-payment of tax. Most of its stores are high street and are around 10,000 to 20,000 sq feet. Many of the stores are ex-Woolworths, ex-M&S, ex-Burtons etc. and have gone through several owners in recent years. They will take a long time to be relet. Many of the staff have long service and are very loyal to the company. The list of creditors will be very long, including landlords, suppliers, staff, and banks.
- **Linens Direct,** an online and store retailer with 35 branches, went into administration in July and ceased trading. It announced its intention of appointing administrators in May. It was established 25 years ago and seemed to be trading successfully with sales of £21mn until it went into administration. There were 320 staff.
- **Lovereading,** the online book recommendation site, went into administration in June 2017.The

company continues to trade. There are eight employees. Its brand identities include lovereading.co.uk, lovereading4kids.co.uk and lovereading4schools.co.uk.

- **Gas Superstore,** with sales of £12 mn (based in Leicester and Coalville) with an active online business, stopped trading in May and went into administation.
- **Rapid Discount Outlet,** the Liverpool-based hard-discount appliance store, went into administration in May owing £3 mn. No buyer could be found and the store has closed. It is the successor to Rapid Hardware which originally operated a whole block in Basnett Street, but went into administration in 2013. There were 100 staff at one time, but only 25 by May 2017.
- **BBC Store,** the corporation's digital download store, is to close in November 2017 with purchases made later than November 2015 to be refunded or replaced with Amazon vouchers). BBC programmes are normally available on subscription sites such as Netflix and Amazon Prime, while BBC Store was TVOD providing permanent rights to view purchased videos. The streaming service has not been a commercial success, without the scale and range of Netflix or the popularity of a subscription model.
- In what has probably been the worst three months for fashion retailing for many many years, **Style Group Brands**, trading as **Jacques Vert**, **Precis, Windsmoor**, **Eastex** and **Dash** (womenswear brands), has been bought out of a pre-pack administration by part of Calvetron Style Holdings, backed by Harold Tilman (former head of Jaeger) and Asian entrepreneurs Sundeep Vyas, Haseeb Aziz and Arvind Vij. The deal includes only 5 of Style Brands' 22 existing stores, but the 318 concessions in the UK and Ireland along with the 5 remaining stores safeguard 1,719 jobs. Fifty-one Canadian concessions and 14 in the Middle East are to continue, but the Belgian concessions are to close. There are 272 immediate job losses from closing the 17 UK stores and reductions in staffing at head office and a warehouse in County Durham.
- **Equestrian Clearance Warehouse Ltd**, trading as **Equestrian.com**, a leading online retailer of riding products and clothing, went into administration in June. Most of the 12 staff has been made redundant, although the firm continues to trade.
- The worst six months for fashion in Australia saw **Topshop Australia** go into voluntary administration in June 2017. The UK operations are not affected. Topshop and Topman have 760 staff in Australia and sales of Aus $960 mn through nine stores and 17 concessions (mainly Myers).
- **Store Twenty One,** the budget fashion and homewares store created from Bewise and Quality Seconds (QS), has avoided administration through the possible sale of its head office. However the company filed a notice of intention to appoint administrators, thus preventing HMRC (and perhaps other creditors) from pursuing their winding up order. Its bankers have been unwilling to provide more credit. The company has been struggling for some years. In 2016 it arranged a company voluntary agreement (CVA) with its creditors and closed 77 of its stores. Store Twenty One had been bought out of administration in 2006 by Indian megacompany Grabal Alok. There are 125 stores and 1010 employees affected.
- **Joy The Store,** the fashion, lifestyle, gifts and homeware brand (fun based), went into administration in May, but was bought on a pre-pack basis by Louche London the company's immediate owner. Eleven stores have been closed and 78 staff made redundant, leaving Joy with 19 stores and 230 employees.
- **Theo Fennel,** the Chelsea jeweller to the celebrity world focusing on distinctive design and craftsmanship, went into administration in May. It trades from its flagship store in Fulham Road, the Royal Exchange and several concessions including Harrods, Selfridges and Harvey Nichols. There are 54 staff. It was established in 1982, but bought by a consortium four years ago. It has suffered from a costly strategy to expand globally, high overheads and management turmoil.
- **Tempest Car dealership** in Lichfield is closing in May with the loss of 25 jobs. Tempest claim that a decision by the council to develop the site earlier than promised has prevented the business finding a new location: Lichfield District Council argues in contrast that Tempest were slow to relocate. Twenty-four jobs are affected.
- **iCandy (iCandy Cards and Gifts),** set up by Clinton Lewis after the failure of Clintons in 2012, went into administration in May 2017. There are more than 100 employees and 14 stores, mainly in market towns in the South East. Four stores were closed immediately and 22 staff made redundant while buyers are sought for the business.

- **Retail Acquisition Limited (RAL),** the personally-owned company used by Dominic Chappel to acquire the assets and good will of BHS for £1 from Arcadia, is to be put into administration and liquidated to make RAL assets available for BHS creditors. When Mr Chappell ran BHS more than £8 mn was withdrawn from BHS in favour of RAL. There is only one director and the last accounts were filed in 2014.
- **Ruddocks of Lincoln,** a large independent stationery and gifts retailer established 163 years ago, closed in April 2017. Reasons given included the decline of the high street, the growth of online retail, the fall in postal communications and increased expenses including rates. Lack of parking has also created particular problems for stores in central Lincoln. Henry's tea room has also closed, but the design and print business will continue.
- **Kit and Ace,** the Canadian retailer of 'technical clothing for men and women' (no we don't know what that means either), is closing its UK stores only two years after announcing that it was to open eight stores in the UK. UK closures are part of the company's retreat from international operations following heavy losses: it abandons its stores in Australia and the U.S. also. Australian staff only found out they were sacked by reading a short notice on the company's Instagram page and on Facebook. Kit and Ace seem to be one retailer that has its social media strategy sorted out. In the UK this relates to two stores and 43 staff and in Australia to seven stores and 75 staff.
- **Transline,** the recruitment specialist used by Sports Direct to provide up to 3,000 staff for its Nottinghamshire Shirebrook warehouse, is seeking additional finance and has given notice that it may ask for administrators to be appointed if this is unsuccessful. The agency became well-known when Sports Direct was the subject of BBC and Parliamentary investigations relating to the treatment of staff.
- **CPL Foods and Millcliffe Ltd,** franchisees of Burger King with 1,000 employees and 36 outlets, went into administration in April, probably caused by over-expansion. The stores are based widely in England and Wales, including Blackpool, Wolverhampton, Dudley, Bridlington, Llanelli, Huddersfield, Worksop, Nottingham, Shrewsbury, Hull, Skegness and Great Yarmouth. HMRC attempted to wind up CPL Foods in January, but the petition was dismissed in February, administrators were appointed April.
- **Jaeger,** the high street menswear and womenswear fashion chain established in 1884, collapsed into administration at the beginning of April. There were 46 stores (20 of which closed in the following fortnight), 63 concessions and 686 staff, including 70 staff at the logistics hub in Kings Lynn. Harold Tilman (who also ran Acquascutum) sold the company to Better Capital in 2012 for almost £20 mn. It has now been sold to Edinburgh Woollen Mills (EWM) after sales fell by 7% last year to £78.4 mn and pre-tax losses were £17 mn. EWM are expected to close most of the stores and run it via in-store concessions and online.
- **Interio,** a luxury furniture retailer and interior designer set up 20 years ago, went into administration in late March. It was the distributor for John Richard, Dorya, Matsuoka and its own brand, AdVivum. It traded online (HQ in Poole) and from a design store in the Kings Road. There are 27 employees.
- **99p Stores,** the value retailer purchased by Poundland two years ago for £50mn, was put in administration in March. The situation is confusing, because 99p Stores was acquired by Poundland a couple of years ago. The truth seems to be: the current **99p Stores** comprise only 60 unprofitable 99p stores that remained on old leases. Poundland was trying to offload these shops to other retailers (99p Stores had 250 stores when bought by Poundland). The stores still trading as 99p Stores have now all closed. The 670 employees are to be offered jobs at other Poundland stores. Poundland itself is not affected, except that it no longer has to find the rent for those stores at quarter day.
- **Brantano,** the national shoe chain that went into administration in 2016 did so again in March 2017. The company is owned by Alteri, like Jones The Bootmakers (which passed through administration a week earlier). There are around 73 stores (plus 64 concessions) and 1,086 employees. Brantano's online business stopped trading a few days after going into administration.
- **Ted & Muffy,** the Somerset footwear company previously known as 'Duo', went into administration and has dismissed 11 of its 38 staff. It sells quality boots and shoes, made in Frome, from one site in Bath and online. It went into administration previously in April 2016.

- **Matthews,** an Ipswich-based electrical retailer that had traded for more than 70 years, went into administration in March with the loss of six jobs.
- **VIP,** the e-cigarette retailer (formally *Must Have Limited*) owned by US corporation Electronic Cigarettes International Group, went into administration in early March, owning HMRC £2 mn in taxes. There are 165 stores and the company employs 265 staff. The company continues to trade and so far its parent is attempting to explore 'strategic alternatives'.
- **Wallace Sacks London,** a family-owned retailer and producer of upmarket made-to-order furniture, went into administration in late-February owing creditors almost £4 mn. Although Heals, Graham and Greene, John Lewis and House of Fraser are listed as existing clients, most sales seem to have been made through Wallace Sacks online and its associated website. The company was an intermediary, taking orders from customers then commissioning products from outside businesses. It has now ceased trading. There is a large number of unfulfilled orders, the list of creditors being 37 pages long with more than 1,840 names, most owed £800-£1,200. Unsecured creditors have claims of £2.7 mn, but only £192,000 will be realisable from debtors. Companies House info shows that 'Wallace Sacks Furnishings' has been a trading name for a firm called Muubaa Limited (that produces leather clothing). Company name changes have allowed Muubaa Limited to continue as a separate concern.
- **Agent Provocateur,** retailer of racy underwear and other products that scarce bare mention, went through pre-pack administration in March and was bought by Sports Direct. 3i obtained a majority stake following the divorce of its founders, Serena Reece and Joseph Corre (son of Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McClaren) who started the business in 1994. Although aimed at a younger clientele, the merchandise was very expensive and the racy designed-to-shock underground product was perhaps over-exuberant and no longer shocked in this post-recession world. It operates more than 100 stores in 30 countries (mainly high-end concessions) and has 600+ employees. There are 11 UK stores, 7 in France, 8 in Germany, 14 in China, 9 in Russia and 29 in the U.S..
- **Jones The Bootmaker,** one of the oldest retail chains on Britain's high streets (founded 1857), went through administration in March, put there by its owners, Alteri Investors, who also owned Brantano. It has been bought on a pre-pack basis by investors Endless, who have closed 31 branches losing 260 jobs. Before administration it had 110 stores and 13 concessions and . e more than 1,045 employeesMid-range and upmarket footwear stores face increased competition from the fact that fashion retailers have radically improved their footwear offer.
- **Food Retailer Operations Ltd,** a franchisee of grocery store Budgens, went into administration in mid-February. It has 34 stores spread over the south of England, London, Norwich, Ludlow, Newport, Wales, Sherwood and St Neots with 872 staff. It also holds leases on a further 36 non-trading stores and Somerfield's former HQ. These are mostly former Co-op/Somerfield stores. Other Budgens stores are not affected.
- **News from A Place Down Under.** Australian/NZ fashion brands David Lawrence and Marcs went into voluntary administration at the end of January 2017. The rationale given was falling sales, poor cash flow and harmful market conditions for fashion. The companies operated from 52 standalone stores, 11 outlets and 140 concessions in Australia and New Zealand (10 stores in New Zealand) with almost 1,200 staff. They continue to trade. The companies were owned by Webster Holdings: Webster co-founded the UK chain Jigsaw in the 1970s. In Australia, major recent failures in 2016 included Dick Smith Electronics (3,000 employees), Masters Home Improvement (part of Woolworths with 63 stores at demise), Pumpkin Patch (a global retailer in the noughties with 100s of stores, but 27 stores and 1,300 employees at its demise), Payless Shoes (150 stores, 730 jobs), Howards Storage World (home organisation systems, 29 stores and 30 franchises), and menswear chains, Herringbone and Rhodes and Beckett (29 stores and 150 staff) owned by German van Laack group.
- **Prelude Records,** a long-established store in St Giles, Norwich, specialising in classical music and jazz, is to close in March 2017 as a result of higher costs and the changes in the record industry. It was one of *Gramophone's Top 10 Classical music shops* and listed by *the Independent* as one of the top 50 record stores.
- **High Noon Stores,** the south Wales convenience store owner and forecourt operator, announced on 16 Jan it would appoint administrators. There are five convenience stores (which closed overnight)

and ten PFS. The company ran out of cash over Christmas and therefore was required to cease trading.

- **Moda in Pelle,** the Leeds-based women's shoe designer and retailer established in 1975, was rescued from administration by a pre-pack sale agreement. This saves 300 jobs, 17 retail branches and 26 concessions. At one time it operated from 60 stores.
- **The Post Office** announced it is to close 37 directly-managed Crown Post Offices this year, on top of the 62 branches closed in 2016. Three hundred employees will be affected. The work will generally be franchised and the post office transferred to a local retail outlet. This is part of a long-term programme by the Post Office, reflecting reduced use of mail, increased competition in postal/parcels services and payment of benefits and allowances by the state using direct debit and the replacement of what were mostly post office services (eg motor tax or postage stamps) by online services.

Failures in 2016

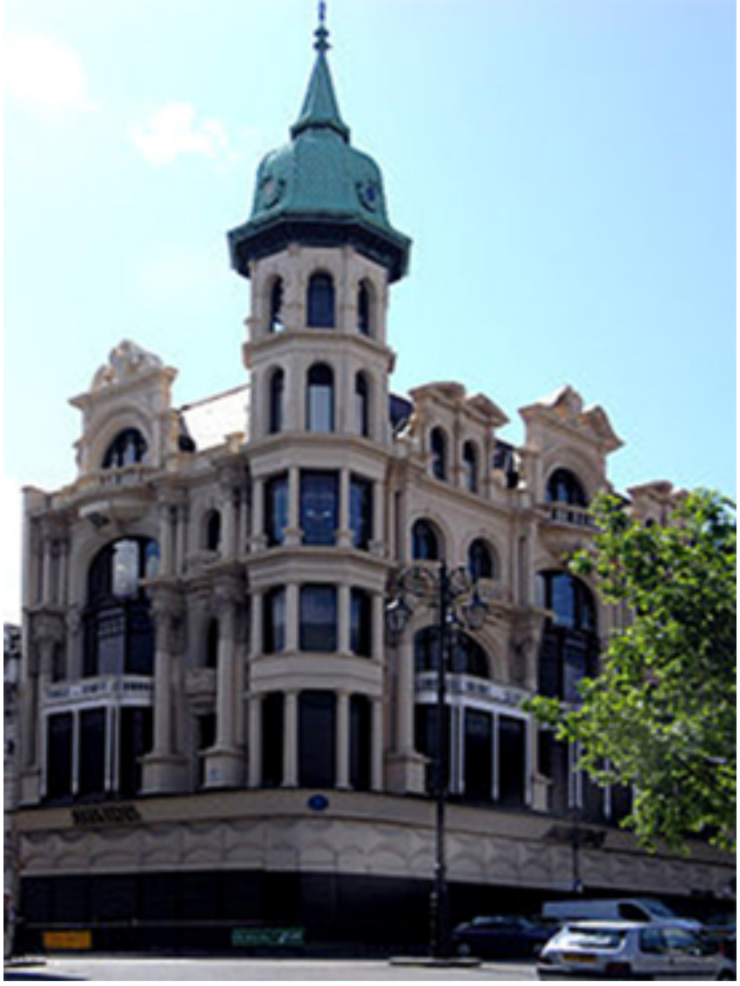
- **Cambridge Toy Shop,** an independent store in the university town, is to close after 12 years, attributed to high rates and rents and loss of customers due to high parking charges.
- **Rugby crisis** with both the northern game (Bradford Bulls in administration again for the third time) and union suffering high costs from professionalism, shown by **London Welsh** liquidating to re-form as a semi-professional team.
- **Formal Affair Weddings,** Tamworth-based wedding hire retailer with three stores, went into administration at the end of December. It had previously been bought out of administration in 2014. The chain closed its stores immediately, inconveniencing several couples that were to marry. We understand the group is not expected to continue.
- **The Ness Chain,** a design-focused Scottish women's wear chain of 15 stores, went into administration at the end of December 2016. Although the business continues to trade, seven of its stores have closed already. The rapidly-expanding business had experienced working capital difficulties. In 2015 the company received £2.5 mn from a UK venture capital firm.
- **Worldstores Group,** one of the largest online retailers of home and garden products, is to go into administration as a condition of its £8.5 mn purchase by Dunelm, the homewares/furnishings superstore company. Worldstores Group had estimated annual sales of £76 mn (2016) and 45 mn visitors annually to its website Founded in 2008, the company has expanded rapidly. It lost £6 mn last year and is forecast to lose £5 mn to £10 mn in this financial year: understandably it is short of working capital. The Dunelm agreement seems to be a pre-pack administration and on the face of it leaves Worldstores Group much as it was before, although we expect some rationalisation of this varied group to occur. Worldstores sells 500,000 products on its site and has two associate companies: Achica is a membership-based online luxury store selling furniture, homewares and accessories; Kiddicare is one of the largest nursery and children's goods suppliers, which was set up in 1974 before being acquired by Morrisons in 2011 and sold in 2014. Previously, Kiddicare operated ten superstores but only the Peterborough outlet seems to remain.
- **Independent Pharmacists in England,** which receive the vast bulk of their turnover for NHS work, will be seriously affected by cuts in the total subsidy, starting from December 2016 of more than £315 mn over 16 months. There are 11,800 pharmacies in England and perhaps 20%-25% will close as unprofitable under this new regime. The government view is that there are too many pharmacies, often in the wrong locations, and larger and better-equipped stores will give a better service. The work of a pharmacist is a highly specialist job, where each task has to be carried out individually with the pharmacist being personally liable if any mistake is made. Mistakes might involve dispensing the wrong medicine or in making up blister packs of several different drugs for people with multiple medication to ensure they do not overdose or 'forget' to take the right products. There are no particular economies of scale. Around 2,300 are expected to close with possibly 9,000 staff affected. A different approach might involve using pharmacies more instead of GPs and A&E for minor interventions, thus saving the NHS cash, but that would be too easy and 'difficult to manage'. CRR has not included the forecast losses of independent pharmacists in the totals, yet.

- **Staples,** the well-known stationery retailer selling to businesses as well as consumers, is to close its 106 UK stores employing 1,100 staff after selling the company for a nominal sum to Hilko. Staples has suffered from online competition as well as falls in demand for of stationery as a result of widespread ownership of computers, tablets and smartphones. It placed its UK and European operations under review after its merger with Office Depot earlier this year was prevented on anti-competition grounds. Hilko has taken over the business and will attempt to trade from its stores, but not as 'Staples'.
- **Betta Living,** the bedroom and kitchen furniture retailer with 24 stores, went into administration early in November. The company had grown from sales of £1 mn to £50 mn but the costs of newer stores turned profits into losses. The company ceased trading with immediate effect, although the nature of the business is that most transactions would be pre-payment or involving finance. There are 300 employees.
- **American Apparel,** the beleaguered U.S. fashion retailer, put its UK operations and some stores from other European countries into administration. The U.S. parent company filed for Chapter 11 (protection from creditors) in 2015 and is now up for sale. The UK stores are expected to trade through until Christmas, and the administrators hope to sell the stores afterwards. There are 13 stores and 95 staff affected. The merchandise was pricey compared to clothing produced in SE Asia, the fashions ceased to be current and there were controversies about the U.S. parent company.
- **William Watson & Sons,** the homeware store trading as Watsons of Perth established for more than a century, is to close, blaming high business rates (£40,000 for 2016) and a secular change in demand away from the quality end of the market.
- **Exhibit,** the well-regarded Northern Ireland fashion chain with 16 stores, went into administration in mid-October, blaming a change in customer habits. The company's owners, Cucco Retail Limited, have been trading since 1983. Some shops have already closed and staff told there is no money for wages. There are 100 employees.
- **Banana Republic,** the fast-fashion subsidiary of Gap, is to close most of its UK stores by the end of December 2016 and supply the UK solely from its website. Other Gap stores in the UK are unaffected (though rationalisation is occurring in other parts of the business). There are eight Banana Republic stores and 90 staff (including part-time).
- **Charity shops in Rugby** face a tough retail climate: three closed in just two weeks in October (Shelter, Scope and Acorns), indicating that in some environments there are few winners even those staffed by volunteers and enjoying 80% rate rebates and peppercorn rents. However the Royal Horticultural Society has awarded Rugby a gold award in the small city category indicating that all is not lost.
- **Icon Live Limited,** a large Sussex-based designer, wholesaler and concession retailer for jewellery and fashion accessories, went into administration in mid-October. It had 1,300 (455 FTE) mainly part-time staff and served 3,000 stores (including Oasis, Lipsey and ASDA) in UK and Europe. So far there have been 80 redundancies.
- **De Bradelei Stores,** a well-established discount (millstore-type) retailer operating from a number of towns (Belper, Dover, and Nottingham) with franchises in Ilkley, Skipton and Northallerton ceased trading in October: the stores have closed. The Belper store itself has been bought by a local businesswoman and reopened (albeit with 50% of the space). There have been some complaints that wages owing have not been paid. Overall around 260 staff are affected.
- **City Motor Holdings,** a car dealership based in the Thames Valley area including Newbury and Reading, went into administration in September 2016. There were 13 dealerships, including Gowrings Ford and City Peugeot: two have shut down (City SEAT and City Skoda) and 276 jobs (out of almost 300) have gone already. The administrators seem to have decided to wind up all the companies, blaming a long period of poor trading related to the current economics of the motor trade, in particular the excess supply of nearly-new and used cars.
- **Specsavers Optical Lens processing operations ,** in Aston Laboratories, Birmingham, serving Specsavers' opticians stores in the UK and Ireland has been scheduled for closure involving 200 redundancies. The operation is understood to be moved to Poland. The company has successfully registered 'should've' as a trademark. Should've ™ thought about the employees.
- **Joshua James Jewellery,** a Hessle (Hull)-based independent retailer, went into administration in

July. There were 13 staff. The company had been successful enough to win *Retail Jeweller of the Year Award* at the British Jewellers Association 125th Anniversary Awards and was runner up in the etailer category of the UK Watch and Jewellery Awards in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

- **Store Twenty One,** a value-oriented clothing and homewares chain with 220 stores, has reorganised its store portfolio (including closing 77 stores and obtaining rent reductions of up to 25% on a number of others) to revamp the business as part of a company voluntary administration (CVA). Its property subsidiaries, Be-Wise and QS Plc, are in administration. Almost 270 jobs have gone. It is part of the Grabal Alok Group, a substantial Indian textiles business, and comprises parts of the former *Bewise and Quality Seconds (QS)* operations. The company had 950 employees when it started this process.
- **HMV Ireland** is to close all its outlets in the Republic, retaining one Belfast store. Its presence will be continued online through a new online video-streaming platform offering 3,000 films in a move that will see it compete directly with Netflix.
- **Netto Stores,** the discount chain brought back to the UK by Sainsbury's in 2014, is to close. It comprised 16 stores in the north of England run as a joint enterprise with Dansk Supermarket Group. Sainsbury's view was that the chain would need heavy funding to enable it to become a national chain and this would detract from the changes Sainsbury's was already making to its business, including the acquisition and integration of Home Retail. All 16 stores are to close, affecting 400 staff.
- **My Local,** the 120-branch convenience chain formed from Morrisons' *M Local* foray into small stores, went into administration at the end of June. There are around 2,000 employees in total. Before administration, Morrisons announced they would offer jobs to the bulk of My Local staff. My Local closed 90 stores (1,658 staff) before the company entered administration and the remainder are likely to be bought from the administrators by other groups including the Co-op. Morrisons sold its (then) 140-store chain to Mike Green in September 2015. After a good start, trading became more difficult in Spring 2016. The leases on many of the stores will revert to Morrisons. Most of them were Blockbuster sites bought by Morrisons when that company collapsed: few are in prime convenience store territory.
- **BHS,** the clothing-based variety chain, went into administration on 25 April 2016, the largest retail collapse since Woolworths. Last month it had apparently achieved a stay of execution from its difficulties: 95% of creditors voted for a company voluntary arrangement (CVA). There are 164 stores and 11,000 staff. The prospects are bleak, and the administrators announced on 2 June 2016 that none of the would-be suitors had enough funds to run the company so it would be closed down. Like all retailers it has been hit by adverse trading conditions, but has not been given the imaginative overhaul required to keep its place in the high street and its assets have instead been used to produce cash for its owners for many years. The pension fund deficit is £571 mn, compared to a surplus of £5 mn in 2001 shortly after being taken over by Sir Philip Green's Arcadia.
- **Austin Reed,** the tailoring brand with 155 stores and almost 1,000 staff, appointed administrators in April a few days after being taken over by hedge-fund Alteri Investors. The company sold some stores and brand names to Boundary Mills/Edinburgh Woollen Mill, but then announced at the end of May that all other Austin Reed stores (Viyella and CC (formerly Country Casuals) are to close. The traditional gents clothing market served by Austin Reed has been undermined by the trend for casual clothes and sportswear; additionally Austin Reed suffered from being 'stuck in the middle' of this market, neither luxury, exclusive or low price.
- **Debenhams Retail (Ireland) Ltd** (otherwise DRIL), part of the UK's Debenhams PLC (but a separate legal entity), has had an interim examiner appointed by Ireland's High Court to examine its affairs. The company has been loss making since the 2007 recession and the Debenham PLC board ceased supporting its Irish chain early in May. The court was told that the only alternative to the interim examiner and protection from its creditors was liquidation. There are 11 stores in Ireland with 2,265 employees, 1,415 being directly employed and the others working in concessions or cosmetics. Total sales in 2015 were €167 mn, 22% below that of 2007. DRIL is continuing to trade and is honouring its vouchers and gift cards. Rents and staff costs are 15% and 22% respectively. DRIL is regarded as being insolvent on a balance sheet basis, but is expected to attempt to cut is fixed costs. (see also, the *Irish Times*, 12 May 2016).

- **Backwash from BHS,** the first failure caused by BHS' administration was Courtaulds Brands in Derbyshire, the manufacturer of Pretty Polly tights, which was owed large sums by BHS.
- **Some good news ('What?!!!'). Hawkins Bazaar owner Tobar Group** which closed all but eight of its 60 stores in 2012 when a staff buyout saved it from impending administration, now has 29 Hawkins Bazaar stores and Tobar is an independent wholesaler. It employs 300.
- **McEwans of Perth,** another old iconic department store trading since 1868, went into administration at the end of March. Two branch stores in Oban and Ballater have already closed, one-half of McEwan's staff has been made redundant and its closing sale is under way. The company closed its stores in Inverness and Aberdeen in 2015. McEwan's employed 110 staff when it went into administration. McEwans has suffered poor trade for a number of years. In view of the fall of McEwans, the town council is to rethink its bid to become one of Europe's 'great small cities' based on its tradition of independent retailers.
- **Trod Ltd,** a Rubery-based (hint: it's near Birmingham) online business trading as Buy 4 Less, Buy For Less, Buy-For-Less-Online, 247 Toys and Global Trader, went into administration towards the end of March but continues trading with 60 staff whilst the administrators seek a new buyer for the company. Trod's last-reported sales figure was £15 mn. It sells mostly toys via its own websites and third-party websites in the UK and North America. It was investigated over Christmas 2015 by the West Midlands Police (the now inevitable dawn raids, etc) as part of a U.S. State Department case using the Sherman Act involving alleged price-fixing for the sale of wall posters on Amazon. The Sherman Act was introduced in the nineteenth century to combat racketeering and corruption in the U.S. by the main steel and railroad tycoons. It is good to know that the Sherman Act is now being used to put the axe to the alleged tree of alleged corruption in the new economy. No doubt the giant multinational companies selling coffee, retail goods, software and internet search at practically no declared profit in the UK will be next. Perhaps not, as everything they do is strictly legal.
- **Furniture Barn,** a family-run chain of seven furniture and bedding superstores and three warehouses mainly in the Midlands which has gone into administration, is now operating (under a 6-month licence) as The Furniture Barn 2016 Ltd, although the Sutton Coldfield and Thurrock stores and three warehouses have closed. The company continues to trade normally.
- **Austins of Derry,** founded in 1830 and one of the world's oldest department stores located in a fabulous building, was put into liquidation on 8 March 2016 with the loss of 53 jobs. It had been trading in receivership for some time, having been saved from failure in 2014 when a hotel group bought it. Trading was being handled by a separate company when it finally was put into liquidation. As well as the problems faced by all department stores, Austins has been affected for years by Northern Ireland's specific problems, the shift in the retail centre away from Austins and a lengthy town-centre remodelling revamp of the city centre which made life difficult for pedestrians.



- **BHS,** the clothing-based variety chain formerly known as 'British Home Stores', gained 95% support from landlords and creditors for its company voluntary arrangement (CVA) aimed at reducing its financial charges and slashing its operating costs. There are 164 stores and 11,000 staff. It has not gone into administration, but is used the CVA, a way of avoiding this. It is still likely to close stores, but reports that one-half its outlets trade profitably - high rents and rates cause the main problems for the rest. It has requested **major** rent reductions (50% to 75%) on 50 stores and **significant** rent reductions (of 25% to 50%) on another 30. Its losses in 2015 were £85 mn, a crystallised pension deficit of more than £500 mn, and problems with maintaining supplies. The CVA has bought time for the chain. Its new strategy looks plausible. In the last 35 years, BHS has attracted retail gurus like Terence Conran and Philip Green to turn it around, pioneered hypermarkets with Sainsbury's, but today BHS is not a good fit with modern retailing, has suffered years of underinvestment and is stuck in the middle, neither cheap and cheerful enough to beat the discounters nor upmarket enough to attract a wealthier and style-conscious clientele.
- **Beales,** the department store chain with 30 outlets, has agreed a CVA (and has not gone bust) to reduce rents by 30% on 14 stores and will pay rents monthly instead of quarterly on all its stores. The company alleges it is being held back because of high legacy rents fixed in the pre-recession, pre-internet days when retail was highly profitable. The good news (for Beales) is that its major landlord has already agreed and most stores operate at a profit. It has bought a number of stores in the last ten years from Vergo Retail, Co-ops Fenwicks, Bentalls and Westgate Stores.
- **Sports Authority** in the US has filed for Chapter 11 protection from its creditors as yet another American big retail beast suffers problems. It intends to sell 140 0f its 540 stores and close two distribution centres. There are 14,500 employees. Ten years ago it was the market leader but a vague strategy and heavy repayment costs from a leveraged buyout doomed the business.
- **Kendall Mint Cake** is now under threat following the administration of its manufacturer, Wilsons based in Holme, Kendall, in February. There are only 35 employees remaining: they have all been given redundancy notices. The company has experienced difficulties for several years, and previously went into administration in 2015. It is not a retailer, but its performance is an important marker of change - and perhaps age - equivalent in its way to the loss of Dan Dare and The Eagle comic, Woolworths, C&A Modes, Timothy Whites, the Sony Walkman and Safeway.
- **Castle Bakery,** a bread and sandwich retailer based in Beaumaris (Anglesey), closed its six North Wales' shops in February with one day's notice. It was established in 1885. There are 35 employees.
- **Hawick Knitwear,** the iconic Scottish supplier and retailer of knitted goods, went into administration, and has made 126 staff redundant. 56 staff are still working at the company, whose

future looks unpromising.

- **Ben Sherman,** the menswear retailer, was sold via pre-pack administration to the clothing supplier BMB Clothing in January 2016. There are 10 UK stores (3 to close immediately), 10 UK concessions in the House of Fraser and 10+ in major overseas destinations. The German, Dutch, Austrian and Swiss operations will be managed by a German licensee. There is a total of 250 staff and the head office is likely to close. BMB is part of the Baird Group that also owns Racing Green and Jasper Conran.
- **Brantano,** the 'value' shoe firm with 140 branches and 60 concessions, went into administration in late January, but continues to trade whilst a buyer is found. There are 2,000 staff. Six months before, Branano had been bought with Jones The Bootmaker by investment firm Alteri from the Dutch firm, Macintosh, which went bust itself in January this year (see note below). Causes of the failure include changing shopping patterns, lack of investment in stores, and unexciting offer. At one time Brantano was an international group operating in The Netherlands, France and Denmark, but closed these stores, though separate companies still run stores in Belgium and Luxembourg. The UK Brantano started in 1998 when the firm bought Shoe City, relabelled Brantano.
- **John Cooper & Sons,** Aga and kitchen suppliers in the south east, went into administration in 2015, and is thought to be in the process of closing down.
- **Atterley,** the online Scandi-inspired fashion retailer founded in 2011 and supported by high-profile backers, went into liquidation early in January. In 2015 it reported to Vogue that it was hoping to turn over £100mn pa by 2020.
- **Blue Inc,** which focuses on young fashion trading in 230 stores as Blue Inc and The Officers Club, is to appoint administrators for A Levy & Son, which holds the leases on all its stores. It is understood that this will enable Blue Inc to give up the leases on (and thereby close) 60-65 stores, losing 500 jobs, and buy back the remainder it wishes to keep trading. The company started in 1912 as A Levy & Son, and traded mostly as Mr Byrite before rebranding as Blue Inc.
- **Dick Smith, Australia's largest electronics retailer,** went into volountary administration in January only two years after listing on Australia's stock exchange. The usual reasons were given: massive price competition, online competition, low profit margins. The company continues to trade from its 393 stores with 3,300 employees.
- **Another blow to Australia is the failure of the Australian arm of UK-based Laura Ashley,** fashion country prints etc, went into administration on Jan 7th with its 38 stores continuing to operate. The Australian firm is a licensee of the parent company and as such does not directly affect the UK operations.
- **In the Netherlands three retailers went bust in the same week.** The large department store chain, **Vroom and Dressman** (V&A) with 10,000 staff in 67 stores declared itself insolvent at the end of December after losing sales for several years. Sales in November 2015 were 15% less than last year and in December 20%. This is the Marks and Spencers of Dutch retailing, so its failure is very significant. For discussion of the Dutch Black Week in which 16,800 jobs ended, see Waard, P. de (2015) 'Zwarte kerst dreigt voor tienduizend V&D-medewerkers', Volksrant, 23 December, http://www.volkskrant.nl/ economie/vend-balanceert-op-rand-afgrond-voor-10-duizend-mensen-dreigt-ontslag~a4213331/
- **Netherland's DA,** a Dutch drugstore with 212 permanent employees and another 1,100 at affiliated franchises has gone into receivership. This chain was condemned for pursuing an middle of the road business strategy at a time when drug store products were being sold widely by supermarkets.
- **Netherlands' Macintosh store group,** a shoe chain with 5,500 employees, went bust in the same week as V&D and DA. It franchises brands such as Dolcis, Invito, Manfield and Scapino.

Failures in 2015

- **Shannon's Jewellery,** based in Lilburn Northern Ireland, went into administration at the end of 2015. This upmarket jeweller, first set up in 1925, was bought out of administration and continues to trade, its staff of 20 being unaffected.
- **Home Mills,** the Huddersfield furniture business set up in 1980, is to close its retail operations in

Milnsbridge, which the family will rent off to other businesses.

- **Cadwallader,** a Welsh ice-cream producer with 14 stores and 120 employees, was bought out of administration in November, although five stores were closed (reducing the workforce to 92).
- **Burns Jewellery Group,** a Salford/NW-based retailer with four stores, went into administration in September, subsequently being purchased by management.
- **American Apparel,** the large once-trendy young person's clothing shop that has not made a profit since 2009, applied for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in the U.S. from its creditors. It has more than 200 stores worldwide, with 20 in the UK (195 employees). It has suffered several internal problems and, like many such stores, has lost business to fast fashion. It continues to trade.
- **Direct Golf,** the 20-store golf supplies retailer, announced on the last day of September 2015 it was filing for administration and was found to owe large amounts to HM Revenue & Customs, landlords and its suppliers. Sports Direct was a major shareholder: it allegedly changed the locks on the head office whilst the owner was away from the building. Sports Direct then bought the company from administration, transferred all the stores to Sports Direct with all 162 jobs being retained.
- **Two retailers engaged in strategic trading** in July and August - the subsidiaries are not in administration and not included in the figures. Sainsbury's sold its 281 in-house and hospital pharmacies to Lloyds for £125mn (2,500 staff) and Morrisons is disposing its 156 convenience stores (sales £289 mn, staff around 4,000).
- **Pet Supermarket** and its owner **MedicAnimal**, the online pet supermarket and pet healthcare provider, ceased trading in July and issued notice of intention to appoint an administrator as a result of cash-flow problems. However Forward Dimension Capital purchased Kokoba Ltd trading as MedicAnimal in mid-August, thus saving it from administration and allowing it to start trading again. MedicAnimal is a pet healthcare provider whose website operates in five European languages and deals with everything from farm animals to pigeons as well as the more conventional cats, dogs and gerbils.
- **MFI** (remember them?) once a formidable operator in the furniture business and latterly a website brand operated by Victoria Plum has now been shut down and replaced by a Victoria Plum branded furniture website.
- **Woolworths**, once a high street staple, and latterly a website owned by Shop Direct, which used to trade as Littlewoods but sold most of its shops to Primark. Shop Direct (which also trades as Very and K&Co), now a major online retailer, stopped using the Woolworths brand in summer 2015 in favour of 'Shop Direct'. They retain ownership of the Woolworths' name and brand.
- **Blinkbox Music,** formerly owned by Tesco and bought by Guvera early in 2015, collapsed into administration in June 2015 after Guvera failed to restructure it and its users drifted away One hundred employees are likely to be made redundant.
- **Spirit of the Andes,** a luxury retailer selling clothes made by artisan knitters in Peru and Bolivia using high-end alpaca fibres and pima cotton, went into administration in July 2015 after several loss-making years. It had 12 shops with 62 members of staff.
- **East,** the women's fashion retailer with 106 stores, went into administration in late June and emerged via pre-pack as a subsidiary of East lifestyle Limited, thought to be owned by Fabindia the majority shareholder of East since 2012. The business lost £0.74 mn last year and UK sales were down from £44.3 mn to £38.8 mn. 82 stores and concessions will remain but 19 will be closed. 550 posts will remain and 155 lost.
- **Game Sweden,** the Nordic game/digital chain originally set up by Game UK, went into administration in June, leading to the expected closure of all 32 stores in Sweden and Norway. After the administration of Game UK (now Game Digital) in 2012 the Swedish operation was bought by Nordic Games AB. It has no link with the UK operation.
- **Cumming of Leven,** a clothing and small department store chain with 16 stores operating as Cumming of Leven, Sphere and Turrett went into administration in May. There are stores in Glasgow, Arbroath, Leven, Kirkaldy, Dumferminline, Glenrothes and three other Scottish towns. There are around 85 employees. The first store opened in 1879.
- **Carcraft,** the second-hand car dealer based in Rochdale, went into administration at the end of April. It is the seventh-largest second-hand dealer with ten showrooms around the country and has been losing £5m-£8m pa in recent years. There are 500 employees affected and the company will be

closed.

- **Motor World,** the car spares and accessories retailer with 34 stores went into administration at the end of March as a result of poor trading and competition both online and offline. Its owner, Maccess has also put the Godfrey Autoparts chain (6 stores), Pacific Retail (the Motor World operating company, 34 stores) and Maccess cash-and-carry chain (11 stores) into administration. This will cause the loss of 350 jobs. Group parent, Tetrosyl, intends to buy 32 Motor World stores from the administrators and continue to trade.
- **Ensemble Clothing,** the workwear and clothing retailer based in Washington (Tyne&Wear) went into administration early in 2015. Thirty-seven people lost their jobs and a further 15 have been kept on to wind down the company. Formerly part of The Co-operative it lost a major corporate contract and suffered severe cash flow problems in 2014. HMRC notified the company it was about to seize part of its assets, and both Ensemble and its sister company, **Packaging Xtra Ltd (Derby)** went immediately into administration. The parent, B&C Investments, is not in administration.
- **First Active Media,** originally an online lingerie company, went into administration in February 2015. Its website, Female First, a magazine site gets 2 mn visitors per month and is still trading. The company was bought out of administration by the managers, saving seven jobs.

In February 2015 widespread concern was expressed about how recent business failures had been handled. There is no imputation of illegality made, it is just odd.

- **USC:** laying off warehouse employees with 15 minutes' notice, transporting merchandise to Sports Direct warehouses then buying back the business. HMRC is still owed £0.6 mn by the old USC, staff are owed £0.1 mn in unpaid wages (to be refunded by the taxpayer), and suppliers (including Adidas, Diesel, Converse) are owed £9.9 mn and landlords £4.6 mn.
- **HMV:** staff, suppliers and landlords lost millions in the failure, but administrators charged £11.7 mn (of which they expect to be paid only £8 mn) and advisors £8 mn. Retail Agents 260, part of Hilco, was paid £2.7 mn as an advisor: but did they advise their own owners who ultimately bought the company? No one can doubt that the new HMV has been a success, but the process of administration looks very strange. Melanie Leech, CEO of the British Property Federation has criticised the administrative process as 'lacking proper checks and balances'.
- **City Link:** there is no doubt that the directors put the company into administration when absolutely necessary, but the self-employed drivers face particular hardship because they worked (ultimately unpaid) for City Link driving their rented vans in City Link colours (ultimately not reimbursed) until Christmas Eve although they could have transferred to other couriers in good time to offset some of their losses.
The way in which the 2012 Comet failure was handled from the point of view of employees and creditors still rankled with many.
- **Cooplands,** the Doncaster-based baker and cake shop with 562 employees, went into administration in February. It started in 1932 when Mrs Jenkinson opened her first store selling home-made cakes and chocolate. At the time of its administration Cooplands had 80 stores and 26 mobile sandwich vans. Forty-one stores and the mobile business have been sold to ReSolve and continue to trade, whilst 39 stores, the bakery and head office have been closed with 300 job losses.

- **Mexx,** the Dutch fashion brand that went bankrupt in December 2014, has ceased sending supplies to several countries. Its Irish franchisee, John Houston, has been forced to close 14 stores in Northern Ireland and 11 in the Republic, mostly trading as concessions. The Irish stores were trading successfully. Mexx closed its UK stores and concessions in 2008, 300 people losing their jobs, although it continued to supply its branded goods to other retailers on a wholesale basis.

- **Radio Shack,** admittedly an American company, applied in February for Chapter 11 protection from its creditors under U.S. law. This affects its 21,000 employees and 4,500 stores, although around half are to be sold to Standard General, which will lease most of these to Sprint Corp. Radio Shack played a major part in the development of early personal computers simply by making cheap components available all over the US, but failed to make the transition from slightly geeky specialist store to selling a wide range of branded computer and mobile phone products.
- **Blinkbox Books**, the e-books seller owned by Tesco as part of its Blinkbox operation, was closed down by Tesco in January as it failed to find a seller. It had hoped to sell it to Waterstones. Sixty jobs are at risk. Tesco itself set up Blinkbox Books in 2012 after it bought digital seller Mobcast. Tesco managed to sell Blinkbox Movies operations to TalkTalk and Australian music streaming corporation Guvera bought Blinkbox Music with a view to operating in Europe as well as Asia-Pacific. TalkTalk are mainly acquiring 75,000 Tesco broadband subscribers and 20,000 phone subscribers and have taken over the leases of Blinkbox's 'flashy' offices: it will close as a standalone service.
- **Country Casuals and Austin Reed**, the clothing outlets, are going through a CVA (not administration) and are seeking 50% rent reductions on its rapid closure list: 26 Country Casuals stores and nine Austin Reed, stores marked for early closure, and 20% rent reductions on a further 30 Country Casuals and five Austin Reed. All seem to be secondary locations apart from Bluewater and Meadowhall
- **USC**, the young fashion chain originally bought out of administration in 2011 by Sports Direct owner Mike Ashley, went into administration after Christmas. The directors decided they were unable to pay outstanding bills. There are 90 stores with 1,000 staff and the Dundonald warehouse (100 staff). One-third of stores and the warehouse were expected to close. Attempts were made to clear the Scottish warehouse before the company went into administration and, according to the Scottish *Daily Record*, suppliers that were owed money blockaded Sports Direct waggons for a period. USC was bought from administration by another Sports Direct subsidiary, Republic (rescued in 2012).
- **Bank**, the clothing store with 84 stores and 1,555 staff was put into administration after Christmas by its new owner Hilco. Hilco is expecting to sell the company as a going concern. It suffered a pre-tax loss of £8.1 mn in the y/e February 2014.

Failures in 2014

  - **City Link**. The collapse of City Link, the courier firm, on Christmas Eve leaving 2,000 employees and 1,000 self-employed couriers without jobs caused widespread surprise. The company had been making losses for some years. The self-employed drivers are each owed between £1,000 and £2,500 and have a small chance of receiving anything but a token sum. In addition, retailers that relied on City Link's promises have suffered losses. Hull-based Carpets Direct used City Link to deliver carpets to around 100 customers per day over Christmas and is still trying to find exactly where they are or whether they have been delivered.
  - **Yorkshire's Magical Winterland** (Harrogate) has entered administration following poor sales receipts and complaints about the possibly iffy nature of what was offered. This means that any possibility of consumer refunds is now unlikely although credit card chargebacks may be possible. This Christmas Winterland at the Great Yorkshire showground closed after a day. Perhaps, as a nation we ought to stick with a traditional Santa in a department store. Snow scenes are always a problem in a country where snow is rare and, when it arrives, no one can travel.
  - **My-Wardrobe.com,** the fashion online retailer went into administration in December. Originally started by Sarah and Andrew Curran eight years ago, it had been offering heavily-discounted goods for the previous two months and was known to be in difficulties. The

company still has one store (Whiteleys, London) that is still trading. The online business has ceased trading and its website has been sold to Net-a-Porter. The company had been in difficulties for more than a year. It went into administration for the first time 13 months ago and shifted its entire HQ to Nottingham in order to cut costs. It will accept returns until 15 January 2015.

- **Croydon Village Outlet,** the historic former Allders department store, went into administration in April 2014 but under new ownership has now become Zervo, selling fashion, fashion, jewellery, gifts, perfume and footwear, as well as furniture, toys and travel accessories.
- **PCS Brands,** the owner of the 30 **Viners** cutlery/kitchenware retailers in the UK and The Netherlands, went into administration in late October. PCS has three factories producing bakeware, cookware (as George Wilkinson) and is Europe's largest wine rack producer (called RTA). The RTA Gt Ryburgh (Fakenham) factory dismissed 109 employees on the first day of administration, leaving only a skeleton staff to maintain operations. PCS employs 299 staff.
- **Inter City Express,** not a railway train but the courier offering mobile phone companies same-day logistics, went into administration in October following the failure of Phones 4U, which provided much of its business and left it with a massive unpaid bill.
- **Apex Electrical Solutions,** an electrical wholesaler in Gateshead, went into administration in October, and is being liquidated following cash flow issues and the failure of its largest customer. There were 15 staff.
- **Phones 4U,** the mobile phone retailer, went into administration in September as Vodafone and EE ended their sales contracts. The 25-year old retailer acted as an intermediary for mobile phone companies, all of which had decided to switch to selling through their own stores or online. Phones 4U had 550 stores (plus concessions) and 5,600 employees affected by the administration. The stores closed immediately but it is likely that parts of the company will be purchased by mobile phone companies. Dixons Carphone is to retain 800 Phones 4U staff previously working in as concessions.
- **Athena,** the once-famous chain of 60 poster and art shops, is to close the last of its remaining stores (the Exeter branch) in September 2014. Founded in 1964, it passed through the hands of E&O plc and Pentos, before going into administration in 1995. It emerged as Vivarti, which continues to trade online. Whether your favourite was the Birmingham tennis student scratching her bum, the art director's nude or a pre-Raphelite lovely, it has gone forever.
- **Brian Leighton (Garages) Limited,** a garage, car dealership and petrol station in Howden, East Yorkshire, has gone into administration and closed apart from a Spar store that was also part of the business. There are 65 job losses.
- **Bolongaro Trevor (trading name of Hoxton Trading),** a young man's outfitters with a celebrity clientele (trading in stores with distressed wood panelling) founded by two former designers of All Saints in 2006, has gone into administration. There are four London stores, one in Leeds (and three pop-ups which have closed). Administration is blamed on the failure of The Fielding Group, to which it outsourced production and, apparently, accounts. There are 30 staff and the company hopes to survive and continue trading.
- **Tyneside Autobuy,** one of the north-east's largest car dealers in second-hand vehicles (sales of £25 mn) has gone into administration with the loss of 50 jobs.
- **Unipart Automotive,** the largest independent UK supplier of car parts and garage equipment with 180 branches, went into administration in July. Thirty-three branches have been sold to other businesses, the remainder are to close with the loss of 1,244 jobs.
- **Floors-2-Go,** the retailer of natural floor coverings and laminates, went into administration in July for the third time in six years. It has 35 stores and 165 employees. In 2008 (when it first went bust) it had 137 stores and more than 500 employees.
- **Fallen Hero,** the Scunthorpe store which closed because of high occupancy costs in May 2014, has reopened again sharing premises with Workwear and Leisure at much lower occupancy costs. The website has already gone live.
- **Interna�ionale and La Senza,** not so much fun for them as for Fallen Hero: the

Interna�ionale brand is now for sale and it seems likely that few Internationale or La Senza stores will continue trading.

- **The Comet liquidation (2011) turns sour.** The Comet electrical retailer went into liquidation in 2011 with the loss of 7,000 jobs. Heavy costs have fallen on the taxpayer: redundancy payments from the Insolvency service cost £18 mn, the 2014 compensation award for failure to consult employees will cost the National Insurance Fund up to £26 mn, and the £26 mn in unpaid PAYE and VAT at the time of the failure make the cost to the taxpayer £70 mn. Unsecured creditors were owed £232 mn at the time the company failed with little or any return. The company's owners and backers pre-collapse did not suffer to the same degree: their holdings were mostly loans secured against Comet property and they received almost £117m as a result of its insolvency. The Government has asked the Insolvency Service to get the ICAEW (Accountancy Watchdog) to investigate the actions of the liquidators (see Leroux, M. [20114] 'Cable Urges Regulator to Punish Deloitte Over Comet's Failure', *The Times*, 26 July, p.51].
- **La Senza,** the lingerie retailer with 55 stores, has gone into administration for the second time in two years. The Group also owns three Pinkberry stores. There are more than 750 employees. The business is continuing to trade whilst looking for a new owner, although the website is closed. The North American operations are unaffected by this problem.
- **Jane Norman,** the women's fashion chain, went into administration for the second time in three years at the end of June 2014. The 24-store chain in Britain and Ireland had been making losses in the current tough retail environment and was classically 'stuck in the middle' strategically being not-cheap and not-upmarket. Its owner, Edinburgh Woollen Mills, was unable to continue to fund the losses and put the chain into administration. There are 54 full-time staff and around 100 part-time. The company is likely to trade in future wholly online. This brings to an end the triumvirate of key ladies 1970s fashion: Morgan (failed Dec 2008), Kookai (failed Jan 2006) and Jane Norman (failed June 2014).
- **Belfast Furniture Mall,** the Northern Ireland furniture superstore with a business address in the Republic, has apparently closed with all the stock transferred to an unknown location, preventing creditors from reclaiming what they consider to be their own property. The store had been in business for only six months in ex-Fulton premises and is currently untraceable (according to the Belfast Telegraph) with no current address, website or email. This may prove to be a temporary problem, but courts in the Republic have appointed a liquidator. Staff claim to have been unpaid for several weeks.
- **Lakeland Leather,** the 22-store clothing chain selling coats, handbags and luggage, went into administration in June claiming that the mild winter has reduced demand for leather coats and jackets. 200 jobs are at risk and four stores have closed and the remaining 18 stores are holding closing sales.
- **Fallen Hero,** youth-oriented fashion stores in Scunthorpe and Gainsborough, has gone into administration with the closure of both stores (23 staff). In Scunthorpe Fallen Hero had moved from the high street into a modern property in the nearby Parishes Shopping Centre with a rent of 22,500 in 2011. Three years late, by 2014, costs were: £67,000 rent, £43,000 rates, £20,000 service charge and £3,000 landlords' insurance cost (£133,000 in total). By 2015 rent would have risen to £90,000 plus rates of £45,000 pa. The creation of a new shopping centre plus the closure of companies in the Parishes Centre like TJ Hughes, HMV, Peacocks and Rizzoli meant its sales had fallen by 70% by the time the administrators were called in. It is expected to continue as an online trader.
- **Solus Garden and Leisure,** the garden product wholesaler, went into administration in May 2014. The company once employed 300 staff and had sales of £90 mn, but its last half-year sales had fallen to £29.3 mn. The company continues to trade in the hope of finding a buyer.
- **Bloom.fm,** a music streaming app with 1.2 million users set up in 2013, went into administration in May 2014 after its main financier, Russia-based TNT Media, withdrew.
- **Zumu.co.uk,** the unwanted DVD online reseller (and its owner Pack Media Ltd) dealing in games, films and CDs, went into administration in April. There have been some delayed payments, presumably indicating cash-flow difficulties.

- **24-Seven Kitchen & Granite Solutions,** a bespoke kitchen retailer and granite tops supplier set up in 2003 in South Yorkshire, went into administration in April. No customers are expected to suffer loss.
- **West Country Pasty Company,** the supplier and retailer of pasties and snacks, went into administration in April, but was bought by Enact (a fund) one day later. The Company ran 45 retail outlets plus facilities in 20 railway stations and employed 350 people. The new company will have the West Country Pasty Company brand along with 35 stores: 30 stores will close and 92 people will be made redundant. The reasons for the decline were given as the Government's 'pasty tax' (tax on items sold hot), but also increased competition in this sector.
- **Paul Simon,** Barking-based furniture, curtains and carpets retailer, went into administration early in April, but continues to trade. There are 51 stores mainly based in retail parks located in the south east. 28 staff have already been made redundant, whilst 17 stores are to be closed (137 retail employees). Poor trading conditions and online competitors have affected the business, whilst bad weather and floods in late 2013/early 2014 led to a further fall in sales and ended the business under its current ownership.
- **John Cheatle Group,** a leading supplier of school uniforms and sportswear to 1,200 schools, has gone into administration but a management buy-out has saved the company. Turnover was around £16 mn, including direct supplies, sales through company-run shops on school premises and sales through their 108 high-street stores trading under names such as Rawcliffes, Schoolwear Centre, John Cheatle and others. Eighty jobs have been saved and 27 outlets, particularly those trading as Rawcliffes in Yorkshire. A few years ago the company had 500 employees, but has obviously run down the business.
- **Poldark Mine,** the Cornish visitor attraction with retail attachments, went into administration in March, after several years of declining revenues. There are 18,000 visitors each year. The business is now for sale.
- **Albemarle & Bond,** one of the largest pawnbrokers in the UK, went into administration towards the end of March. There are 188 shops and 1,000 employees. The company expanded (too) rapidly proclaiming the 'age of the pawnbroker' until 2013, when the fall in gold prices and business overexpansion produced cash flow problems and turned profits into losses. Attempts to restructure the business, merge with Better Capital, or obtain further loans from banks came to nothing. When its main creditors (banks) refused to provide further facilities after the March end, its only option was to file notice of administration. In April, Promethean Investments acquired 128 out of 187 outlets meaning that 628 jobs out of a workforce of 809 have been saved.
- **Trust Media Distribution (TMD),** the Carlyle-based distributor of bibles, Christian books, DVDs and music, has gone into administration as a result of a heavy fall in sales. The company cut its workforce from 70 in 2012 to around 30 in 2013. It is continuing to trade on a reduced scale whilst a buyer is found.
- **SitUp TV,** the TV shopping channel that operates **Price Drop TV** and **Bid TV,** was acquired in December 2013 after large losses caused by internet competition. The owners of Ideal Shopping (Paul and Val Wright) will invest £6 mn to save the TV selling business if the creditors accept a CVA (Company Voluntary Arrangement) to settle debts believed to be more than £68million (ie it's those 'haircuts' again). Creditors are asked to accept between 9p and 30p in the £pound. SitUp TV broadcasts weekly more than 300 hours of live demonstrations on Freeview and employs 350 staff.
- **Interna�ionale,** the value clothing retailer entered administration once again at the end of February after its purchase by Jason Granite. Unless a new buyer can be found, it is possible that the entire chain of 110 stores (1,600 employees) will be closed and the company liquidated. However it is likely to continue trading for up to three months.
- **Computer Bookshops Limited (CBL),** a retailer and wholesaler of IT books with 350,000-plus titles based in Sparkhill, has gone into administration. Component parts of the business include CBL Distribution, Bookaxis, cblearning training and computermanuals.co.uk. The causes of administration are thought to be declining high-street sales and withdrawal of a key

supplier.

- **Hooty's Supplies,** the £15 mn turnover Willenhall-based home and garden retailer, went into administration in February. Its assets were bought by The Range, retaining its large warehouse store, although 26 employees have been made redundant and 130 transferred to the new owners. Stores in Birmingham and Kidderminster had already been closed.
- **LN-CC,** a rapidly-growing up-market quality fashion concept combining an experiential store and an online business, went into administration in February. The expected £7 mn turnover in 2013 failed to occur. The business has been bought by Italian online seller, The Level Group. Senior figures are to remain with the business.
- **P&C Distribution,** a games and toy distributor trading as The In Thing to top sellers Harrods, JLP, Hamleys and W H Smith, went into administration in February. Its business model involved promoting fads/crazes like Peppa Pig, Angry Birds and Zombie Zity, but recent failed promotions led to failure. There are 46 employees.
- **Sa-Kis,** brand-oriented fashion chain with outlets in Nottingham and Sheffield, went into pre-pack administration in February, closing its Nottingham store. The Sheffield outlet continues to trade.
- **Bloomfield Shopping Centre,** Bangor (Northern Ireland) is in receivership following action by Ulster Bank. The shopping centre made a small loss this year (-£0.37 mn) after a £52 mn writedown last year. The centre continues to trade but according to Lisney the Bangor's shop vacancy rate increased from 21.8% in 2012 to 25.7% in 2013.
- **Nuval Ltd,** a distributor for watch brands including MeisterSinger, Ball, Fendi and Salvatore Ferragamo went into administration in February, blaming weak sales and late payers. Fourteen staff have been made redundant. For the last few years Nuval's driving force has been Jurek Piasecki, former chairman and mastermind of Goldsmiths Jewellers.
- **Clubsport (Kington) Ltd, a franchisee of Animal Stores, has gone into administration resulting i**n the closure of seven out of its 12 stores (mainly Wales and the North West) and 47 redundancies. An affiliated (but separate) business, Clubsport, an action retailer based in Hereford, is unaffected by the problems of the other business, has opened new stores in south Wales and seems to be operating at least some of the former Animal stores.
- **All Gino Casuals and NV stores,** two Northern Ireland fashion chains (menswear and womenswear respectively), closed 15 stores (costing 150 jobs) after the parent company (Nath Bros Partnership) went into liquidation. They focused on the younger market, but were not price-focused enough or exclusive enough to survive against large-scale competition. Donald McFetridge suggests, 'they have fallen victim to the changing patterns and trends in consumer behaviour in the fashion industry... others in a similar position need to learn lessons from this failure.'
- **Base Retail,** parent company of Base Menswear, went into administration in February blaming the squeeze on mid-market shoppers and excessive business rates. Four of its nine stores have been closed (Lakeside, Watford, Bromley and Luton) with the loss of 10+ jobs. Base Childrenswear is unaffected.
- **Lewis's Southport Ltd T/A Variety Shopping Ltd,** Southport's newest department store trading from the Tulketh Street premises vacated by Waitrose in 2006, closed for business, failing to pay staff their December wages. There were 90 staff, all dismissed. The manager had little previous retail experience and it seems unlikely that the business would have thrived.
- **Serene,** the upmarket brand clothing retailer, has been put into liquidation although its website (owned by a separate legal entity) continues to trade. The owner has blamed the rising costs and reduced customer footfall of trading in the UK for the outlet's problems.
- **Eric Alcock Ltd,** the 50-year Staffordshire electricals mini-multiple, went into voluntary administration in January and is being liquidated. It had stores in Alsager, Kidsgrove, Newcastle, Crewe Sandbach and Middlewich but was unable to repay its creditors before it folded.
- **Priory Shopping Centre, Dartford,** went into administration at the end of December 2013. There are more than 40 stores, including Sainsburys, Wilkinson, the 99p store and Poundland.

- **Glasgow's Savoy Centre,** with a large indoor market and almost 70 small stores, has given its retailers notice to quit within seven days as the Centre is not generating sufficient cash to allow it to continue. The Centre is owned by InShops.
- **InShops premises across the UK** - 50 centres with around 1,800 retailers - it is understood are to close on Friday 15 Jan 2014 and the leases are to be handed back to the owners. All retail tenants have been given one week's notice. It is thought that InShops Centres and InShops Starters will cease to trade and go into liquidation, subject to agreement from the creditors. Geraud Markets is the ultimate company owner, which is a subsidiary of French operator, **Groupe Geraud**. Centres exist in Kings Heath, Cannock, Perry Barr, Erdington, Aberdeen, Chatham, Thornaby, Cwmbran, Stratford London, Broadway London, Huyton, Chelmsley Wood, Washington. The **Dundas/Middlesborough** InStore Centre has been taken over by the landlords to ensure its future and three other shopping centres. Six other leases were surrended before administration and ten centres closed permanently. 321 retailers have been able to survive in the premises that have been saved.
- **Tone World,** Manchester's specialist guitar store started by former Sounds Great director, Garry Sharp, is in administration. Two staff have been made redundant. A major factor in the company's difficulties is a significant legal dispute.
- **News from Germany. Weltbild,** a large German bookseller with sales of €1.6 bn and 6,800 employees has filed notice of insolvency. It sells online and via catalogues and is the part-owner of Germany's second largest bricks and mortar bookseller, Hugendubel. It has been struggling against Amazon.de for years and could not arrange refinancing following a fall in sales in 2013. Weltbild is owned by 12 dioceses of the Roman Catholic Church. The Weltbild companies in Austria and Switzerland are not affected and its website continues to trade.
- **Conway's Toymaster,** a chain of 14 toyshops based in Keighley, West Yorkshire, has filed a notice to appoint an administrator. The causes cited include loss of trade to online retailers and high rents on the high street. The group has stores in Macclesfield, Keighley, Preston, Otley, Carlisle, Southport, Blackpool and Halifax. 'Toymaster' logo shops elsewhere, including Harpers (Penrith), and in Cockermouth and Barrow and the rest of the country are unaffected because they are not part of the Conway Group.
- **Fragrance House stores and some store in the Semichem chain** are to close leading to 90 job losses and 13 store closures by the Scotmid Co-operative Society. The remaining convenience store operations of the 5,000 employee group will be unaffected.
- **Base Retail,** which is known for its designer-wear clothes for children, is going into administration following a decision to close its menwear range. The Granditer store in London's East End was established in 1910 and there are currently nine stores.
- **Pykes,** up-market family-run jewellers in Birkenhead, went into administration early in January after a disappointing Christmas, the growth of online retailing and the fluctuating price of metals. The business was set up in 1878 and there are four shops which will continue to operate.
- **McKechnie Brass,** It may seem odd to start the year with the failure of a West Midlands (Aldridge) producer of copper and brass rod and sections, but for those of us who know McKechnie's well it is the end of an era. The Company was founded in 1871 and produces metals for the automotive, electronics, energy and construction sectors. Sixty out of the 75 staff have been made redundant.

Failures in 2013

- **Jacksons of Reading,** a traditional department store with 60 staff in Reading town centre ('Jackson's Corner') closed two days before Christmas. The store was founded in 1875. Trade had moved away towards the Oracle shopping mall on the other side of the town and a large repair bill for the roof made the business unsustainable. Goods were still sold from glass/wooden cases, receipts were hand-written, and the old cash-tube system was used for payment. The Economist wrote a short article about it here http://econ.st/1armBZt
- **Broadview Blinds,** a Poole-based chain of shops selling blinds blinds was bought out of

administration and will focus on blinds for industrial and commercial use. All the stores have been closed and 27 staff made redundant, although the main showroom remains open.

- **Fuzzwire,** Ending on a Christmas note, Fuzzwire had gone into administration leaving almost 190 staff and self-employed workers without a job a couple of weeks before Christmas. Fuzzwire supplied Christmas lights to many shopping centres and in particular the grottos and moving decorative items that are such a feature of Christmas. The company has been bought by MK Illumination and we understand that most employees and contractors have transferred to them.
- **Osborne's,** one of the UK's oldest retailers, went into administration early in December. It is a stationers established in 1830. There are 20 stores, three stores have already been closed, and 140 staff.
- **The Oak Mall in Greenock,** a shopping centre with more than 65 units, went into administration in late November as part of an effort to refinance the business.
- **Tie Rack,** the necktie, scarf and accessories fashion retailer, is to close its 44 high-street stores and continue as an online retailer. It has not gone bust. Last year's accounts show a loss of 10% against sales of £68 mn. In the 1980s there were 450 stores and along with Sock Shop, Principles and Laura Ashley it was a pioneer of what was known as 'edited retailing' (see Bamfield [1988] 'Competition and Change in British Retailing' *National Westminster Bank Quarterly Bank Review*, February, pp.15-29.)
- **Mywardrobe.com,** the Nottingham-based online fashion retailer (formally Meemi Limited), went into administration in November and was purchased by Growth Capital Acquisitions. Thirty-two out of 80 employees have been made redundant.
- **Blockbuster,** the games and DVD rental chain with 246 stores, has announced it will enter administration for the second time this year. There are 2,000 employees. It emerged from administration six months earlier with one-half the number of stores of the original business. Gordon Brothers, its owners, is looking to sell the business.
- **Elmfield Training,** a £100 mn-funded training provider one of whose clients was Morrisons, has gone into administration with the loss of 600 jobs after a critical BBC investigation, a low grade from OFSTED for apprentice training and being investigated by the Skills Funding Agency.
- **Barratts,** the high street shoe stores, went into administration for the third time in four years. It shrunk from more than 350 stores in 2009 to 45 today (plus a further 15 in N. Ireland and 15 in the Republic). It faces the same problems as the rest of the high street along with the specialist difficulties of selling mid-market shoes. . Its prospects look bleak. There are more than 1,000 staff.
  It has been announced today (6 January 2014) by Insider Media that a new company called W Barratt &, Co, created by footwear entrepreneur Harvey Jacobson and previous Barratts' buying and merchandising director Simon Robson, will pay £360,000 for the Barratts brand and online trading business.

  Despite these deals to save the business, Barratts' creditors will still be short by more than £14 million. Trade and expense creditors are owed £6 million, loan note holders £9 million, and £850,000 to HMRC.
- **Gerald Davies & Sons,** a chain of six butchers shops established in 1969 in the south west, went into administration in October. There were shops at Minehead, Dulverton, Weston and Cheddar. Three stores remain open and 50 people have been made redundant.
- **A Little Bit of Bling,** a wedding events retailer, announced on its Facebook page that it was going into administration, thus jeopardising the weddings of 170 brides (and grooms). Overtrading and illness seems to be the probable cause.
- **Preston & Thomas,** admittedly not a retailer, but a supplier of equipment has gone into administration after 100 years of trading. Preston & Thomas is one of the largest manufacturers of fish and chip frying equipment and its problems will cause shortages and difficulties for fish and chip shops. Even though some people are talking up the economic recovery, we can expect many more failures like this from companies that have mainly been

'hanging on' during the recession. Their creditors see the prospect of getting back some return now that business prospects are improving.

- **Collectables,** a 12-store chain of fashion accessories, jewellery and gift shops in the North-east, went into administration at the end of September. There were 75 staff including HO at Stockton.
- **Hanna & Browne,** the Northern Ireland home furnishings and domestic electricals chain, went into administration as Lisnasure Interiors in early September. There are five stores and 100 employees. Linasure paid off its debts in 2011 and avoided a winding-up order, but it is unclear whether it will be able to do so again.
- **Dominoes Toyshop,** Leicester. This iconic store, Toy Industry Award *Best Independent Toy Store in Britain in 2010*, went into administration early in September having lost £1 mn in the past two years. Eighteen of the 28 staff have been made redundant.
- **Designville,** trading as 2020 Optical Store - the largest independent optician in London turning over £3.4 mn in one store - went into administration earlier this year. It has now been sold to Vision Express.
- **HMV Ireland.** Some good news. Hilco bought HMV assets from administration after 16 HMV stores closed in Ireland and intends to reopen four in September 2013. The administrators of Modelzone stores however are likely to close all its outlets.
- **Good news also for Hailey Acquisitions Limited (HAL),** the arm of Opcapita used to purchase Comet for £2.00 in February 2012. Although the company was placed in administration in November 2012, HAL has so far received £54 mn from the sale of Comet's stock and equipment and, according to the Telegraph, there is another £29 mn to be distributed. Unsecured creditors will only receive around 1p in the £1.00.
- **Warner Estate Holdings,** the owner of Liverpool's Cavern Walks Shopping Centre and a number of other properties, has gone into administration. Its debts from 2008 have proved impossible to clear or to manage. Warner's different holdings are likely to be repackaged. A change of ownership should not affect the tenants of the shopping centre.
- **Montgomery Tomlinson,** the curtains and accessories supplier with concessions in many department and other stores, went into administration in August. Its 530 staff were made redundant immediately with no pay available for August. It is likely that all assets will be sold to relieve creditors.
- **Tomlinson Directories,** the well-known directories for local traders and retailers went into well-publicised administration in August, the sales staff were made redundant, but the business was rescued from administration a few hours later.
- **RSM Tenon,** no - not a retailer - but the seventh largest accountancy and insolvency firm in the UK. It found a big hole in its accounts in 2012 and went into administration this summer to re-emerge quickly as part of Baker Tilly.
- **Homebase Ireland,**the Irish arm of the DIY group, has been put into 'examinership' in Eire after five years of losses. Its sales in Ireland have fallen by 31% since 2009. It proposes to close three of its 15 stores (17 FT and 79 PT staff affected). The system of 'upward-only' rent reviews has meant that they are paying (in their view) excessively high rents, which they are attempting to reduce. Other UK chains that have put their Irish companies through examinership include B&Q and Monsoon.
- **Begbies Traynor,** one of the major restructuring and recovery businesses has seen its profits halved to £2.4 mn in the last year. Obviously the company is not a retailer and not in difficulties, but it may be significant that the company's rationale for the profit fall was that there were not enough companies failing.
- **Laindon, a Basildon shopping centre,** owned by Laindon Regeneration, has gone into administration. It was bought at the very worst time for £11.5 mn in 2007 and the company has failed to keep it commitments to its bankers. It was originally intended to demolish the existing centre and rebuild in collaboration with the council, but thje company failure may prevent this.
- **Nicole Farhi,** the iconic luxury fashion retailer, went into administration in July. It employs 120 staff, has six stores, 10 concessions and a website. The company was set up by Nicole

Farhi and her then husband, Stephen Marks (head of French Connection) in 1982. French Connection sold it to private equity firm OpenGate in 2010, who sold their stake to Kelso Place Asset Management. The most-recent company results (for 2010) show losses of almost £6 mn on sales of £21.7 mn.

- **Gelert,** the camping equipment retailer, was been saved from administration by Sports Direct, which bought its four Welsh stores, a Haydock showroom, and its wholesale operation run from Widnes. Thirty employees are involved.
- **Ark,** the swish Leeds-based fashion retailer, is to enter administration. It is owned by Rett Retail Ltd and has 17 stores and 410 employees. The company was later bought by JD Sports, who closed four uneconomic stores affecting 40 jobs.
- **Interna�ionale,** the value clothing retailer with 145 stores and 920 staff, has gone into administration for the second time (previously 2008). It bought 85 MK fashion stores after that firm went into administration.
- **Modelzone,** the toy/game/model retailer selling more than 10,000 lines (!), is to go into administration. It has 48 stores and 500 employees.
- **Slurp.co.uk,** the online drinks retailer owned by Ribica International, has been acquired by the online retailer S H Jones. Slurp, established in 2004, specialised in single bottles of premium wines. It also bought the software, assets and retained the staff. S H Jones has stores in Banbury, Bicester, and Leamington and purchased the Hawkeshead Wines (online) operation in January 2013.
- **Comet, again.** Former owners Hailey Acquisitions are believed to be purchasing Comet's losses of £27 mn in order to set against their own taxes. They bought Comet in 2012 from Darty for £2 and received £50 mn investment from Darty. Comet's failure cost HMRC itself £50 mn and 6,000 employees lost their jobs.
- **Derby Riverlights Developments,** the entertainments complex that includes two hotels, a Spar convenience store, Jimmy's World Grill, and a Casino Genting Club, went into administration in June.
- **Kyle Shopping Centre and Arran Mall,** shopping centres located in the town centre of Ayr, both went into administration in June as a result of a fall in shopper numbers caused by increased competition from rival centres.
- **Dwell,** the well-thought of national furniture retailer, went into administration in June 2013 with 350 jobs at risk and around £1 mn of customer deposits. There are four flagship stores in Lakeside, Tottenham Court Rd, Trafford Centre and Glasgow, and 20 other stores. Six new stores were opened last year. Sales were £34 mn last year but losses over the last three years amounted to £5.6 mn. Aamir Ahmad, the founder of Dwell, has now bought the company out of administration, and reopened five stores and restarted the website.
- **Lisa Ho,** Australian high-end fashion retailer, went into administration in May, since when six of its eleven stores have closed. It lost $A2.4 mn last year and owes creditors $A11 mn. Although some companies are interested in buying what remains of the chain, the remaining shops are on sale till the end of June when they will finally close and 100 people lose their jobs.
- **Past Times, again.** The 51 Past Times stores that continued to trade under administration have all been closed. The website has been purchased by W H Smith, which bought the Past Times brand, and this has been shut down also.
- **White Rabit Records,** Essex-based music retailer trading as 'Digital Village' and 247.com, has gone into administration with seven of its eight stores already closed. Sales in 2010, the peak year, were £37 million. A German retailer is thought to have bought the website, but the owner of the flagship store is yet unconfirmed.
- **Infinity Furniture,** Liverpool, trading as the Bed Shop, Hudsons and The Furniture Company at 66 Long Lane Liverpool with an online presence at different websites and a claimed 1 million customers has ceased trading as a result of a large bad debt. There are other business at the same address including Furniture 66; their position is unknown.
- **Coggles Limited,** the York fashion retailer established in 1974, went into administration in May. There are about 60 staff, one-half of which were made redundant immediately. As well

as the designer store, Coggles ran a large online business sourcing designs from more than 200 collections.

- **Icetech,** a company manufacturing freezers in Castletown Scotland, went into administration in April. It had been a major supplier to Comet, which collapsed owing the small business £0.9 million. It was unable to recover from this blow and the loss of half its business. There were 70 employees. This website does not really concern itself with suppliers, but every time a retailer goes bust it is certain that traders involved in shopfitting, logistics, storage, landlords, small-scale services and local manufacture will suffer considerable losses which may be the final blow to some of them.
- **Xtra-Vision,** the Irish entertainment rental and retail business, went into administration as being 'unable to meet its debts'. It cited the decline in film rentals as being key to its failure. It has 152 stores in Ireland (42 in Northern Ireland) and 1,023 employees. The majority of its shops are still profitable so it is likely that the business will continue in a reduced form.
- **Leslie Cass,** the Sheffield jeweller, became the third jeweller to crash in six weeks.
- **Textiles Direct,** (readymade curtains, bedding and linens etc) with 50 stores and 300 staff went into administration early in April. Five stores have already closed. A company restructuring in 2010 already cut store numbers from 75 outlets, but company sales fell 20% in 2012. The *Textiles Direct* website is owned by a separate company and is unaffected by the administration.
- **Brandspace Group,** one of Britain's major suppliers of temporary space and pop-up shops, has lost several shopping centre contracts and is seeking a buyer. Its most recent accounts show losses of £2.3 mn on sales of £6.5 mn.
- **Ortak,** the major design jeweller with 15 shops in Scotland and two in England, went into administration at the beginning of April. There are 150 employees. The company, established in Kirkwall by designer Malcolm Gray, had grown to a turnover of £7.3 million but had been hit by the recession and the rapid increase in the price of raw materials.
- **Mercury FX Limited,** the special effects company for the Dr Who series, went into administration early in March owing the HMRC money.
- **Sugar Mill Retail Park,** Plymouth, with 14,000 sq ft of space and 25 tenants has been bought from the administrators by Chris Dawson, owner of the £500 mn turnover Range chain. Sentimentally his first shop was on the same estate.
- **Taps,** the plumbers merchant which also supplies bathrooms, entered administration in March. There are eight branches and 20 staff mainly in the north east.
- **Semple Fraser,** a Glasgow law firm with 20 partners and 100 staff, is to go into administration.
- **Clive Ranger Rings,** a four-store jeweller in the West Country and South Wales, with 34 employees, went into administration in March.
- **Spirit,** a ladies fashion store, with 20 employees at branches in Marlborough, Devizies, Bradford-on-Avon and Frome, went into voluntary liquidation owing £0.4 million.
- **Style Passport,** the fashion e-commerce retailer started by former Marie Claire fashion editor Sarah Walter is being placed in voluntary liquidation and wound up. All existing customers and promises will be met. The company has failed to meet expectations and will cease trading.
- **Monsoon Accessorize Ireland** is to appoint an examiner (=go into administration). The UK operations are not affected.
- **Dreams,** the bed retailer, went into administration for one day as part of being restructured, before being acquired by private equity firm Sun European Partners for £35 mn. It was worth £222 mn a few years ago. Sun Europe has purchased the head office, its 2 manufacturing plants and 171 stores (1675 employees). That leaves the other 93 stores not part of the deal in administration. Sun also owns ScS, Alexon and bed specialist Sharps.
- **West One Fashion,** the young woman's fashion retailer with 17 stores went into administration at the end of February. There are around 35 employees affected.
- **Republic,** the mid-market youth fashion retailer with 121 stores and 1,600 employees, went into administration in mid-February in order to reorganise (=close shops) before the next

quarterly rent period. Negotiations with landlords came to nothing. It has been suffering because it cannot afford the high rents and rates of UK high streets and the youth market has been one of the most strongly hit sectors. Its chairman departed in Jan and the company twitter accounts closed, the modern precursor to announcing bad news.

- **Rapid Hardware,** the Liverpool family-run business that operates from a 10K sq ft store in Williamson Sq, went into administration in early February. The company was established in 1971 and has 90 employees. It left its original property and moved into the heart of Liverpool's retail district in 2009.
- **B&Q Ireland,** a subsidiary of Kingfisher Group, has appointed an examiner (this is Irish law for administration) to enable the business to continue trading in order to survive. It may close up to four of its nine stores.
- **PleaseandThankyou,** the online business start-up run by Peter Gelardi (co-founder of failed wedding gifts provider, *Wrapit* [see below]) has been wound up with no debts. The company sold home and garden products.
- **Excellar,** the wine retail chain with 7 stores in the South East and one in Paris, went into administration at the end of January. There are 45 staff. Simon Baile, former head of Oddbins, originally bought 158 Oddbins stores from Castel Fr�res, but the chain went into administration in 2011. The present Exceller was rescued from the administrator.
- **Cobbetts,** the law firm with 500 employees sat in offices in Birmingham, Leeds and London went into administration at the end of January. Its revenue to April 2012 was £45 million, but debts amounted to £10 million. £400 million IT reseller/integrator, 2e2, with 2,000 staff has also gone into administration.
- **Mothercare Australia** has been put into administration by it parent. Its recent performance has been weak and it represented only 7% of Mothercare international sales. Mothercare UK and other subsidiaries are unaffected.
- **Godfrey,** the Norwich-based DIY retailer established in the 1980s, with stores in Stowe, Diss and Norwich is to go into liquidation. An attempt in December to focus on the Norwich store of the £5 mn business came to nothing and the business is to be wound down with 51 employees likely to lose their jobs. Sales had been falling since the recession started.
- **Midlands Co-op** is to close its eight non-food outlets including department stores in Derby, Coalville, Chesterfield, Stafford, Ilkeston and Wigston plus small furnishings/homeware operations in West Bridgford and Long Eaton. The food operations, by far the biggest part of the business, are unaffected.
- **D.J.Jenkins Stores,** operator of five general stores in the East Midlands, has gone into administration because of a downturn in trade affecting 198 employees. All stores are thought likely to close by the end of February.
- **Play.com,** the popular etailer, is to close its retail operations and concentrate on acting as an internet third party to other organisations. It is the second largest etailer with 14 million registered users and 500 employees, operating behind the VAT-free regulations (Low Value Consignment Relief) in Jersey. However the value of the company was only £25 mn when acquired by Rakuten, which had also folded its PriceMinister etail business into Play.com. The business can only have been marginally profitable because, when the VAT-free status was withdrawn by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 2012, the etailer decided to close its retail operations. It has not gone bust but beat a strategic retreat. Other parts of the business continue unaffected.
- **La Senza,** , the remains of the women lingerie retailer bought out of administration in 2012, is to go into liquidation. Alshaya bought 60 of the original 140 stores in 2012, saving 1,100 jobs. The liquidation is thought to be a financial reorganisation not affecting La Senza's current operations. The European arm is also to be liquidated.
- **Sony Centre,** the East Midlands based electronics and electrical goods retailers, has closed its stores in Derby, Nottingham, Lincoln and Leicester and its staff of 24 have been made redundant. The parent company is Raresupply Company.
- **Gio Gio,** the menswear retailer sold in JD Sports, USC, Littlewoods, Republic, Lifestyle and independents, went into administration in mid-January and its staff of 24 have been made

redundant. It closed three stores last summer (Aberdeen, Glasgow and Manchester) but could not stem continued losses.

- **Blockbuster,** the national chain of video (rental) stores, went into administration in mid January. There are 528 stores with 4,190 employees. Like HMV the chain was a former market leader, adversely affected by the importance of video downloads and online rentals and DVD sales.
- **HMV,** the last UK chain of music and entertainment stores, went into administration after a weak Christmas and years of fighting a losing battle against downloads and online retailers. There are 238 stores and 4,350 employees. HMV is still trading though it is unlikely to attract a buyer for the whole business. The failure of HMV is likely to be a 'Woolworths' moment' where shoppers (and no-longer shoppers) realise that a changing world is exactly that.
- **Ethel Austin,** the 32 remaining stores of the once-flourishing budget chain (which had 300 stores at one time), were closed immediately in January as the company went into administration for the fourth time. In July 2012, Liric bought 32 stores from the restructuring specialist GA Europe, but the company has been unable to continue. See below for previous administrations.
- **Jessops,** the only national UK camera retailer, was the first major retailer to go into administration in 2013. It had grown from around 50 stores in 1994, acquired Camera Crew and City Camera Exchange, and had more than 200 stores by 2002. It sold its central premises in 2008, avoided administration in 2009 by carrying out a debt for equity swap (involving HSBC taking 47% of its equity and a £34mn debt write-off). The administrators closed down Jessops' 193 stores and fired its 2,000 staff, two days after taking control, partly at the instigation of Jessop's suppliers. Goods were returned to suppliers, who had become concerned that a 'fire sale' of under-price merchandise by Jessops' would undermine everyone's businesses for the following few months.
- **In France, Virgin Megastores** (1000 staff and 25 stores) is to close under pressure from online competition. Our legal advisors point out that it is owned by an investment company not Sir Richard Branson.
- **Italy: FNAC and Blockbuster** have announced they will close their Italian operations.
- **Ethel Austin/Life&Style:** the administrators have stated that they may take action against 'certain parties' as a result of the failure of Life&Style in 2011.
- **K Village,** a shopping outlet opened in Kendall in June 2010, went into administration in January. It failed to attract sufficient tenants.

Failures in 2012

- **Green & Blue Wines,** ethical retailer of organic wines in the London area, went out of business in December. Highly-targeted businesses of this character have found the UK a very inclement market since the recession started.
- **Wine Shak,** a chain of 14 off-licences created out of the ruins of Thirst Quench (Oddbins, Threshers), went into administration in December, taking with it Hampshire-based Wickham Vineyards (the owner). The main thrust of the chain was to support English wine, positioned between "high-end specialist shops and where Wine Rack was before". Fifty-eight staff are involved, 34 from the stores and 24 from the vineyard. Wickham Vineyards was bought back from the administrators in 2013.
- **Nidd Vale Motors,** the Harrogate-based Yorkshire car firm selling Vauxhall, Seat and Mazda, went into administration in December. There are 105 employees over two sites. The company had existed for 92 years but problems with their bank led to the appointment of administrators.
- **Manor Furniture,** near Swindon, went into administration in November as a result of a slowing of trade and problems with their suppliers. The company had been in existence for 18 years.
- **Whiteleys Garden Centre in Mirfield,** Huddersfield, went into administration in November and is currently on the market. Annual sales are £2 mn and there are 45 staff.

- **Walmsley's,** the Walsall-based furniture chain, went into administration for the third time in seven years in November. There are 24 stores and 105 staff. It was bought by turnround specialist SKG Capital in 2011.
- **Famous Footwear,** the loss-making chain with £15 mn sales and 21 stores and 21 concessions, went into administration in November. It is owned by the shareholders of the shoe manufacturer Jacobson Group who bought the company to give them access to the retail market.
- **The Web Group,** owners of Book Club Associates, Choices UK (once 2nd-largest DVD/video game retailer), and five other brands, went into administration in October. The companies have ceased trading. Choices UK itself closed in April 2012. The remaining parts of Webb employ 60 staff.
- **Comet,** Britain's second-largest electrical retailer, went into administration in November and the last stores closed in w/c 16 Dec 2012. It was established in 1933 and had grown to 243 stores and 6,500 employees. It suffered as a result of the credit crunch, competition from online retailers, and by not being seen as authoritative in consumer electronics. The final blow was given when its insurers refused trade credit insurance and suppliers demanded to be paid in advance. Part of the Kingfisher Group since the 1980s, it traded suboptimally for years and went to Darty (Kesa Group). Kesa sold it for £2 to OpCapita and gave OpCapita £50 mn to take it away. OpCapita have now obviously given up the ghost.
- **J Harris & Sons,** long-established Cheshire furniture retailer, went into administration in September and has been closed down. It traded as Andrew Harris Furniture and Mr Bedds.
- **United Carpets** put its subsidiary, Northern Carpets into pre-pack administration early in October, then bought back most of the assets. It intends to renegotiate rents downwards as an alternative to closure. There are 420 staff. It is assumed that 20% or so of these stores will close shortly.
- **Romida Sports,** a small cricketing specialist established for 30 years, went into administration in September. There were stores in Rochdale, Maghull, Brighouse and Leatherhead in Surrey. There are 10 employees.
- **Optical Express,** with 200 branches providing laser eye surgery, has put its Southern subsidiary into administration. It closed its 40 worst stores the day after the subsidiary went into administration (though most affected staff will be switched to the remaining stores). 40 other stores are transferring to the main company along with 750 staff.
- **Stratford Wine Agencies,** a 30-year old firm importing and distributing wine (based in Cookham not Stratford on Avon), went into administration in September. The assets were bought by F E Barber. There were 19 employees.
- **Mostyn's,** the curtain and soft furnishings company established in 1950 with 128 staff, went into administration and was bought as a going concern. Sales last year were £7 mn.
- **JJB Sports,** the struggling sportswear retailer with 4,000 staff and 180 stores, went into administration in September. Its 20 best stores have been bought by Sports Direct and a few others have been picked up by other retailers, but the rest have closed and the staff sacked. US-chain Dick's Sporting Goods announced in August that it had written off the £20 mn investment in JJB that it had made in April.
- **Hein Gericke UK,** the UK arm of the dominant German motor bike dealer, went into administration in early August. It has 49 stores, a catalogue and online business, with around 200 staff. It is a separate business from the German operation, which is unaffected by the administration and trades throughout the rest of Europe. A new buyer was found (completion in September) and the business is expected to continue much as before.
- **Fultons Fine Furnishings,** one of Northern Irelands best-known retailers (three stores) trading at the upper end of the market, went into administration in July. It was started 50 years ago and has 57 employees. It follows another high-quality NI furniture retailer that closed down in 2011.
- **Ethel Austin,** the low-price clothing retailer that has now failed four times, was placed in administration in July by Ashloch Ltd, the company that had bought it out of administration in August 2011. Ashloch stated early in 2012 that there was £5+ mn of stock missing and

they refused to pay the full purchase price. There are 60 stores, compared to 300 stores in 2010. 32 stores and the 'Ethel Austin' brand have been purchased from administration by Ricli Limited (owned by Mike Basso), saving 200 jobs.

- **Bathroom Emporium,** a Lancashire-based bathroom showroom/online business, ultimately failed as a result of local price competition and excessive amounts of stock.
- **Julian Graves,** the natural food store, was one of the first retailers to go into administration in July. Since its purchase from Baugur, the Icelandic group, in 2008 it lost £2 mn pa. There are around 189 stores and 755 employees, mostly part-time. Its owner is NBTY which also own Holland and Barrett that currently is trading strongly and in unaffected by the problems of Julian Graves.
- **Allders of Croydon,** the third-largest department store in the UK, went into administration in June threatening the livelihoods of 300 people. It had been rescued from previous failure by Harold Tillman but succumbed to the general retail malaise and the problems of the other parts of Tillman's group (see below, Aquascutum).
- **Cecil Jacobs,** the Leicester-based camera retailer with 19 stores and 154 employees, went into administration early in June. It was established 70 years ago. By mid-June the administrators had closed all its stores except London Road, Leicester. By the end of the month only 25 staff will have been retained
- **Peters Bakery,** the North-Eastern multiple baker and retailer with 58 stores and 403 employees, went into administration in June. As well as its retail chain, it supplied leading supermarkets and wholesalers.
- **Masai GB,** the UK distributor of MBT (Masai Barefoot Technology) shoes, went into administration following its Swiss parent's filing for bankruptcy. There are 10 stores and sales of around £10 million.
- **Rhythm and Booze** (R and M Swaine), a Yorkshire-based drinks chain with outlets also in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire , collapsed in April with losses of £7 mn. It was bought out of administration by Bibby Retail Services (trades as Costcutter). There were 68 stores, mainly loss making, many of which had been bought from Thirstquench in 2009. The 425 staff are expected to transfer to the new owners.
- **Wallace Clement Interiors,** a quality home furnishings retailer set up in 1906 with stores in Diss and Cambridge, went into administration in mid-May after a long period of declining sales. The website (on 15 May 2012) seemed to be unaware of this. Its former Norwich store closed in 2011. There are around 30 employees
- **Joscelyne,** the long-established furniture retailer, went into administration early in May. Founded in 1878, it has 6 Clement Joscelyne stores in the south-east, and owns two Ligne Roset stores in London and Charles Page. There are almost 100 employees. The reason given for the failure is recent worsening in trading conditions.
- **Clinton Cards,** which operates 628 Clinton and 139 Birthdays stores, went into administration early in May. Its US supplier, American Greetings, bought its £35 mn loan from its bankers and the company has had to apply for administration. The company has been struggling for several years. There are 8.500 employees. The fall is caused by weakfish management, high rents, the slump in consumer demand, and the purchases of not-very-good card companies.
- **Micro Anvika,** the Tottenham Court Road electronics retailer has closed four of its stores. A CVA with creditors will allow it to continue operating with two stores in London and one in Newcastle. Its mail order business will also remain. Staff numbers have fallen from 140 to 48.
- **Allied Floors,** which bought the remains of Allied Carpets in 2011, itself went into administration in April. It has been purchased pre-pack by Scotland-based General George, which has 8 stores selling carpets, laminates and flooring. This deal saves the 9 Allied stores and 41 jobs.
- **D&d Wines International,** the wine shippers and importers based in Knutsford, went into administration in April. It supplies 600 wines from 25 businesses to supermarkets and cash-and-carry. There are 25 employees. One-half has lost their jobs but it is thought the business

will survive.

- **Carsite,** the company behind Tesco's unfortunate foray into online second-hand car sales, was placed in administration one day after Tesco announced it was closing its sites. Tesco sold only 140 vehicles a month and explained that it was hard to get hold of good stock. About every 10 years a grocer has a go at selling cars or doing car repairs, including Sainsbury's in the mid 80s and ASDA in the 90s. It never works. The problems can be seen in the economics classic The Market for Lemons. Unless you have read that don't sell second-hand cars.
- **Instyle Furniture and the R&M Deluxe Upholstery/Holdings,** which produced and sold its own furniture and chairs, went into administration in April. The Aberdeen and Glasgow stores have closed: it continues to trade from its Uddingston store and the Hillington HO remains open. There are 45 employees of this Scottish firm, founded in 1983.
- **Acquascutum,** the famous fashion name bought by Harold Tilman, was placed into administration in April following the sale of Tilman's Jaeger. The factory in Corby was immediately closed with the loss of 115 jobs. There are another 135 retail and HO employees, working in 3 stores and 16 concessions. The company made a £10 mn loss in 2010 on sales of £28 mn. The company dated from 1851, making waterproof coats in the Crimean war. These garments adapted for use in WWI became known as 'trench coats'. The vicious weather in the Crimean war gave rise to a number of fashions such as the cardigan, the balaclava, and beards.
- **John Frackleton and Son,** the Northern Ireland bathroom and tile retailer went into administration in April. It has ntwo showrooms and 15 staff.
- **Houston Fashions,** the Northern Ireland retailer (68 staff) with 4 stores in the Province and two in Eire went into administration early in April.
- **Webb Brothers,** the Midlands Electrical retailer with 7 stores (some trading as 'Panasonic') went into administration in April. All stores except for the Cannock one have been closed and 15 out of 21 staff have been made redundant.
- **Ellie Louise,** the women's fashion retailer that operates 97 stores under the names Budget Box, Gimbles, Seconds Ahead, Trade Secret, Happit and Ellie Louise, went into administration at the beginning of April. It has 400 staff and also sells lingeries and jewellery.
- **DBC Foodservice,** bulk wholesaler and supplier for convenience, smaller supermarkets and independent stores, went into administration at the end of March. Although sales rose by 10% to £302 mn its profits collapsed from £1.3 mn to a loss of £4.95 mn. DBC had 12 depots and 1,000 staff. It served retail, catering, pubs, education, business and the Ministry of Defence from 12 depots. Trade insurers removed cover, larger suppliers pressed for invoices to be paid in full and changed to cash pro forma arrangements, and there was no likelihood that the dire cash position could be reversed. The main contracts have already been sold to Brakes and Vestey, leaving around 40% of the business to be transferred elsewhere. 250 jobs have already gone. DBC was set up 110 years ago as the Danish Bacon Company. In the 50s and 60s it was a pioneer of voluntary groups for independent retailers.
- **Game Group,** the UK-based retailer of computer games, suspended dealing in its shares on 20 March having decided that there was no more equity left in its shares. Rent was due at the end of that week and Game was trying to raise £180 mn. In the UK there are 600 stores and 6,000 employees, all of which are now in jeopardy. Game is the largest specialist videogame retailer in Europe with 1,300 stores in total and 10,000 employees. The company will certainly need to restructure, whether or not it actually goes into administration.
- **Firetrap,** the high street fashion brand, has been bought out of administration by Sports Direct. Its brands, Firetrap UK and FullCircle, and the wholesale business have been saved along with 170 jobs but Firetrap's 6 stores have been ditched costing 51 jobs. Sports Direct also bought USC and Cruise this year.
- **Azendi,** the Leeds-based jeweller with 17 stores, went into administration in March. There are around 80 staff.
- **Fenn Wright Manson,** the fashion retailer with 17 stores and 62 concessions in department stores like John Lewis and House of Fraser, went into administration in early March. It has

350 staff and continues to trade awaiting a buyer.

- **Shoe Envy,** the popular women's shoes website trading at www.shoe-envy.co.uk, closed down without warning at the end of February. It had been trading for 10 years. It operated on Amazon as well through its own site and had shoe-envy Facebook, twitter, and LinkedIn corporate sites.
- **Madhouse (or Deluxe Retail Limited),** discount young men's fashion chain selling Lee Cooper and Nike at a discount, went into administration again suddenly in February. Its previous version was as Cromwell's Madhouse. There are 700 employees and we guess around 38 stores.
- **Rowlands Clothing of Trowbridge (Wiltshire),** aimed at slightly older ladies, went briefly into administration in February before being purchased by New World Private Equity. There are seven stores and a mail order and internet operation based at Southwick. 60 jobs have been saved although there have been eight redundancies.
- **Twickenham Film Studies** has entered receiverships and will close finally in June. It was established almost 100 years ago and Alfie (Michael Caine) was made there, the anti-landlord film by Roman Polanski *Repulsion* and the studios were used by the Beatles for *A Hard Day's Night* and *Help*. More recently the studios have been used in making *The Iron Lady* and *Warhorse*.
- **Shoon Limited,** a family-owned retailer in the south of England selling shoes and clothing, went into administration in February having failed to sell some of its loss-making stores. The company employs 280 staff and has 23 stores.
- **Abbeycrest,** the manufacturer and distributor of jewellery, went into administration in February although its Brown and Newirth subsidiary survived through a previous MBO. The manufacturing business in Thailand also survives. A shrinking order book and the jump in gold prices made it impossible for the company to continue.
- **Ugo,** the hard discounter created by Haldanes from ex-Netto stores acquired from Asda, has been sold to Poundstretcher. The stores will become part of Poundstretcher saving 300 jobs. The company itself did not go bust but it had been an unsuccessful operation based on 20 stores across the North and the north Midlands. A buyer pulled out of a previous sale early in January. Haldanes retail itself went bust in June 2011, blaming The Co-op for selling it some allegedly duff stores. Remaining are some bakery stores (trading as Bakery Products) and three plant bakeries.
- **United Retail,** the American operator of 433 Avenue plus-size stores applied for bankruptcy protection under US law in February, seeking relief from the high costs of its leases.
- **Pumpkin Patch,** the retailer of children's clothes, has gone into administration. It has 36 stores in the UK with 400 staff. Five stores have already been closed with the loss of 60 jobs. The New Zealand-based company's operations in other territories are unaffected.
- **Peacocks,** the fashion chain, has posted a notice of intent to appoint an administrator covering the Peacocks chain and BonMarche. There are 550 stores and 9,600 employees. BonMarche was subsequently sold for £10mn to Sun European Partners, although 160 stores will close and 1,400 jobs lost.
- **La Senza,** the lingerie retailer with 146 stores, announced at the end of December 2011 that it planned to enter administration in early Jan 2012 as part of a KPMG-planned company rescue. There are 2,600 employees.
- **Past Times,** the modern antique-based business selling retro Wm Morris, Pre-raphelite etc merchandise also announced it planned to go into administration, probably in week 2 of Jan 2012. There are 100 stores and perhaps 1000 employees. It previously went bust in 2005 and was acquired by Epic Private Equity. In 2010 it turned over £45 mn, but made losses of £1.5 mn. Epic also owns Whittards, the tea company, which is doing OK and is not affected by Past Times' problems. Whittards is still separate although originally there was talk of running the stores together.
- **Blacks Leisure,** the outdoor sports, camping and recreational stores, announced in December that after putting itself up for sale it had received no bids. The next stage is probably the sale of subsidiaries, although a new bidder may still emerge. However pre-pack administration is

still likely to form part of the process. The company has announced that its equity shares have little or no value at present. There are 98 Blacks stores and 208 Milletts shops. There are 3,885 employees.

Failures in 2011

- **Hawkin's Bazaar,** the source of novelty gifts and stocking fillers, appointed administrators on the last working day of December 2011. There are 400 staff and 120 stores. It did not go into full legal administration but was bought by the management, although 65 stores were closed and 300-odd staff made redundant
- **D2 Jeans,** the Scot-based denim specialist chain originally set up by Tom Hunter, went into administration for the second time in 2 years at the end of December as the first of several expected retail failures. There were 47 stores, of which 19 were immediately shut with 200 employees dismissed, and there are 300 more employees in the remaining stores and head office. When it previously failed the existing management bought 40 out of its 80 outlets, saving 500 jobs. Most of the stores are in secondary locations.
- **Some Non-retail Failures.** Saab GB, Portsmouth FC parent company, Battersea Power Station Professional Ventures (owner of Marriott Hotel Group), Venture Hotel Group, and Paramount Restaurants (3 Bertorelli restaurants, 4 Livebaits, 18 Brasseries Gerards having sold 8 Chez Gerard restaurants to Raymond Blanc before going into admin) all went into administration in December or November - just to show that it is not only retailing that is in trouble.
- **Barratts,** The shoe chain (Barratts Priceless), went into administration in December 2011. It operates 191 stores, 391 concessions, and employs 3,840 people. Footwear and fashion have been trading badly for several years and this finally did not Barratts. It previously went bust in 2009.
- **Cooks Bakery,** coffee shop and bakers, went into admin in November. Now with 8 stores and 62 employees it had 120 bakers' and coffee shops five year ago, It took over 123 bakeries from The Three Cooks in 2006.
- **Broadmarsh Centre:** Westfield announced in November it was selling its 75% stake in Nottingham's Broadmarsh Centre, one of two major shopping malls in the City, to Capital Shopping Centres (CSC) the owner of the Victoria Centre. Westfield had been waiting for some years to launch the redevelopment of the centre and the surrounding area in conjunction with the city council. Building work was to start a fortnight later! The recession and its impact upon retailing made Westfield doubt whether the Broadmarsh revamp would ever be profitable. The change in ownership will inevitably affect the range of shops in the city, the timing and the scale of redevelopment. But there is no point in opening a revamped shopping centre that is incapable of being profitable. Westfield, the Australian big hitter, has had a major impact on UK retailing with its two shopping malls in London and obviously Nottingham was no longer on their strategic map.
- **MFI** (remember them?) is opening up as an online retailer in November-December 2011.
- **Best Buy**, the *Carphone-Warehouse* controlled electrical chain, is the close by the end of the year. Best Buy was to be the start of a completely new way of selling electricals in Britain and Europe. It hoped to operate 200 stores by 2013 in conjunction with the US big electricals beast, Best Buy, which invested £1 billion in Carphone Warehouse and the project. The new chain of 11 stores lost £47 million in the most recent trading period. Carphone Warehouse also sold its US cellphone business (sales $838 million), Best Buy Mobile, to its US partner, Best Buy.
- **Comet**, in the same week as the Best Buy news, the UK second-largest electricals group, Comet, was sold by KESA for £2 with additional support of £50 million. The company has not gone into administration but obviously the owners were anxious to end their involvement. Sales fell by 18.6% in the previous six months.
- **Alexon,** the fashion chain, went into pre-pack administration at the end of September. The group owns 990 outlets trading as Ann Harvey, Kaliko, Dash and Eastex employing 2,700

staff. Sun European bought the company out of administration saving the group, but at the costof shareholders (loss £4 mn), suppliers and HMRC (lost £12 mn).

- **Walmsley,** the 60-store furniture retailer, went into administration in September 2011, following in the heels of Habitat, Lombok, and Floors-2-Go. Sales in 2010 were £26 million. 38-ish stores have already been closed (mainly in North and Wales) and the remaining 25 have been bought by equity group SKG. Walmsley was established in 1933.
- **Floors-2-Go,** the floorcovering firm established in 1999, collapsed for the second time (the first time was 2008) in late August. 53 of 88 stores were closed with the los of 200 job, and the remainder were sold to a new company set up by two of the former directors. Before 2008 the company had 132 stores.
- **Lombok,** the furniture chain, went into administration in August for the second time in two years. Nine of its stores closed immediately, leaving three remaining outlets and a concession in the HoF. In a pre-pack deal the existing owner, Angora, has purchased the assets from the administrator.
- **Ireland: Superquinn,** the upmarket grocery chain with €500 mn annual sales around Dublin went into receiverships in mid-July, but was bought by Musgrave the next day. Known as a very innovative retailer in its day, its combination of service, range, prepared food and prices was hard to maintain in the current Irish trading climate. The deal makes Musgrave the largest supermarket group in Ireland.
- **TJ Hughes,** the off-price general-store retailer, appointed an administrator on the last business day of June. There are 57 stores and 4,000 employees.
- **Jane Norman,**the fashion chain with 90 outlets, went into administration at the end of June. 1,600 jobs are at risk. It had £140 mn of debts and was badly affected by the economic slowdown, a rotten Christmas, and the fact that clothing sales were sharply down in the first two quarters of 2011.
- **Habitat,** the symbol of the swinging 60s (the chicken brick and cous-cous equipment being particular favourites [No, I never bought them: think I'm made of money?]) is to be sold by Hilco as a UK brand to Homebase, most of the stores being closed. Of the 33 remaining stores, it is expected that three will remain. There are 900 staff. However Habitat will continue as a store-within-a-store in Homebase. The international arm, which has a good reputation abroad (think France) is to be sold to another company.
- **Homeform,** the kitchens and bathrooms business with 2010 sales of £152 mn, has filed notice to appoint administrators. The bathroom retailers, Moben and Dolphin, are to be sold as free-standing concerns. The future of Sharps and Kitchens Direct expect to be saved as part of a deal to continue the business.
- **McCormick's Music Shop** in Glasgow, iconic record shop - appearances from Rolling Stones and The Eagles - has been trading poorly for 3 years and gone into administration. It is thought it can be saved as a going concern.
- **Life & Style,** the 91-store fashion lifestyle chain formed from the ruins of Ethel Austin, went into administration in June 2011. It had gone bust in 2010 and had been bought from the administrator by Elaine MacPherson (former CEO of Ethel Austin).
- **Haldanes,** the grocery retailer with 26 stores, went into administration in June. It trades as UGO and Haldanes Express. There are 600 staff. It bought several ex-Somerfield stores from the Co-op and has been complaining bitterly about their trading performance. One of the last acts of the Board was to issue a Notice of Claim against the Co-operative Group.
- **Canada:** Blockbuster has been put into receivership by a court to sort out whether there are sufficient funds to repay money owed to film studios and other suppliers.
- **Bruce Millars,** independent music shop in Aberdeen, is up for sale to avoid admin. It is the biggest supplier of musical instruments and has a wide range of TV and audio. In the 60s and 70s it was probably the biggest such store in the North East (of Scotland),
- **Shopping Centre problems**. The British Council of Shopping Centres estimates that one-fifth of UK shopping malls is in financial difficulties. Companies with combined assets of £10 bn are in breach of their covenants and may default. Around 20 secondary shopping centres are already on the market. Many assets were purchased at the top of the market. Selling them

now will further depress prices. But banks like Lloyds and keen to get the no-hopers off their balance sheets.

- **Focus DIY chain**, with 3,919 employees and 170 stores, applied for administration in May 2011. It is a large-ish operation but lacked authority in a weak DIY market that has been hammered by low property sales since 2007/8. It was merged with the Do-It-All chain in the 1980s (trading as Focus Do-It-All) and was owned by Boots in the days when every self-respecting retailer had a DIY chain, including W H Smith, Sainsbury�s and Boots.
- **ETS**, a chain of 6 electrical household appliances stores, based in Bodmin has gone into administration (poor trading for several years). It has 57 employees.
- **HiHo Jewellers**, the handmade jewellery company in the SW with 14 stores and an online business, went into administration in April. There were 55 employees and sales of £3.5 mn. It is believed that the stores have closed and the management has bought the online business from the administrator.
- **BeCheeky**, the UK online lingerie etailer, ceased trading in March and is likely to go into liquidation quite soon. It was set up in 2005. Turnover was £1 mn pa, but it never made a profit. Its name and site has been purchased by LoveHoney.com
- **U.S.A. American Apparel**, the American youthful street fashion retailer aimed at young people aged 8 to 80 (and run by charmers), has declared it is destined for Chapter 13, which under the US Bankruptcy codes provides protection from creditors whilst it reorganises in an attempt to pay off its creditors � or at least make them an offer.
- **Oddbins**, see below, has now gone into administration with all 400 jobs at risk. The HMRC refused to accept its proposals so there was no legal alternative except administration. Some stores may survive either as stand-alone outlets or elements in other chains.
- **Alworths**, the successor to Woolworths, went into administration at the end of March. Its 17 stores with 235 staff are still trading. It was hoping to restructure but obviously either its trading was very dire or the poor outlook frightened (or both) so it has taken the administration route.
- **Easy Living Furniture**, Sofas UK retail trading name, went into administration at the end of March. It has 20 outlets in the South of England employing 150 people and an online site.
- **The Officers Club**, discount fashion chain, has gone into administration again, but half its stores have already been sold to young fashion retailer, Blue Inc. Officers Club employs 900 people in 102 stores, 46 of which (400 staff) have now gone to Blue Inc.
- **Henleys**, a young fashion brand, put its retail arm into administration in March, closing 18 stores and dismissing 200 employees. Reasons: poor trading, lease problems.
- **Dekko,** a NI-based furniture retailer (2 stores), has announced it will wind down its business over the next few months and close. Reason: poor trading conditions.
- **Autoquake,** one of the largest online retailers of used cars, went into administration in March. It was founded in 2005 and bought used cars at auction and resold them online. The website was successful, but it is hard market (you don't sell your car unless there is something wrong with it).
- **Shakeaway Milk Bars,** the Bournemouth-based retailer with 55 owned and franchised milk bars in the UK, Cyprus, Australia and Abu Dhabi has gone into administration. One half the stores have been bought by a new company, running 15 owned bars and 25 franchised.
- **Arrogant Cat,** the celebrity fashion chain with three stores, went into administration in March. Customers included Mischa Barton, Lindsay Lohan, Amy Winehouse, Peaches Geldof and Katie Price. No redundancies are planned and Arrogant Cat is expected to find a buyer. Its wholesale operations, the HK flagship store, and franchises in Denmark, Dubai and Kuwait are not included in the administration.
- **Triumph Furniture Company,** Merthyr Tydfil, with a London showroom and facilities in Solihull and The Netherlands (sales £23 million) has been put up for sale by the administrators.
- **Oddbins,** the major wine and beer chain, is to close one-third of its stores, dismiss 15 out of 60 HQ staff, and require landlords of the remaining 89 stores to accept lower rents as part of a CVA in March.

- **Ireland: Birthdays,** the Clinton-Card owned Irish operation with 14 stores has been put into administration by its owner. This does not affect the UK Birthdays chain.
- **Bennets,** the Norwich-based electricals retailer with 14 branches and 300 employees, went into administration in March. It operated from some impressive stores, but difficult market conditions since the recession and competition from eRetailers had made a harsh trading environment for at least 3 years. The immediate causes were: the withdrawal of credit insurance in November had meant that suppliers would not deliver and the snowy Christmas created further damage.
- **Fenchurch,** the fashion chain with four stores and department store concessions, went into administration in March. Its assets were purchased by JD Sports Fashion, but all its staff have been sacked and the Covent Garden Store has already closed. The staff first learnt of their employer's failure when they read an advert selling the company in the Financial Times.
- **Ollie and Nic,** the vintage-inspired handbag and accessories chain with 11 stores, went into administration in February. It has been bought out of administration by the original founders and a group of other investors previously associated with Principles, Rubicon and Monsoon.
- **Auto Windscreens,** the UK's second-largest windscreen replacement company, ran out of cash in Feb 2011 and ceased trading. The Chesterfield-based (Derbys) business has 1,200 employees, 68 fitting centres, 550 mobile units, a call centre and distribution depot in Witton. The administrators have failed to sell it.
- **Cattles,** the private company lending mainly to the poor at high interest rates, avoided administration in Feb 2011 after reaching agreement with its creditors. It will continue to run down its loan book to repay the banks much to the chagrin of its other creditors and bondholders who will receive little. A long-running accounting error led to the downfall of this firm.
- **JJB Sports,** the Sportswear/fashion retailer with 250 stores and 6,300 employees, is attempting a second CVA (company voluntary arrangement), involving: renegotiating leases with landlords; the closure of 45 problem stores to be followed by closing a second tranche of 50 stores (depending on the willingness of landlords to reduce rents and how these stores trade); and raising £31.5 mn from shareholders. JJB Sports have raised the money from shareholders, but now need some more. Less than one-half of landlords have agreed the CVA and there is some dispute about whether JJB's approach is valid.
- **USA. Borders,** the US bookstore chain (whose UK subsidiary closed down in 2009), has filed for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy. It has 674 retail stores, employing 19,500 people, and will close 200 outlets in the next few weeks. Borders has been unable to agree refinancing terms with its banks for debts of $1.29 bn (£627 mn) and assets of $1.28 bn assets.
- **Ireland.** Retail Excellence Ireland (REI) reported that 400 stores closed in Ireland during Jan 2011, following a terrible Christmas, poor Jan, upward-only rent reviews and the most savage budget in the history of the state.
- **Greece.** Poor Trading has meant that Aldi Sued is closing its 38 Aldi Hellas hard-discount stores by the end of February, losing 500 jobs.
- **Netherlands. Impact Retail,** the consumer electrical/IT specialist operator with 118 stores, has filed for bankruptcy under Dutch law, closing both its stores temporarily and its ecommerce site.
- **US. A&P** (once '**Atlantic and Pacific**') has requested Chapter 11 protection from its creditors. The group, owned by Tengelmann, has 395 outlets suffering from lower-priced competitors and heavy debts. Normally Chapter 11 allows a company to reorganise so it continues to survive.
- **HPJ Jewellers**, a discount jewellery firm with 70 (or perhaps 40) stores, has filed notice to appoint administrators. Originally established in 1980 as Half Price Jewellers with limited service, it has been hit by poor Christmas sales, careful consumer spending and online sellers. Bought by restructuring specialists Gordon Bros in Dec 2010, it expects to reduce its rents and close one-half of stores via administration. It also had a period in administration in 2006.
- **British Bookshops and Stationers**, a 51-store 'discount' stationery/books chain with 300 employees in the South was the first major retail casualty of the 2011, going into receivership

in Jan 2011. Immediate causes were poor Christmas trading, but the longer-term impact of the recession and effect of internet sales on books and office supplies will be the key issues they faced. W H Smith bought 22 BBS stores for £1 mn in February.

Failures in 2010

- **Cruise**, the Edinburgh-based fashion chain with 300 employees, went into administration at the very end of December, but was bought along with 10 stores by Tom Hunter (to be run in conjunction with Van Mildert, a NE England fashion retailer with five shops that is run from a converted jail. Tom Hunter sold his Office chain a month earlier so had a bit of spare cash. Two stores were closed by Deloittes, the administrator. And Van Mildert looks pretty good.
- **Balls Brothers**, the upmarket watering hole chain in the City, went into Administration in November. Problems with a Barclays loan to buy a competitor was the key issue, with the recession and changes in drinking and eating patterns amongst City drinkers changing patterns of demand. There are 19 restaurants and bars.
- **Suits You**, the 66-store formal menswear company (Speciality Retail Group), was put into administration by new owners G A Europe in late October. SRG had gone through a company voluntary arrangement earlier in 2010 but with the sales outlook remaining bleak it was sold to G A Europe.
- **Stokes**, the UK's largest greengrocery trader (37 stores), entered voluntary administration in October. 10 stores were immediately closed. There are 277 employees. The rationale for VA was poor sales.
- **Confetti**, the weddings businesses, went into administration in 2010 a few days after being sold. Its 5 stores were closed and one-half of its 94 staff dismissed.A separate company (with no link to the previous business) bought the website and the name 'Confetti' and has traded successfully online since then.
- **Mad O'Rouke's Pie Factory**, a black-country themed restaurant chain once named 'Restaurant of the Year' in Tipton, West Midlands, went into administration in July, having handed over its Lower Gornall and Wordsley operations to M&B.
- **Thoughts**, a greetings card retailer with nine stores in high-profile locations (eg Bull Ring, Westfield and St David's) got in difficulties when its banking facilities were withdrawn and was bought out of administration by the previous owners as Thought Card Retail.
- **Vergo Retailing**, a 20-store department and jewellery store chain with 940 employees, closed many of its operations in 2010. The chain was originally set up in 2007 to run the Lewis's, Robbs and Joplings department stores (sold by Owen Owen). In 2009 it bought Coop department stores in Devon and Cornwall (eg Derry's in Plymouth), East of England Coop Homemaker stores in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex (350 staff) and a jewellery store. Most of these have been closed or are apparently closing, although it is possible that some will survive. Administrators were appointed in May.
- **Fashionair**, the up-market fashion website established as 'an entertainment and shopping platform' was forced to cease trading in May and the staff have been made redundant. Fashionair was founded on the initiative of Simon Fuller (ex-manager of the Spice Girls) but US-based owners CKx decided to close it down after a review. The Clothes Whisperer felt that all Fashionair's news about what fashionistas actually do was pretty offputting to young wenches whose nearest *Jimmy Choos* is simply miles away.
- **Laser Electrical**, a 10-store chain of hi-fi/audio retailers in Northern Ireland, went into administration and the stores were closed when no buyer was forthcoming. This cost 140 jobs.
- **Labsport**, the branded sportswear chain, fell into admin in April and closed its 8 stores. 80 staff have gone. One innovative feature of LabSport was co-development of brands; every supplier was allocated a section of the store and could merchandise it as they wished.
- **Faith Shoes**, 1800 jobs, 78 stores and 120 concessions, went into administrations in April

after desperately seeking a buyout. Hilco has taken control of the company's £14M debts.

- **Envy!** , This fashionwear chain with 23 stores and 20 department store concessions went into administration in April three weeks after being sold. It is likely to continue in a reduced format.
- **Not Only Shops!** , In February and March 2010 we have seen the administration of Jarvis Engineering, Highlands Airways, Crystal Palace Football Club, Premier League Portsmouth Football Club, exclusive London restaurant Cipriani, Readers Digest (UK), Snowsport GB (UK governing body) and Landsdowne, the UK's largest driving school (trading as RED).
- **Speciality Retail Group**, owner of **Suits You** and **Racing Green**, made a company voluntary arrangement (CVA) with creditors (including landlords) that will initially save 300 jobs but result in closing 42 out of the current 73 stores over the next 18 months. The stores to close will mainly be High Street. A CVA arrows a struggling retailer to get out of rental agreements they can no longer afford - as an alternative to closure. SRG's landlords have agreed a 40% rent reduction in the marginal sites.
- **Ethel Austin**, value clothing retailer with 300 stores, and Au Naturelle have appointed administrators. Both companies have found it hard to pay suppliers since before Christmas. It went bust previously in 2008. It is expected that the administrators will close one-half the group's 270 stores affecting around 40% of the 3,100 retail staff; by Feb, there had been 470 redundancies at the now-closed warehouse and headquarters, and 1000 retail staff have lost their jobs as 114 stores have closed. The Austin family sold it in 2002. The company was originally founded in Liverpool by Mrs Austin in her living room.
- **Adili**, the ethical fashion e-tailer (slogan, 'we're committed to ethical, we're committed to cool') trading as Ascension Online, suspended its shares in early February because it had failed to secure future financing. Adili ran into cash problems at the end of 2009; it had revenues of £299,000 with costs of £886,000 at about this time. The business has now been bought by Luke Heron for £1 has been renamed ASCENSION and will stress higher price point items. Heron also owns Green Baby, the ethical e-nursery provider.
- **Diamonds and Pearls**, the jewellery company, went into pre-pack administration in February for the second time in 12 months. A consortium of suppliers, Renaissance Jewellery, bought it out of admin after a few hours, but 100 people have been made redundant. There are now 50 stores and 200 jobs; 30 stores of the predecessor company were closed.
- **Adams**, the children's clothing store, has fallen into administration for the third time in two years. John Shannon first bought it from the administrators in 2007, rescued it from a second failure in Feb 2009, sold it to Habib Alvi in September 2009, then appointed administrators again in January 2010. There are 125 store and more than 2000 staff.
- **D2**, the 79-store fashion chain once owned by Tom Hunter, went into administration at the end of December. It has closed 2 of its 3 Irish stores, but the 77 remaining UK stores continue to trade. 22 staff at the HQ in Scotland have been made redundant.
- **Head**, the entertainment chain set up by Simon Douglas after the collapse of Zavvi, closed down in December 2009. Several ex-Virgin/Zavvi stores were bought from the administrator, but Liverpool and Sheffield have closed, Leeds and Dundee are closing, and Bristol and Brum are about to.
- **Virgin Cosmetics [renamed Effective Costmetics]** , closed in Jan 2010. Originally launched in 1997 with a characteristic blaze of publicity from Britain's favourite entrepreneur it expected to open 2 stores a month and to have 100 in 5 years. Virgin Cosmetics created losses and half its shops were closed when Branson sold the business and it became Effective Cosmetics a couple of years ago. Under the terms of the announcement, 80 staff will lose their jobs. The business lost £1 M on sales of £1.7 M in the five months to end August.

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- Who's Gone Bust in Retailing?
- The Living Wage
- Royal 2018, Prince Harry, Meghan & Baby Cambridge III
- Charlotte Elizabeth Diana - The Royal Baby - Retail Estimates
- Online Retailing:Britain, Europe, US and Canada
- Mobile Retailing 2015
- Peak E Commerce
- Shopping After Brexit: Premium Brands
- UK Retail After Brexit
- Joseph Chamberlain and Retailing
- European VAT rates, ecommerce and US Sales Tax
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- Shoplifters' Hit Parade