

# New look for Jarvis Radio

Times-Herald February 15, 1975



The Jarvis family with Bob and Christine Jarvis seated and their three sons, David, 15, Keith, 24, and Mark, 18, and Bob Jarvis's late parents, Violet and Gerald, inset in the television screens.

ANYONE walking along Christchurch High Street in the last few days will have noticed that Jarvis Radio has a new look — but the service remains the same.

It was 31 years ago when Gerald Jarvis first took the shop at 55 High Street, and since then, through three generations of Jarvis's, the shop has established its reputation for high quality goods and fine service, both in the shop and after sales. Bob Jarvis, who had worked in electronics since he was at school, had a shop in Boscombe in 1945, and when he saw the Christchurch shop empty (it had formerly been a gentleman's tailors) he persuaded his father to take it.

They moved into the rented shop with stables at rear. The ground floor of the stables was used for the first workshop and the hayloft stayed overhead.

In those early days Gerald Jarvis was renting the High Street shop from Mrs. Tilley, and later he and Bob bought the premises. Their first ventures into the cellars of the shop uncovered gas irons, used by the tailor before the takeover.

Gerald Jarvis ran the shop and Bob ran the workshop, and now that many other shops have closed their workshops as liabilities Jarvis's still pride themselves on workshop service.

Since then Jarvis Radio has gone from strength to strength. In 1964 new workshops were added at the back but the front of the shop was obviously not large enough to accommodate all the stock to show it off to its full advantage.

In October, 1973, Bob Jarvis and his son Keith, who is now a partner in the business, decided to alter the shop front. They hoped that the work could be completed by Easter 1974. However, it turned out that alterations were not quite so easy as that.

Jarvis Radio, with its curved glass and pilasters, was a feature of the High Street, so when the Department of the Environment appealed to local historic associations and local authorities to submit a list of possible listed buildings, Jarvis Radio was included, and the preservation order was served in August, 1974.

The special significance of the shop front was thus brought before the development control committee, who debated for almost 12 months about the alterations before agreement was finally reached last year.

Now the results can be seen, with the fine new windows which turn the corner to face up the High Street. Although the curved glass had to go — it was in an unsafe condition, and broke when it was removed — most of the important architectural features have been preserved. Officers, councillors and the general public seem to be delighted with the result.

The Jarvis family can now set about selling their televisions, radios and audio equipment, together with the electrical sundries in their new shop.

The Jarvis reputation extends far beyond Christchurch. Their loud-speaker vans are a feature of many shows all over the area, and they even provide public address systems for shows as far afield as Somerset and can be seen in many local churches including Salisbury Cathedral.

Bob Jarvis always does the Now Forest Show, and Christchurch Regatta. He is proud of a photograph of their original Ford public address van outside Christchurch Town Hall when there was still a horse-trough immediately outside the door. They employ a staff of over a dozen, one of whom, Mr. Brian Livy, has been with them for 20 years.



Some of the staff of Jarvis Radio, with Brian Livy, who last week celebrated 20 years with the firm, on the extreme left.

Items delivered to the shop are checked before being sold. This means that there aren't any huge discounts, but any customer can rely on the goods being in perfect working order. If they do go wrong Jarvis's will put them right without the long delays of sending articles back to the manufacturers

It is because of this that so much public interest was generated with the Jarvis Saga.

When planning permission was constantly refused, and Keith Jarvis was beginning to despair about keeping the shop going the public response was so great that at the suggestion of many customers, a petition was started to allow the alterations to the shop.

In just two weeks over 1000 people signed a petition, which was later presented to the development control committee.

This must have swayed the decision because it was at that committee meeting where definite steps were taken towards a compromise between the Jarvis's and the historians.

It is a long time now since Bob Jarvis and his staff took portable aerials into people's gardens to demonstrate monochrome television, but television service is still the most important and time consuming of Jarvis's customers service.

For the past 12 years they have used radio telephone to link their service vans, and the calls are coming in day and night seven days a week. Both Bob and his wife Christine have always known that this is not a nine-to-five job and 24-year-old Keith is learning fast that his evenings really aren't his own.

Keith won the Pye Apprentice of the Year Award last year, which is made in conjunction with the Television and Radio Examinations Board.

He trained at Bournemouth Electronics and Jarvis Radio as well as the Bournemouth College of Technology.

He has two brothers, Mark, 18, who wants to be a design draughtsman in mechanical engineering, and Paul, 15, who may join the family business.

Now that the shop front is finished the Jarvis families is anxious to thank Mr. Earley of Earley and Croucher the architects for his patient work with submitting many sets of plans and the shop fitters Atkins and Whittle for carrying out the work whilst business continued.

A special thanks to their staff for patience and forbearing under extremely difficult conditions. The Jarvis family are looking forward to a successful 1975.