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Stobart, Jon  (2021) Advertising and the character of English provincial department stores, c.1880–1914. *History of Retailing and Consumption*, 7 (1). pp. 98-114. ISSN 2373-518X

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.1080/2373518X.2021.1970942>

**Publisher:** Taylor & Francis

**Version:** Published Version

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History of  
Retailing &  
Consumption

Special Issue: Department Stores  
Guest Editor: Vicki Howard

ISSN 1751-3758  
ISSN 1751-3766  
ISSN 1751-3774



ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rhrc20>

# History of Retailing and Consumption

## Advertising and the character of English provincial department stores, c.1880–1914

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To cite this article: Jon Stobart (2021) Advertising and the character of English provincial department stores, c.1880–1914, *History of Retailing and Consumption*, 7:1, 98–114, DOI: [10.1080/2373518X.2021.1970942](https://doi.org/10.1080/2373518X.2021.1970942)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/2373518X.2021.1970942>



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## Advertising and the character of English provincial department stores, c.1880–1914

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### ABSTRACT

Provincial department stores are slowly coming out of the shadow of their metropolitan counterparts, increasingly being recognised as innovative and dynamic in their approach to retailing. In a British context, they are generally seen as falling into one of two categories, targeting upper and middle-class customers or those from the working classes. However, there has been little attempt to consider how this differentiation was reflected in or created by their marketing activities: how they promoted themselves to these very different customer bases. This short paper examines the advertisements placed in provincial newspapers by two Manchester department stores during what is often seen as their heyday. It addresses three related questions: how did their advertising campaigns develop over time, to what extent were they differentiated by the ‘type’ of store, and how did this relate to the broader image of the store?

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 26 May 2021  
Accepted 19 June 2021

### KEYWORDS

Department stores;  
advertisements; newspapers;  
customer type; price; fashion

Provincial department stores are gradually emerging from the shadows of their metropolitan counterparts – thanks to a growing number of studies of their collective economic performance and individual character.<sup>1</sup> As with their metropolitan counterparts, the picture which is slowly coming into focus is somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, they are seen as modernising forces in provincial retailing; on the other, they are portrayed as very traditional retail businesses, especially in comparison with American stores.<sup>2</sup> One reason for this is the different business strategies pursued by provincial department stores, Scott and Walker drawing a distinction between those targeting upper and middle class customers and placing emphasis on a long tradition of high quality customer service, and those aiming at the lower middle and working classes, which often pursued more aggressive and ‘modern’ retail practices, and competed on price.<sup>3</sup> The first is exemplified by stores like Browns of Chester, Brown Muff in Bradford, and Kendal, Milne & Co. in Manchester; the second by Binns or Lewis’s, both with branches in several northern towns.

To date, there has been little attempt to critically assess these categorisations or examine how they impacted upon or were reflected in retail practice. In this brief paper, I examine the promotional strategies of two Manchester stores which fall either

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side of this apparent divide – Kendal, Milne & Co. (hereafter Kendal Milne) and Lewis’s – and in particular their use of newspaper advertisements. Like many upmarket department stores, Kendal Milne was an old-established firm that could trace its roots back to 1835, when its founders opened a drapery business in the former Albion Bazaar. As Mitchell notes, this produced the false idea that the company had its origins as a bazaar, whereas in reality theirs was a typical story of a draper gradually adding more lines of stock.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, by the final quarter of the nineteenth century, Kendal Milne was entrenched as a Manchester institution, occupying a key site on the newly widened Deansgate. Lewis’s began in Liverpool in 1856, growing organically before expanding via a small chain of stores in other industrial towns, including Manchester, where a store was established on Market Street in 1877. Lewis’s fostered an image as ‘Friends of the People’ because of their keen prices.<sup>5</sup> My purpose is twofold: firstly, to compare and contrast their approaches, and assess these in the relation to the image of these stores; and secondly to consider what this tells us about the validity and usefulness of broader categorisations of department stores. Whitaker argues that ‘Nearly everything department stores did could be considered advertising’,<sup>6</sup> but my focus here is more narrowly on newspaper advertising: its frequency, form, language and content. What does this tell us about department stores and how they viewed themselves? At present, the analysis is somewhat anecdotal: further research is needed to generate the quantities of data needed for robust quantitative analysis and to assess the budgets and decision-making processes that underpinned advertising campaigns. However, the findings point to some important conclusions about the relationship between the character of the department store and the advertising practices pursued.

Shopkeepers have been using the press to advertise from the earliest days of the provincial newspaper, carefully constructing their advertisements as polite notices to the public, but increasingly emphasising the benefits of their business in terms of choice, quality or price.<sup>7</sup> Activity increased exponentially in the nineteenth century, especially following the removal of advertising tax (1853) and duty on paper (1861) which reduced the cost of advertising and newspapers respectively.<sup>8</sup> Whatever distaste the middle classes might have had for advertising – its apparent vulgarity is a point made for the mid eighteenth century as well as the later nineteenth century – the newspapers that they read were stuffed with advertisements.<sup>9</sup> By 1886 the Telegraph was dedicating over 60 percent of each issue to advertising, including a wide range of branded goods as well as shops and other service providers.<sup>10</sup> The overall presentation of these advertisements had changed relatively little since the eighteenth century: they were generally in a small font size, there was limited use of illustrations, and they occupied a regular column width, so the page was densely packed and individual advertisers had to work hard to make their notices stand out. Under such circumstances, advertisements needed to be carefully planned and positioned to be spotted by the reader and thus have their desired effect. This imperative was reflected in the gradual ‘professionalisation’ of marketing, especially in large US stores, and in the growing body of guidance literature available to advertisers.<sup>11</sup> An early example of the latter is the short pamphlet, *The Advertiser’s Guide to Publicity* (1887), but it was the appearance of Walter Scott’s *The Psychology of Advertising* (1908) and, most notably, Claude Hopkins’s *Scientific Advertising* (1923) that helped to formalise knowledge of good practice.<sup>12</sup> That said, it is striking how the practice of Lewis’s and Kendal Milne often presaged ideas formalised in these didactic texts: practice clearly preceded preaching.

## The number, form and language of department stores advertisements

Department stores were certainly among those making active use of the press; Whitaker's assertion that they 'did little newspaper advertising until Selfridges came on the scene' is simply another example of the mistaken view that everything changed with the arrival of Gordon Selfridge in Edwardian London.<sup>13</sup> Even a cursory glance at the Manchester press makes it clear that both Kendal Milne and Lewis's were extremely active advertisers from at least the 1880s. David Lewis, of course, was an arch publicist, drawing on a wide range of media to promote his stores in Liverpool and Manchester, and later Sheffield and Birmingham. Quite apart from the shop itself, there were poster campaigns, processions, public events and pamphlets, as well as commemorative goods, sales gimmicks and the heavy use of what we might now call advertorials. Lewis's were frequent and prolific advertisers in the regional press and especially in the Manchester and Liverpool newspapers. The Manchester store was heavily advertised in the *Manchester Courier and Lancashire Advertiser*, appearing 2346 times in the 1880s, often with multiple adverts in the same issue. However, the level of activity seems to have fallen considerably from the 1890s onwards. Certainly, the number of notices appearing in the *Manchester Courier* declined sharply, to less than 500 between 1900 and 1906. This decrease may be a product of the sources available, but there is no upturn in advertisements for Lewis's in other Manchester newspapers and their appearance in the Liverpool press experienced a similar downturn. This decline is all the more striking given the continued presence of Kendal Milne in the pages of the Manchester press. This was a far more upmarket department store which traded on its old-established presence in the town, yet it was clearly not above using newspaper advertisements to promote itself – even advertising in the same titles as Lewis's (and therefore reaching a similar readership). It matched Lewis's in the 1880s and, after dipping in the 1890s, returned to earlier levels of c.260 adverts per year in the *Manchester Courier*.

Through the early years of the twentieth century, Kendal Milne appeared on the front page of many issues of the *Courier*, occupying the same position at the top of the page, under the heading 'Fashion' (Figure 1). This is a form of repeat advertising, noted by Scott, who observed that an advertisement, 'repeated over and over again at frequent intervals gradually becomes fixed in the memory of the reader'. This was, he felt, 'a crude and expensive method, but it seems to work'.<sup>14</sup> It seems unlikely that the owners of Kendal Milne felt that they were engaged in crude or primitive practices; aligning their advertisements under the Fashion columns and including the royal standard to signify their patronage was surely intended to lift the tone of the notices. Moreover, the precise content of the advertisements changed on each occasion: the name of the store was kept in the public eye, but always with a different set of goods or services – the kind of variety later recommended by Hopkins.<sup>15</sup>

Lewis's also used repetition, but within the advertisements themselves. Along with a number of other shops, they constructed adverts that repeated the same phrase over and again, sometimes with similar notices appearing across the page. Thus, we see in the *Manchester Courier* from 30 May 1881 a series of adverts headed 'WHITSUN HOLIDAYS': one for tailoring, one for boots, one for gloves, one for drugs, and one for Lewis's famous two-shilling tea (Figure 2). Each advert repeats the same phrase over and again: 'Come to Lewis's for ...'. This does look rather more like a crude attempt to cement the





shop name in the minds of the reader and potential customer, but it also created a visually striking image in the days before illustrations could be included. The effect was heightened by off-setting the lines (Figure 3), although here the key message was developed through subtle variations that emphasised price, quality and value – selling points which were previously developed at length in the small print at the bottom of the inventories of repeated phrases. There was an insistence and urgency to these advertisements, both in the repeated phrasing and in the persuasive rhetoric that was also captured in the neighbouring notice placed by the Manchester Furnishing Company to advertise the availability of hire purchase. These businesses were actively urging the purchase of their goods rather than simply bringing them to the attention of the public. On other occasions, more discursive text was arranged in a particular shape to create an advertisement that stood out or the initial letters were picked out to create a key message within a more detailed promotion of the shop (Figures 4 and 5). Such repetition and eye-catching ‘gimmicks’ ran the risk of what Hopkins termed ‘overselling’, but fit perfectly with David Lewis’s bravura approach to marketing.<sup>16</sup>

Kendal Milne created very different advertisements, the language of which harked back to the polite notices placed by eighteenth-century shopkeepers. They advertised in the *Manchester Courier* to ‘respectfully invite inspection of their extensive stock’ of furniture for drawing and dining rooms, libraries, and so on, or to suggest that ‘Letter orders receive careful and expeditious attention’, or to ‘Kendal Milne & Co. are now offering in their NEW SHOWROOM (accessible by three elevators) the latest designs in traced and finished work of the Macclesfield School’.<sup>17</sup> Notwithstanding the modernity of the elevators, these notices are striking both for the formality of their language and because this form of address was maintained over a thirty-year period. In contrast, Lewis’s approach seems more varied and dynamic: the deployment of repetition noted above was supplemented by the use of humour and puns – a device recommended by Scott.<sup>18</sup> This can be seen in a pair of advertisements promoting the ‘Grand March to Lewis’s’, which was an apparently new piece of music, available for modest outlay of just a 1d. (Figures 4 and 5). Quite apart from the pun on the word march, there is humour in the doggerel poetry and more is promised on the product itself: the frontispiece of the sheet music was advertised as including ‘many excellent likenesses of prominent and important personages well known in Manchester’.<sup>19</sup> The use of images in advertisements themselves was limited during this period: they were largely absent from the pages of the *Manchester Courier* and it was only in the late 1910s that they became a regular feature in the *Lancashire Evening Post* and the *Manchester Evening News*. Further analysis is necessary, but preliminary work suggests that these were often linked to particular promotions or events: bathing costumes in an advertisement from Lewis’s and Christmas gifts in another from Kendal Milne.<sup>20</sup>

### **Differentiating by stock, quality and price**

Seasonal promotions – especially those around Christmas – were a firmly established part of department store business, as Christopher Hosgood has demonstrated.<sup>21</sup> In 1898, Kendal Milne were advertising Christmas cards, calendars and booklets, ‘in the latest designs’, which could be personalised. Significantly for what it tells us about their target market, these were advertised the following year as being available in time for



**L E W I S ' S      W O N D E R F U L      H A T S .**

**L E W I S ' S    A R E    F A M O U S    F O R    H A T S .**

LEWIS'S SPLENDID HATS, 3s. 9d.  
 LEWIS'S SPLENDID HATS, 3s. 9d.  
 LEWIS'S SPLENDID HATS, 3s. 9d.  
 LEWIS'S SPLENDID HATS, 3s. 9d.  
 LEWIS'S SPLENDID HATS, 3s. 9d.  
 LEWIS'S SPLENDID HATS, 3s. 9d.

**C O M E    T O    L E W I S ' S    F O R    3 s . 9 d .    H A T S .**

LEWIS'S WONDERFUL HATS, 3s. 9d.  
 LEWIS'S WONDERFUL HATS, 3s. 9d.  
 LEWIS'S WONDERFUL HATS, 3s. 9d.  
 LEWIS'S WONDERFUL HATS, 3s. 9d.  
 LEWIS'S WONDERFUL HATS, 3s. 9d.  
 LEWIS'S WONDERFUL HATS, 3s. 9d.

LEWIS'S make a profit of 3d. on every Hat they Sell.  
 No wonder Lewis's Hat Trade is the largest in the Kingdom.

COME TO LEWIS'S FOR 3s. 9d. HATS.  
 COME TO LEWIS'S FOR 3s. 9d. HATS.  
 COME TO LEWIS'S FOR 3s. 9d. HATS.  
 COME TO LEWIS'S FOR 3s. 9d. HATS.  
 COME TO LEWIS'S FOR 3s. 9d. HATS.  
 COME TO LEWIS'S FOR 3s. 9d. HATS.

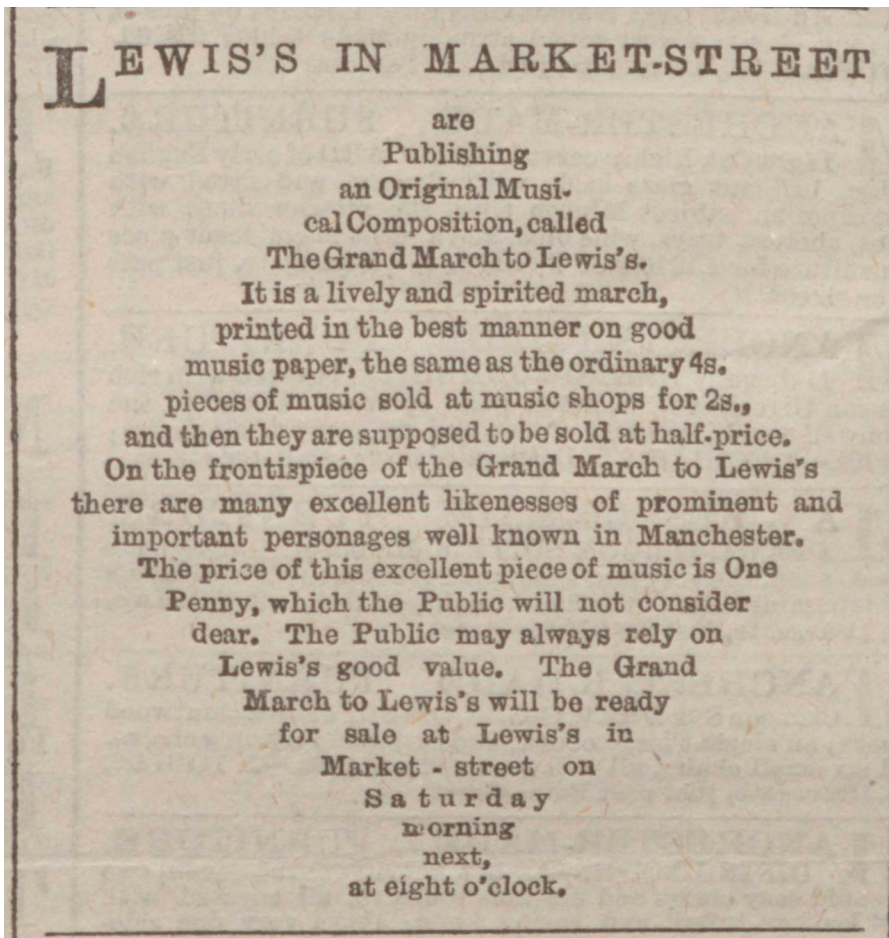
**L E W I S ' S** HATS at 3s. 9d. are equal to those sold by the Hatters at 5s. 6d. to 6s. 6d.  
 Lewis's Sell More Hats than all the Hatters in Manchester put together; the reason is that

**L E W I S ' S    G I V E    T H E    B E S T    V A L U E .**

WEARERS OF LEWIS'S SPLENDID HATS ARE  
 INSURED FOR £150 AGAINST ACCIDENTS  
 (as specified in coupon presented to each customer).  
 ALSO SPECIAL CYCLISTS' INSURANCE FOR £150  
 OR £1 A WEEK DURING DISABLEMENT.  
 Everybody should wear Lewis's Splendid Hats.

**L E W I S ' S    I N    M A R K E T - S T R E E T ,    M A N C H E S T E R .**

**Figure 3.** Repeated phrasing and design in Lewis's advertisement (*Manchester Courier*, 5 November 1902).



**Figure 4.** Visual design in advertisement by Lewis's (*Manchester Courier*, 11 April 1881).

posting via the 'Indian, foreign and colonial mail'.<sup>22</sup> There were also other suggestions, from dolls, dressed and undressed, to Persian, Japanese and animal-skin rugs, small items of clothing, quilts, lace curtains, and table cloths. Alternatively, customers could acquire 'useful skirts [...] for charitable purposes'.<sup>23</sup> These were things clearly aimed at a resolutely middle-class market, and indicate how the goods offered for sale lay at the heart of all the advertisements placed in the press by Lewis's and Kendal Milne – and were crucial in marking their individual character. Zooming out from the notice about the window displays, we see items that are typical of the products advertised by Kendal Milne (Figure 6). These were high-end goods being promoted in terms of the separate in-store departments through which they were available: in the costume department were the 'latest productions of the English and Continental markets for spring and summer wear' and, in the Gents' outfitting department, 'all the latest novelties and newest fashions for men's spring wear ... new spring patterns ... latest styles'.<sup>24</sup> Both the types of goods and the emphasis on fashion and style are readily apparent. The emphasis placed on continental fashion was apparent two decades earlier, when

# THE GRAND MARCH TO LEWIS'S.

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**MUSIC!** Martial, merry music! mellifluent and grand;  
**U**ndoubted impress bearing of a gifted master hand!  
**S**everely simple, yet sublime; spirited, yet strangely sweet;  
**I**ncomparably fitted for a rich aesthetic treat,  
**C**an soon be had for next to nought at **THE** shop in Market-street.

**HURRAH!** Our friends in Market-street will one more triumph score,  
**A** victory, too, that will eclipse all those they've gained before!  
**T**hey're not content with catering for the bodies of mankind,  
**H**igher aims inspire them now—improvement of the mind!

**CHEAP,** yet perfect, is the music Lewis's intend to sell,  
**H**alf the pieces at two shillings are not written half as well.  
**A PENNY'S** all they mean to charge for this truly wondrous sheet,  
**R**ight nobly illustrated, and with beauties rare replete  
**M**essrs. Lewis have our good at heart, all men readily confess.  
**S**o "The Grand March to Lewis's" must meet with great success.

---

This extraordinary publication will be ready for sale at Lewis's in Market-street on Saturday morning next at eight o'clock.

Figure 5. Visual design in advertisement by Lewis's (*Manchester Courier*, 11 April 1881).

**FASHIONS.**

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**K**ENDAL, MILNE, & CO., MANCHESTER.  
 Telegrams: "Kenmil." Telephone: 1,746.

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**L** E T T E R O R D E R S .  
 LETTER ORDERS (HAVE CAREFUL AND EXPEDITIOUS ATTENTION.)

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**L** A T E S T N O V E L T I E S  
 IN  
 COATS, BOLEROS, JACKETS,  
 MANTLES, FURS.  
 SEE LARGE WINDOW,  
 POLICE-STREET,  
 T H I S D A Y .  
 KENDAL, MILNE, & CO.

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**K**ENDAL, MILNE, & CO., MANCHESTER.  
 HOURS OF BUSINESS, 8 30 to 6; SATURDAYS, 1  
 WHEN CLOSED, AND ON SUNDAYS,  
 FUNERAL ORDERS AND URGENT COMMUNICATIONS  
 ARE ATTENDED TO  
 AT  
 8a, ST. JOHN-STREET, DEANSGATE.

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**K**ENDAL, MILNE, & CO., MANCHESTER.  
**R**ARE COLLECTION OF REAL LACE.  
 KENDAL, MILNE, & CO.,  
 ARE NOW EXHIBITING FOR SALE  
 A RARE COLLECTION of REAL LACE, at moderate prices,  
 comprising  
 REAL LACE, ALL WIDTHS.  
 REAL LACE COLLARS and BERTHAS.  
 REAL LACE SCARVES, HANDKERCHIEFS, &c.  
 Illustrated Catalogue of Real Lace will be sent on application.  
 THIS DAY, SPECIAL SHOW OF REAL LACE  
 IN POLICE-STREET WINDOW.

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**K** E N D A L , M I L N E , & C O .  
**M** A N T L E D E P A R T M E N T .  
 FRENCH NOVELTIES  
 in MANTLES, JACKETS, and CLOAKS.  
 SMART DESIGNS  
 in VELVET RUSSIAN BOLERO,  
 Trimmed Feather, Fur, &c.  
 EVENING CLOAKS AND COATS  
 for Theatre wear.  
 Newest Styles .....from 35s. 6d.  
 FUR-TRIMMED (and Fur-lined) JACKETS,  
 ¾ and Full Length.  
 TWEED ¾-LENGTH COATS  
 for Everyday wear .....from 37s. 6d.  
 KENDAL, MILNE, & CO.

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**D**RESS AND MANTLE TRIMMINGS.  
 The LATEST NOVELTIES in GARNITURES, COLLARS,  
 PASSEMENTERIES, EMBROIDERIES, DROP ORNA-  
 MENTS, FOURAGERS, BELTS, and BUTTONS, from  
 BRITISH and FOREIGN MARKETS.  
 KENDAL, MILNE, & CO.

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**K**ENDAL, MILNE, & CO., MANCHESTER.

Figure 6. Kendal Milne & Co. advertising by department (*Manchester Courier*, 5 November 1902).

Kendal Milne advertised a range of French and Japanese silks, *Peau de Soie*, and *Louisine*, and the return from Paris of their ‘Mantle buyer ... with the latest productions’ of mantles, Spanish lace and Sicilienne broche.<sup>25</sup> Such products were important in coaxing the right sort of customers and perhaps in discouraging the wrong sort from seeing this as a store that served their needs and wants.

Lewis’s could also boast some foreign-sounding fashions and advertised Parisian correspondents. They had Duchesse satin and ready to wear gowns with names like Venetia, Pompadour, and Liguier.<sup>26</sup> It is telling, however, that the gowns are ready made rather than bespoke, a distinction that says much about Lewis’s customer base. This comes out clearly in a paired advertisement in the *Manchester Courier* in August 1882. The top part advertises ‘Lewis’s beautiful house dresses’ which ‘combine gentility and durability; dress which will wash well and look like new when washed’. The bottom part promotes their ‘wonderful velveteen’ – an especially popular line at Lewis’s.<sup>27</sup> It was a good quality copy of a more expensive product (velvet) and was promoted on the basis of its quality, with the promise that, ‘If a dress should wear badly ... Lewis’s will give a new dress for nothing at all’.<sup>28</sup> Yet price was the key attraction: Lewis’s sold their ‘quality velveteen’ at 2s per yard, whereas it would cost anything from 3s 6d to 5s 6d per yard in the ‘best drapers’. Such price comparisons were typical of the way in which Lewis’s promoted their goods; they foreshadow Hopkins’s insistence of making specific rather than general assertions and of selling value not cheapness.<sup>29</sup> Returning to the repeat adverts noted earlier, we see price, value and quality as central to the promotion of the 3s/9d hats. They are not only ‘wonderful and splendid’, but also ‘the best value’, equal to products sold by hatters for 5s 6d to 6s 6d – something which Lewis’s can do because they buy and sell in such large quantities.<sup>30</sup> The same mantra is repeated in the small print at the bottom of the advertisements for tailoring, boots and gloves (Figure 7), whilst specific and itemised price comparisons are made with drugs. Quality is maintained, the advertisements argue, by closely controlling the production process, for example, employing overseers ‘whose sole duty it is to see that every stitch, stay, and seam is faultless and the finish quite perfect’.<sup>31</sup> Yet, above all, it is the cost saving – as much as 25 percent – that is the key selling point, reflecting the price sensitivity of the customer base to which Lewis’s predominantly appealed. They offered anyone who sent in a postcard ‘the most astonishing lists of prices for every article Lewis’s sells’ so that they ‘can judge if Lewis’s are the Friends of the People or not’.<sup>32</sup>

If prices and savings were the leitmotif of Lewis’s advertisements, this did not mean a lack of choice and some surprisingly specialist items. On the same page that advertised the price list, was another notice for keenly priced cricket equipment available by mail order. That said, Kendal Milne marked the social distinction of its customers through advertisements for a range of goods that were not just exclusive in terms of their price, but also the practices with which they were associated. In 1898 and 1899, for example, they were tapping into the middle-class craze for cycling, advertising the ‘“Rideasy” improved cycling and walking skirts for comfort, elegance and utility’ and a ‘new’ cycling glove made from thick suede.<sup>33</sup> At 2s/6d, these were not hugely expensive items, but the notion of buying a glove particularly for cycling speaks of a well-heeled clientele, as does the later advertisement for public and private school uniforms.<sup>34</sup>

It is significant that price appears in this advertisement, as it did in a growing number of others, especially through the 1890s. At Christmas 1897, Kendal Milne gave prices for

W HITSUNTIDE HOLIDAYS

Come To Lewis's For Gloves.  
 Come To Lewis's For Gloves.  
 Come To Lewis's For Gloves.  
 Come To Lewis's For Gloves.  
 Come To Lewis's For Gloves.  
 Come To Lewis's For Gloves.  
 Come To Lewis's For Gloves.  
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 Come To Lewis's For Gloves.  
 Come To Lewis's For Gloves.  
 Come To Lewis's For Gloves.

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It is not surprising that Lewis's sell such an enormous quantity of gloves. The public know they can rely on the quality of Lewis's gloves. Lewis's sell only the gloves which are made by the best manufacturers, from whom they buy immense quantities on the best ready-money terms. Lewis's sell all their gloves at the wholesale prices, and thus save the people's pockets from being dipped so deeply into by the big-profit shopkeepers. For example, Lewis's sell Dent's Ladies' Kid Gloves at 1s. 11d. The price elsewhere is 2s. 6d. Lewis's sell Dent's Gentlemen's Gloves at 2s. 9d. The same gloves are charged 3s. 3d. by other dealers in gloves. Buyers of gloves for ladies and gentlemen will always save money and be well pleased by going to Lewis's in Market-street.

**Figure 7.** Repetition, value and price – hallmarks of Lewis's advertisements (*Manchester Courier*, 30 May 1881).

dress fabrics and coats (the latter marked in guineas) and noted that 'these materials were bought at prices much below their value, and will be marked very cheap'.<sup>35</sup> This is very much the pitch regularly made by Lewis's and indicates that there was far from a rigid dividing line between the sales practices of the two shops. That said, the remainder of the advertisement offers things like riding habits, mantles and coats trimmed with fur, oriental rugs and servants' dresses. Price mattered, but the nature and quality of the goods were very different and speaks of a corresponding difference in wealth and lifestyle. This distinction is also apparent in their promotion of seasonal sales, which usually occurred in the New Year or in the summer months. For example, Kendal Milne advertised discounts of 10 percent on all white blankets through January 1899 and in July 1907 promoted, with rather uncharacteristic urgency, its summer sale of drapery stock 'at prices which should ensure speedy clearance' (Figure 8).<sup>36</sup> Lewis's was also quick to promote its sales. Many struck a similar seasonal tone to those issued by Kendal Milne, but there were others that spoke of a slightly different approach and a different set of potential customers. Whilst Kendal Milne were appealing to those posting presents to friends and family in the colonies or buying cheap skirts to give to charity, Lewis's advertised in a Bolton newspaper a 'Stock taking sale of Oddments and Remnants'. These would not appear to be the most appealing things, but Lewis's clearly felt that they would appeal to the thrifty housewives of Bolton, especially as they offered to 'pay the railway fare of visitors from a distance whose purchases amount to £2 and upwards'.<sup>37</sup>

## Conclusions

Along with many other shops in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Lewis's and Kendal Milne both engaged in extensive newspaper advertising campaigns. Contrary to the notion that bourgeois sensibilities found advertising vulgar, it was Kendal Milne that appears to have sustained its advertising activity at a higher level. Clearly, the owners of very different types of department store felt they could boost sales and promote their reputation through newspaper advertising. This both affirms the dynamic and entrepreneurial character of provincial department stores and questions some of the distinctions drawn between upper and lower status department stores. Indeed, it could be argued that both Lewis's and Kendal Milne occupied a similar position in terms of the investment in modern retail and marketing practices – they were both part of Scott and Walker's modern category, and both deployed tactics in line with Hopkins's notion of scientific advertising. Searching for other department stores in the pages of the *Manchester Courier* is a fruitless exercise, despite there being many others in Manchester in the surrounding towns. This suggests that they did not engage in the same kind of sustained advertising campaigns and perhaps fall into the other half of Scott and Walker's typology: less dynamic and slower growing. However, we should be cautious of drawing the two shops too closely together: their advertising differed markedly in character and content, and in a manner that closely reflects their different market positions. In this sense, newspaper advertising at once proclaimed and underscored the reputation of these shops, consciously appealing to different client groups through different quality goods but also through different forms of rhetoric and persuasion. More broadly, this analysis suggests that the approach to advertising

FASHIONS.

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KENDAL,  
MILNE  
& CO.'S

SUMMER SALE  
OF  
DRAPERY STOCK,  
THIS DAY  
TO  
SATURDAY, JULY 13,

---

AT PRICES WHICH SHOULD ENSURE  
SPEEDY CLEARANCE.

---

NO CATALOGUES ISSUED.

---

HOURS OF BUSINESS: 8 30 TO 6,  
SATURDAYS 1.

---

TELEGRAMS: "KENMIL."      TELEPHONE 1746.

---

LETTER } HAVE PROMPT  
ORDERS }      AND CAREFUL ATTENTION.

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KENDAL, MILNE & CO.  
MANCHESTER.

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**Figure 8.** Kendal Milne & Co. advertisement for a clearance sale (*Manchester Courier*, 4 July 1907).



adopted by department stores can tell us much – and sometimes surprising things – about their character.

## Notes

1. Recent surveys include Scott and Walker, “The British ‘Failure’,” 277–303; Mitchell, “The Victorian Provincial Department Store,” 149–63; Stobart, “Cathedrals of Consumption?,” 810–45.
2. Lancaster, *The Department Store*; Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*.
3. Scott and Walker, “British failure”.
4. Mitchell, “Victorian Provincial Department Store”.
5. Briggs, *Friends of the People*.
6. Whitaker, *The Department Store*, 124.
7. Stobart, “Selling (through) Politeness”. See also Briggs, “‘News from the Little World’,” 29–45; Ferdinand, “Selling it to the Provinces,” 393–411.
8. Church, “Advertising Consumer Goods in Nineteenth-century Britain,” 621–45.
9. Chaney, “The Department Store as a Cultural Form,” 49–68.
10. Lee, “The Structure, Ownership and Control of the Press, 1855–1914”.
11. For a useful overview, see Howard, “Department Store Advertising in Newspapers, Radio and Television, 1920–1960,” 61–85.
12. Anon., *The Advertiser’s Guide to Publicity*; Scott, *The Psychology of Advertising*; Hopkins, *Scientific Advertising*.
13. Whitaker, *The Department Store*, 162.
14. Scott, *Psychology of Advertising*, 9.
15. Hopkins, *Scientific Advertising*, chapter 5. Read online at <https://www.scientificadvertising.com/ScientificAdvertising.pdf> — accessed 26 May 2021.
16. Hopkins, *Scientific Advertising*, chapter 2; Briggs, *Friends of the People*.
17. *Manchester Courier*, 18 November 1886, 15 December 1898, 14 September 1908.
18. Scott, *Psychology of Advertising*, 15–19.
19. *Manchester Courier*, 11 April 1881.
20. *Manchester Evening News*, 25 July 1918; *Lancashire Evening Post*, 20 December 1919.
21. Hosgood, “‘Doing the Shops at Christmas’,” 97–115. See also Weber, “Selling Dreams: Advertising Strategies from *Grand Magasins* to Supermarkets in Ghent,” 160–88.
22. *Manchester Courier*, 31 October 1898; 11 November 1899.
23. *Manchester Courier*, 29 November 1897, 10 December 1898, 18 December 1899.
24. *Manchester Courier*, 10 March 1908.
25. *Manchester Courier*, 27 March 1885, 13 April 1882.
26. *Manchester Courier*, 27 March 1885.
27. *Manchester Courier*, 8 August 1882
28. *Ibid.*
29. Hopkins, *Scientific Advertising*, chapters 6 and 7.
30. *Manchester Courier*, 5 November 1902.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Manchester Courier*, 15 June 1882.
33. *Manchester Courier*, 11 November 1898, 21 March 1899.
34. *Manchester Courier*, 14 September 1908.
35. *Manchester Courier*, 29 November 1897.
36. *Manchester Courier*, January 1899, 4 July 1907
37. *Bolton Evening News*, 3 July 1885.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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