

ROLLING BACK THE YEARS

What happened in the industry, as seen through the eyes of Wares magazine, 10, 15 and 20 years ago? Merv Robertson reports.

APRIL/JUNE
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20 YEARS AGO – APRIL-JUNE 1999

The rumour mill – In our world 20 years ago, the magazine had been busy sorting through a plethora of “rumours, innuendo and outright speculation” from in and around the industry.

Such snippets included the rumour of the sale of Bond & Bond by PRG to **Roger Bhatnagar** and **Greg Lancaster** no less, a decade after they got shot of Noel Leeming to the Murray Group.

Of course, that never happened and it would be several years before a major brown goods brand supplied The Warehouse, despite the rumours of the time.

Whirlpool makes a big entry



– By 1999 Whirlpool was making progress with an aim “to be the market leader in New Zealand.” It was a mark of its aggressive intent that the brand bought five pages in *Wares* to tell its story, an inside front cover for microwaves and a four page advertorial.

We were reintroduced to the New Zealand front line team of **Calvin Sandford** (“Where are they now?” June 2012) who led the side as Country Manager, **Alan Dalton** as Account Manager Lower North Island and **Chris McKee** who covered the South Island in a similar role.

For some years now, Calvin has had his own company, ActionCOACH, Alan is GM Australia & New Zealand for Electrolux Home Care and Small Domestic Appliances and Chris is MD and owner of Jalmac Sales & Marketing, a sales agency and importer which manages sales for Sharp NZ and Arisit NZ, and is the importer and distributor for ACQUA refrigeration, Sensibo Wi-Fi heat pump controllers and MAP Coffee.



1. Whirlpool’s 1999 front line team comprised (L-R) Calvin Sandford, Chris McKee and Alan Dalton.

2. Welcoming the Nilfisk-Advance global boss (L-R): Merv Robertson; Ole Jakobsen; Phil Gregg; Alister Cotter; Dennis Amiss.

3. From June 1999 Group SEB’s Deane Westwood, and Ecco MD, Howard Mackley, talk about new Tefal and Rowenta products.

4-5. April 1999’s movers & shakers included Errol McKenzie and Brett McMeekin.

Hail to the chief – It’s always an occasion when a supplier’s international chief comes to our shores and Nilfisk-Advance was thrilled to welcome **Ole Jakobsen** who was Global President and CEO of the mother ship, Nilfisk-Advance A/S in Brøndby.

Ole hosted a dealer lunch for the company’s leading resellers, both in consumer and commercial & industrial.

He spoke of the group’s goal of becoming the world’s leading supplier of professional equipment then announced that in the 1998, Australasia had been the leading region for the Nilfisk brand in consumer.

“In New Zealand,” he went on,” our growth in domestic was 47.5% over 1997, so to our dealer associates, thank you for your great support.”

Nilfisk has just recently announced it would be pulling out of the consumer market here

Out of the frying pan... – These days Groupe SEB in New Zealand comprises **Darryl Brown** as Country Manager and **Bronwyn Muldrew** as

Account Manager.

But, 20 years back, **Deane Westwood** was the man in charge with new Tefal and Rowenta products ready for release through Ecco (NZ), led by **Howard Mackley**, with a CV that also included Swatch telephones and Bosch GSM mobile phones.

Today, Deane is Sales Manager at Coffee Biz NZ, marketing Jura domestic and commercial coffee-making machines plus Necta automatic coffee vending machines, while Howard is Director at Novo, an import/distribution business catering to commercial and domestic electrical contractors and electricians.

New Plymouth's finest – In retail, the Sunbeam Award for Excellence in Retailing went to Mason Appliances in its impressive New Plymouth premises.

Brian Mason and **Robbie Peel** were on hand to accept the award from Sunbeam's **Greg Stevens** and **Fiona McKinnon**.

Speaking with *Wares* at the presentation, Brian's comments were typical of the attitude and atmosphere prevailing in our industry back then.

He said: "We love serving the people of New Plymouth. It's not a matter of getting up and doing a day's work, it's about enjoying the day's work. And when customers come into our shop we want them to enjoy the part of their day they spent with us."

Nowadays Brian is with Property Brokers in Hawkes Bay and Robbie is retired after spending eight years at Harvey Norman.

Greg and his partner **Lisa** own Civic Video in Whitianga, half of which they have converted into a homeware outlet called Civic Style Homeware.

No sign of Fiona.



1-2 . Mason Appliances' **Brian Mason** and **Robbie Peel** accept the June 1999 Sunbeam Award for Excellence in Retailing from Sunbeam's **Greg Stevens** and **Fiona McKinnon**.

3-5. Retravision's 1999 Australasian conference was held in in Canberra with some 700 delegates; **Rex Gibson** carried the torch at the "sports day" and here's **Rex** today, at the last **Joseph Parker** fight, flanked by sons **Riley** (left) and **Casey**.

Retravision retrospective –

Retravision's 1999 Australasian conference was staged in Canberra with approximately 700 delegates in attendance.

Rex Gibson of Gibson Retravision in Rangiora carried the torch at the "sports day" at Australia's Institute of Sport which was won by Victoria/Tasmania.

Retravision had grown to impressive proportions after 40 years of existence with Kiwi Chairman, **Rob Duckworth**, numbering 43 identified Retravision stores in New Zealand including five new members following the implementation of a new structure and associated new policies.

These days, **Rex** is an International Employment Consultant at Business Immigration in Christchurch while **Rob** is busy investing in and developing commercial and domestic properties (not to mention the golf).

Movers & Shakers – Philips announced **Errol McKenzie** as Director, on top of his duties as GM Consumer Electronics; the company also announced that **Brett McMeekin** was the new Marketing Manager Consumer Electronics.

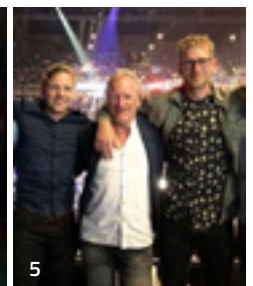
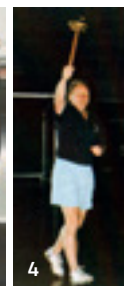
Errol keeps himself busy these days as a Director, along with wife **Sarah**, at Futurescape Global as well as partnerships in MMD, Viaduct Quay Holdings and Amam Consultants (not to mention the golf).

Brett has worked for **Lion Nathan** and **Telecom** since he left Philips and most recently was National Events Director for **Fairfax Media**. He has been enjoying a well-earned break in **Mount Maunganui** with a plan to move back to **Auckland** in the near future. Give him a call on 021 814 583.

15 YEARS AGO – APRIL-JUNE 2004

Sunbeam's extra dimension – Special 3D glasses were provided so we could read the blurred headline message on Sunbeam's special *Wares* front cover.

The headline said: "Sunbeam presents a clear vision of the future in beverage sales"... and was designed to celebrate a new juicer, two kettles, a drip-filter coffee maker, a one-touch espresso machine and



the crowning glory, a 15 bar pump espresso machine.

Promotional hot potato – A no-holds-barred editorial had a look at “pork barrel”, or “wing walking” advertising, that perennial promotional hot potato which is slightly on the side of dodgy when it comes to representing price savings.

The *New Zealand Herald* had run a piece headed “Retailer’s ads not all they seem” after the Consumer’s Institute had done some digging and the “greyhound of fair trading superheroics” – the Commerce Commission – had opened an investigation into one retailer’s practices.

Nothing’s changed there, by the look of things.

Passing the baton – In 2004, the Whirlpool brand’s baton was passed to Fisher & Paykel, whose MD at the time was **John Bongard**.

Fast forward 15 years and our congratulations go to John, ONZM, who’s recently been named one

of Auckland University’s 2019 Distinguished Alumni!

In terms of Whirlpool New Zealand, **Matt Sinclair** was appointed GM, charged with setting up a small team dedicated to supporting the brand.

Matt had been with the company since 1995, most recently as Product Marketing Manager based at the Dunedin dishwasher plant, then in 2006 he transferred to the States.

These days Matt is General Manager – Canada for Fisher & Paykel Appliances, having previously held various roles out of Huntington Beach California, the most recent being Vice President Sales, North America.

In January next year, Matt will achieve 25 years’ service with the company.

Stick em up! – As a boxer, **George Foreman** was pretty handy, but in 1995 he began a relationship with Salton which saw the George Foreman Grill become virtually a generic name for household grilling



1-2. 15 years ago Matt Sinclair looked after Whirlpool for Fisher & Paykel. These days Matt is General Manager – Canada for Fisher & Paykel Appliances.

3. From 2004, Salton’s Paul Holdsworth is “grilled” by the one and only George Foreman...

4-5. 15 years ago, Gary Pyes 100% Your Electric Store was our JVC Retailer of the Month. Late last year, Gary retired and sold the business.

appliances.

Paul Holdsworth was Salton’s New Zealand National Sales Manager back in the day and he took the corporate message tirelessly across our country, thereby ensuring the global success was reflected here.

In 2004 Paul took himself off to Sydney where Big George was cooking up a storm for invited guests at the Park Royal and had this to say on his return: “George’s enthusiasm for the grill and roasting machine was exceptional. It was great to see the man himself, with the products he obviously has such a passion for.”

Today, Paul is Sales Manager at Speed Queen (allegedly “the largest manufacturer of commercial laundry equipment on the planet”), while George is an ordained minister, author, and entrepreneur and both he and Salton have done very well from their 24-year partnership.

A bigger slice of Pye – 15 years ago, Gary Pyes 100% Your Electric Store was named JVC Retailer of the Month, 25 years after **Gary Pye** first opened in Waiuku South Auckland and he put the team’s success down to “pushing the point of difference”.

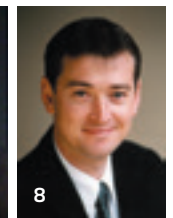
Gary recalled challenging and changing times. No longer were there fishing rods and reels or other seasonal items.

There were plenty of plasma TVs though, and heaps of other TVs, projectors, DishDrawers, refrigerators, laundry and cooking appliances and more filling the shop.

“People may tell you we’re lucky to have little competition in Waiuku,” he told *Wares*, quickly qualifying with: “I wish! We are 20 minutes from Manukau City and 30 from Botany Downs and we compete directly with dealers in those places. Consumers presume they can bet better prices and a wider selection.

“Here though, the deal, the





package, the hassle-free service and the store personality wins every day.”

Late last year, Gary Pye decided to retire and sell the business. It is now managed by **Shailza Walia**, the new entity being jointly owned by Shailza’s husband, **Gaurav Khurana** and her brother, **Saurabh Walia**.

The island life – Appnet went north for its 2004 conference– in fact to Norfolk Island, where GM, **Warren Brewin**, outlined the strategic focus for the ensuing 24 months.

In his opening address he reported that sales at Beta Electrical and Kitchen Things (yes Kitchen Things) had grown by 13.8% and 16.7% respectively in the last year, testimony to Appnet’s “clearly defined brand strategies and strong supplier support”.

Warren was confident that the further development of the “Generation 2” large format store concept and increased promotional

1. Appnet went north for its 2004 conference– in fact to Norfolk Island, and dressed accordingly...

2-8. Some familiar faces were moving & shaking, this time 15 years ago.



activity would enhance the Beta Electrical image.

Do check out Warren’s book at www.warrenbrewin.com

Movers & Shakers – 15 years ago, there were movers & shakers aplenty, including a new Consumer Division at Tech Pacific comprising **Melanie Wrann** as Marketing Manager, **Rick Jansen** as Divisional Manager and **Steve Meadows** as Sales Manager.

We now find Melanie at Ingram Micro NZ, where she is General Manager of the Volume Business Unit, Rick is Senior Manager at Dove Electronics and Steve is Ops Manager at Forbes & Davies, wholesaler of motorcycle & powers ports supplies.

In 2004 BDT welcomed back **Kate Gibson** into the role of Sales & Marketing Manager for OEM Products and announced that **Trish Stenzel** would be involved in the transition that followed the

amalgamation of the consumer and air conditioning businesses.

Both are still at BDT (both having taken time out / left and returned), as Business Strategy Manager and Marketing Manager respectively.

Rachael Ash was the latest recruit at JVC, as Central Region Area Manager, whilst at Salton, **Jon Gibson** was a new Sales Executive, alongside **Paul Tweedale** the company’s first South Island Account Executive. **Lisa Buscomb** was also introduced as Groupe SEB’s Trade Product Manager.

Rachael is now with the renowned Weta Workshop as Global Sales Manager, Jon is Owner/ Operator of Liven Up Electrical & Property Services in Auckland, Paul is a Christchurch-based Territory Manager with CDB Goldair and Lisa has a business called Shine Tees Co.

Cliff Carr heads up Sunbeam NZ these days but 15 years ago, **Wares** announced his appointment as



HWT's Sales Manager, while **Chris McKee** had taken the position of New Zealand Sales & Business Manager at Electrolux Floorcare and Consumer Outdoor Products, following his time at Whirlpool (as mentioned earlier in this article).

Rounding out this review were some new appointments at Monaco Corp. **Desleigh Jameson** took up the role of Product Channel Manager Multi Media, **Michelle Bushett** became Sales & Marketing Manager Casio, **Lee James**, after five years' service took up the challenge of Product Manager for GE and AEG and **Diana Pauling** moved into a role as Product Manager Casio Timepiece.

Having been a judge at the Wares Awards and then CEO of Retail Institute, Desleigh is now a Director at Gubb & Hardy, a wholesale contributory mortgage company, Michelle is Commercial Manager at L'Oréal Luxe NZ, Lee is GM at Filta New Zealand and Diana prefers to stay under the radar.

10 YEARS AGO – APRIL-JUNE 2009

Go well, Wayne – Around this time 10 years back we were sadly marking

the passing of a much loved industry captain, **Wayne Burton**.

Wayne had been tragically struck and killed by a car just days after the February issue of *Wares* went to print, as he walked with his wife, **Heather**.

Described as a “leader, a mentor, a gentleman and a friend,” he was inducted posthumously into the Industry Hall of Fame at the Wares Awards in November 2010.

Not retailers, Chartered Agents – Miele bucked the traditional way in which suppliers conducted business when the highly innovative Miele Gallery opened in Mt Wellington and dealers were encouraged to refer customers direct to the manufacturer for expert guidance.

In fact, the term “dealer” became rather obsolete as the appointed reseller network were called “Miele Chartered Agents” and every customer signing up to buy a Miele appliance in the Gallery was in fact routed through the referring retail outlet or, in the case of “cold” clients, the retailer of choice.

Dr Marcus Miele, the fourth generation family owner, flew in especially for the opening, at which National Sales Manager, **Brian Scott**, told *Wares*: “This was an opportunity for our specialist dealers to come in



1. 10 years ago we were sadly marking the passing of Wayne Burton.
2. *Wares* became a second generation business in 2009.

and view the Gallery, and also meet Dr Miele.”

Miele renamed the Gallery “Miele Experience Centre” and shifted it to the current College Hill location in October 2013.

Last year, after a decade plus looking after Miele (with Miele itself and at Steelfort before that), Brian and his wife **Vicki** moved to Wellington and, once they have everything “shipshape”, Brian reckons it’ll be time for a new challenge...

Heathcote’s The Base – Hamilton-based Heathcote Appliances (Heathcote & Wills 10 years ago) opened for business in Morrinsville in 1964 and today stands tall as one of the few truly successful independent businesses in our marketplace.

Ten years ago, the new flagship store, 100% Heathcotes Te Rapa, was the subject of the Energywise Focus on Retail.

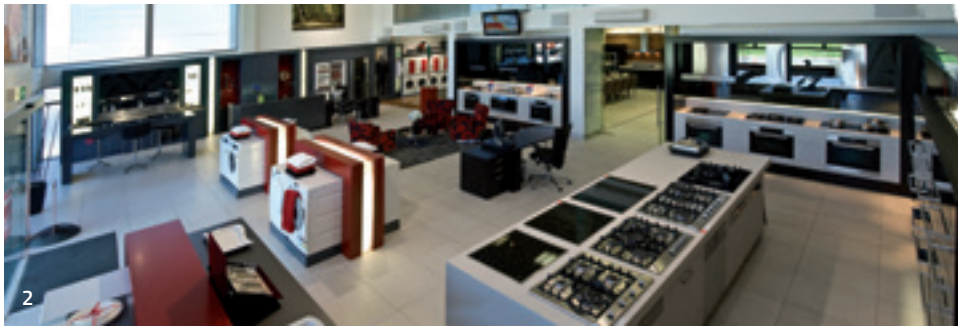
The manager was (and still is) **Alan Durnett** and he had this to say: “Our store is unique. We aim to offer our customers the best merchandise and trends throughout the country. It’s all about the customer experience and we want to stand out from our competitors.”

John Heathcote added: “As Hamilton was growing steadily north, with The Base as a shopping destination, we felt the need to have a footprint at each end of the city and The Base was the obvious choice as it’s where everyone goes.”

Alan was named Retailer of the Year at the 2017 Wares Awards.

Movers & Shakers – There were several movers & shakers this time a decade ago, starting with **Peter Drummond**, who was named as Executive Chairman of Appliance Connexion, having assumed the role of acting Chief Executive on the death of Wayne Burton.





Peter remains Chairman and in fact, celebrated 20 years with ACL on 1 March this year, along with **Bryce Purdy** (GM Merchandising & Marketing), joining **Nikki Shutkowski** (Group GM) who reached that milestone in June last year.

Congrats to all three – this industry does that to you.

10 years ago, **James Smith** was introduced as Panasonic’s Promotions & Advertising Manager; now with several years as an independent marketing consultant under his belt, he’s Director and co-owner of Xennial the Marketing Specialists at www.xennial.co.nz

At the same time, we saw **Callum Dodunski** promoted to the position of Philips’ Manager Marketing Peripherals & Accessories; he now

1-2. When the innovative Miele Gallery opened in Mt Wellington 10 years ago, Miele Chartered Agents were encouraged to refer customers direct to the manufacturer for expert guidance.

3. Farmers was ahead of the game in 2004 with its reusable bags-for-charity scheme.

4-9. Another fine array of those who were moving & shaking 10 years ago.

has the dual roles of National Key Account Manager and Business Development Manager Small Appliance at BSH Home Appliances.

Francis File became New Zealand Sales & Manager CE, IT & Appliances at Samsung, **Mike Johnston** was named Country Manager and at BDT **Nicole Williams** was appointed Marketing Manager.

Today, Francis is Agile Chapter Lead Product & Propositions at Spark New Zealand (great job title!), Mike plies his trade at Wordcom Direct Marketing where he is Owner/Director and Nicole used the experience and passion for marketing she gained at BDT to move into a product career. She is currently on maternity leave from her role at Trade Me as Head of Product.

Well, that’s it from me – I’ve been in and around the appliance and consumer electronics industry for the thick end of 50 years one way or another and the last almost 9½ years of being a regular contributor to *Wares* in retirement have been a huge blast for me and an absolute privilege.

My thanks to **Simon** and **Steve** for the opportunity and their ongoing support and of course to you the readers for showing sufficient interest in an old man’s nostalgia to keep the past alive for just a little while longer.

I leave you with this: “People do business with people, not corporations.”

At least, that was how it used to be. **W**