

act NEWS

WINTER 1990/91



Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year!



SMALL FAMILY BUSINESS

Where do Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles, the Real Ghostbusters, Count Duckula, Skull Crushers, the Care Bears and Batman get together? In an old swimming pool complex at Kirkcaldy in Fife, Scotland, that's where. And if this sounds fantastic, read on as "you ain't heard nothing yet".

There was once a kindly lady named Mrs. Anne Maciocia and her husband Alfred who ran a seaside sweetie store and "large oaks from tiny acorns grow", as they say, and today the family has built Alma into the largest independent confectionery group in the UK and the third largest sugar confectionery manufacturer in Britain with an annual turnover of some £75 million.

Their range of products runs from children's delights such as those named above to old favourites of all ages like Dolly Mixture, Hacks, Cherry Lips, Floral Gums and any of Keiller's and Barker and Dobson's assortments to Alma's line of exclusive hand-made Belgian chocolates.

Alma Confectionery was established by Alfred Maciocia in the 1950s—the company



Close co-operation between ACT Lines and their customers is an important factor in providing an outstanding service. In the photograph Mrs. Linda Heron (centre), Export Controller of Alma Confectionery, visits the offices of ACT Services at Coatbridge Containerbase and discusses documentation with Jacqui Brynes (right), Commercial Assistant, and George Shanks, Commercial Section Leader.



Kirkcaldy factory, which was once a derelict swimming pool and was acquired in the early 1950s.

It was a small-time business by today's standards and the little Kirkcaldy factory employed perhaps 40 people, but there was the kind of close family atmosphere that made the commitment all the more intense. When the first order came from Canada, they completed the packing with five minutes to spare to meet the deadline and when Mario Maciocia, now Chairman

Machines are essential in the production of large quantities of confectionery, but there are certain processes which require the "personal touch" and considerable experience such as "panning" (left) in which various colours have to be blended so that the products (below) look every bit as good as they taste.

name comes from the first two letters of his first and last names—and its beginnings were on the promenade in Kirkcaldy.

Alfred was an innovative creator of quality confectionery products and he developed his business from an ice cream manufacturer to making cream snowballs, chocolate wafers and eventually chocolate flavoured buttons and white chocolate flavoured discs covered in non-pareil called Skiffle Discs, which is still one of the important items manufactured in their present



Our Cover

A big smile and lots of Christmas cheer are on the cards when Father Christmas spreads happiness to youngsters around the world with sweets from Alma Confectionery's 60 children's product lines.

TO A MULTI-NATIONAL GROUP

of the company, dreamed up Skull Crushers, they had to be airlifted from the factory to meet US demand.

"It was all very exciting and hectic in those days," says Mrs. Anne Maciocia, "and there was never enough time for everything." She had to look after her husband and seven children and still managed to put in a full day's work at the business. Mrs. Maciocia retired in 1988 to take things a little easier, but the sons are carrying on the business in the family tradition.

Today the Alma Group encompasses Alma Confectionery, Squirrel Chix, Barker & Dobson, James Keiller & Son, Edward McGregor, Bensons, Angus Confectionery and companies in Ireland, Holland and Spain.

Barker & Dobson, founded in 1834, are producers of the original Everton Mints and are also manufacturers of the medicated products Victory V, Hacks and the Benson Range. Squirrel Chix products, aimed at a younger market, include the original Dolly



Quality control plays a key role in ensuring that the highest production standards are maintained. In the photograph, Skiffle Discs, one of the leading brands at Alma Confectionery, are inspected and tested. Every employee acts as a member of the quality control team and they take pride in the excellent products manufactured by the company.

Belgium. A Spanish-based sales, marketing and distribution company, Bensons SA, was formed in 1989, at about the same time as the Dutch firm Arba Confectionery was acquired, to further strengthen the Group's European penetration.

Substantial investment programmes have been implemented at the Group's production facilities in Dundee and Stockport. Following the £6.5 million invested at Dundee in plant and machinery, it is one of the most modern and sophisticated confectionery plants in the world. A £2 million investment at Stockport has seen the introduction of the first mallow extrusion line to be installed in the UK.

Serious fire damage at Stockport in 1989 has resulted in a massive £7.1 million in-

vestment in a new plant situated in Glenrothes (Fife) into which the current Squirrel range is being transferred, which puts the Glenrothes site on a par with Dundee. Further significant capital commitments are planned.

Alma supplies the most comprehensive range of sugar confectionery available through a single manufacturer, offering more than 60 children's product lines. The company holds character licences for Masters of the Universe, Looney Tunes, Popeye, Rupert Bear and many others.

The ACT Group Lines are often called on to carry the wide range of Alma products to destinations around the world and these products bring a lot of enjoyment to people everywhere.



Not only are Alma's production plants a paradise for those having a "sweet tooth" but also they provide a kaleidoscope of colour to delight the eye.

Mixtures (created in 1902), Cherry Lips and Floral Gums. Premium lines from James Keiller & Son include the traditional Keiller Butterscotch, Barley Sugar and Fudge and they date back to 1792.

In the UK Alma products can be found in almost all of the major confectionery retailers, including Tesco, Sainsbury, Safeway, Morrison, Asda, Gateway and Woolworth stores. The Group employs over 1200 people and exports approximately 60 per cent of all its production, with Southern Ireland, where they have their own company, taking a significant portion of the total exported.

Imports of products from overseas are handled by Somportex Viceroy, another arm of Alma, whilst their overseas presence is being developed by Alma Ireland, Alma Leo (USA) Inc. and Lamy Lutti of



Forward planning is vital to meet the demand for Alma's products ordered around the world. Discussing the next shipment to Australia and New Zealand are Mrs. Linda Heron, Export Controller of Alma Confectionery, and Arthur Glen, Sales Representative of ACT(A).

ACT GROUP SUPPORTS BRITISH SHIPPING

British Shipping Month, sponsored by the General Council of British Shipping, was held during September and October and members of the ACT Group actively supported many of the events which took place from Aberdeen in the north to Plymouth in the south to promote British merchant shipping.

MPs, local dignitaries, MEPs and school children were invited to the 15 events which included visits to Birmingham and Coatbridge Containerbases, Tilbury Terminal and to the container-ship "ACT 7", owned by Blue Star and operated by ACT(A).



Lunch prepared by the ship's catering staff for guests visiting the "ACT 7" at Tilbury.



Pupils from the local primary school were among those invited to the "open house" at Tilbury and are shown (left) coming aboard the "ACT 7" after touring Northfleet Hope Terminal, while in the photo at right the tug "Sun Mercia" puts on an aquatic display for the guests.



A group of hosts and guests photographed on the deck of the "ACT 7" (left) at Tilbury. In the photo at right the General Council of British Shipping's portable stand at the open house at Coatbridge Containerbase.



Customers are taken on a tour of the Bonded Warehouse at Coatbridge (left) where Scotch Whisky is the principal product stored there and at right another group of customers are photographed while going around the Containerbase.

'FILM STAR' RETURNS TO BRITAIN



The famous "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" car is carefully unloaded at Milton Freight Terminal near Abingdon (Oxfordshire) and pictured with the vehicle are (left to right) Walter Marshall, General Sales Manager - Southern Region of ACT(A), Paul Hazell, Sales Director, and John Carrett, Car Development Manager, of Shirlstar Forwarding Limited.

The star of the film "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" has come back to England on the containership "ACT 7" and the famous vehicle which has the title role in the picture will be joining other four-wheeled stars at the Cars of the Stars Museum in Keswick (Cumbria).

Recently purchased at auction in Sydney by English collector Dr. Peter Nelson, the car was insured for £100,000. It will be restored to pristine condition and will share top billing with other celebrity film and TV vehicles at the museum, including James Bond's Lotuses, The Saint's Volvo, Laurel and Hardy's Model T, Bergerac's Triumph, Herriot's Morris, Del Boy's Reliant Van, the Avengers' Lotus and Joey's Jag from "Bread".

The shipment was handled by Shirlstar Forwarding Limited of Ilford (Essex) who chose ACT(A) to carry the valuable and delicate cargo.

Although the vehicle was roughly based on Count Zborowski's 1920 car, it was actually built in 1968 by car-builder Alan Mann of Surrey especially for the film and houses a Ford V6 engine, has automatic gears and a top speed of 100 mph.

QUALITY ASSURED WITH ACT SERVICES



Customers of the ACT Group Lines whose cargo is handled by ACT Services have long been assured of efficient, prompt and careful handling of their goods, but now this service has been officially recognised with the awarding of a BS5750:Part 2:ISO9002 - 1987 Certificate.

ACT Services' operations at Birmingham Perry Barr have been assessed and approved by Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance Limited and have been awarded the Certificate of Approval for meeting the stringent standards required, applicable to Shipping Agency and Transport Services.

This incorporates preparation of import/export booking and customs clearance

documentation for UK and international customers, verification of customers' cargo against consignment documentation prior to shipping and supervision of container packing and unpacking; and management of maintenance and supply of trailers and third party owned containers and associated equipment.

"Birmingham is the first of our British operations to receive the BS5750 Certificate of Approval," said Bill Campbell, Managing Director of ACT Services, "but we expect that all our regional and port terminal offices as well as our head office will be similarly recognised in the near future."

NEW FAR EAST SALES MANAGER

Ron Godman has been appointed Far East Sales Manager of Ben Line Containers, based in Hong Kong. He was the Ben Line representative in Seoul and has previously served in South-East Asia and Japan.



The BS5750 Certificate of Approval is presented to Bill Campbell (second from left), Managing Director of ACT Services, by Ron Turner, Managing Director of Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance Limited, observed by Dave Clark (left) ACT Services Regional Manager-Birmingham, and David Sparks, Quality Assurance Manager of ACT Services.

'THE LOCALS WERE FRIENDLY

(As we reported earlier this year in "ACT News", the Royal Navy were challenging the record for circumnavigation of Britain in a powerboat under 50 feet in length. ACT Services (ACTS) provided logistical support for the team and Jim Robson, Head of Personnel of ACTS, found himself unexpectedly enlisted as a crew member of the powerboat "Falcon Flyer". We asked him to record some of his experiences and he has done so in the following article, which we thought readers would enjoy.)



A map showing the route to be followed is discussed by Phil Pryor (left), Project Manager of Operation Island Fortress, and Jim Robson, Head of Personnel of ACT Services, who was a team member, in front of ACT Services' Head Office in Southampton.

Perhaps I should have been a little suspicious when Steve McGillicuddy, Operations Manager for the Island Fortress project, showed such an interest in my "Home Trade" background at the launch of "Falcon Flyer". Certainly I had navigated much of the coast of the British Isles but that was 20 years ago and in a 10-knot coaster, not a powerboat capable of travelling at 80mph.

Next came the invitation to join the crew for a trip out of Portsmouth during trials. The craft was definitely well equipped with a satellite navigation system, radar, position fixing and a range of instruments reporting current status of the vessel including its "altitude"!

The crew were kitted out with bright orange waterproofs, lifejackets and helmets and all identified by name tags. Why did my set have "Jim Robson-Team Mem-

ber" stitched in place—did they know something I didn't?

The trial was all I needed. I was hooked and couldn't wait to join the "Falcon Flyer" for what was described as the easy leg of the attempt on the round Britain record. I was to navigate from Fishguard to Portpatrick through the Irish Sea... a simple task—just a straight line, so long as the Isle of Man didn't get in the way.

The record we were challenging was set by the Royal Marines in 1984; they had circumnavigated the British Isles in 90 hours. Our team consisted of young naval personnel, teachers from Brookfield School in Hampshire (my first contact with the project) and "volunteers" like myself from sponsoring companies. Technical back-up was provided by Suzuki and powerboat expertise by the "Penthouse" race team.

The record attempt was scheduled for



The 36-foot monohull "Falcon Flyer" during the trial at 80mph. Technical problems prevented completion.

July 1st, but the first try came to an abrupt end when the boat hit floating debris only two hours out from Portsmouth and was forced to return for repairs.

The re-start two weeks later got off to a better beginning with a smooth passage from Portsmouth to Brixham. However, on the next stage technical problems developed in one of the 200hp engines which necessitated a complete engine change in Plymouth and the loss of 12 hours.

Waiting with the other four crew members at Fishguard, I was aware that no more time could be lost if we were to break the record. When "Falcon Flyer" arrived on the morning of Sunday, July 15th, we were all ready to service the craft from the mobile workshop and fuel bowser set up inside the container which had been safely delivered by ACTS to the quayside.

Within the hour we were underway. During the handover just one or two minor problems were reported by the departing crew, such as the radar had got a soaking off Lands End and the satellite position



Shortly before the record-breaking attempt was to begin, six 20-foot containers and tractor units provided by ACT Services were photographed at HMS Sultan in Gosport, near Portsmouth, with the "Falcon Flyer" and members of the team of Naval Engineers taking part in the project. The boxes were loaded with equipment, spare parts and supplies and taken to six strategic staging points around Britain.

EHCL'S THE NAME AND



Ellerman Harrison Container Line (EHCL) organised a series of outings to cricket matches to thank export and import customers for their continued support on the Southern Africa trade. Photographs on these pages were taken at a one-day match between Essex County Cricket Club and Zimbabwe and another match between Essex and Kent.



CRICKET'S THE GAME



Ben entertain in London and Düsseldorf



The annual banquet dinner for the Japanese business community in the UK was held in the City of London recently at the prestigious Plaisterer's Hall. As usual the event was hosted by Ben Line's Chairman, Mr. William Thomson, and Mr. Bob Tookey, Chairman of Killick Martin & Co Ltd.



Senior representatives from various German and Japanese export and import houses, including Henkel GmbH, Hitachi, Kamigumi (Europe) GmbH, Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd., Mitsubishi International, Nissho Iwai, Sanyei and Toyota were entertained by Ben Line Containers assisted by their agents Menzell & Co. at Schloss Gymnich, near Düsseldorf. Our photograph shows some of the guests on the steps of the grand house.



EDISHIP EXPRESS READY

Exporters and importers will now be able to conduct business electronically with the ACT Group Lines through a new EDI system, EDISHIP EXPRESS, which allows users to enter EDI networks in an easy and cost-effective manner, which will work on anyone's PC.

EDISHIP EXPRESS is a powerful yet simple EDI shipping software package which utilises "screens" already familiar to the shipping industry. This high quality package, developed by EDISHIP working closely with Vistec Business Systems, can be swiftly and economically integrated with existing shipping systems.

It concentrates on the exchange of electronic messages, allowing users to make bookings with the ACT Group Lines and receive the electronic equivalents of their shipping documents, thereby considerably reducing the time and expense spent on moving paper around.

This EDI facility is being offered to customers in the UK and Europe at extremely favourable rates and the PC software package costs three thousand pounds.

"This is a breakthrough in EDI in shipping as for the first time we can offer ACT Group Lines' customers a working, practical solution," said Jim Austin, ACT Services EDI Analyst, who has been closely involved in the development of the EDISHIP concept.

SIMPLIFIED APPROACH

Market research undertaken early this year highlighted the need for a simplified approach to the introduction of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and as a result EDISHIP was formed in April by a group of ten shipping lines to initiate a common approach to EDI technology in the shipping industry.

Following a long and thorough evaluation process, EDISHIP selected International Network Services Limited (INS) as the preferred EDI network supplier. INS has a user community of more than 2000 companies in the UK and some 7000 elsewhere, making it the world's largest electronic trading community. INS' EDI service for EDISHIP users—"EDISHIP TRADANET"—allows trading partners to exchange commercial documents electronically between computers regardless of their type, size or location. INS' EDISHIP TRADANET also eliminates the costs and delays associated with paperwork, thus improving business efficiency for its users.

A series of demonstrations are being held around Britain to prepare the shipping community for the launch of this low price software and network package which is expected to give an important boost to EDI usage in shipping in the UK and throughout Europe.



A series of seminars on Ediship Express are being held for members of the EDI Association. At a recent conference Jim Austin (seated at keyboard), ACT Services EDI Analyst, explains some of the details to (left to right) Nigel Hollebone, Director of Harrison Line; Sam Garnett, Customer Services Manager, and Walter Marshall, General Sales Manager-Southern Region, of ACT(A); and Dave Houghton of Killick Martin's Computer Department.

BLC PARTY IN HAMBURG



BLC customers and their guests were invited to a dinner dance in Hamburg in October, which was organised by Menzell, BLC's agents in Germany. The evening started aboard a boat, renamed "Benavon", on the Alster-Lake, where the photographs were taken.



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...and back again

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HARRISON'S A HIT WITH 'ALL-STARS'

Customers of Harrison Line were invited by the Company to attend a series of concerts given by the Trinidad "All-Stars" steel orchestra when they visited the UK in November.

The Line helped sponsor the British Tour of the West Indies' top steel orchestra whose 50 members played works from Bach to Beethoven and from Dvorak to Elgar. The All-Stars is the only orchestra in the world which specialises in performing major classical works using more than 150 steel drums. The drums were transported around the country in a Harrison Line 40-foot dry freight container.

The British tour of this spectacular and exciting group was to raise money for the University of the West Indies' Appeal Fund, whose patron is HRH The Princess Royal. The University of the West Indies has campuses in Trinidad, Jamaica and Barbados. It was formerly a University College of the University of London. Funds are now required to refurbish existing facilities and to expand the faculties of Medicine and of Science.



The Trinidad All-Stars during one of the concerts on their UK Tour (above) and below steel drums are unloaded from the Harrison Line container that transported the equipment around the UK. Errol "Reds" Collins (left), the Captain (Leader) of the group, checks the sound on one of the drums watched by Dan Beckwith (fourth from left), London Marketing Manager of Harrison Line, and members of the orchestra.



Photographed with the famous "Beef-eaters" at the Tower of London are (left to right) Errol "Reds" Collins, Leader; Gillian Nathaniel-Balintulo, Musical Director; and Deryk Nurse, solo pan man, of the All-Stars.



Bowled Over By Harrison Line Service

Harrison Line shipped the motor car and personal effects of West Indian Test Cricketer Gordon Greenidge (right) from Scotland to Bridgetown, Barbados recently. While these were being loaded at Coatbridge Containerbase near Glasgow, Margaret McCaig (centre), Sales Executive of Prentice Service Henderson (PSH), Harrison Line's agents in Scotland, took the opportunity of getting the necessary documentation, which Wills, who is in charge of Harrison Line documentation for PSH, looks on.

Logos for shipping agents: ACT, BEN, SCNZ, EHCL, and Harrison Line.