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Records of T.P. Atton & Son,
Watchmakers and Jewellers of
6a, Cambridge Street, Wellingborough

Accession 1977/333

Thomas Percy Atton, born on May 1st., 1879, was the youngest of seven children of John Thomas Atton, a monument mason from Spalding, Lincs. Having no reason to stay at home, Thomas left Spalding to become an apprentice to Arthur George Sawyer, a watchmaker and jeweller at Ely. He began his apprenticeship on 28th May, 1894, and served four years. In 1907, Thomas Atton started up his own business at 22, Mill Road, Wellingborough, mainly making and repairing clocks and watches, although he did some work as an optician. His son, C.T. Atton, was born at this shop in 1909. In 1910/11, the shop moved to 14, Cambridge Street, Wellingborough, and finally, to 6a, Cambridge Street in 1913.

In those days the shop sold only necessary items, rather than the luxury goods of jewellers today - that is, rings, spoons, knives, forks, clocks and pocket watches. Luxury goods were very hard to sell. In the 1920's, the shop bought some American Community Plate, but were unable to sell it, although today it is very popular. The goods supplied to the shop mainly came from London and Birmingham for jewellery and general goods, and Sheffield for silver plate. The shop windows and showcases were insured with a local co-operative, "The Wellingborough and District Mutual Plate Glass Insurance Association", to which many local firms belonged, all contributing ten shillings a year towards the fund.

Mr. Atton did all his own accounting and tax returns, until 1923, when he decided he ought to have a professional accountant. Mr. H.H. Pollard of H.W. Pratt, Pollard & Co. became Atton's accountant and remains Mr. C.T. Atton's accountant in 1977. Pollard began as H.W. Pratt's articled clerk and then became an independent accountant, although still occupying offices at his old firm; now Thornton, Baker & Co., 119, Midland Road, Wellingborough.

In 1937, C.T. Atton entered the business in partnership with his father. Mr. Atton Senior had by then given up watch repairing, because of poor eyesight. The younger Mr. Atton, who retired in 1973, now living at 49, Doddington Road, Wellingborough, has seen many changes in jewellery fashion - the once popular Mourning Rings worn on the death of relatives or friends; Easter Crosses and jewellery gifts enclosed within a decorated Easter egg. The

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

Records of T.P. Atton & Son (cont.)

Christmas season brought in three times as much trade as any other month, and wedding rings for Easter weddings were also very popular. The jewellery trade used to suffer during January and February, but was given a boost by the Government act which allowed a couple who married just before the end of the tax year to claim a wife's allowance for the previous 12 months. Reliable customers often used to pay for goods on a Journey Account, whereby they were allowed credit on goods, which they would pay for on their next visit to the shop, when they would purchase more goods. The shop used to open in the evening to capture trade from people working long hours. Opening hours were 9am. until 7.30pm. during the week, 9am. until 8pm. on Friday and 9am. until 9pm. on Saturday. Mr. T. Atton, who did not believe in inside shop window lighting used two outside 250volt lamps, which were taken in during the summer.

Before Mr. C.T. Atton retired, he supplied the token jewel to the retiring chairman of what was then the Wellingborough Urban District Council. On his retirement the shop was sold to Mr. Roberts, an Olney man, who had owned jewellers shops in Wellingborough Road and Gold Street, Northampton. In 1975, he sold the shop to Mr. George, but the name T.P. Atton, Watchmakers and Jewellers, is still retained.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

T.P. Atton & Son

- 1 Suppliers Accounts Ledger: Jan 1920-April 1948
This has an index of the suppliers in the front. Each account gives the name and address of the supplier, the date and separate cost of each item per transaction, and the total cost of the transaction. The date and method of payment is shown and the amount of credit and discount allowed. General accounts are included at the back. Names of items are not given.
- 2 Invoices and Statements:
- a) Invoice from Art Pottery, 30, Paradise Street, Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent, for 12 sets of china earclips and brooches @ 11/- a set. 1/9/1948
- b) Statement to E.V. Stamp & Co., jewellers, Tenby Street North, Birmingham, with receipt of payment. Dec. 1948
- c) Statement to Dimier Bros. & Co. Ltd., Croydon, Surrey. 30/11/1948
- d) Statement of credit held with the Pinnacle Watch Co. Ltd., Hatton Garden, London, for scrap gold. 13/12/1948
- e) Receipt of payment from T.P. Atton & Son. 13/9/1948
- 3 Balance Sheet:
The first audited account of T.P. Atton & Son. Contains a Statement of Affairs until 31.12.1923, Balance Sheet until 31.12.1924, and Trading and Profit and Loss Account until 31.12.1924.

T.P. Atton & Son
(cont.)

- 4 Insurance Policies:
- a) Wellingborough and District Mutual Plate Glass Insurance Association Policy. 1915
Shows position and sizes of plates of glass in the shop window at 6a, Cambridge Street and the total value of the glass. The premium was 10/-.
Rules of the association printed on the back.
- b) Fire Policy with Lloyds of London. Nov 1st. 1970-
Shows the shop insured for £6,000 with a premium of £10.10s.0d. Oct 31st. 1971
- c) Renewal Fire Policy for above. Nov 1st. 1971-
Oct 31st. 1972
- d) Renewal Fire Policy for above. Nov 1st. 1972-
Oct 31st. 1973
- e) Fire Policy with Lloyds of London. Nov 1st. 1970-
Shows the insurance of £8,500 for goods, and stock in trust, and of £300 for fixtures, fittings, furniture, tools, machinery and materials. The premium was £16.10s.0d. Oct 31st. 1971
- f) Renewal Policy for above. Nov 1st. 1971-
Oct 31st. 1972
- g) Renewal Policy for above. Nov 1st. 1972-
Oct 31st. 1973
- 5 Apprenticeship Indenture: July 20th. 1894
Indenture for the apprenticeship of Thomas Percy Atton and his father with Arthur George Sawyer, Watchmaker and Jeweller of Ely.
The conditions of the apprenticeship are set out with the amount of wages, holidays and rules.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

T.P. Atton & Son
(cont.)

- 6 Photographs
- a) Mr. T.P. Atton outside his shop at 22, Mill Road, Wellingborough. c.1909
 - b) T.P. Atton's shop at 14, Cambridge Street, Wellingborough. c.1911
 - c) T.P. Atton's shop at 6a, Cambridge Street, Wellingborough. c.1920's

Nov. 1977.