The War and the Local Drapers.

Among the serious problems of the local Business men is how to keep their assistants, as far as possible, fully employed.

Reduction of staff, whether in the shop or workrooms, would only add the evil of unemployment to the other problems which have to be solved. If the public will help us by placing their orders and making their purchases, as much as possible, as usual, they will also help to a much greater extent the large numbers engaged in our shops and workrooms.

At a meeting of local drapers and members of Allied trades, it was decided that when economies were necessary it was desirable that they should be effected by other means than dismissals.

As a preliminary, we, the undersigned, on and after Monday, September 28th, will close our shops for one hour from 1.15 to 2.15.

Customers will greatly help by making their purchases early in the day, as early closing in the evening will also prevail.

It is very greatly to be hoped that customers will order goods as usual, will shop in their own town, and pay their accounts promptly.

T. H. Marshall, 33, South-street.
Bernard Baker, Chapel-road.
H. and L. Lynn, Shelley-road.
Bentall and Sons, South-street.
R. Hubbard and Son, South-street and Montague-street.
Leal and Co., Chapel-road.
Ford Ashdown, Montague-street.
H. R. Dale, South-street.
Wallis Bros., South-street and Montague-street.
G. W. West, Broadway.
Moncrieff and Sons, Montague-street.
W. J. Holder, Montague-street.
Smith and Strange, South-street and Montague-street.
G. H. Smith and Son, South-street.
EARLY CLOSING.
SHORTEST HOURS FOR SHOP ASSISTANTS

Now employers and employees both benefit.

As in the realm of national politics His Most
Gracious Majesty the King has set an example
which all his subjects might do well to follow,
as in this cause of the world the Right Very
Esteemed the Mayor of Chichester has set an
example which local citizens are bound to
improve upon and emulate.

The subject of shop closing hours of the greatest
importance, and the Mayor appeals to employers
during some amount of space to it in this issue
of the 'Observer'.

A large number of the nation’s young men and
women are employed in shops, and the character
of the employment, together with the length of
hours spent daily within the confines of business
rooms, can but have caused many misgivings to
young men and women.

The matter of shop hours in Chichester are
recently aired in our correspondence columns,
and we have before commented on the subject.

Vendors of boots and shoes were the first to
gain the advantage during the summer months
when the scheme that obtains during the winter of
closing at seven o’clock on Monday, Tuesday and
Wednesday and the Mayor has now given to
the nation’s boot and shoe exporters news of
his business establishment at Eastgate will close at
that hour on the first three days of the week.

As far as it goes, this is a beginning of a movement
that will end in permanent improvement in shop
hours.

The question affects employers as much as
employees, and in this connection it will be seen
that the question is not only applicable to the
summer months, but also to winter. Why
tradepeople keep their shops open so many
hours after dark, paying pounds for artificial
light, when by cooperation they could close
earlier and thus save the necessity for so
much night shopping, one fails to see.

Tradition would be honing away at all
classes of the community by staying at a clock,
paid for, of course, the scheme was generally
accepted. The public, as a whole, is greatly
concerned in this question, for in the event it
would be found somewhat inconvenient, though
after a time the altered state of affairs would
become familiar, as was the case in respect to the
Shops Act and the weekly half holiday.

The most important aspect from which the
question should be viewed is that of the health
of those engaged, particularly that of young
people from 16 to 25 years of age, who are to be
the future parents of a large percentage of our
race.

Their hours at present, despite the laudable
attempt at reduction, are unnecessarily long,
not so much in that they run to a high
figure in the aggregate, but because they
necessarily run so late into the night as to deprive
in practically every instance those first in the
shop from outdoor recreation in daylight, except
the weekly half day. The question, of course,
does not exclude the draper’s assistants, who are among the worst victims of the long
hours’ system.

While the general public realizing the benefits
that might accrue from such a scheme, would
willingly concede the advantage to the restriction
in hours, there is little doubt as to whether
tradepeople, as a whole, will ever come to
realization of such a scheme into practice. When
the “half holiday” Act was being enforced there was all the element of the law—country stores and pedlars that made
excellent shopkeepers close their premises, and
thus foreign small business advantage over the
other trade.

Whether there exists sufficient good feeling
as would lead all to follow the example of the
Mayor if he stood at the head of the Monday,
Tuesday and Wednesday, instead of seven, to
open to the public, but let the present there be
some consultation on the step which his Worship
may take—’a for the Shops which, at least, is
leading in the right direction.”
Mid-Sussex Times

5th September 1916 page 5

Tradesmen in Haywards Heath and Cockflete are asking whether steps are going to be taken to secure the closing of the shops during the winter months at six o’clock. With this is a matter which the tradesmen feel for themselves. They have only to draw themselves friendly towards each other, shop the matter over, and the thing will be done. But somehow or other there does seem to be that unity among traders to the towns above named that there should be.

At Burgess Hill they manage things differently. They have a Chamber of Commerce and the meetings number diverse questions affecting their interests and a vote has been taken they abide by the result. That is business.

It is very good business. At Burgess Hill the tradesmen have greatly lowered the amounts of ticket that by limiting credit. Now at Haywards Heath the same thing is being done again and some of this tradesmen and that being let it for a good round sum and not just of promoting by their every operation, those very same shopkeepers continue to give credit. It is in business, then it’s very bad business.

It is one thing to secure a customer: it is quite another thing to secure the money for the goods delivered. If at the tradesmen to the laws agreed to give no credit to strangers the latter would pay up as a matter of course. There are some people who will not keep a step until they find out that the shopkeeper is willing to take payment for the goods, and then instead of making an effort to settle the account elsewhere, they as a general practice will not return the goods and say “I really cannot let you have it as you ask.”

Not at all disconcerted the bad habit was soon seen by the traders. The waste of breath is it a waste of breath. They were told to “dig in” and all the while the traders as they cannot combine to protect themselves they will be done.

It is no business to allow people to run up bills—is especially when it is done away. If some people cannot meet their liabilities they will have to pay by week or every fortnight it will be given credit for a month longer.

Going back to the question of early closing during the winter months, it had not been well to call a meeting of tradesmen in the respective districts and notice as a matter of darkness and winter lighting regulations. At all it will pay when the rise in the price of light....

Mid-Sussex Times

19th September 1916 page 1

THE EARLIER CLOSING OF SHOPS.

At the last meeting of the Burgess Hill Chamber of Commerce it was unanimously decided that as on October 2nd revolution to “Sun” time would take place and shop windows and the streets would be in darkness at 6 p.m. and at a few minutes earlier each evening till after Christmas, it would be to the traders’ interest to close their establishments at 6 p.m. and at 8 p.m. on Saturdays. It was considered that there are many reasons why this “Sun” should be adhered to, such as the saving of gas, electric light and coal, all of which have considerably risen in cost and all of which we are frequently urged by the Government to use as little as necessary. An additional reason, deemed of great importance, is that by closing at 6 (and not at 6.30 as is the case at 7) it will be possible to delay the tea meal till that time, and that will allow four hours of uninterrupted attention to business—three till 6.

This should prove a great boon, as it has been the dinner hour closing, which has been such a great success. It is hoped that all will agree in these hours, without exception, and that all will pull together.

Last (Monday) evening we were informed by Mr. A. A. Moore, of the Broadway, Haywards Heath, that forty tradepeople of the town had signed the petition in favour of closing at 6 p.m. nightly and at 8 p.m. on Saturdays from October 1st and two had declined to do so. In consequence of the attitude of these two—their names are well known—the proposal has been dropped for the present.

Should Haywards Heath, however, adopt this early closing, leading tradesmen of Lindfield—grocers, butchers, etc.—have expressed their willingness to fall in line.