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THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

FACULTY OF DESIGN

DEPARTMENT OF FASHION AND TEXTILES

ARNOTTS

By

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"Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design and Complementary
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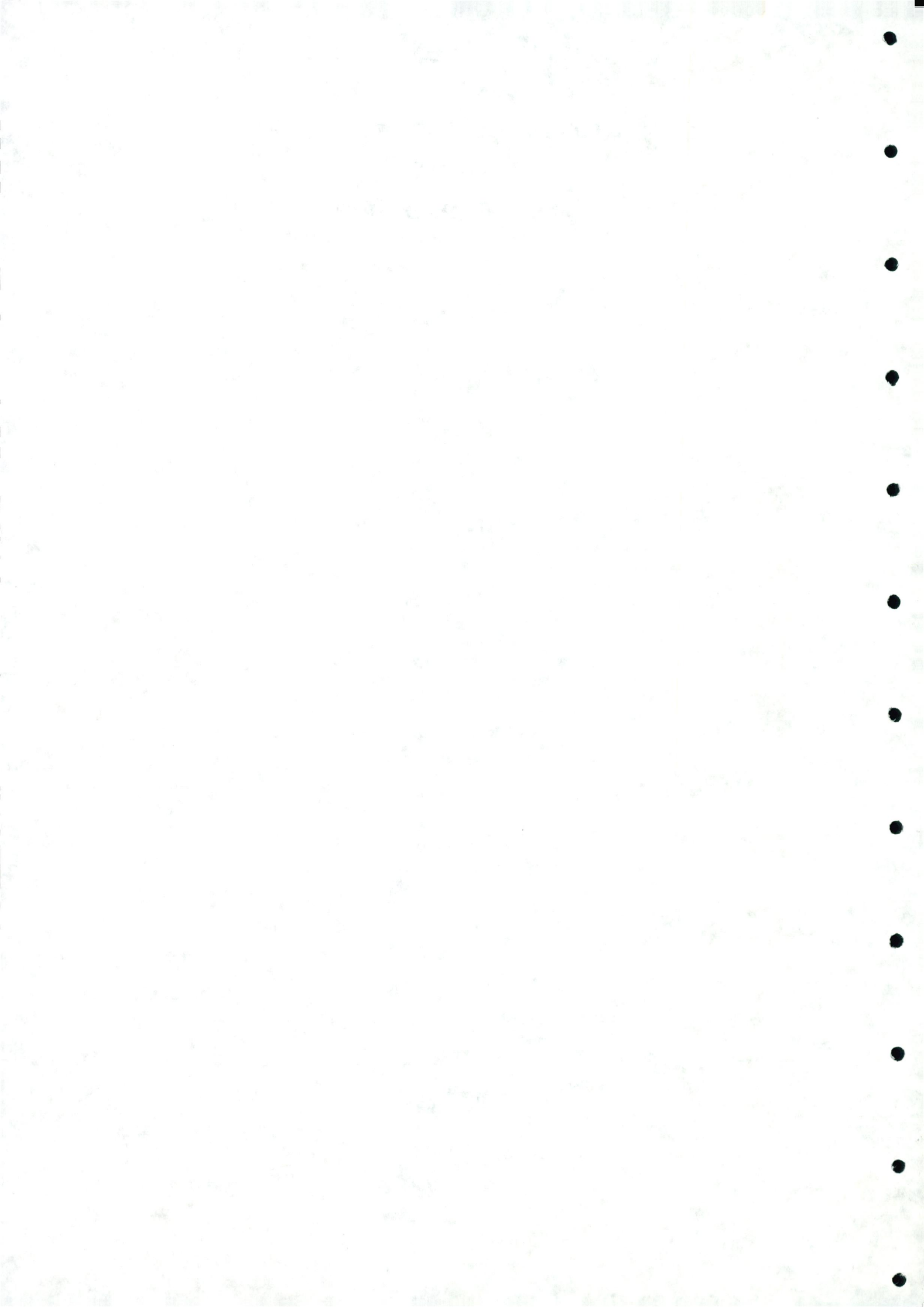
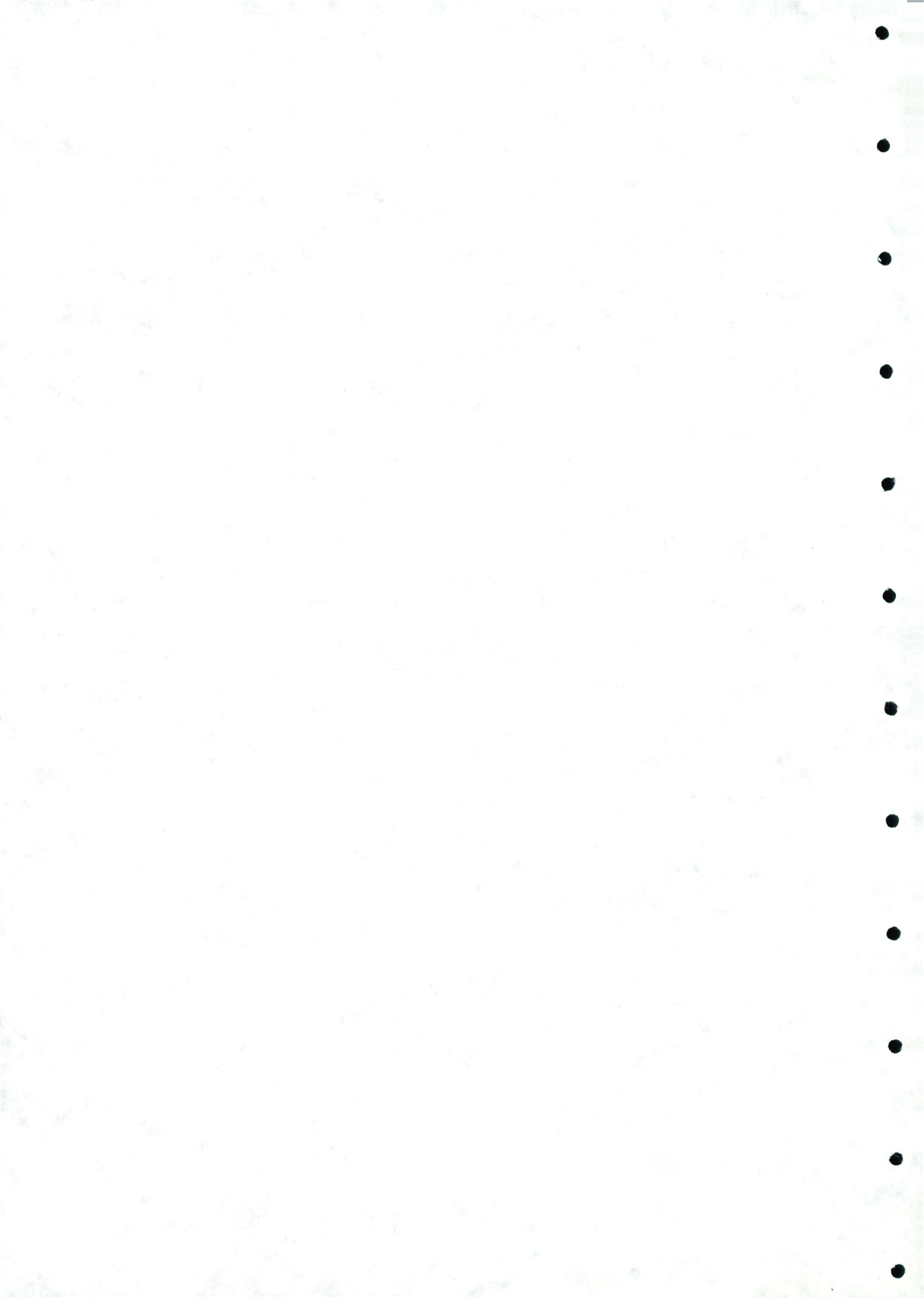


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Chapter One: The Early Years and Growth of the Company	6
Chapter Two: Employees, Training Policies Past and Present: An Employer's Experiences	15
Chapter Three: Arnotts other Interests; Financial and Promotional	21
Chapter Four: Changes since the 1990's Concession Shops	30
Conclusion	38
Bibliography	41
Interviews	42
List of Plates	42



INTRODUCTION

Henry Street is the busiest shopping street in the country if not the whole of Europe" - Pat Smyllie 1986.

One of Ireland's largest department stores is on Henry Street (Fig 1). Arnott & Co. Ltd. is a familiar landmark to generations of central city shoppers and has been for over a century and a half. Since it was established in 1843 it has grown and developed steadily. Established just two years before the height of the famine the company has survived a fire on the premises, two world wars, rebellion, civil war and market depressions.

Paradoxically the aftermath of the famine was a prosperous time for Ireland. Ostentation and appropriateness in dress for a whole new variety of purposes and social events were becoming imperative for fashionable men and women. The industrial revolution created a new consumer. The newly wealthy business man and industrialist enjoyed displaying their new wealth through their dress and adornments but more particularly through the dress of their family.

In the 1830's a woman considered herself rich when she possessed one silk dress and a few muslins all untrimmed and perhaps a summer and winter bonnet each year. Women rarely wore jewellery until after they were married. By the 1880's women were spending four times as much on clothes than they did just decades before. The heyday of the crinoline was in the 1850's. The sheer volume of material required for the large bustled dress with enormous sleeves and numerous petticoats naturally also increased the expenditure on clothes (Fig 2). Along with these costumes women also required the essential accessories such as hats,

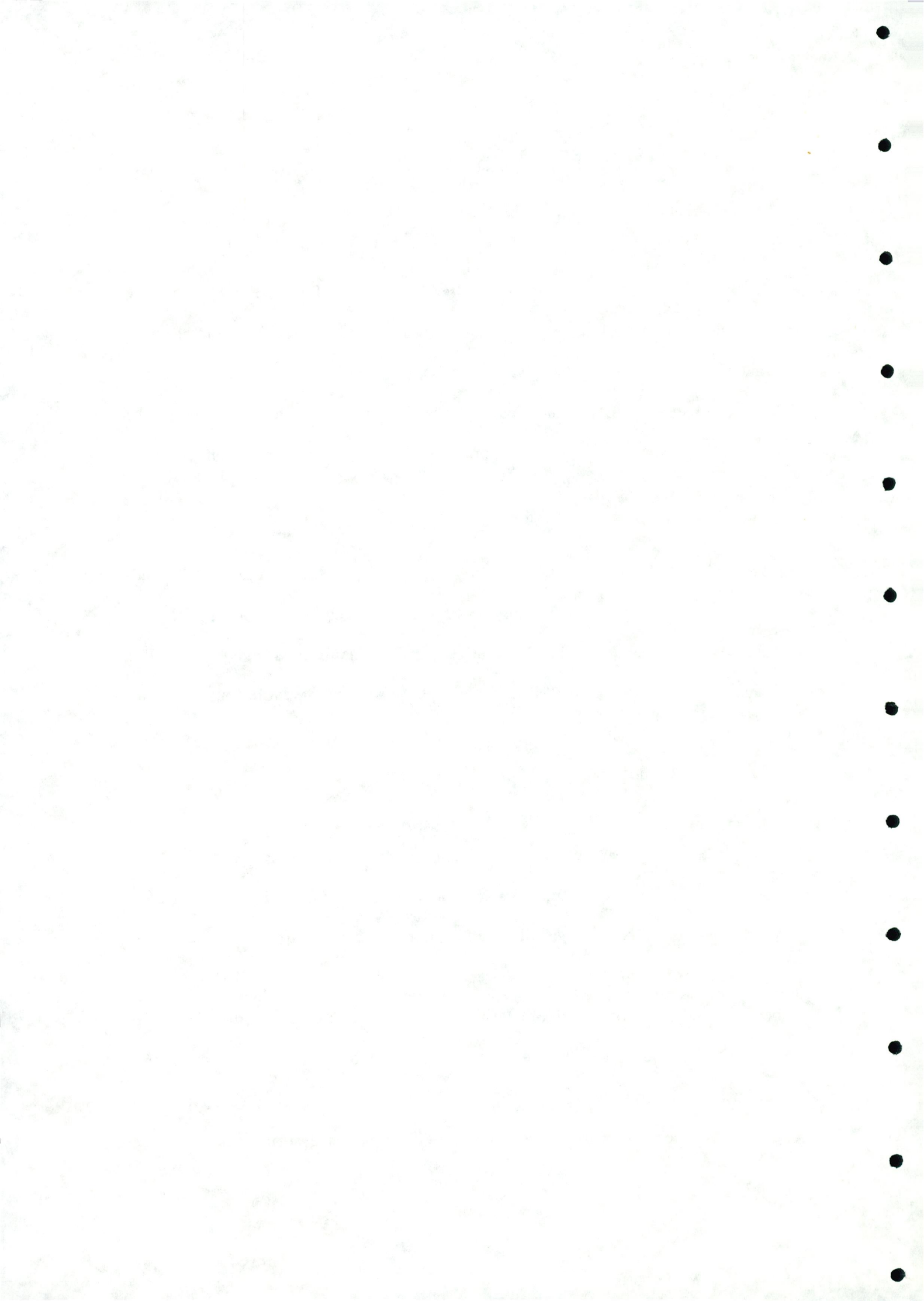
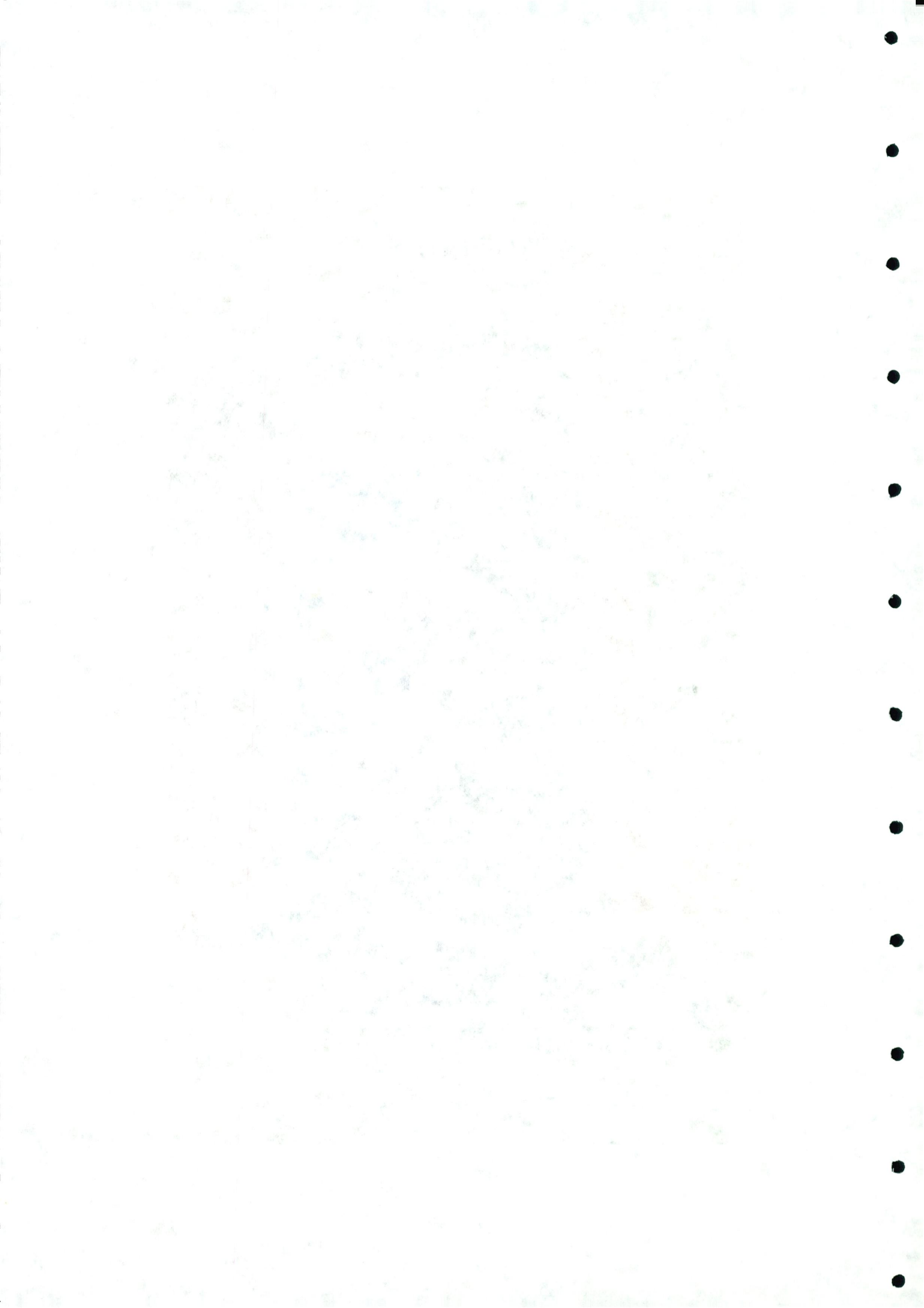




fig 2 :



collars, gloves, furs, muffs, shawls and footwear. Women who regarded themselves as 'respectable' required them to be different for morning, afternoon or eveningwear.

Victorian etiquette was strict and complex and those who could afford to complied with it. In the 1840's Dublin's population was 250,000 out of the eight million people living in Ireland at the time Nearly a quarter of Dublin's population lived in the southside growing suburban towns. Rathgar was regarded as one of the most prestigious and desirable places to live.

Transport in Dublin was usually by carriage or tram (Fig 3). However the rest of Ireland and travel in general became more accessible when the railway lines were laid down during the 1870's. Later by the time of the First World War the phenomenon of the department store was firmly established. It was a place where one could purchase everything from fashions and accessories to household furnishings under one roof. In the 1840's both Switzers and Brown Thomas had established themselves among Dublin's more affluent went consumers. Judging by a street map of the time, Grafton Street was known as a street which catered for more luxury items such as fine silks perfume and confectionary (Fig 4). Arnotts catered for the newly wealthy in Dublin, providing good quality fashions at a good price. Clerys catered more to city dwellers and clergy offering a lower price range to the working man and women.

Of the 1840 department stores only four remain in Dublin, two of these joined forces. Clerys, Arnotts, Brown Thomas and Switzers, the latter two having

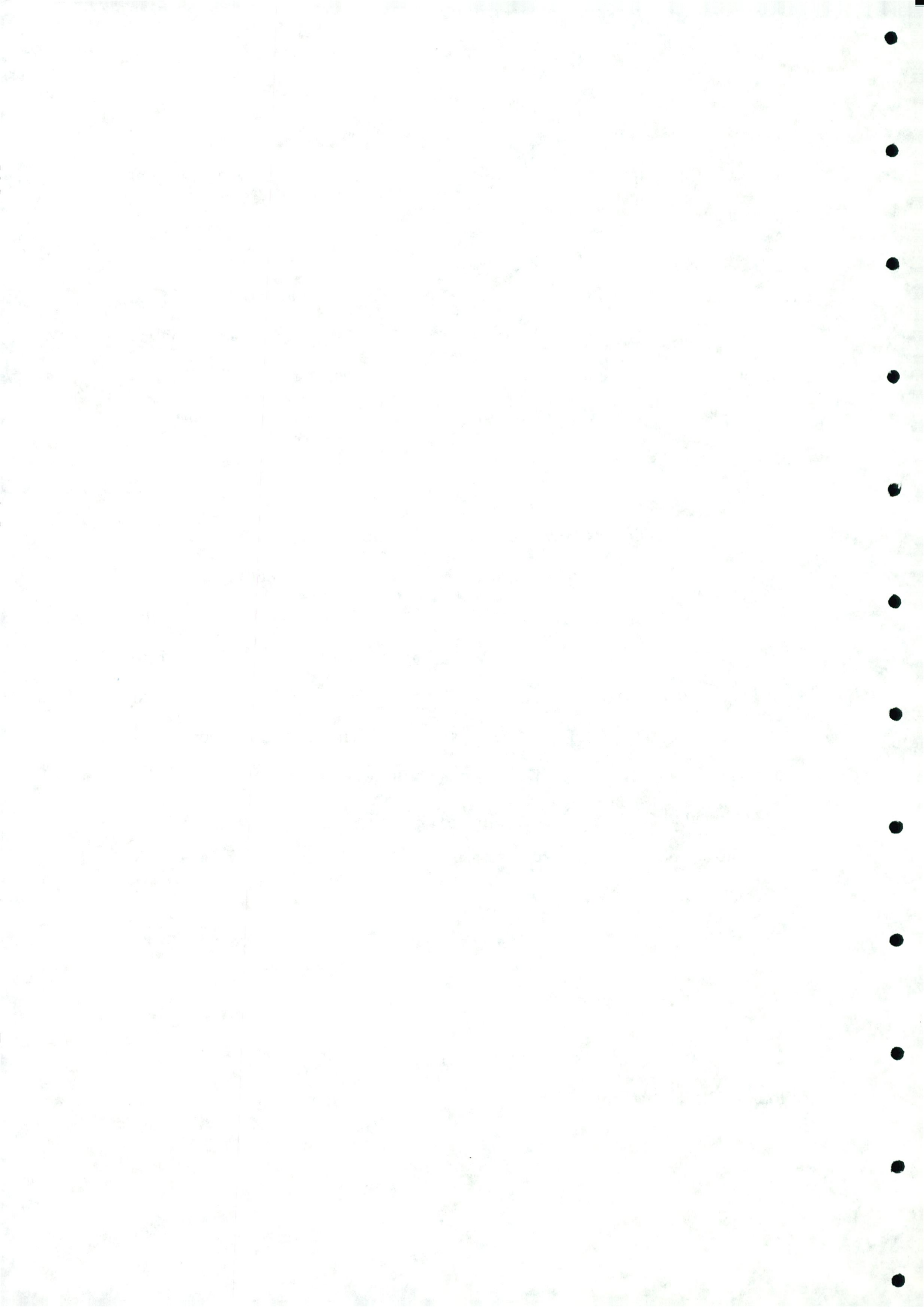
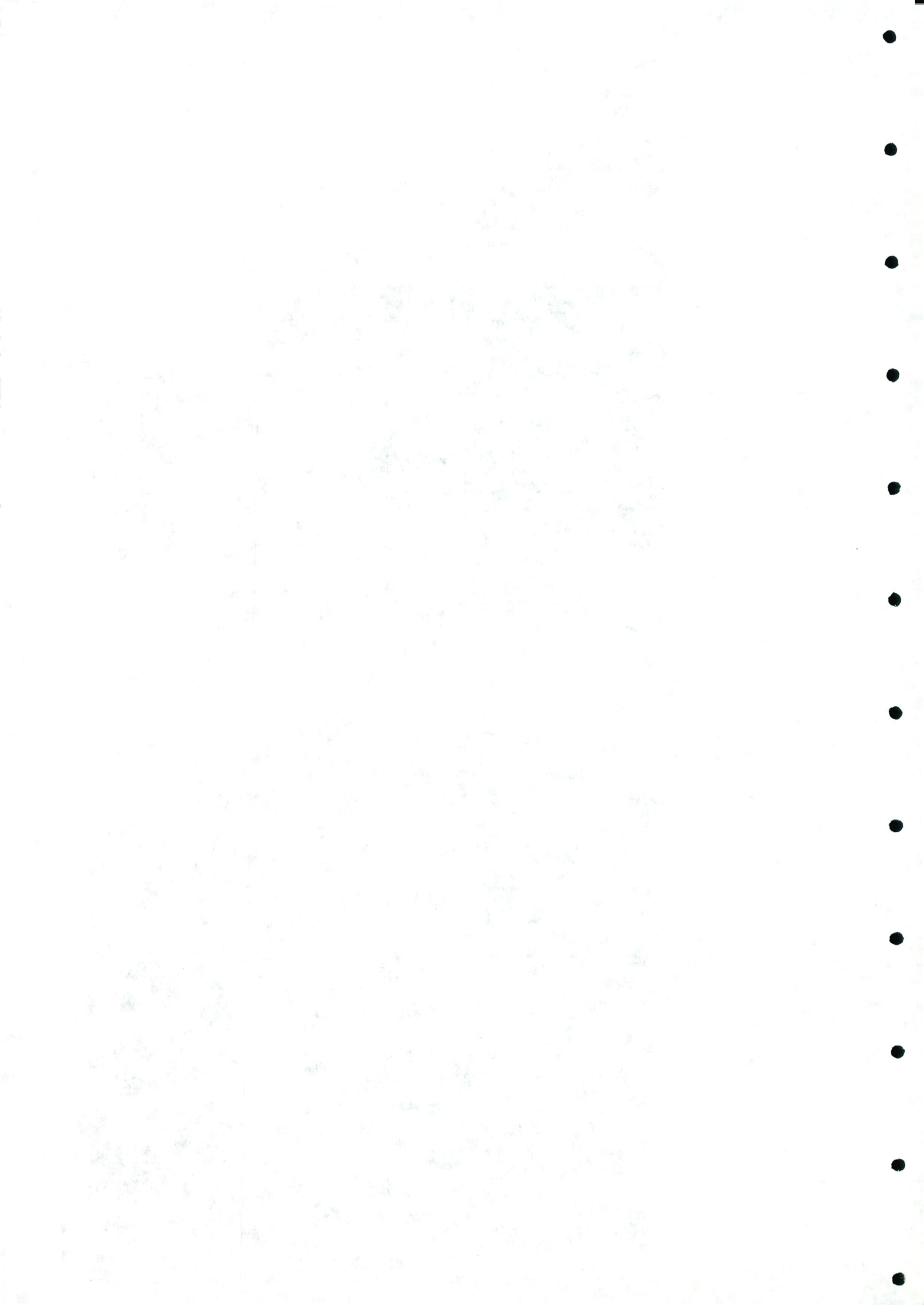
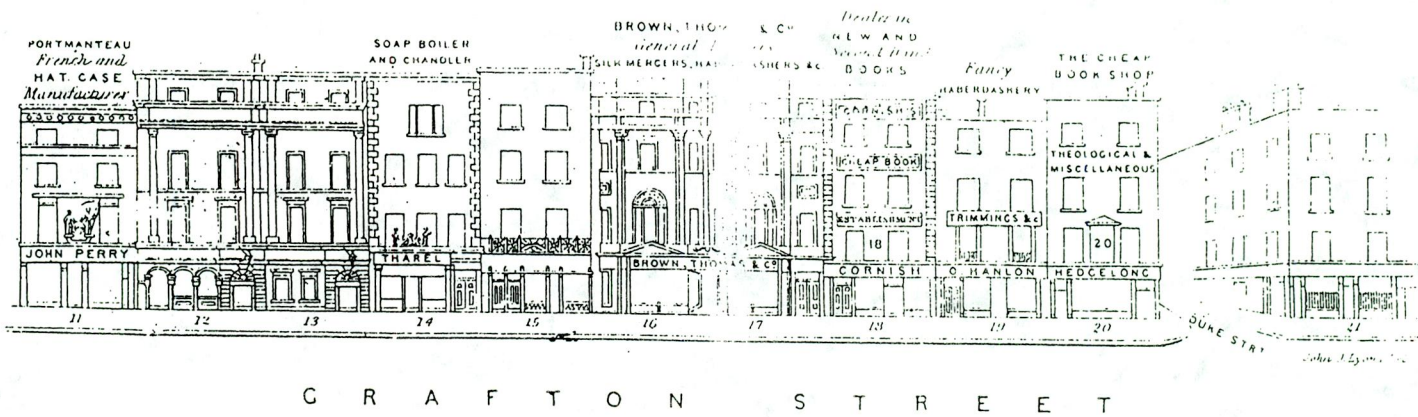




fig 3







G R A F T O N S T R E E T

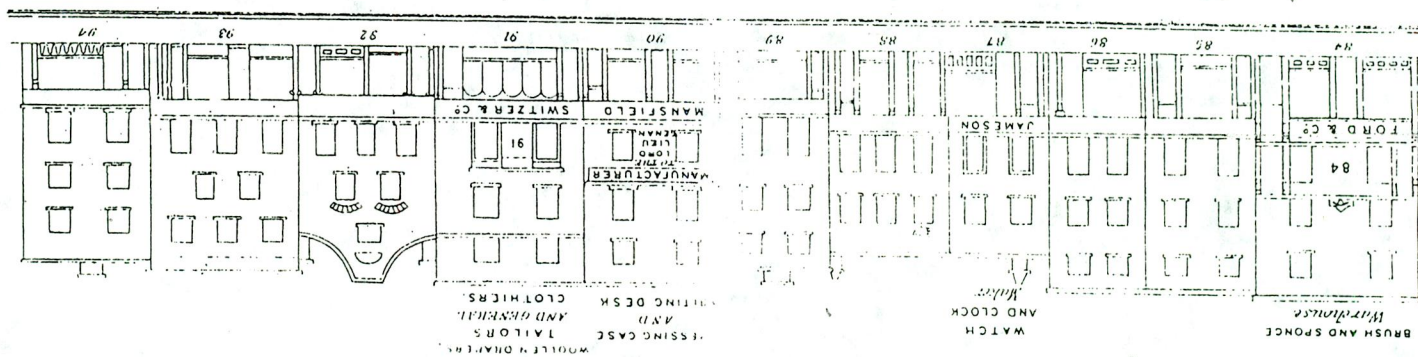
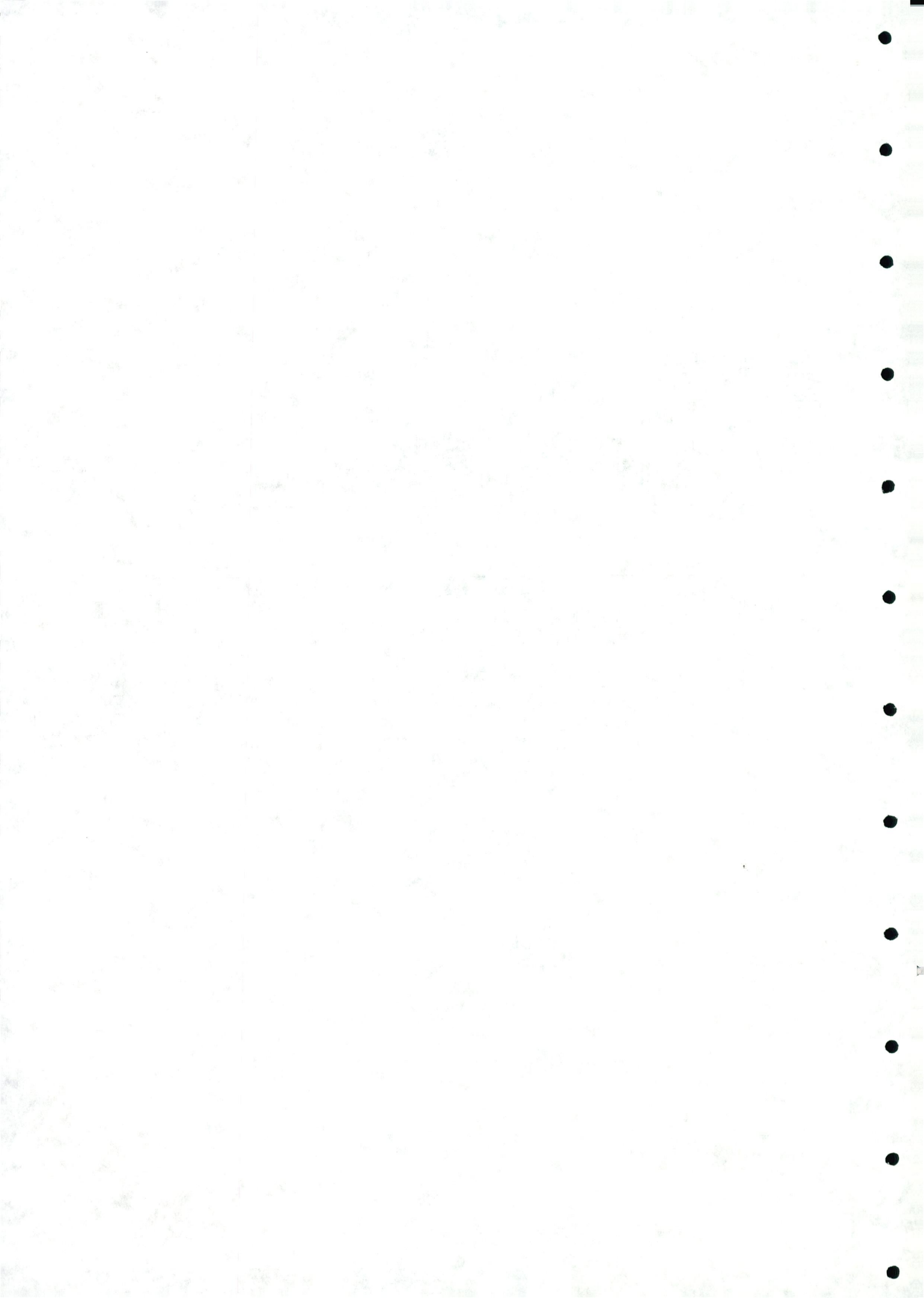


fig 41



recently merged. Each had individual identities, characterised at the turn of the century as

'Clery's for the yobs'

Arnott's for the Dubs

Switzer's for the prods

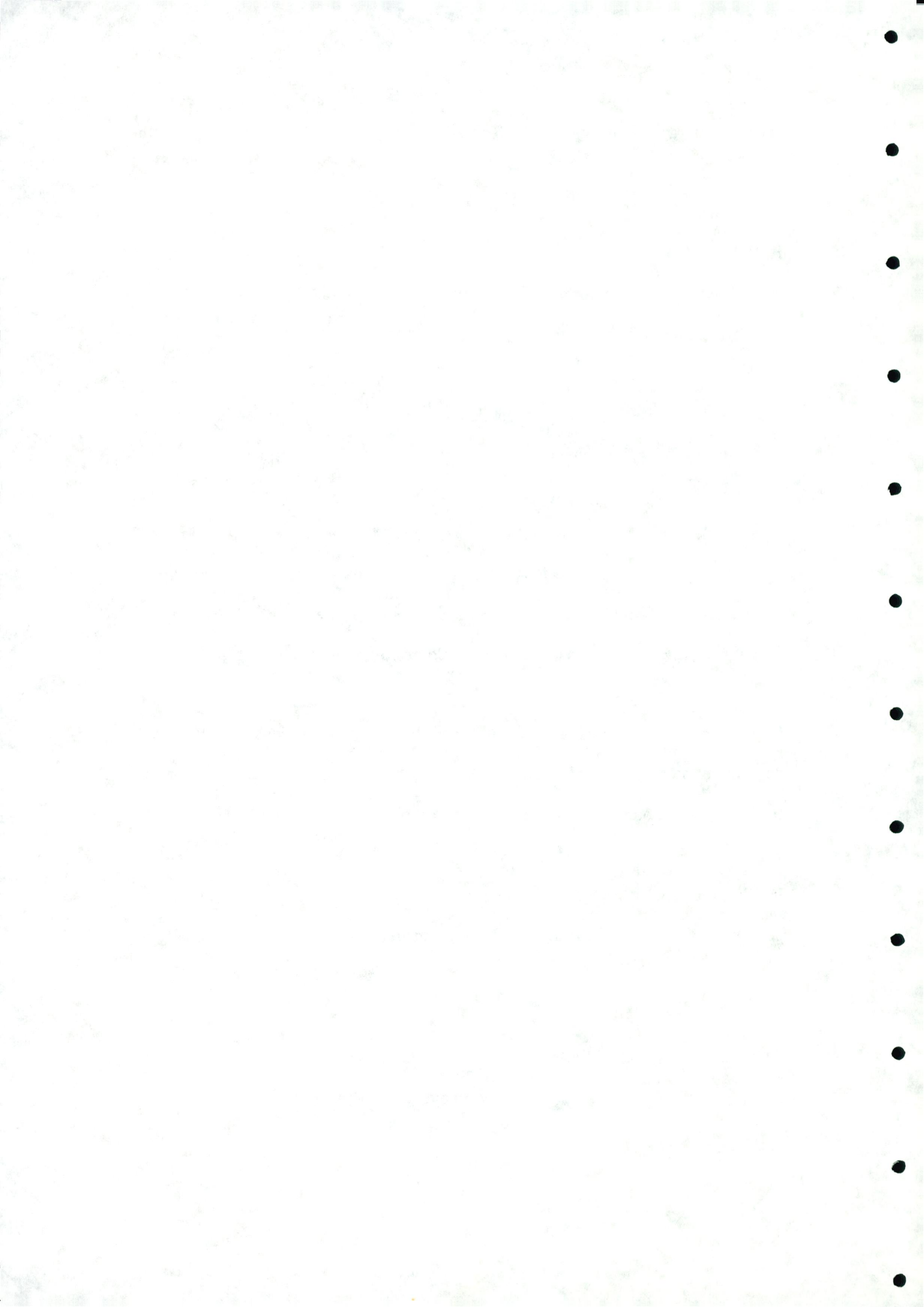
and Brown Thomas for the snobs' - (1840's Haverty P.)

Arnott's position among these other Dublin department stores has changed little since its establishment. It began by catering to the wealthy, manufacturers and industrialists. Later it became a place for the working women to purchase her fashionable but reasonable priced goods as we see in one of their adds from 1892 (Fig 5). However during the 1970's and 1980's Arnotts gained the reputation of a store where one would go to purchase one's school uniform or household linens. It was not regarded as a place where one would go to buy the latest in fashion.

In this thesis I hope to show how Arnotts began as a beautiful Victorian department store, how it changed and how it plans to re-establish itself as one of Ireland's and Dublin's leading department stores.

In **Chapter One** I will describe the premises in which Arnotts is established, the people who created it and the changes they made to keep up with their changing environment.

Chapter Two looks at the employees the changes in training they received and the way they and are treated by their employers.



ARNOTT & CO., DUBLIN, LTD.

THE SALE COMMENCES TO-DAY

OF THE VALUABLE STOCK OF

Mr. J. H. FIELDER, GRAFTON STREET,

Which they secured at the unusually Large Discount of

57½ per cent off Cost Price.

The Stock comprises a Large Assortment of Mr. FIELDER'S own
TAILOR-MADE JACKETS, in the Latest Shades and Designs ;
ALSO A GREAT VARIETY OF
FRENCH AND GERMAN JACKETS, PLAIN,
TRIMMED WITH MINX, BEAVER,
SKUNK AND PERSIAN LAMB,
TRAVELLING CLOAKS AND RIDING JACKETS,
IN SHADES SUCH AS TABAC, CRIMSON, & DRAB BOX CLOTHS.
Fur Boas, Collarets, Muffs, Trimmings, and Rugs, of
The Best Quality of Fur.

Our Own Large and Well-known Stock of JACKETS will be found Replete with the
Richest Novelties produced in

OTTO; NOGAT, ACCHEN, AGETHE, AND DRINDE JACKETS,

Trimmed with this Season's Fashion Fur.

RAIN AND TWEED TRAVELLING CLOAKS, CAPES, RICH SILK,
PLUSH AND FANCY CLOTHS.

Every Description of Fur at Half Price.

DRESS MATERIALS.

56-inch LADIES' SUITING TWEEDS, SERGES,
HABIT CLOTH, and CHEVIOT SERGES.

48-inch FRENCH VICUNA CLOTHS, CAMEL
HAIR CLOTHS, NEW PLAIDS, STRIPES, &c.

COSTUMES.

TAILOR-MADE FRENCH MODELS and TAILOR-MADE SKIRTS.

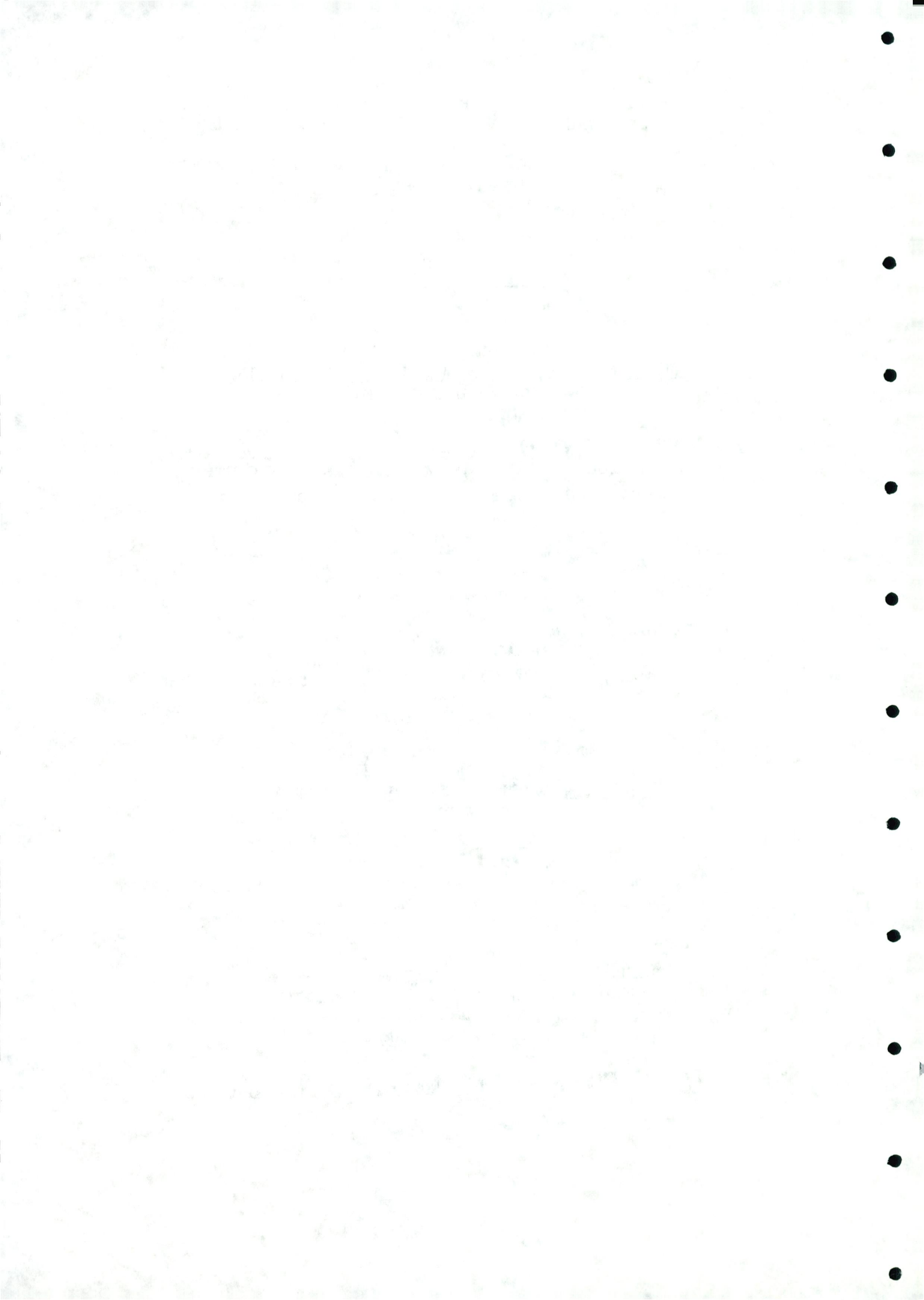
MANTLE BEAVER CLOTHS	in	Black, Blue, Fawn and Brown.
VICUNA CLOTHS	in	Black, Blue, and Grey
TWILLS	in	Black, Blue, Brown, and Fawn
BROCHE CLOTHS	in	Black and Fancy
MELTON CLOTHS	in	Black, Blue, Brown, and Fawn
BOX CLOTHS	in	Black, Blue, Brown, and Fawn

ASTRACHANS AND ROUGHS IN ALL SHADES.

We have arranged that during this Sale the other Departments, including the Carpets,
Cabinets, and Damasks, will offer their Goods at exceptionally Low Prices.

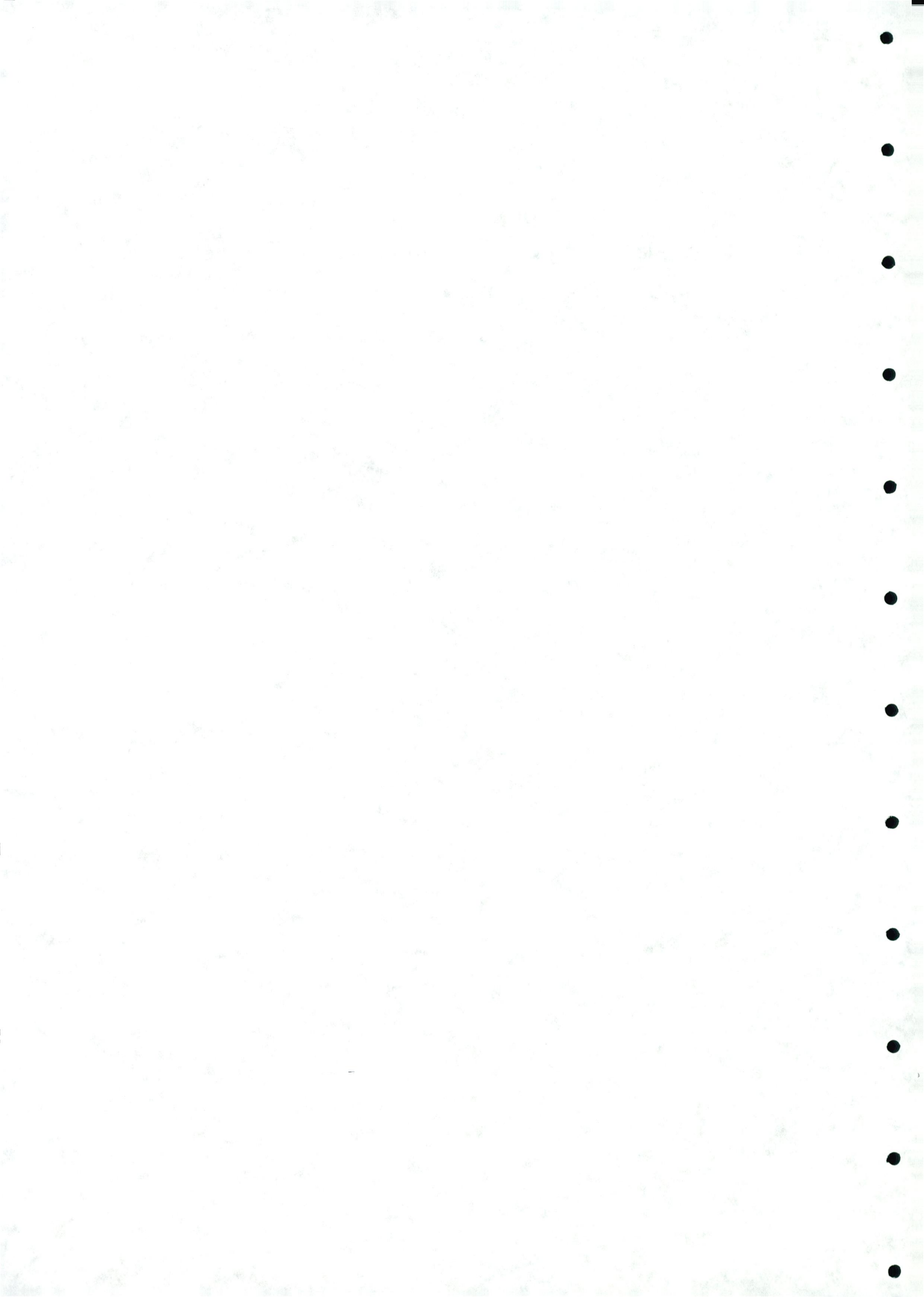
ARNOTT & CO., DUBLIN, LTD.

fig 5



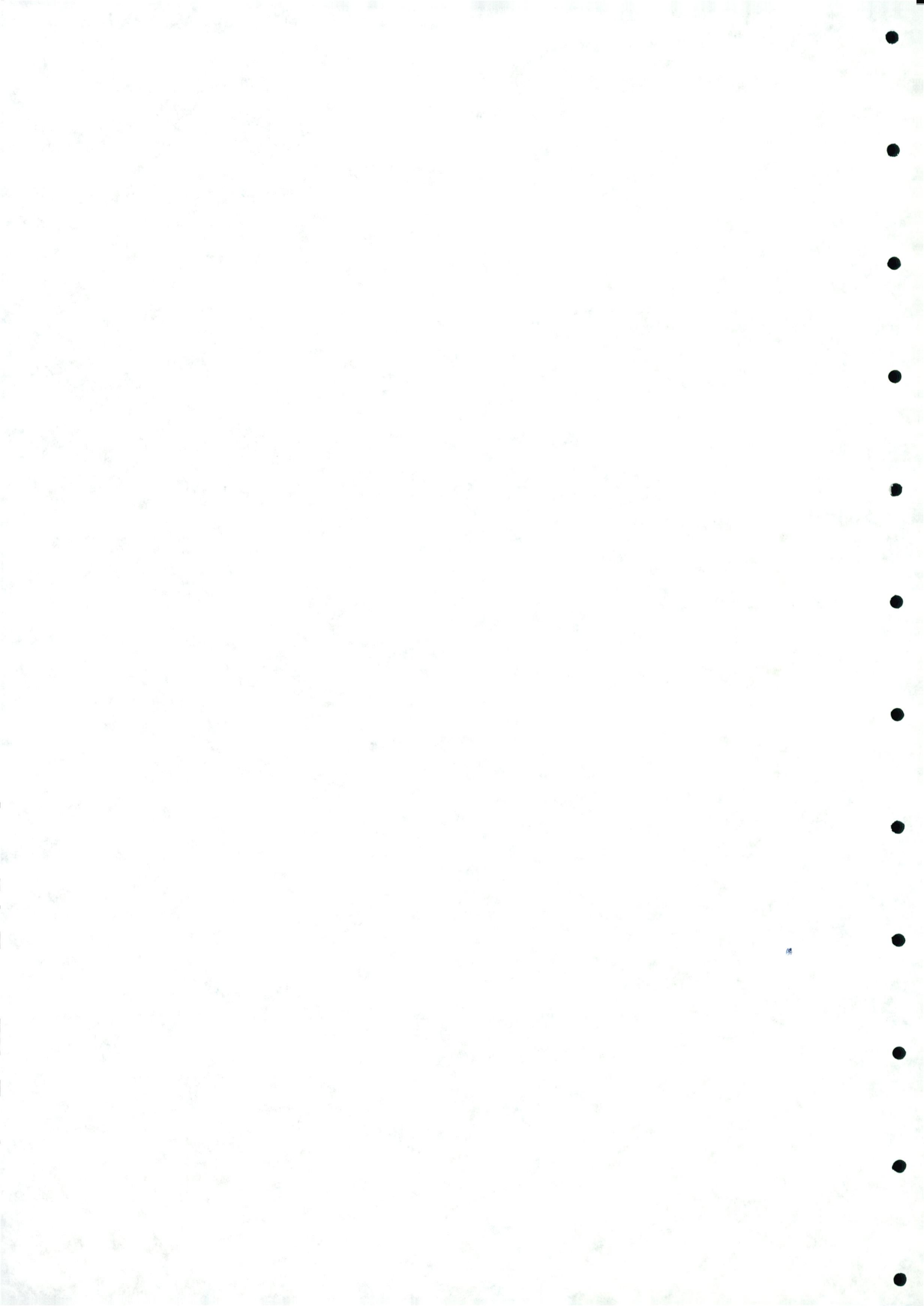
Chapter Three looks at Arnotts other interests and investments, as well as their current competitors.

Chapter Four looks at their strategy of dealing with their competition, and how they plan on bringing the store into the next century.



Chapter One

The Early Years and Growth of the Company

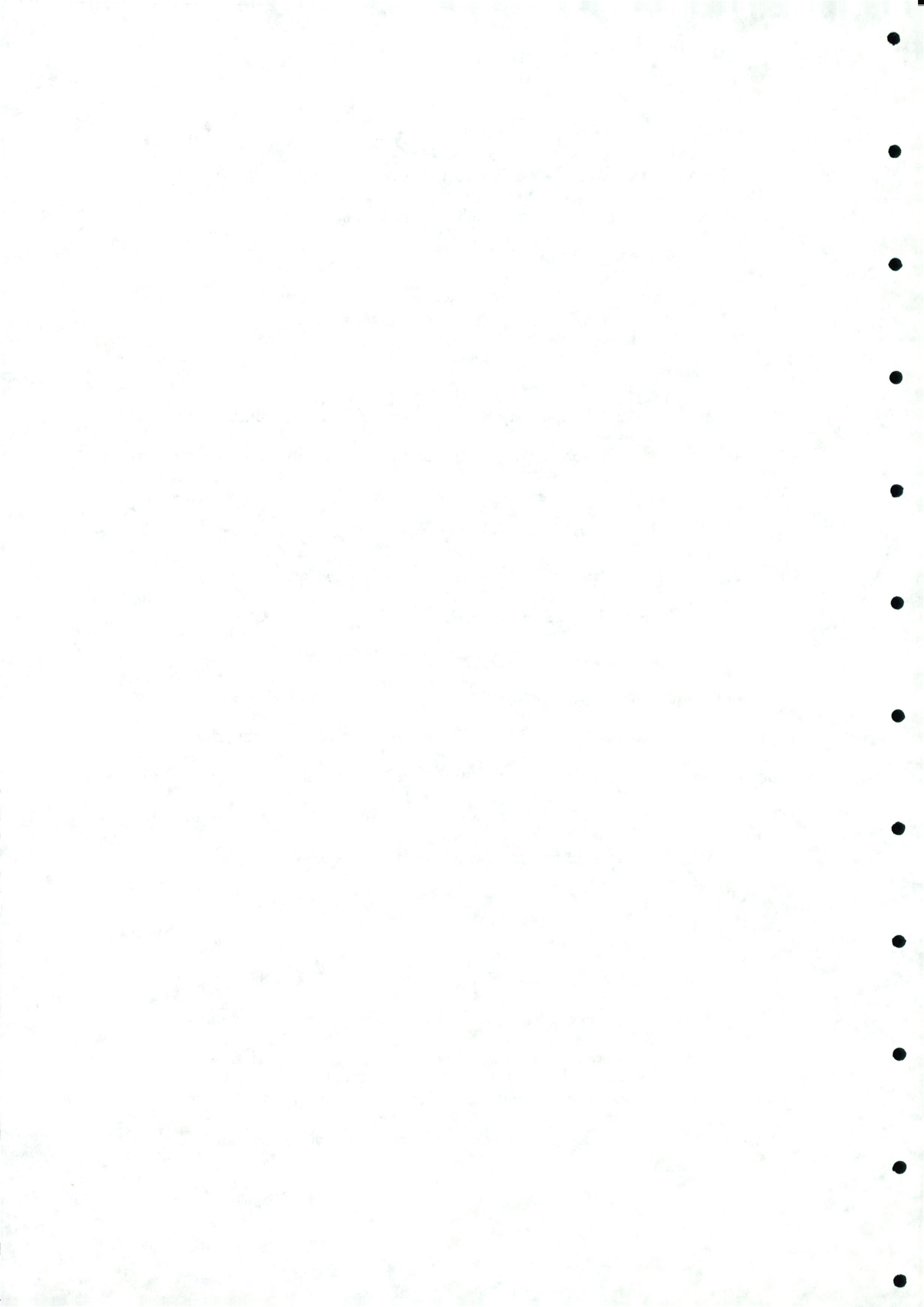


Henry Street which was laid down in 1824 and named after the Earl of Drogheda, Henry Moore, was never a good 'residential' street. In fact by the time George Cannock and Andrew White started trading in partnership in No. 14 Henry Street in 1843, it had already well established itself as a street for small traders such as milliners, cabinetmakers, cutlers, shoemakers and grocers, as we see from a street map of the time (Fig 6).

Built naturally in a Georgian style of architecture, the buildings were over basement with several storeys, with long narrow gardens finished with a coach house at the back. Henry Street is a narrow street which made for good shopping as it is easier to cross from side to side. Henry Street also benefits from its location as it is close to the centre of Dublin and opens onto O'Connell Street formerly known as Sackville Street (Fig 7).

The flourishing new business started by Cannock and White at No. 14, expanded quickly and No. 13 was added in 1845. John Arnott, an entrepreneur, industrialist and philanthropist bought No. 16 Henry Street in 1850 and joined the firm. By 1865 after record sales and the addition of No's 11 and 15 the store was renamed 'Arnott John & Co.' general drapers and house furnishers as Mr. Arnott now had a controlling interest.

Born just outside Glasgow in 1814 John Arnott moved to Cork at the age of twenty to work in a small store, why he moved and the name of this store is unrecorded. Later he operated a store in Belfast and Glasgow with his brother-in-law. As well as this retail business John Arnott had other interests such as, ship building, brewing, baking, milling and manufacturing. He was more well known in Cork than



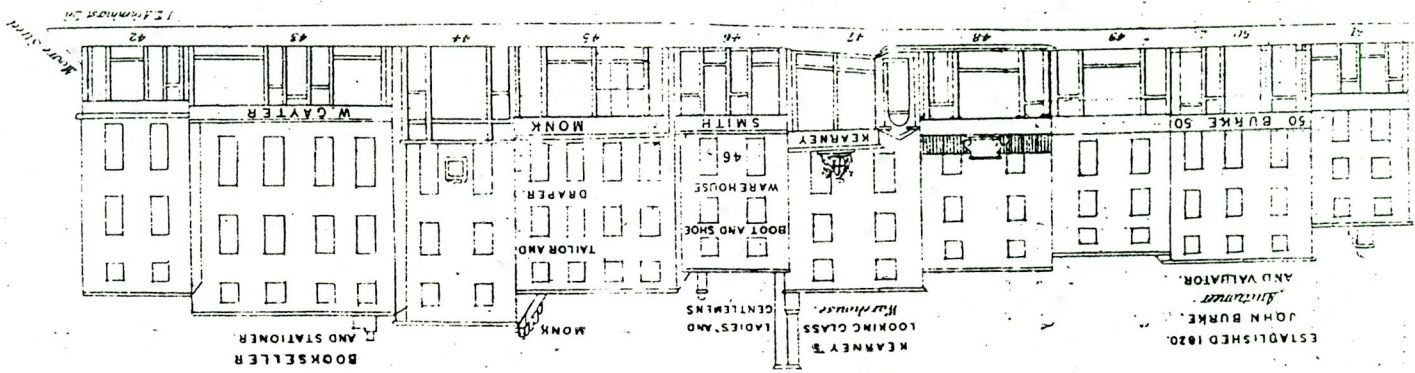
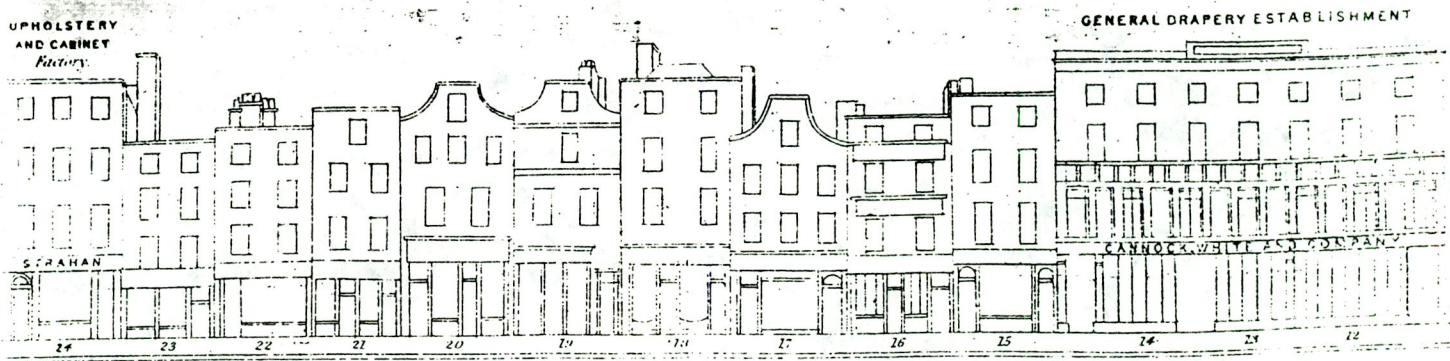
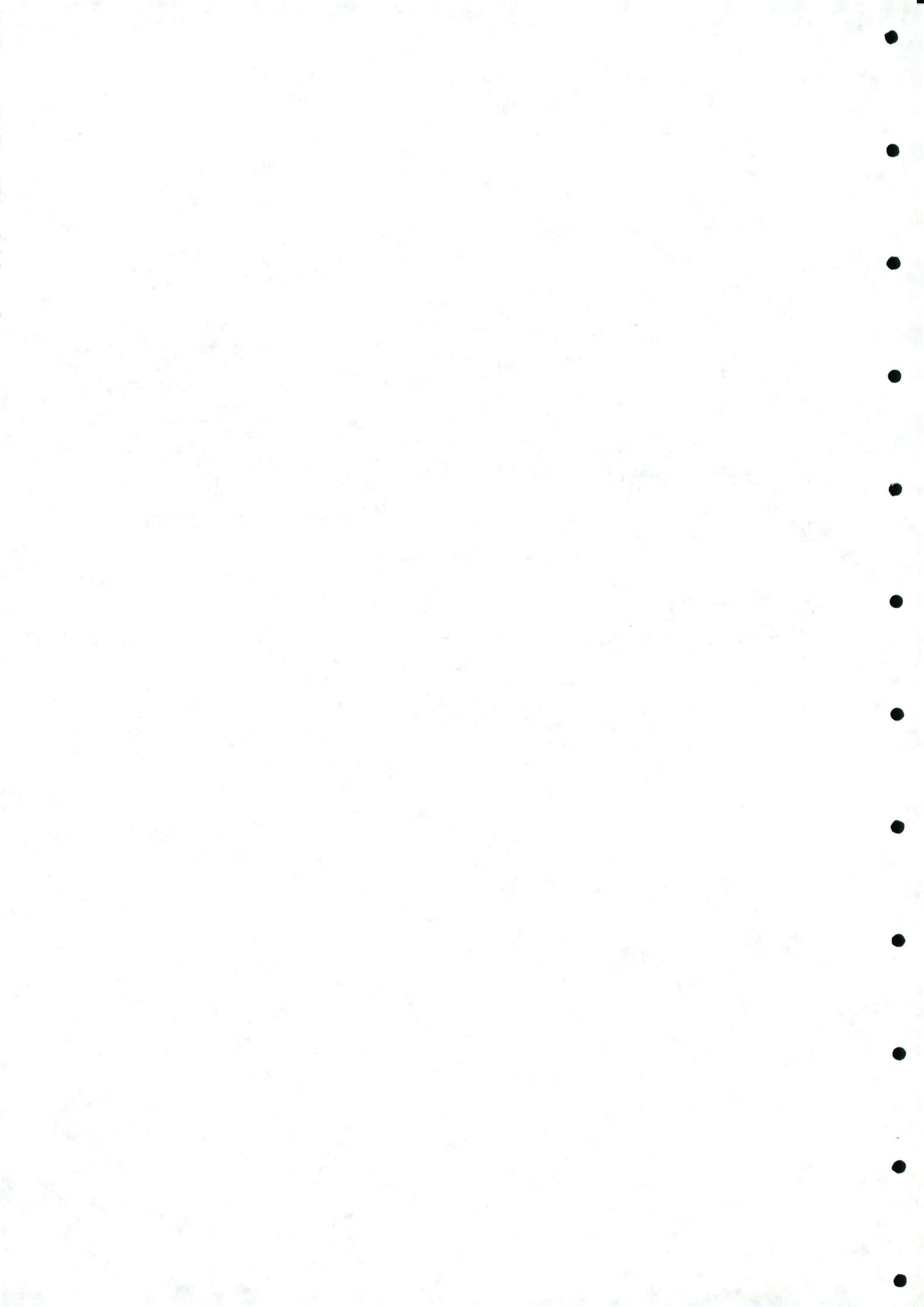


fig 6



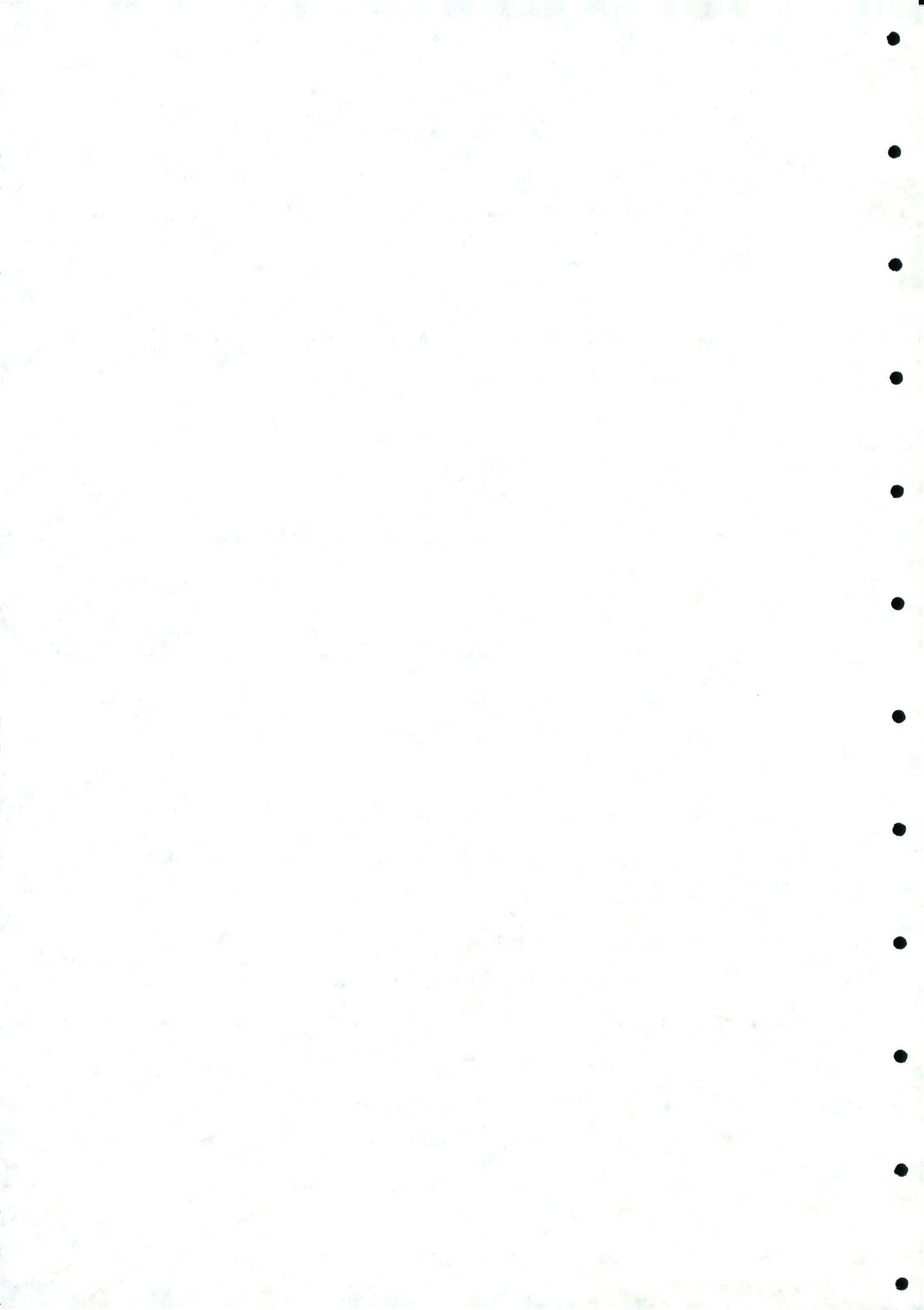
Dublin as he was Lord Mayor of Cork from 1859 to 1861. Knighted by the Lord Lieutenant in 1859 he represented Kinsale in parliament as a Liberal MP from 1859 to 1864. He was Chief Proprietor of the Irish Times and of Bristol Steam Navigation Co.

John Arnott lived over the Henry Street shop with his housekeeper by whom he had two daughters. It was fairly common for the proprietor of the shop to live above it although it was a . . .

'new trend among well-to-do shopkeepers to no longer live over the shop but to take a prestigious house remote from their place of trading -
(Haverty p. 17).

One could conclude from this that Arnotts had already established itself as slightly lower than the upmarket stores on the south side of the Liffey such as Brown Thomas and Switzers whose proprietors had country homes.

The already successful business thrived under the direction of John Arnott who by the 1890's was trading in retail and wholesale, clothing and furnishings, shoes, millinery and furniture. The building had developed enormously. It consisted of five storeys and a basement and stretched back to Princes Street. As well as wholesale and retail business the building also housed many of the staff who occupied the upper levels of the shop. By today's standards the amount of retail space would have been smaller than expected for the size of the premises.



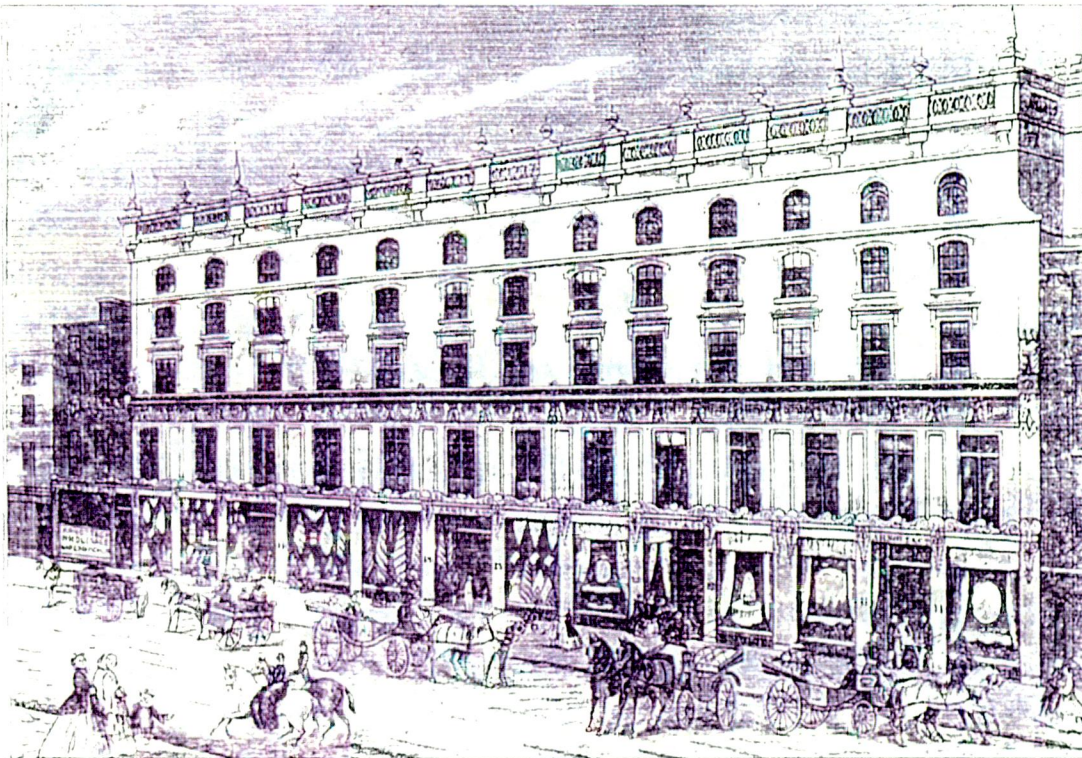


fig 8

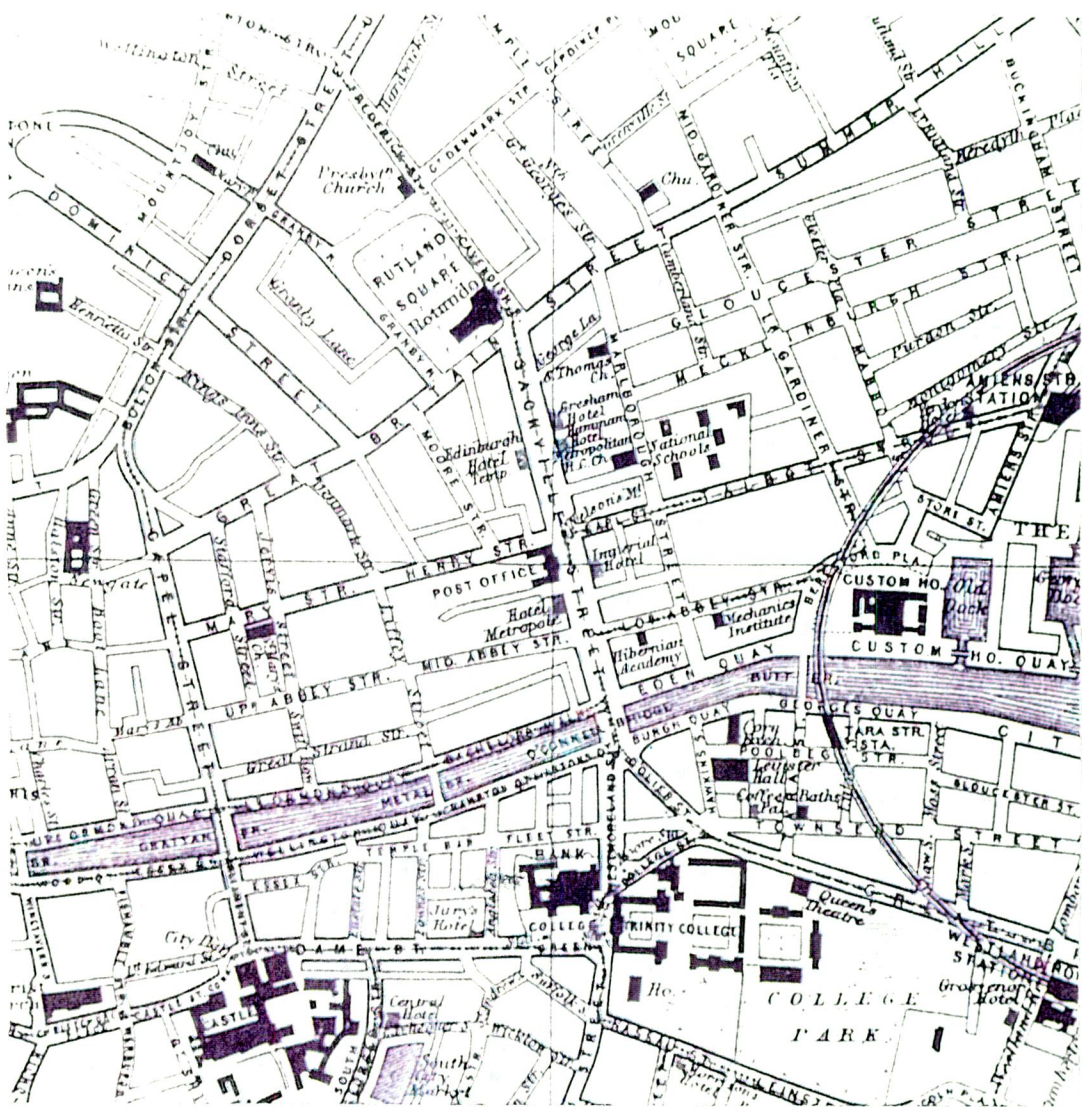
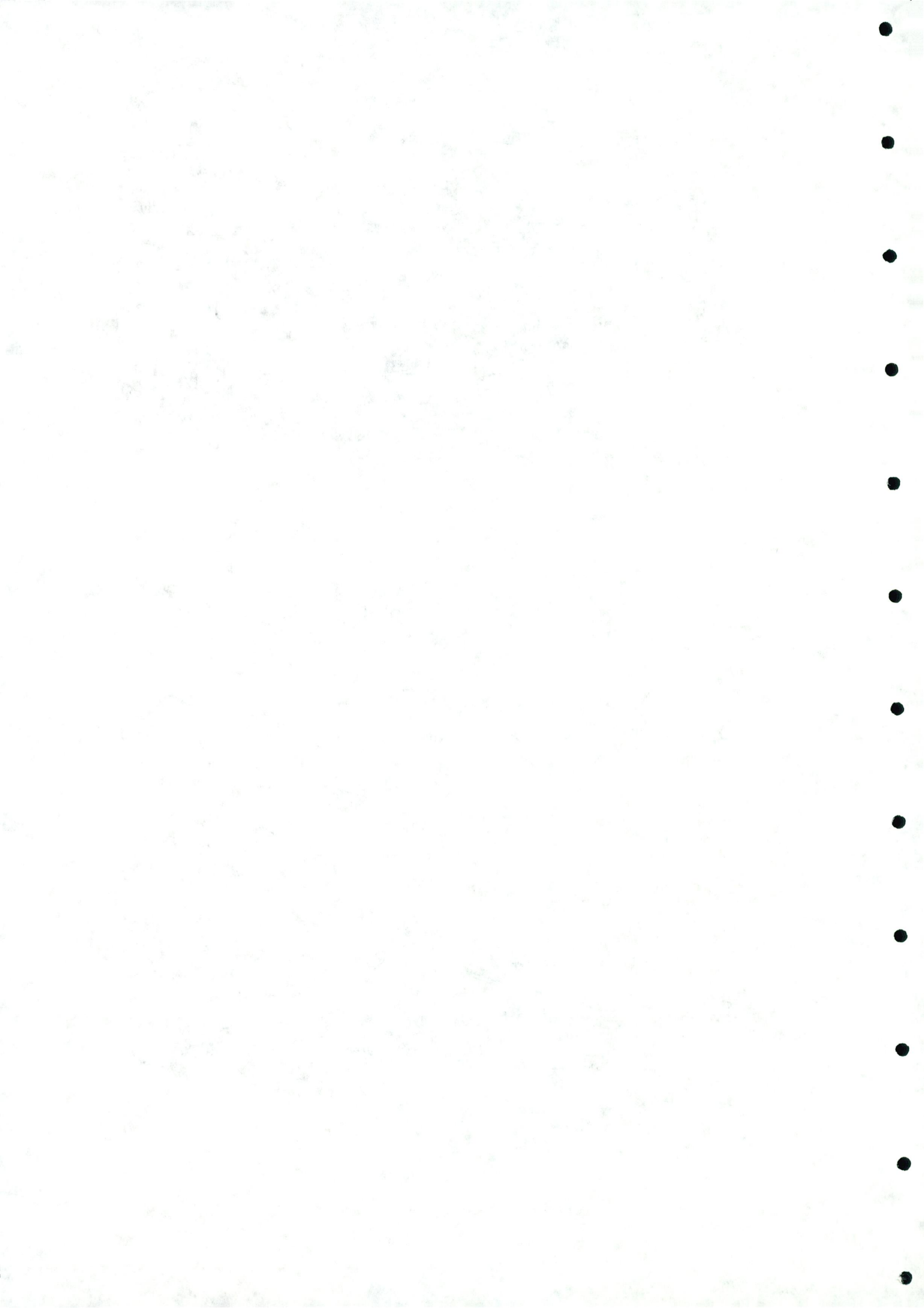


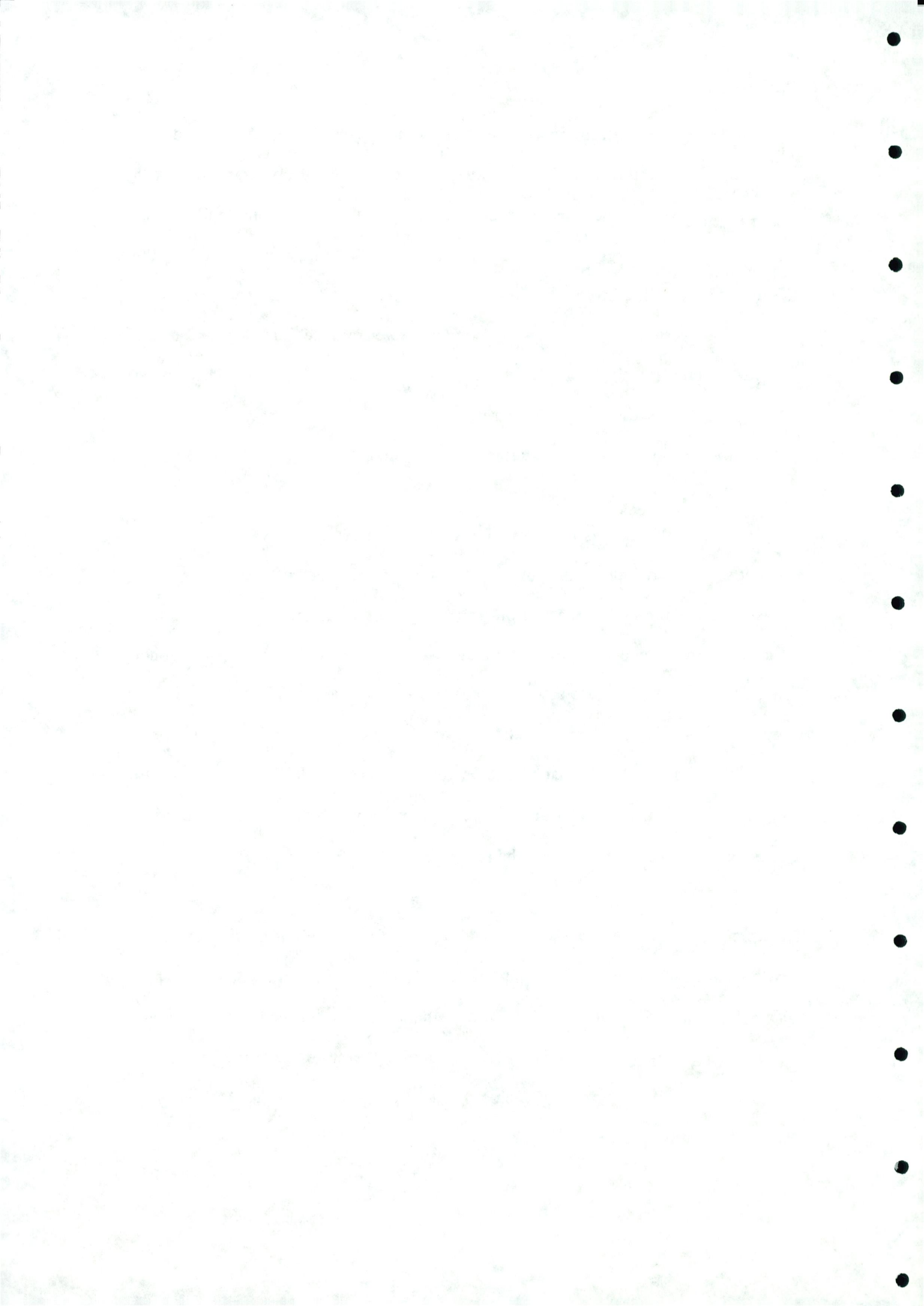
fig 7



As we see from an illustration of the store in the 1870's (Fig 8). Arnott and Co's facade was the largest on Henry Street and the ground floor was lined with windows allowing the customer to see right into the store. Inside the building the second and third floors opened into a mezzanine, (Fig 9) this was situated in the centre of the building which was used mainly for retail trade. The mezzanine allowed the customer to look down through the store from the third floor and it also helped to create a bigger and more spacious feeling to the building. The ground floor, which was quite large, was set out in isles of counters which lead the customer from the front through to the rear of the shop.

By this time the expansive shop sold a variety of retail and wholesale items. Arnotts included among its customers not only members of the professional classes but of the mercantile and business classes as well, among them the rising Catholic middle classes. However mainly the aristocracy shopped on the south side of the city in the more affluent stores like Brown Thomas. Arnotts sold linens and woollens produced in both Ireland and the UK. Shoes and ready to wear dresses and suits were available in both retail and wholesale. However made to order clothing for both males and females was more popular and these were made in the workrooms which were on the premises.

During the early hours of May 4th 1894 a small fire broke out on the premises, without the safety precautions and fire prevention techniques of today, the fire spread quickly and completely destroyed the building and damaged some buildings surrounding (Fig 10), (Fig.11). Work to rebuild the store started within three weeks and a temporary store which fronted onto Henry Street and backed onto Princes Street was erected (Fig 12).



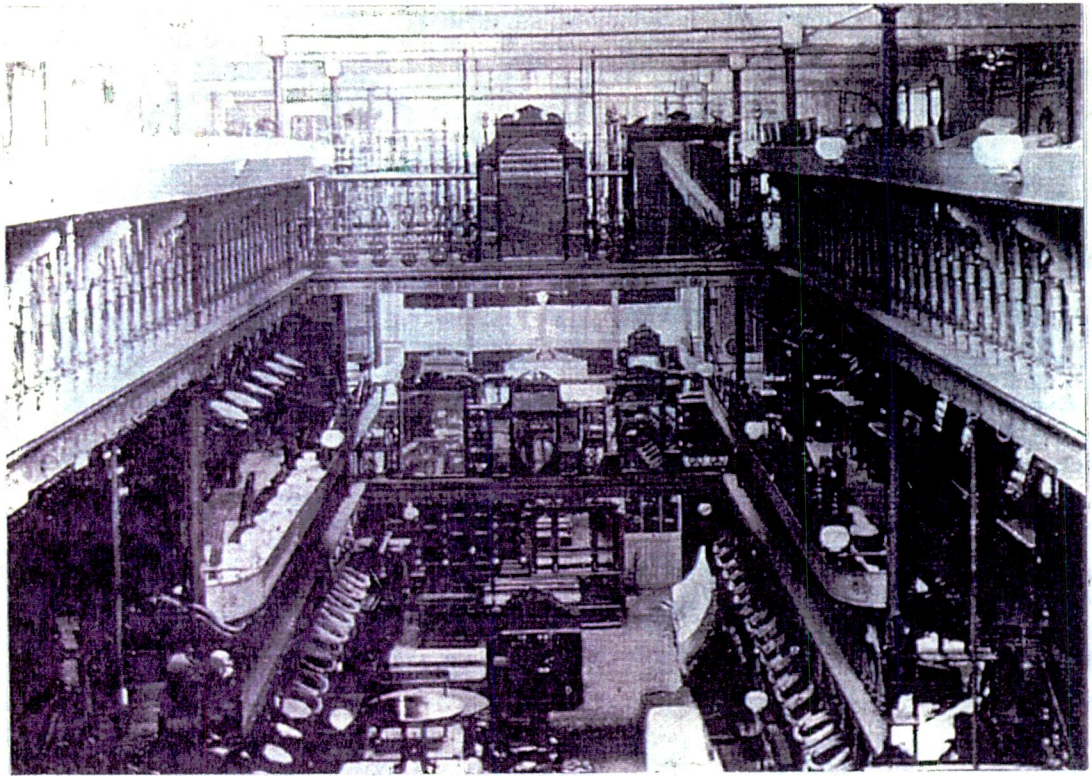
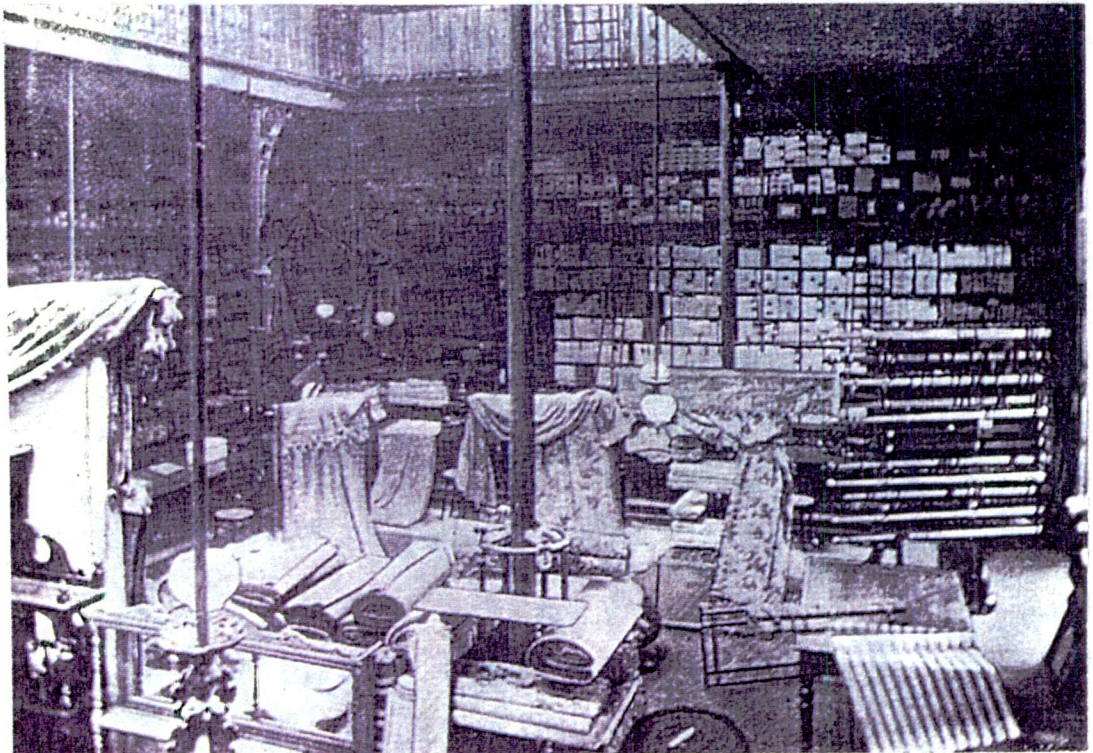
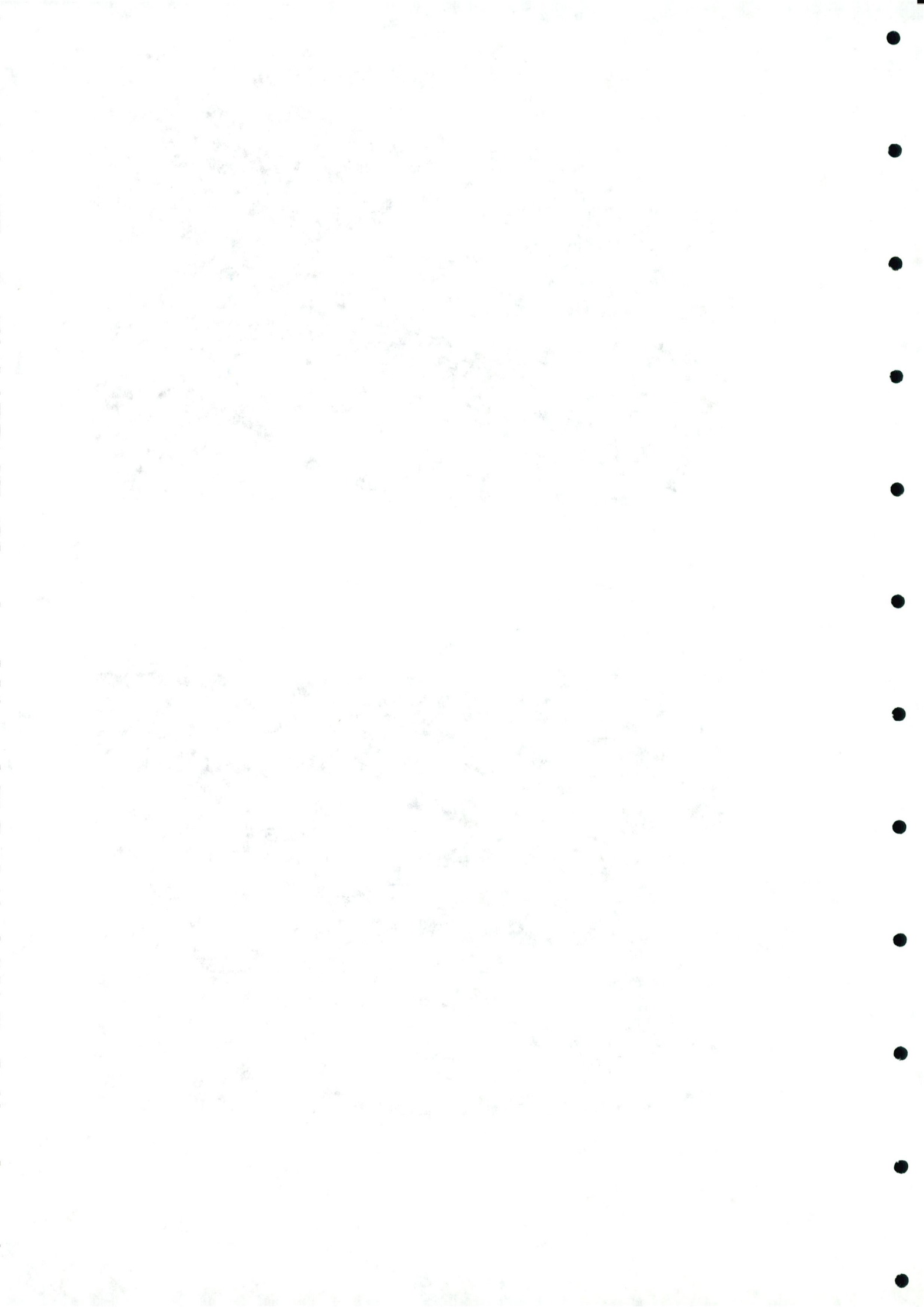


fig 9





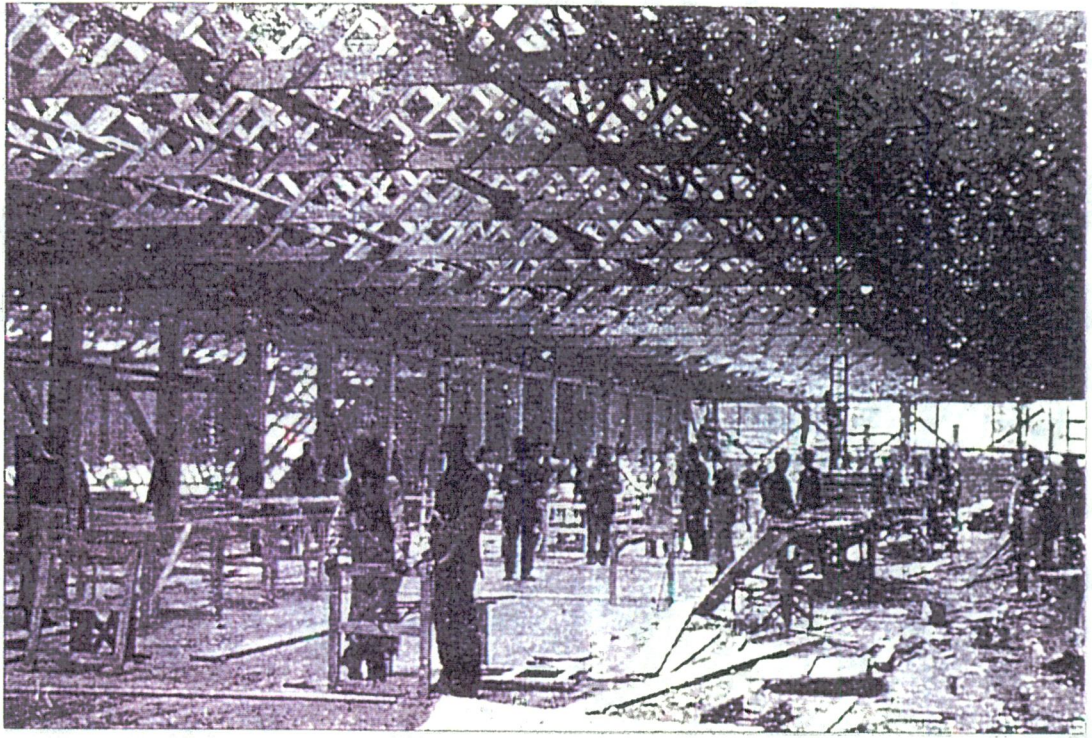
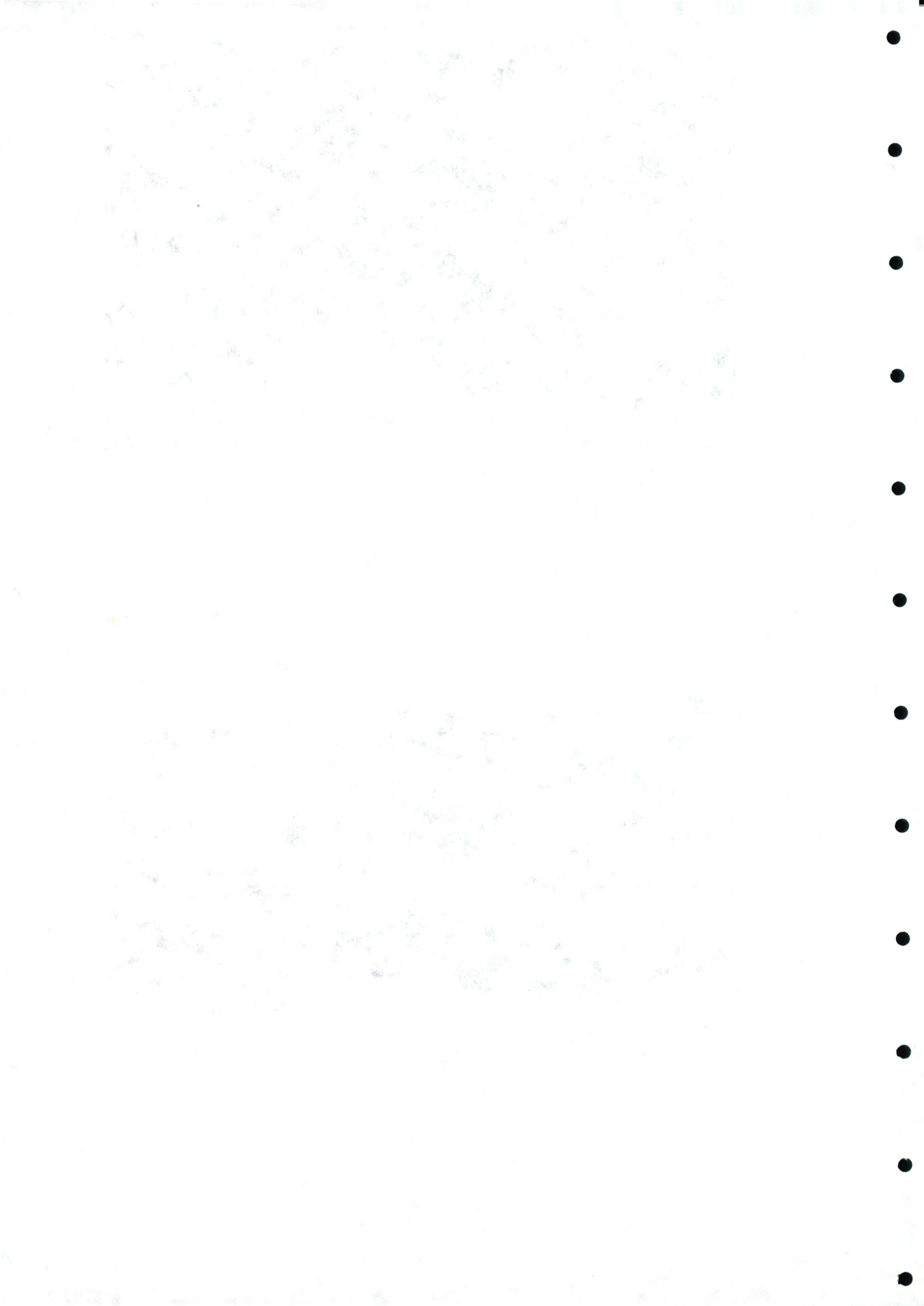
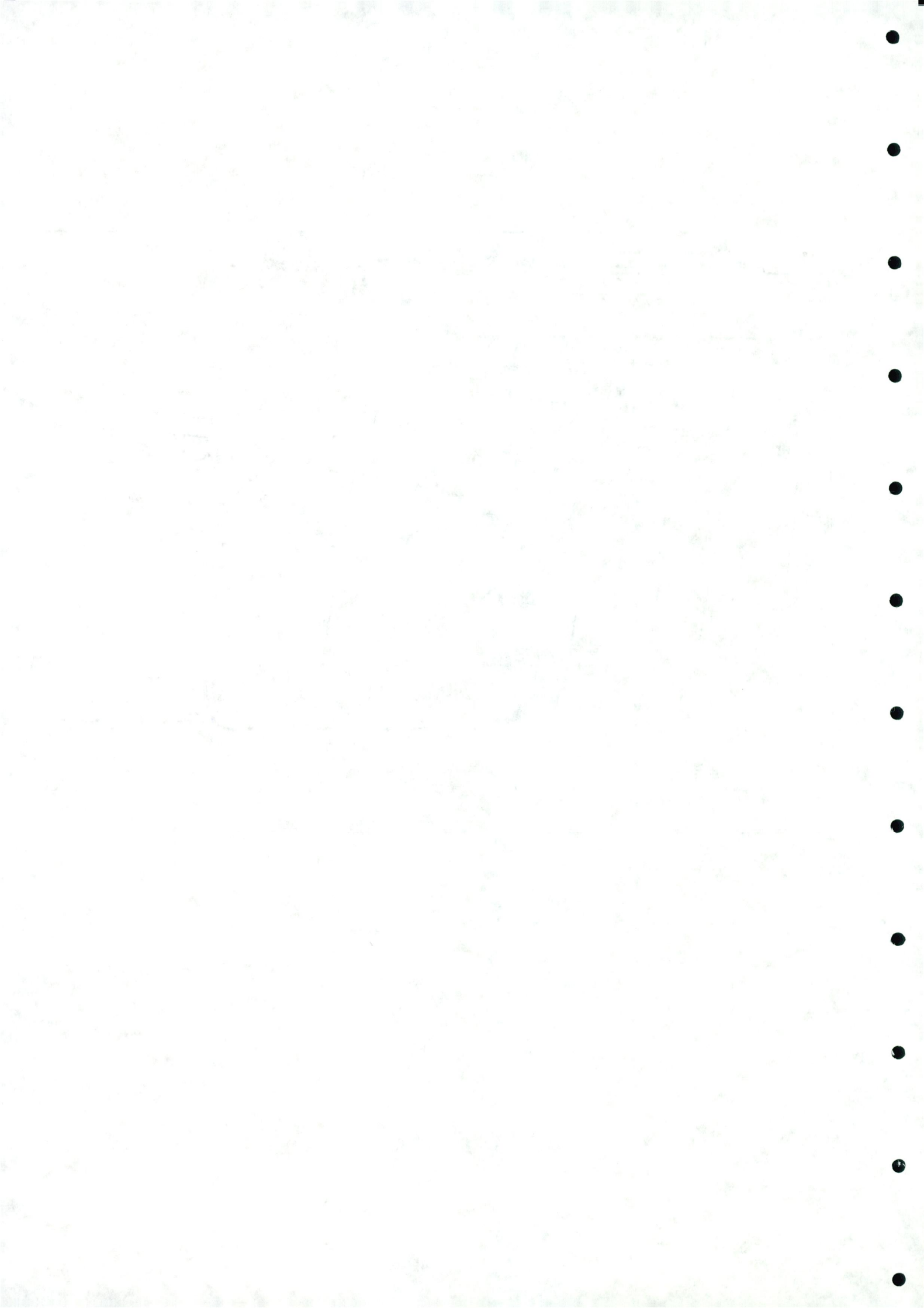


fig 10



fig 12





The architect George Beater was employed to design a bigger and better edition of what had been destroyed. The original buildings had not really been purpose-designed as a department store but rather consisted of smaller buildings which had been added together over a number of years from various houses acquired on Henry Street.

The new building was designed in keeping with the rest of the street and therefore quite similar to the first. It had an open space plan quite like a warehouse. The ground floor had features such as a flat central roof held up by many pillars. Some of which were hollowed so to allow rainwater drain through them. The centre of the building was hollowed into an arcade which allowed light to pour onto the centre of the ground floor through arched windows (Fig 13) which we see in a picture taken in the early 1930's. This arcade was not however in the main Henry Street building but rather in the building behind it. It ran down the centre of the building from front to back which was parallel to the main aisle which lead to the back stairs.

Again like the original, the ground floor was lined with isles of counters leading the customer from the front door to the back of the shop as we see again in (Fig 13). The front facade on Henry Street was lined with 10 ground floor windows which were the same height as the front of the ground floor (Fig 14). The main door was in the centre of the building and two other doors were at either end.

Above the centre of the building was an impressive copperdomed tower which stood 56 feet high, smaller flanking towers were at either end. This main tower was quite similar to the one which can be see now above 'Penny's' on Henry

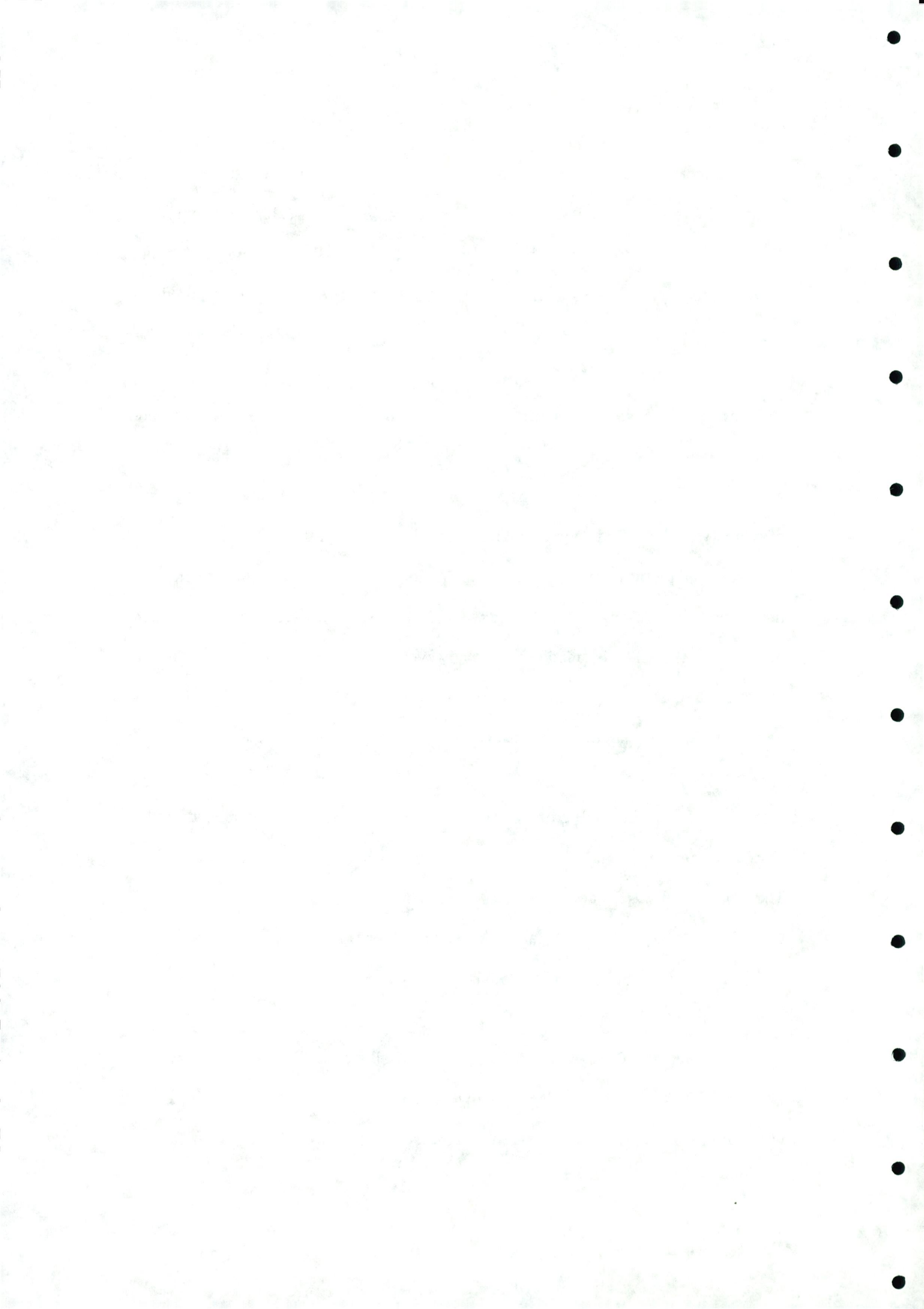
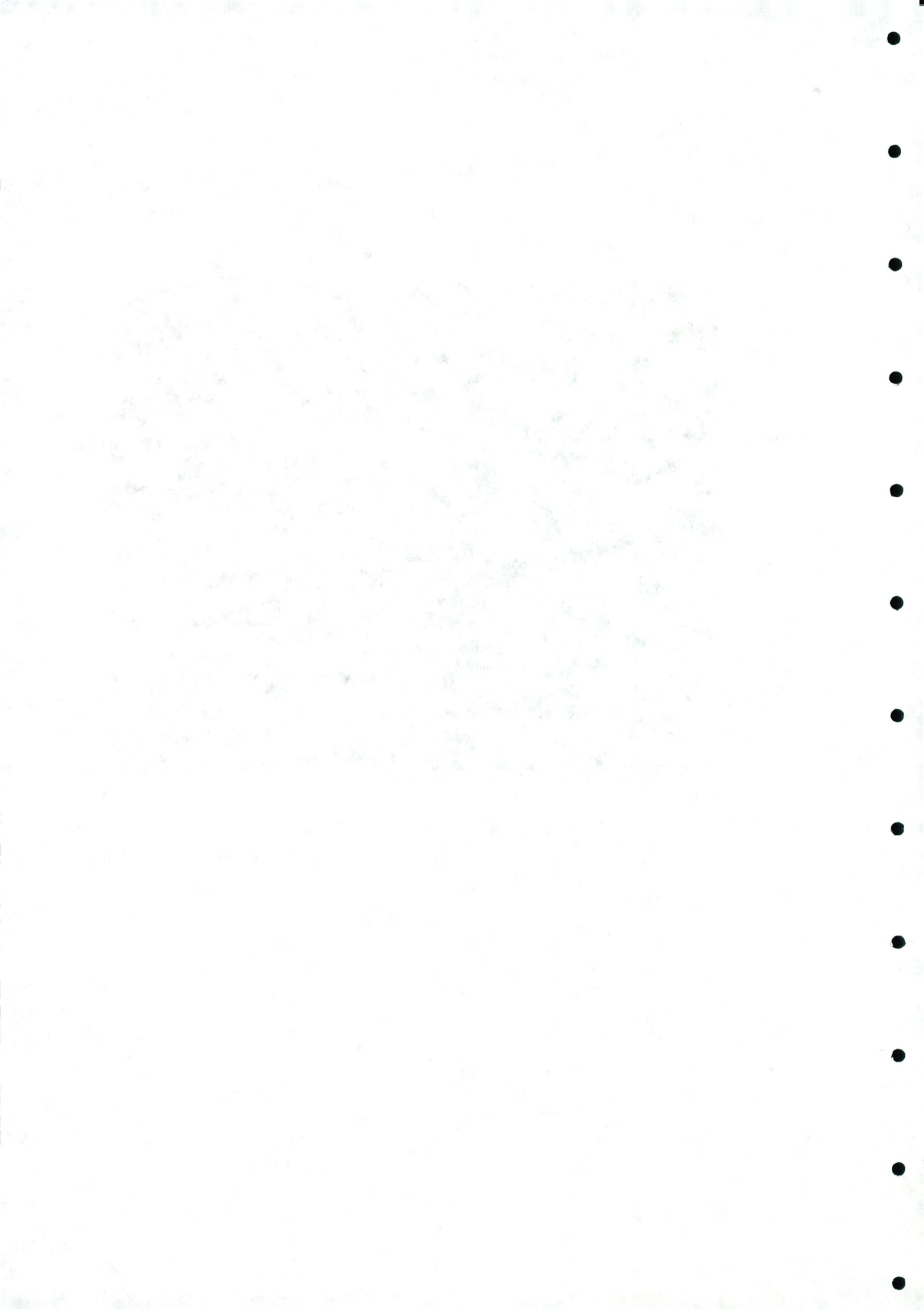




fig 13



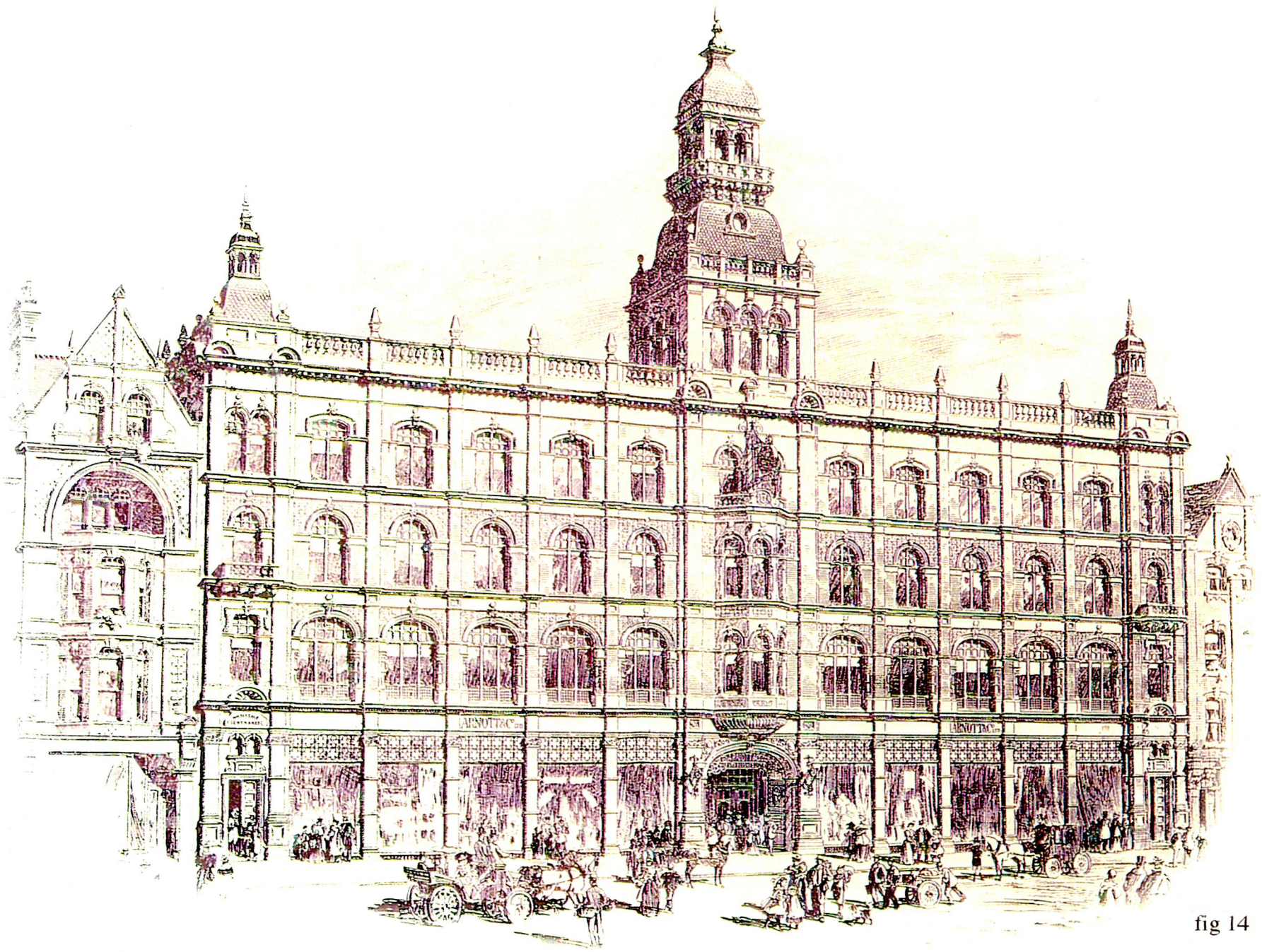
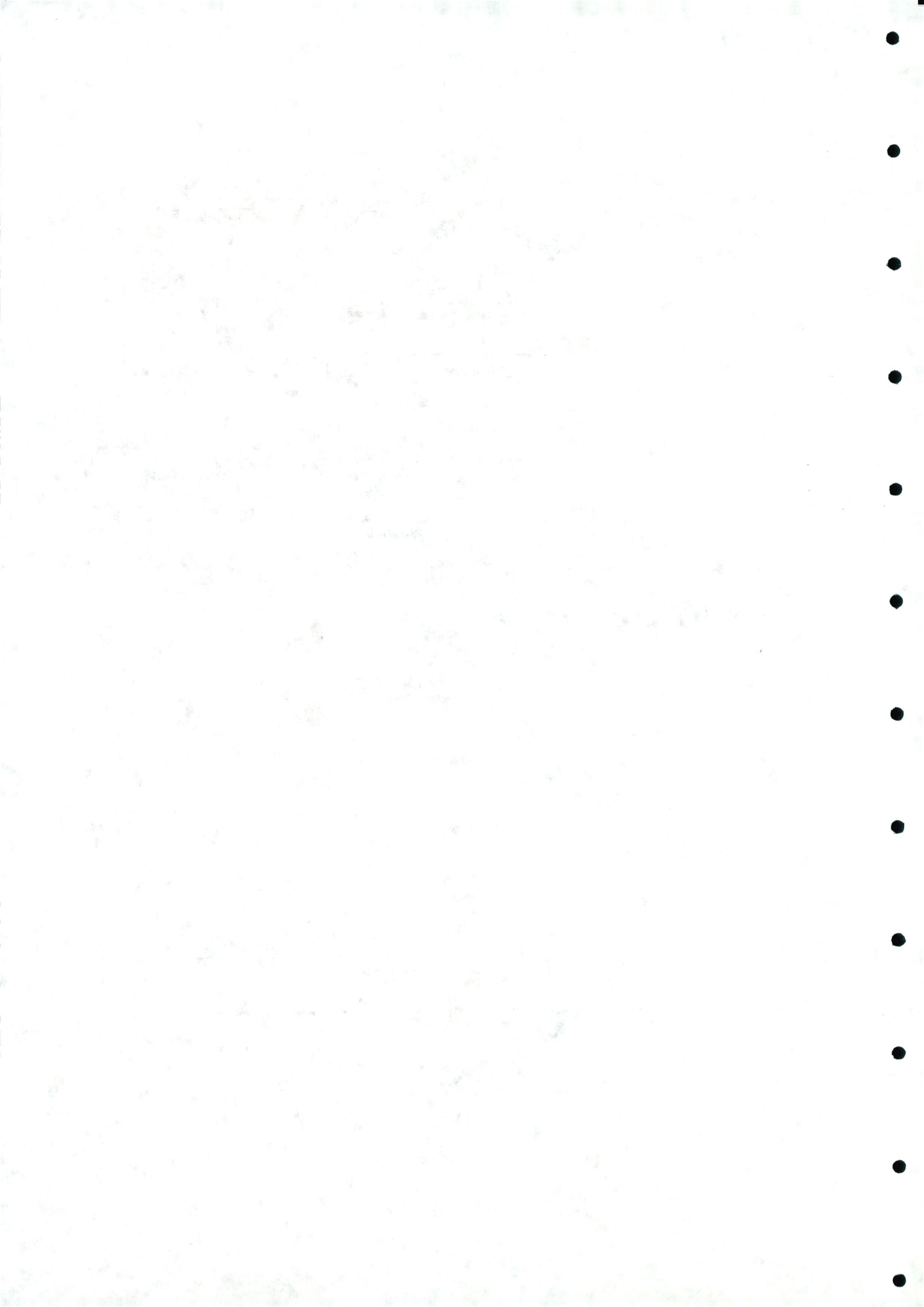


fig 14



Street. The Henry Street warehouse on nearby Little Denmark Street which has since been demolished also had a tower (Fig 15).

Sir John Arnott died in 1898 during the rebuilding of the store. Alexander Nesbitt, who was retail manager, then oversaw a lot of the building. A special entrance to the furniture department was opened to the far right of the building, fronting onto Henry Street. A covered carriage entrance which has since been removed allowed the customer to draw up outside the door (Fig 16). Later in 1909 after Alexander Nesbitt was elected chairman he added a 'veranda' across the pavement from Nos 9 and 10 allowing ladies to walk from their carriages to the central arcade without fear of the weather.

Major changes to the store were again made in 1939, as well as a cafe opening which proved to be an enormous success. The store was attempting a new look. 'Janus' was a company which was financed and established by Arnotts in 1937 in order to provide 'good' advertising for Arnotts and other clients. Janus designed a new logo for Arnotts, based on a freehand brush drawing a bodoni type (Fig 17). The new logo and clean layout of its advertising were intended to create an aura of style. The company began to pay more attention to merchandising and advertising, as was the current trend among department stores to sell a lifestyle. Arnotts worked towards getting the stylish woman who bought their elegant clothes to want to live in the surroundings they offered in their furnishings department. The 1930's saw a new type of woman being identified, the business girl who needed to dress tastefully and at a moderate cost. Arnotts offered good quality 'ready to wear' or 'off the peg' clothes which one could purchase at a good price and quickly which suited her lifestyle.

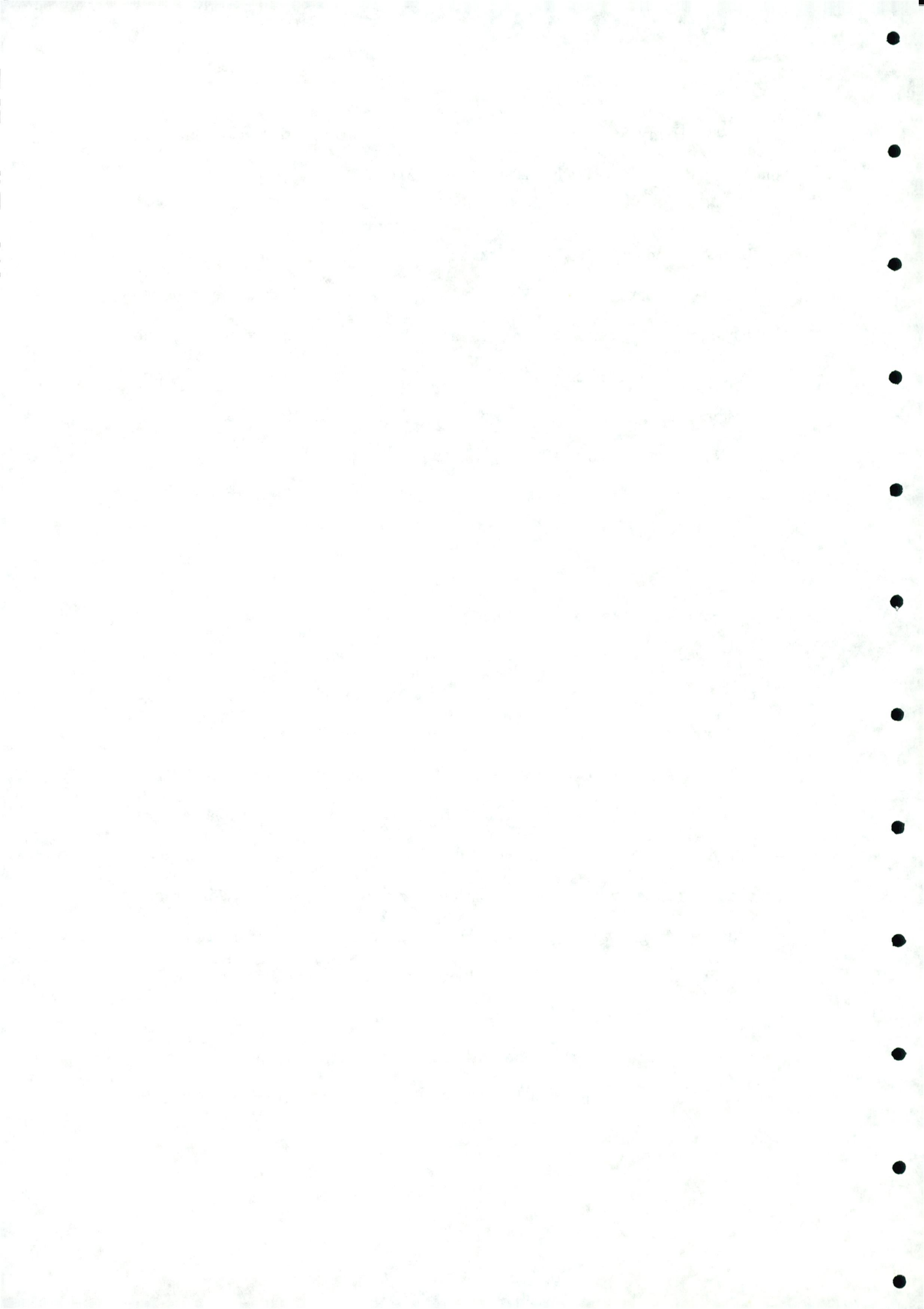




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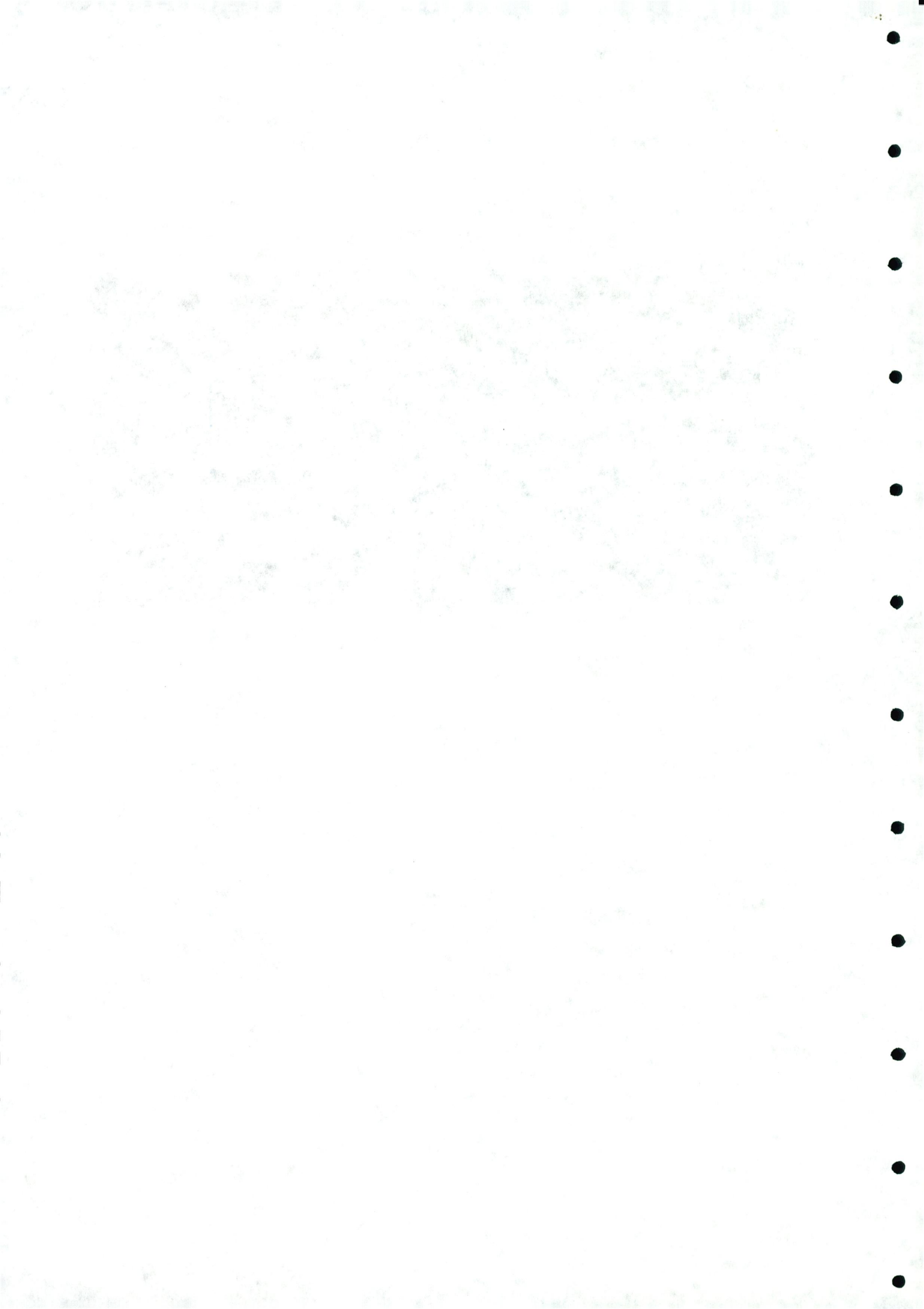
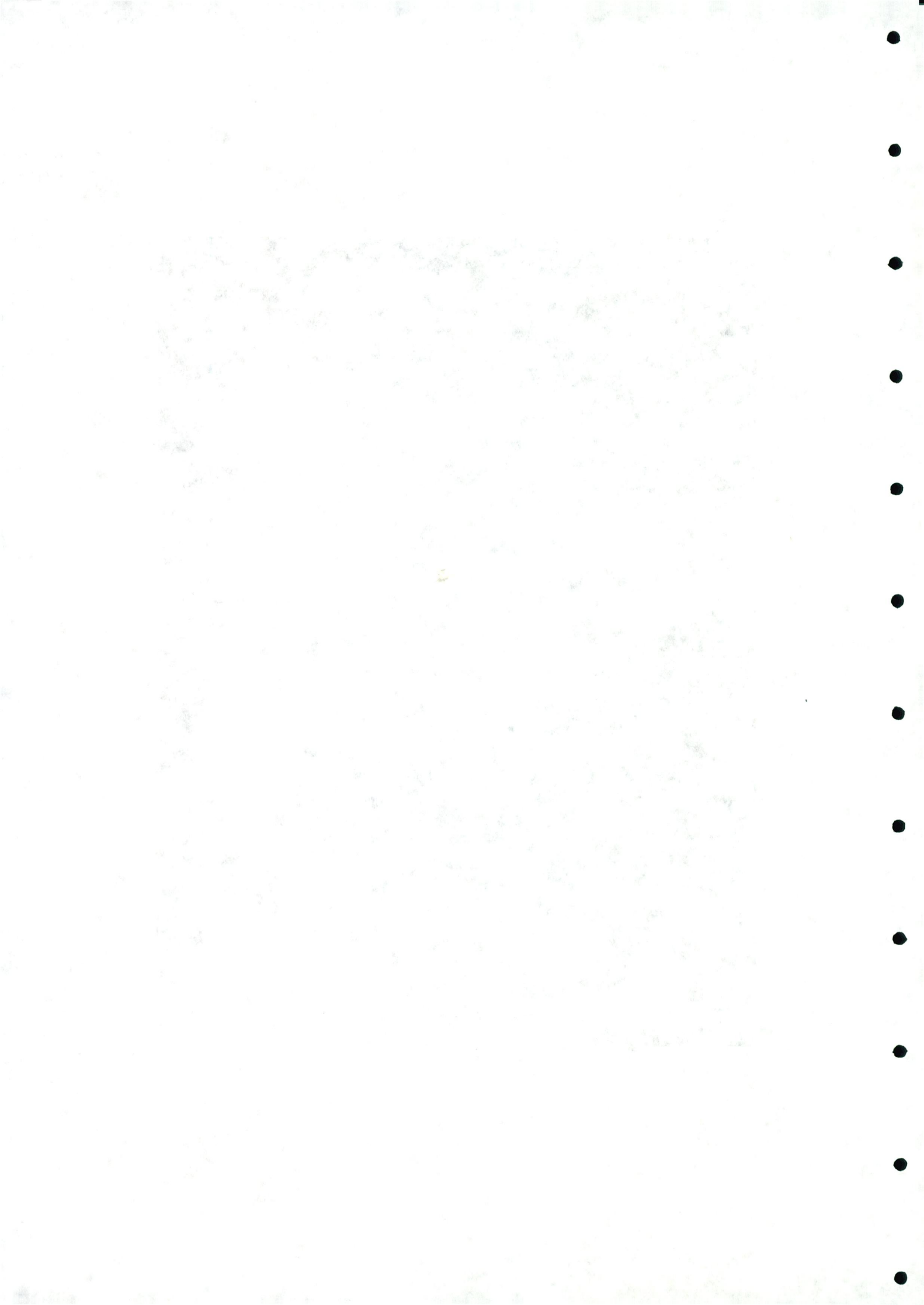




fig 16



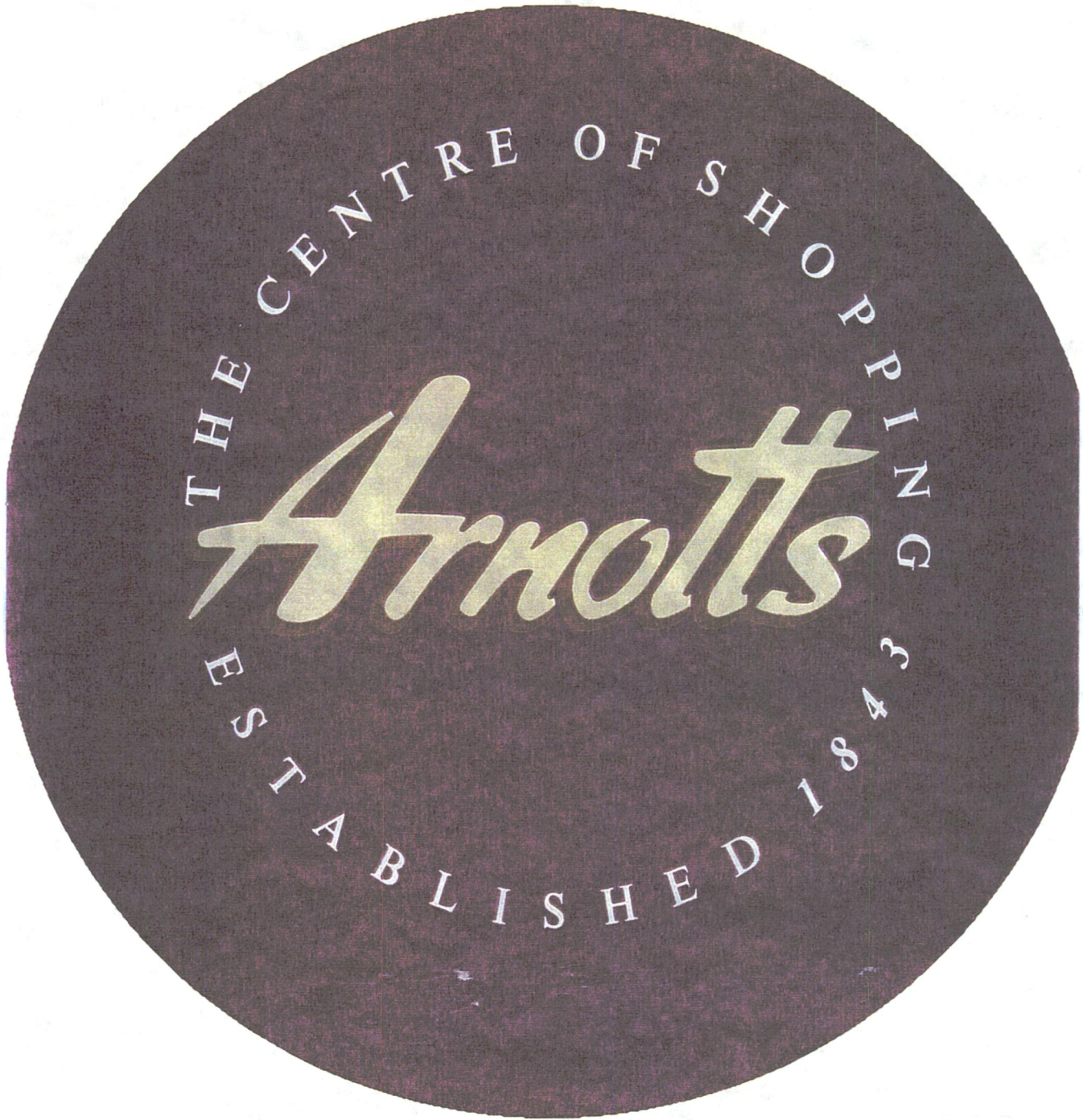
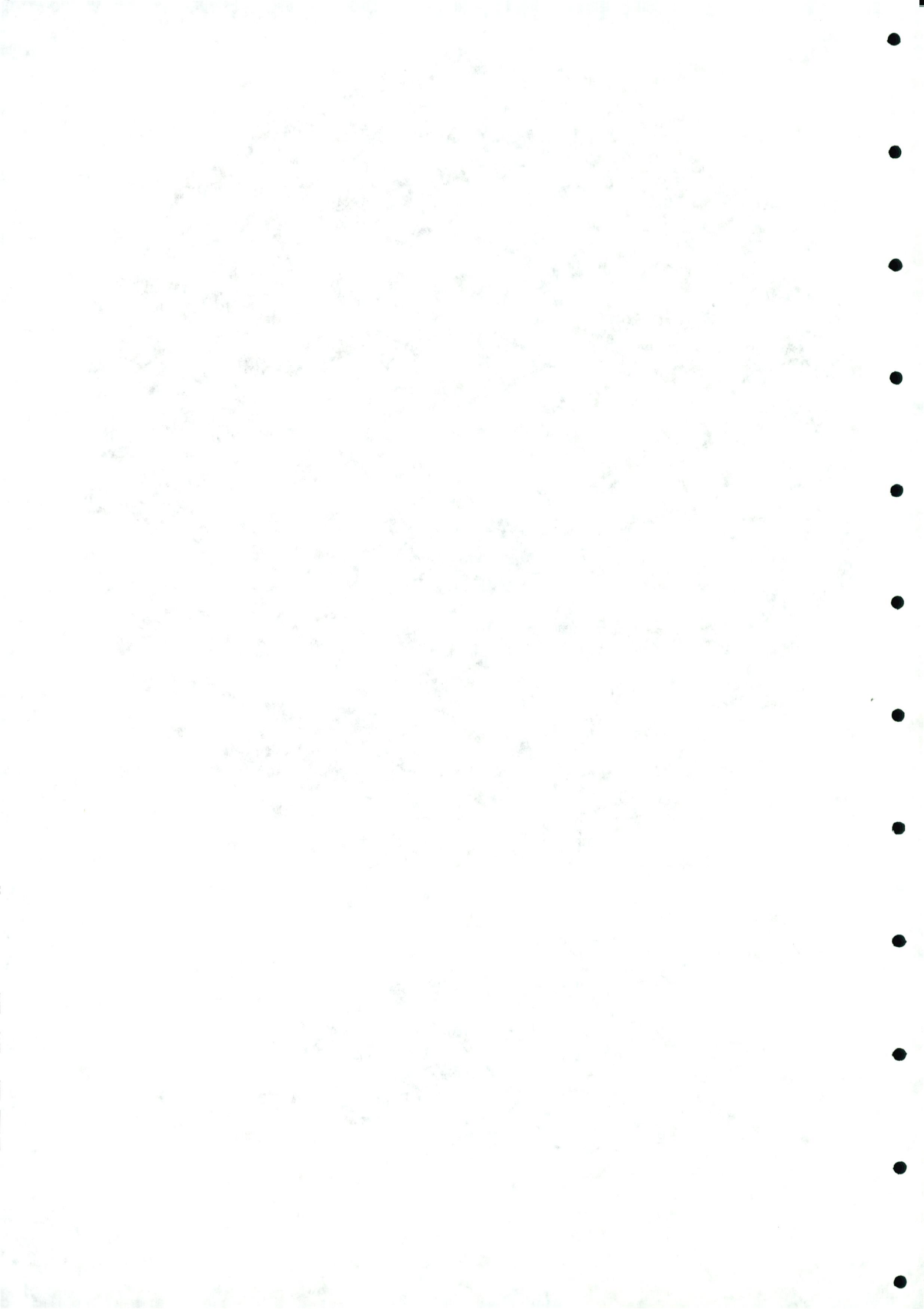


fig 17

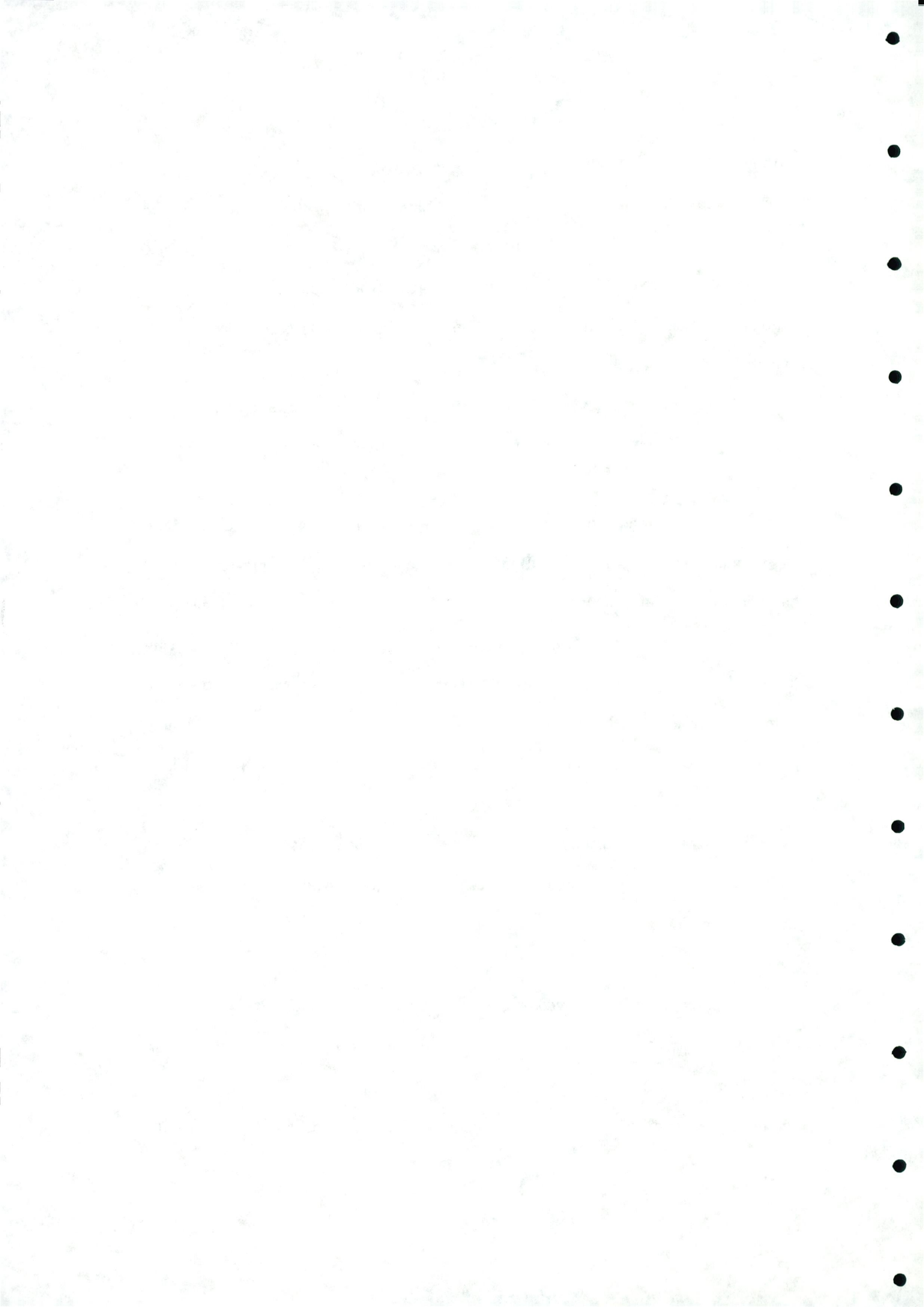




Along with this new look at merchandising and advertising Arnotts looked to their front windows which were in much need of attention. Strolling in the city and window shopping had become quite popular at the end of the previous century. This became increasingly more popular and most shops and department stores started to 'dress' their window during the 1930's and 1940's. The ten windows which lined the front of the store did contain displays but this would have been very difficult to focus on as the windows which were very tall, were not backed and one would have been able to see through to the rear of the store.

A young man who had shown promise in display while in the cashmere department by the name of Henry (Harry) Dillon, was employed as display manager. Display had become a popular practice among most retail outlets. Mr. Dillon who was first employed by Arnotts in the 1930's and stayed with the firm until his retirement in the 1970's set to work redoing the front windows. Dillon backed each window with draped fabric about 10 feet back from the glass on 'beaverbord'. He then made pelmets of the same material and hung it across each window. This reduced and concentrated the window space and helped set a 'stage' like atmosphere on which he could display the various merchandise. Each window was separately lit so different themes and stories could be created, a procedure which remains today in stores worldwide.

In 1940 the veranda was removed and replaced by a canopy which ran from No. 11 to 15 Henry Street. It was later extended along the entire frontage of the store. The customer could walk in comfort along the length of the frontage of the store admiring the newly fashioned window displays. The rebuilding of No's 7 to 10



Henry Street was decided on in 1945 but did not take place until 1955. No's 102 and 103 on Abbey Street were added after it was discovered that the width and height were compatible with those of the adjoining workrooms on Princes Street and Abbey Street.

In 1949 a newspaper piece described the removal of the main and flanking towers (Fig 18), it said they:

'served no useful purpose, Its design accorded with no known style of a architecture. It was utterly useless forma utility point of view, and was always regarded as a piece of misconceived Victorian decoration'

- (Nesbitt p. 132).

The absence of this beautiful tower is compensated for, perhaps by the construction of the newly glass domed atrium added in 1993. However the present secretary, Andrew S. Knowles, when spoken to unofficially commented on the possibility of the company returning the original towers.

The arcade down the centre of the store disappeared in the 1950's during the rebuilding of No's 7 to 10. A roof level was added to the workroom between Princes Street and Abbey Street. The central well was filled in to complete the first and second floor. More pillars were added for a mezzanine floor over most of the area of the original 1890's building. The work was undertaken in stages between the 1950's and 1975.

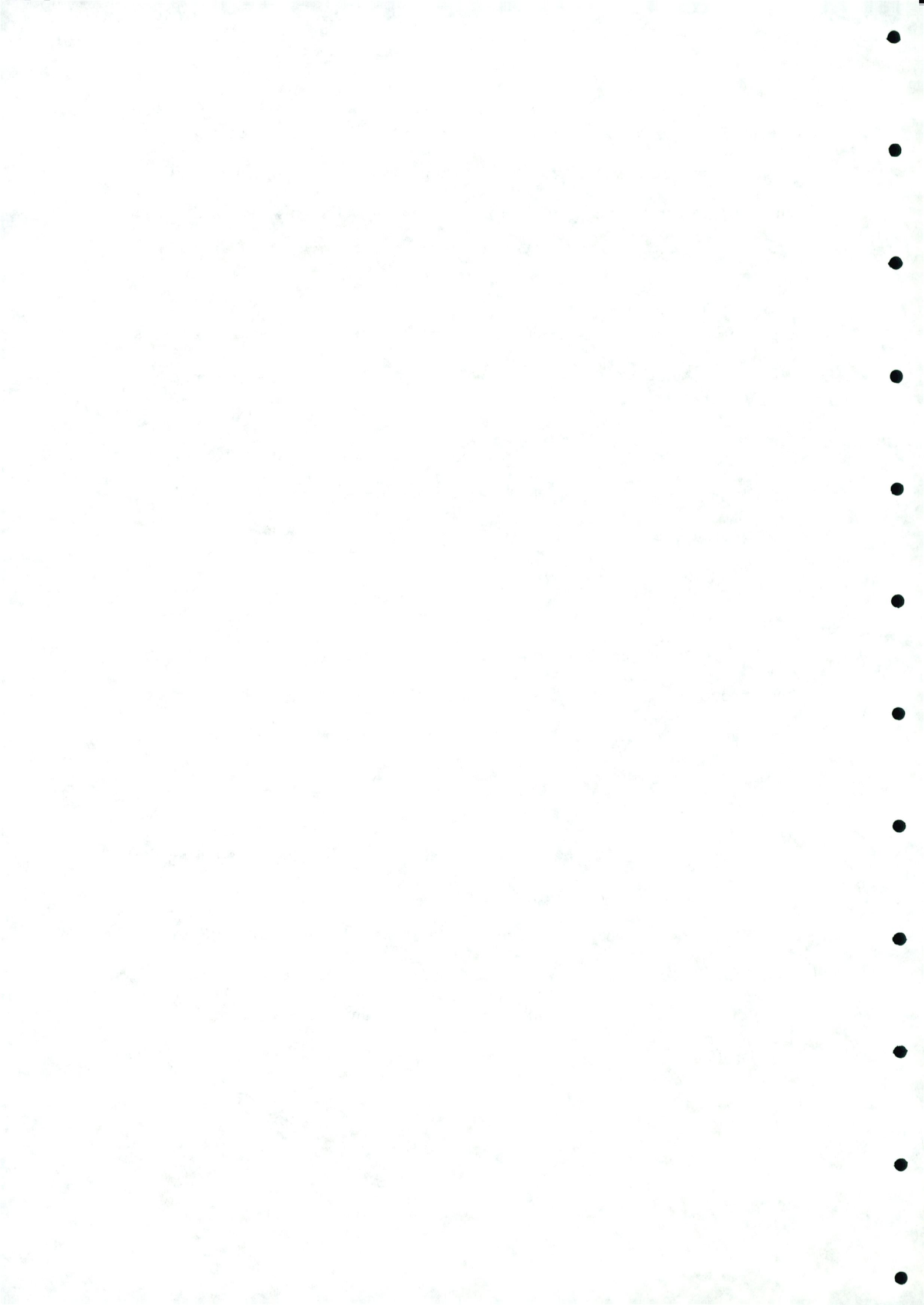
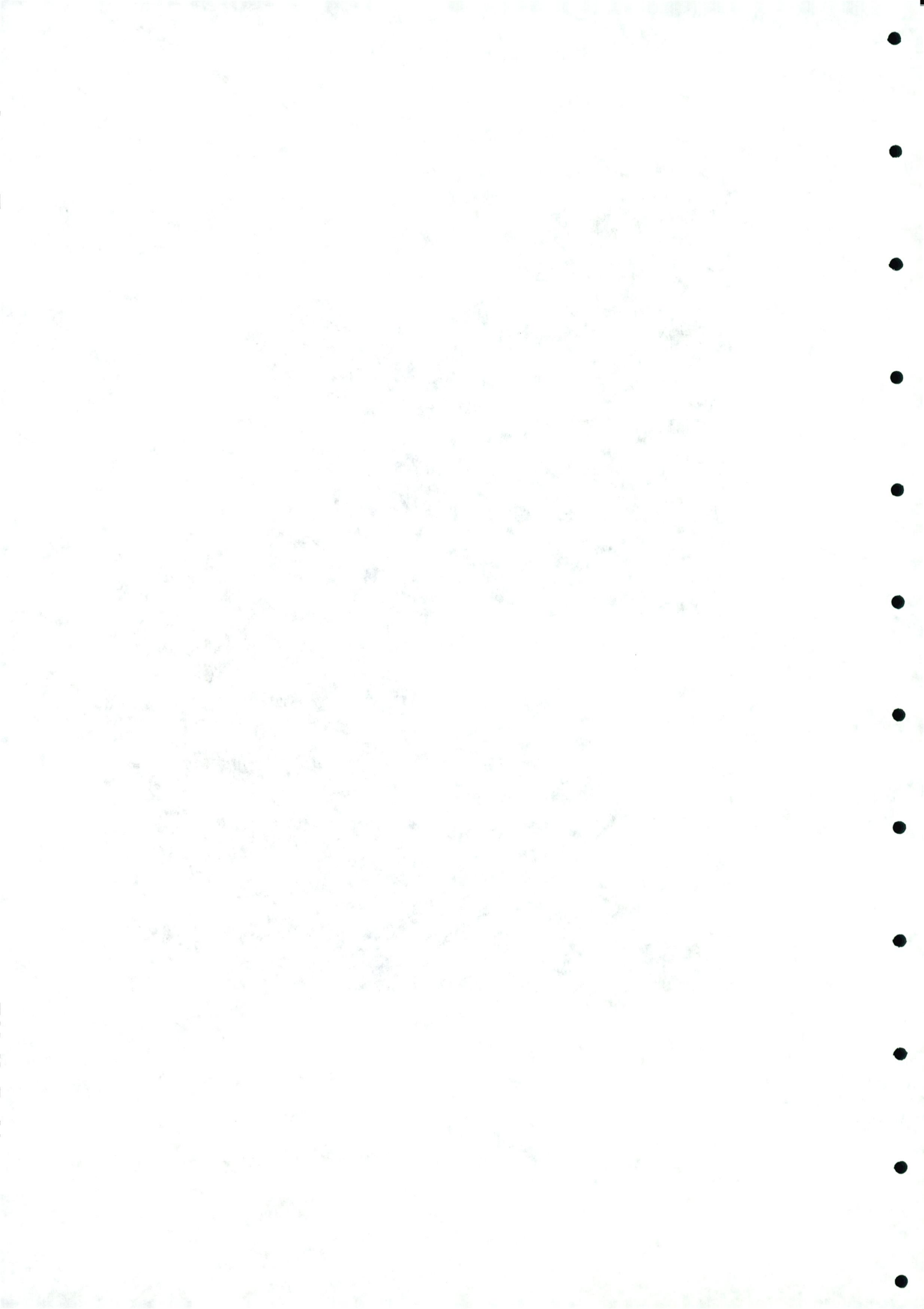
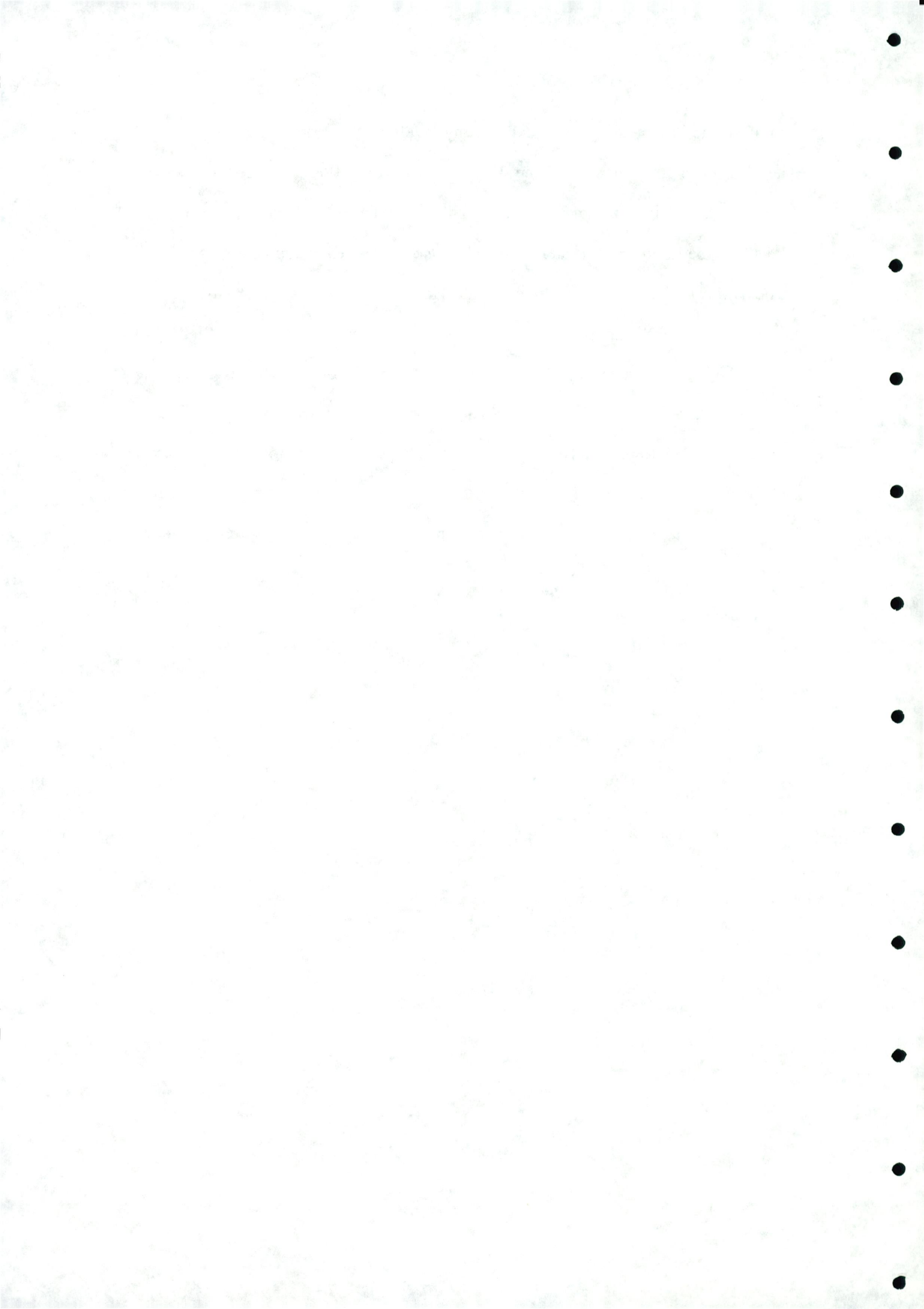




fig 18

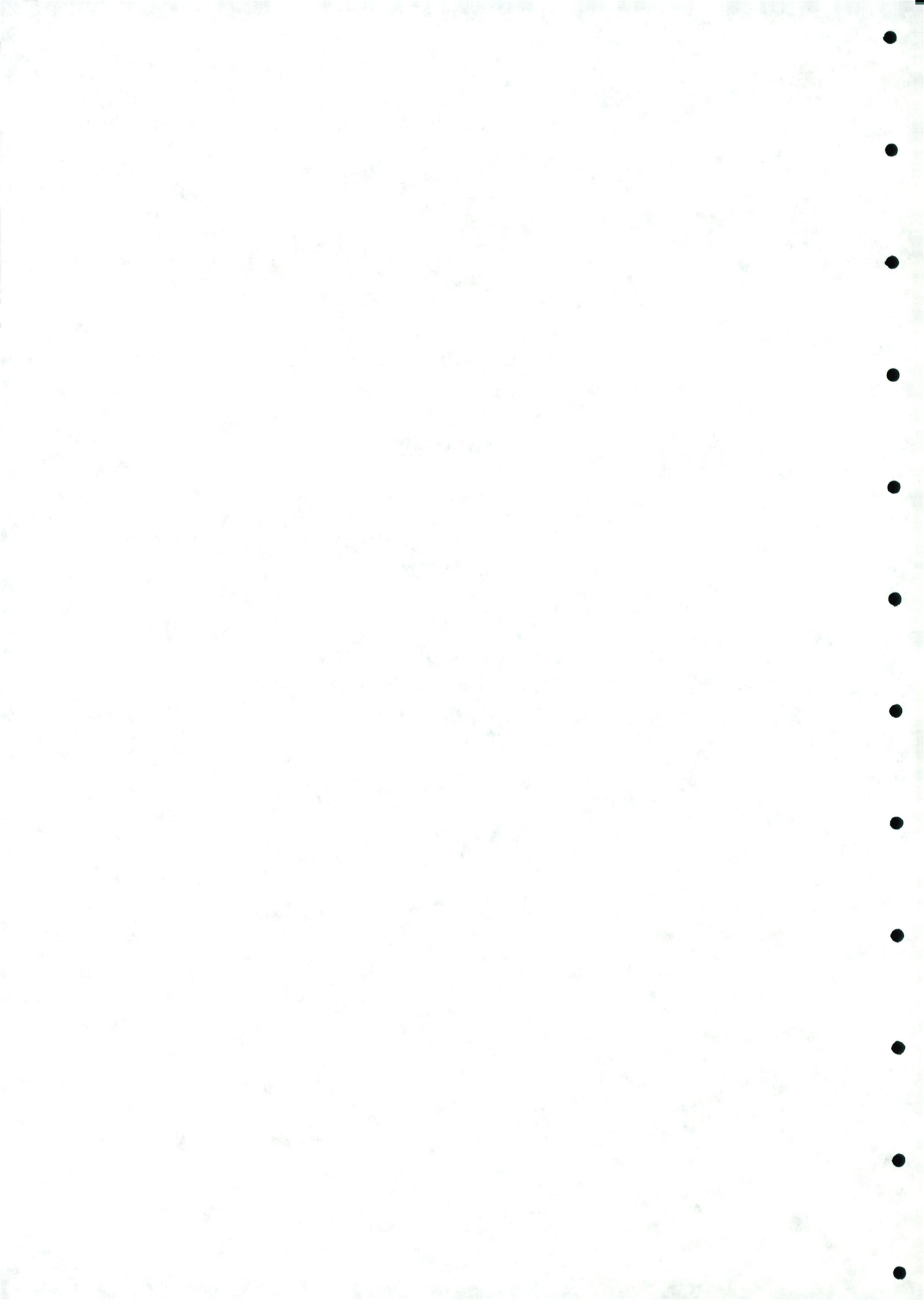


In 1985 the basement, ground and balcony levels of the 1890's building extended and linked in an L shape with the first, second and top floors along Henry Street. The new director, William Nesbitt, agreed to spend £100,000 on improving three levels of the building, but later accepted the six levels redevelopment as designed. The purpose was to keep together in the Henry Street/Abbey Street area all the retail trade which had spread out and back on the ground, first, second and third floors becoming a bit disbanded. The basement was cleared of wholesale and the cafe to make way for a retail 'lower ground floor'. The front window space on Henry Street had grown by half. The whole ground floor was devoted to retail trade most of the balcony level carried through to the wall of No. 7 Henry Street and was filled with a new larger cafe. Plans to redevleop and replan the entire premises have arisen in recent years, 1993 saw the beginning of major change which is still under development.



Chapter Two

Employees



Training & Apprentices

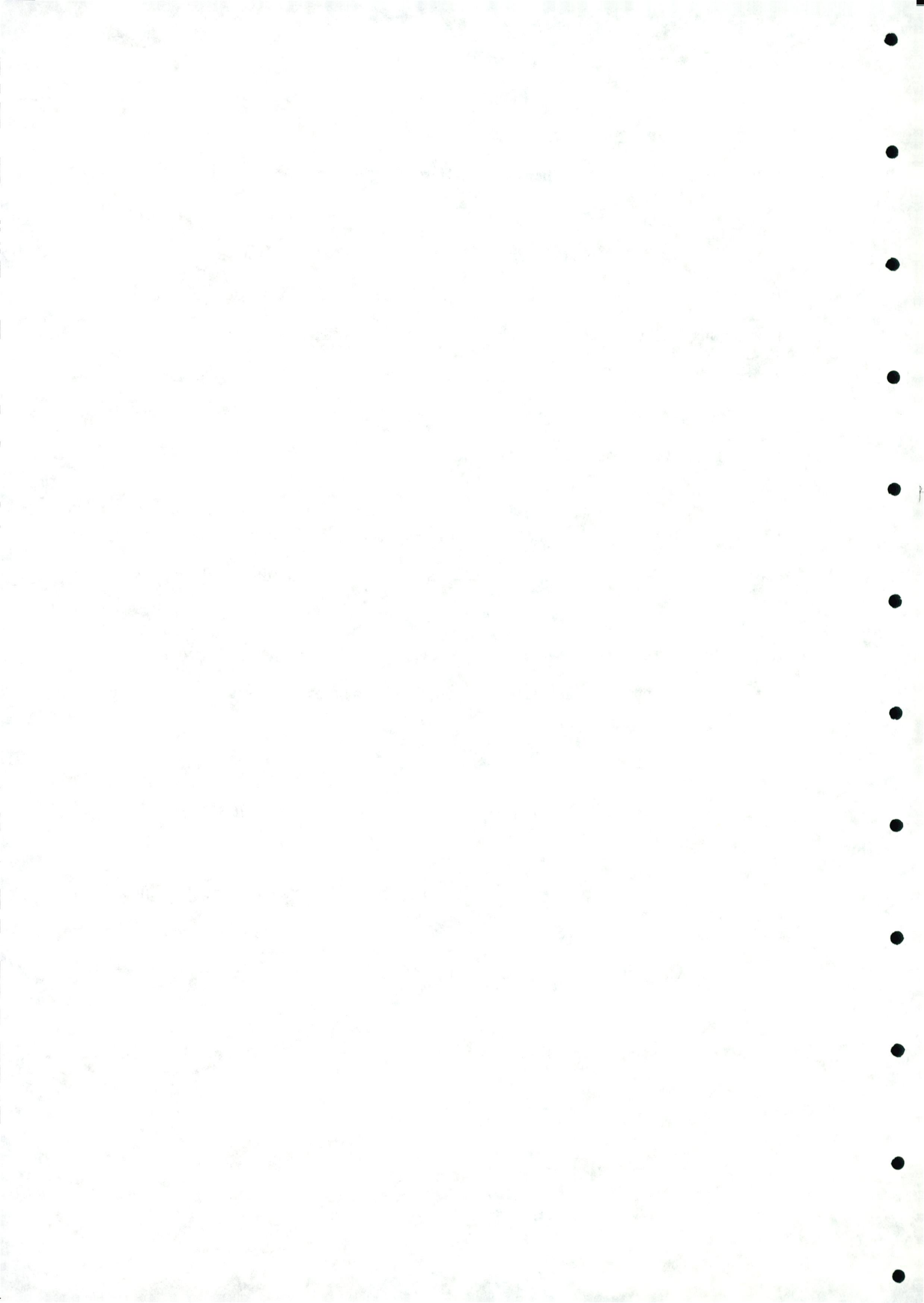
Since the establishment of the store, staff training and customer relations have always been very important to Arnotts. The store prides itself on having a good reputation concerning its staff. The staffs product - knowledge is a key factor in good service. Arnotts policy is to train an employee well in their particular area so their selling can be helped by their knowledge of and familiarity with the product. A current example of this would be when a new concession or product is introduced to the store, Arnotts will send the staff member intended for this area to the mother house (e.g. cosmetics company) for training.

Up until 1930 the staff in Arnotts had normally been recruited at the 'improver' stage, that is after serving three years as an apprentice in another shop. It was common practice for an apprentice to move on after they had finished their first three years. Smaller country shops as well as larger Dublin shops offered such initial apprenticeships. When asked his opinion of where to recruit apprentices William Nesbitt would say:

'from one of the hardier northern counties like Cavan' - (Nesbitt p. 197).

During the 1930's this practice fell off due to the reducing of staff in the difficult trading of the 1930's. However after the war Arnotts resumed the recruitment of apprentices whom they renamed trainees to suggest a fresh start:

'a useful source of promising young people was the families of our wholesale customers' - (Nesbitt p. 107).

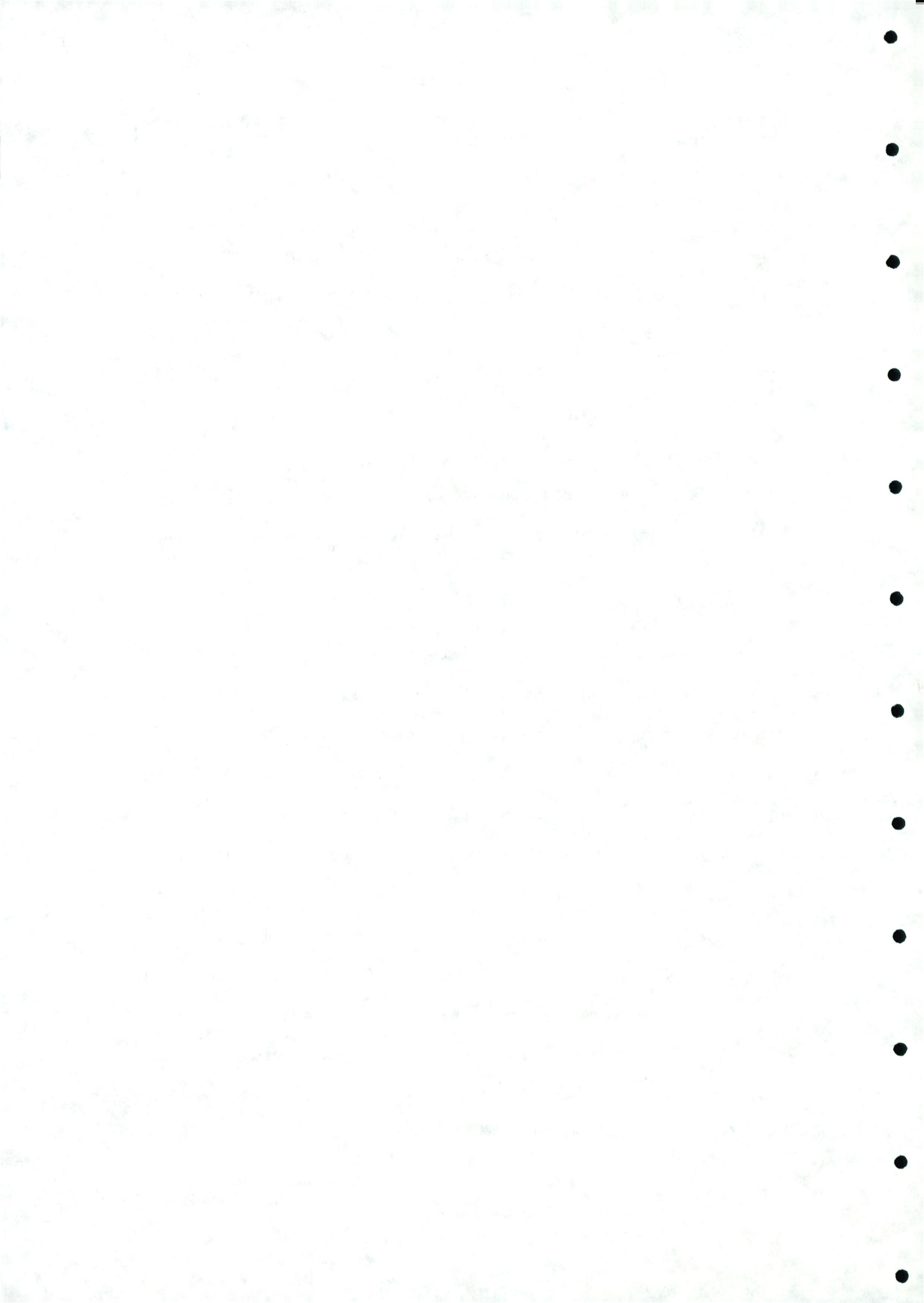


The families were known to Arnotts and the trainees, being brought up in the retail business, were already accustomed to it.

Post war Arnotts was an increasing business and they recruited up to twenty school leavers and trainees each year. These were between the ages of 16 and 18. Trainees learned about each department and this could be supplemented by attending the Parnell Square Vocational Education School, which offered a three-year day release course for trainees in the drapery trade. These courses were supported strongly by the leading department stores and some of the smaller shops until their numbers thinned out so much by development in the clothing trade in the 1970's that the leading stores decided it was more economical of valuable time to resume in-house training.

Trainees were often paid very little and sometimes nothing at all, however they often lived above the shop or rooms provided for them by the store. In the case of Arnotts few women trainees remained after marriage.

In 1938 the pension fund was set up. Arnotts was one of the first stores to introduce the pension and many companies over the next twenty years who did not, found themselves in difficulty over unfunded staff pension schemes. Pension schemes were a minimum of two pounds for men and thirty shillings a week for women. After forty years service on the basic rate. Graded contributions of equal size from the company and the member, were agreed up to a basic salary limit of £750 a year. Pensions are still available today however the worker is protected more by different unions like I.T.G.W.U. and S.I.P.T.U. who back the worker in trade disputes and other matters.

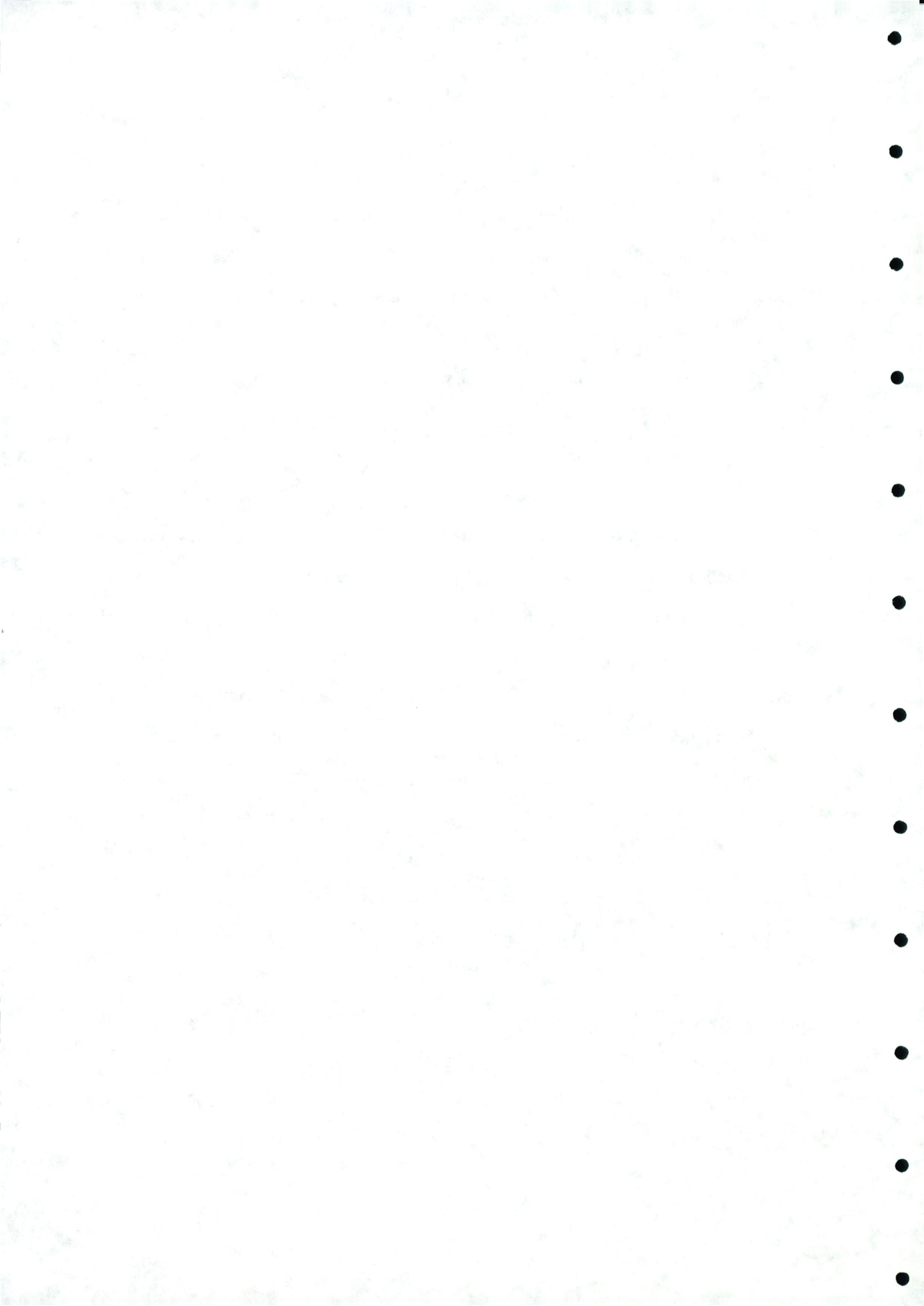


From the 1940's to the 1980's when it fizzled out, Arnotts also ran an exchange with staff in overseas department stores. A lack of fluency in European languages limited the benefit for the Irish staff. However reports in Nesbitt's book tell us that students coming to Arnotts from European countries were never handicapped by inadequate English. Arnotts still view this as a benefit to their staff, according to Bill Kelly and do not rule out participating in such staff exchanges in the future.

An Employee's Experience

My father, Brain Tucker worked in Arnotts during the late 1950's and 1960's. Having left school in 1952 at 16 to get a job. He was first employed at Clery's on O'Connell Street, where he was an apprentice. His apprenticeship in Clery's involved training in many areas of the department store but mostly in retail fashions. After three years, like most apprentices he moved on to Arnotts where he was to continue his training. Although he had already served for three years as an apprentice. Arnotts liked to continue training the employee to their in-store system of service and selling. This time training was limited to a specialised department. Mr. Tucker worked in the wholesale shirts department and factory where he learned the basics in clothes manufacturing and wholesale trading. His starting salary in 1956 was one pound seven shillings and eight pence a week but after a short time he moved onto commission.

After a year and a half of working in the wholesale shirts department, at the age of twenty he decided to travel for nine months. Upon returning to Ireland he sought his job back at Arnotts which he eventually got. This time he was employed in the women's coats and suits department, which were not made on the premises but by

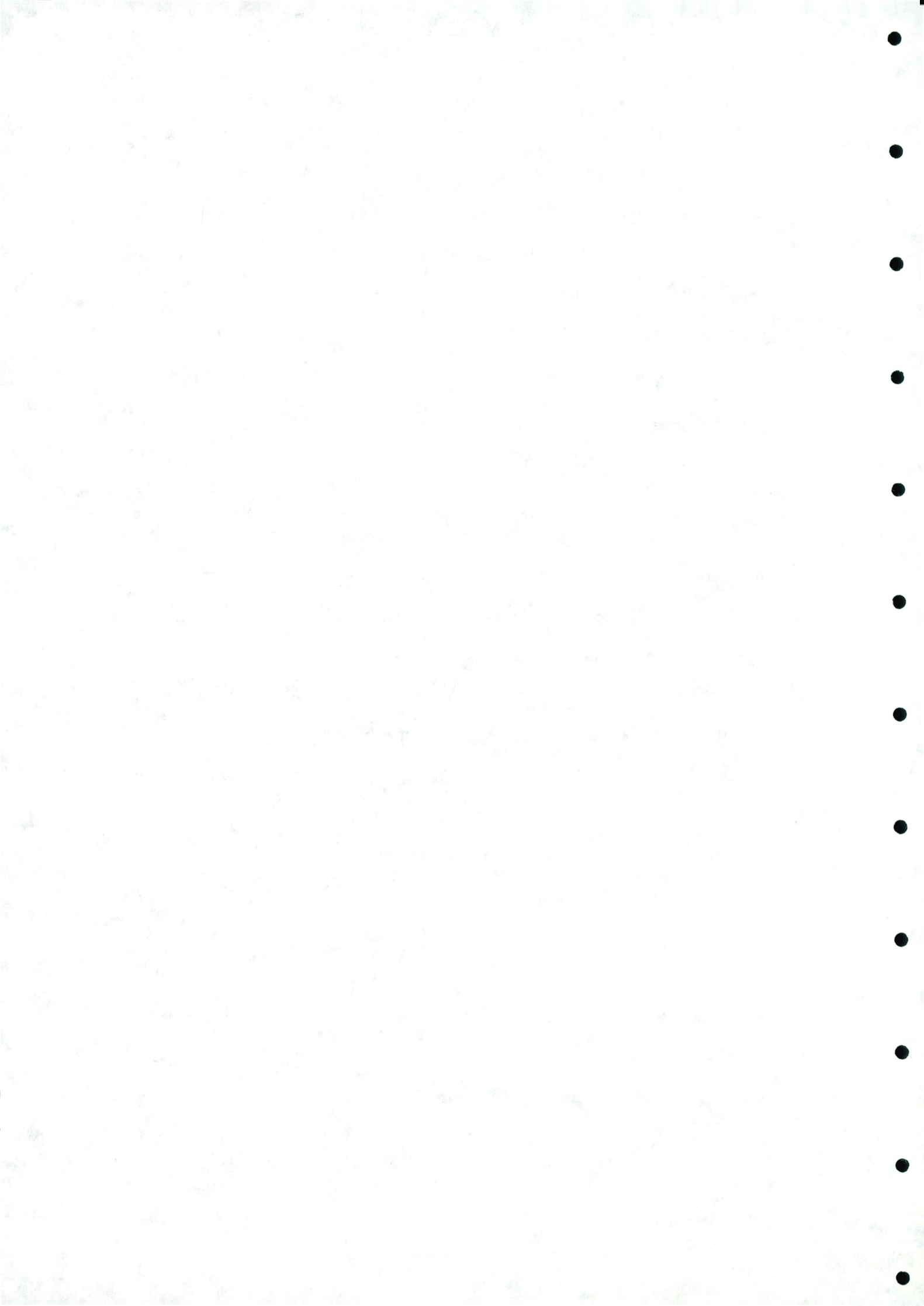


C.M.T. (cut, make, trim). His job entailed working on the road selling wholesale coats and suits to different shops around Ireland in a van which Arnotts supplied. As well as his wages he received an allowance to cover costs of travelling and accommodation. He left the business in 1964 and pursued a career in the fashion industry where he remains today as a manufacturer in ladies clothes. Arnotts currently stock his garments.

Training Today

Training policies in Arnotts today have changed little. However the formal apprentice/trainee system is no longer used. In-house training is still required and Arnotts continue to train employees into their system of service and selling. Arnotts still believe in promotion from within and after four years promotion is possible. There are three levels in each department; staff charge-hand and buyer, as well as many part-time assistants. The buyer and charge-hand will train the new employee to the instore systems. As there are a lot of concession shops within the store, the senior members of the department are often sent to receive specialised training in a particular area, to the UK or France where the store have connections for example fashions in the UK and French cosmetic firms. A good example of this would be in the cosmetics area where product knowledge is most important.

As well as in-house training at the early stages of an employee's career within Arnotts, they promote the continuation of education and the company will pay for college when a degree or diploma is sought, unlike many other businesses throughout the world Arnotts does not then hold the employee to a contract of

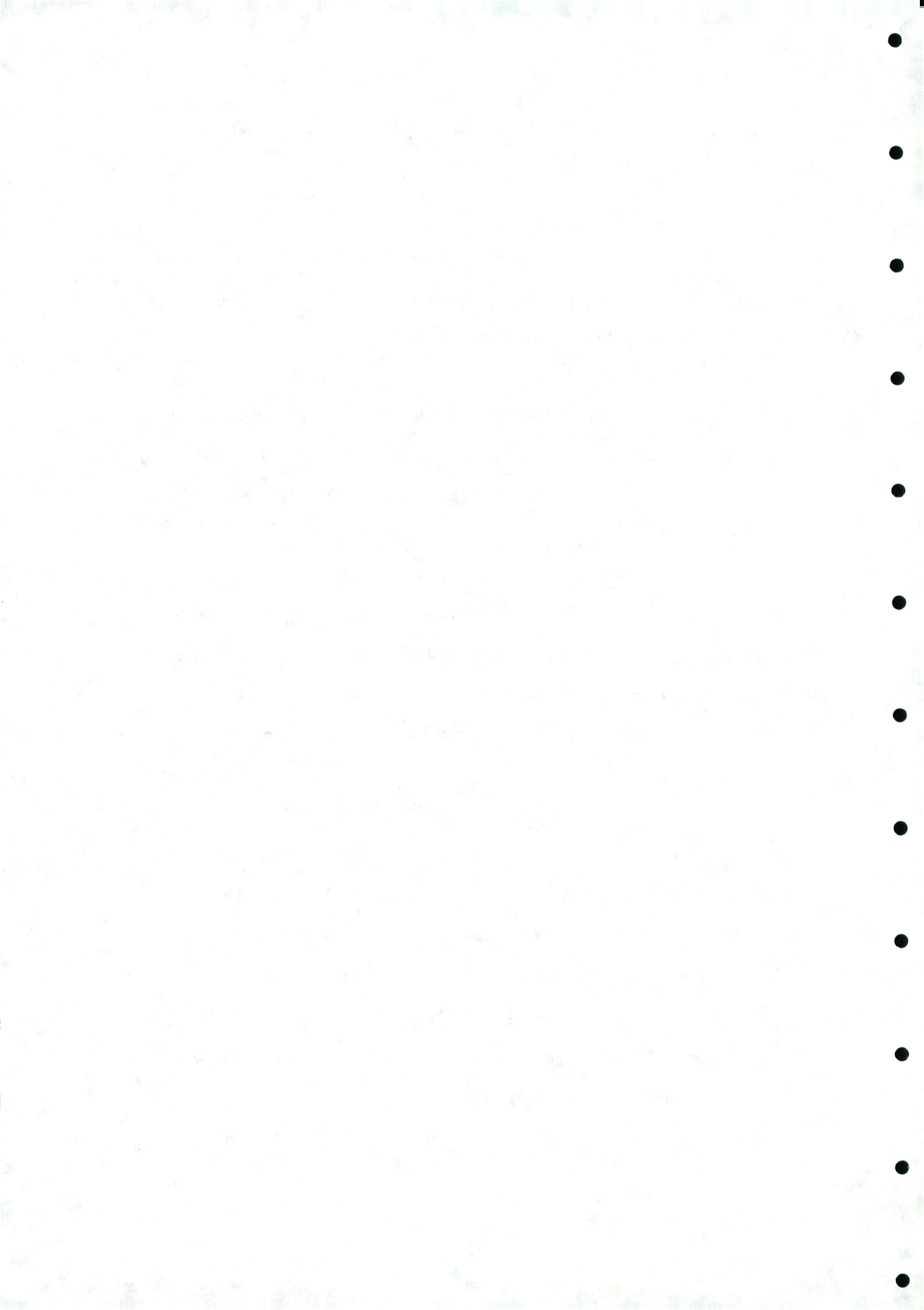


employment. However as promotion from within is advocated many stay with the firm.

Today the status of women in the work place is much better than in the last 100 years. Women no longer leave employment after marriage, and equality in the workplace has much improved. Arnotts are no different to any other department store in this regard. There is one woman on the board of six directors. The ratio of men to women throughout the store is about fifty/fifty. In fact one could say that the tables have turned as women can move from department to department with marginally greater ease than men. As it is still difficult for men to work for example in ladies lingerie or hosiery.

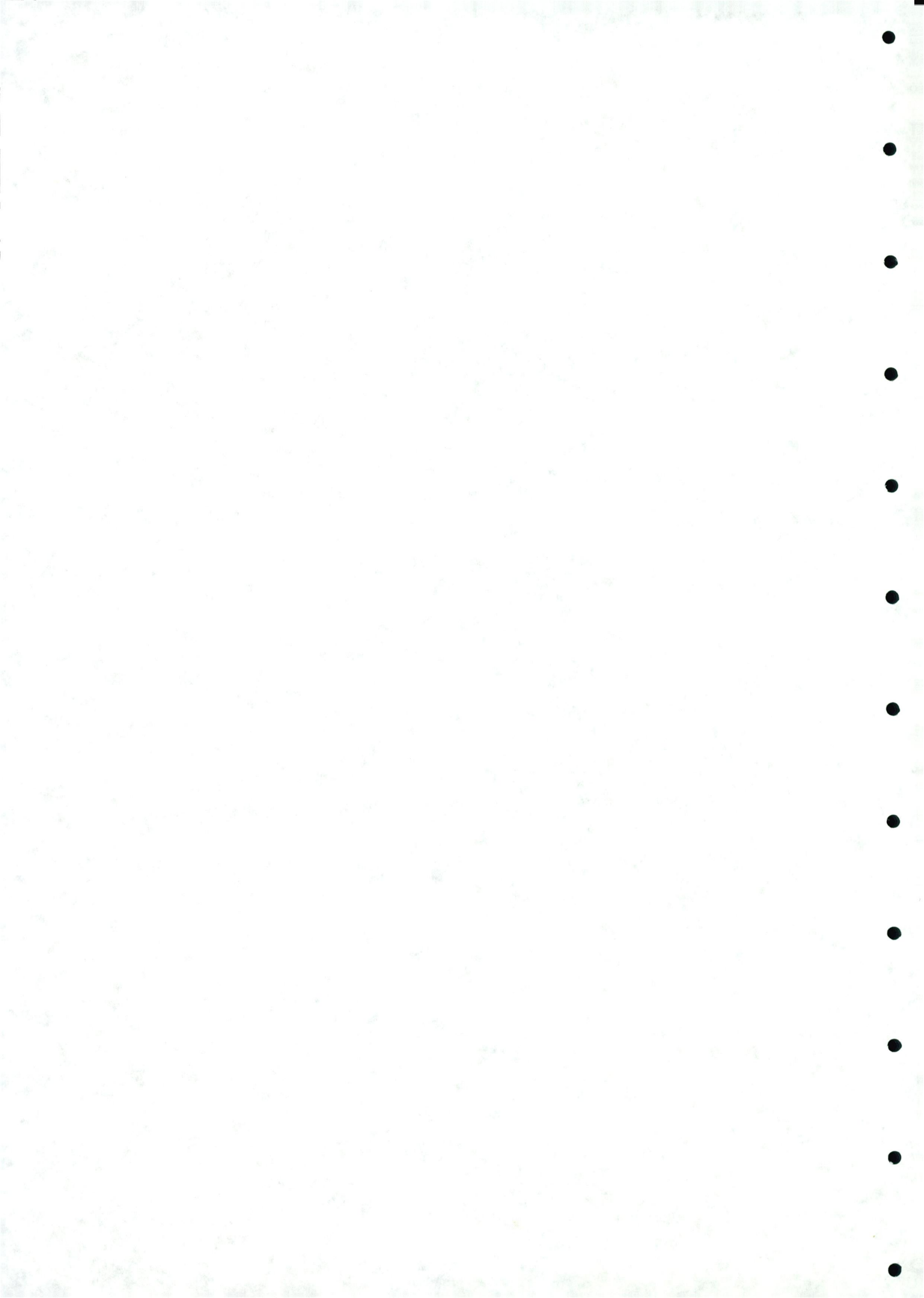
As well as today's independent pension funds and union support for employees Arnotts also offer other perks. In 1975 Arnotts provided cars for their executive directors and other managers. A healthy group scheme with VHI was established where a discount is available generally two weeks paid sick leave is the normal allowance.

The staff and staff-policies have changed in keeping with social and political developments since the establishment of the store in 1843. One change is that there are now many different levels of employee. This has come about since e.g. the full day Saturday trading which came in 1977 and the longer opening hours and late night shopping in recent years, as well as Sunday and bank holiday opening over Christmas. These changes have made way for more part-time and Saturday-only staff, so staff can rotate easily over the opening hours of the store to give the best service to all their shoppers.



Chapter Three

Arnotts Other Interests: Financial and Promotional

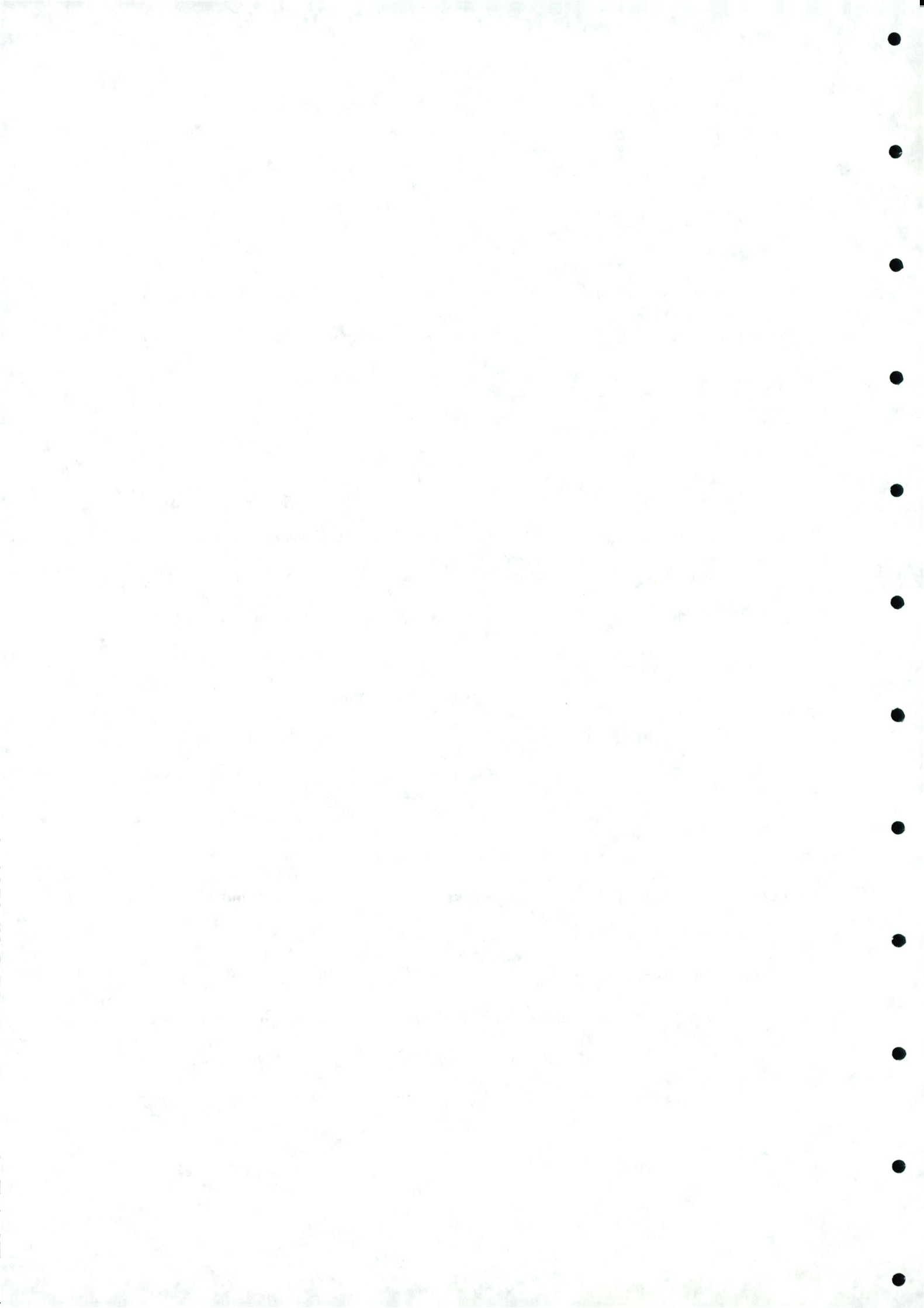


Up until recent years Arnotts have always traded as a retail and wholesale store. They have also had various manufacturing interests and numerous other investments, from sports sponsorship to film investments.

In-house manufacturing has been an important part of Arnotts trading, and although men's 'made to measure suits' is the only one to remain in operation, many other businesses have been financed and established by Arnotts.

Ballet International

Ballet International is probably the best example of this and the most successful of these subsidiaries. During the difficulties of trade and purchase of materials of the 1940's Arnotts regular supplier of lingerie had run into financial difficulties so Arnotts decided to produce their own. Having no licence to manufacture lingerie Arnotts had to buy their materials retail. Linen was the primary material used and it was often purchased in the form of napkins or as tablecloth. A Mrs. Buchatter was appointed to the position of designer and she was supplied with two machinists to work in a small work room on Henry Street. Unknown in the lingerie trade they had to scavenge for materials. Cotton sheets, parachute silk and any retail fabric that became available. Hacksaw blades filed down were used as corset steels. A local Dublin firm, working out of the Liberties and known as Elliotts produced hand woven fabrics for men's neckties and scarves and agreed to supply Arnotts with fabric for lingerie production. The fabric for underwear was usually dyed as 'tea rose' colour which was popular at the time. However weaving in Dublin was a dying trade and Elliotts could only supply for a few years. Arnotts more upmarket competitors such as Brown Thomas and Switzers were importing

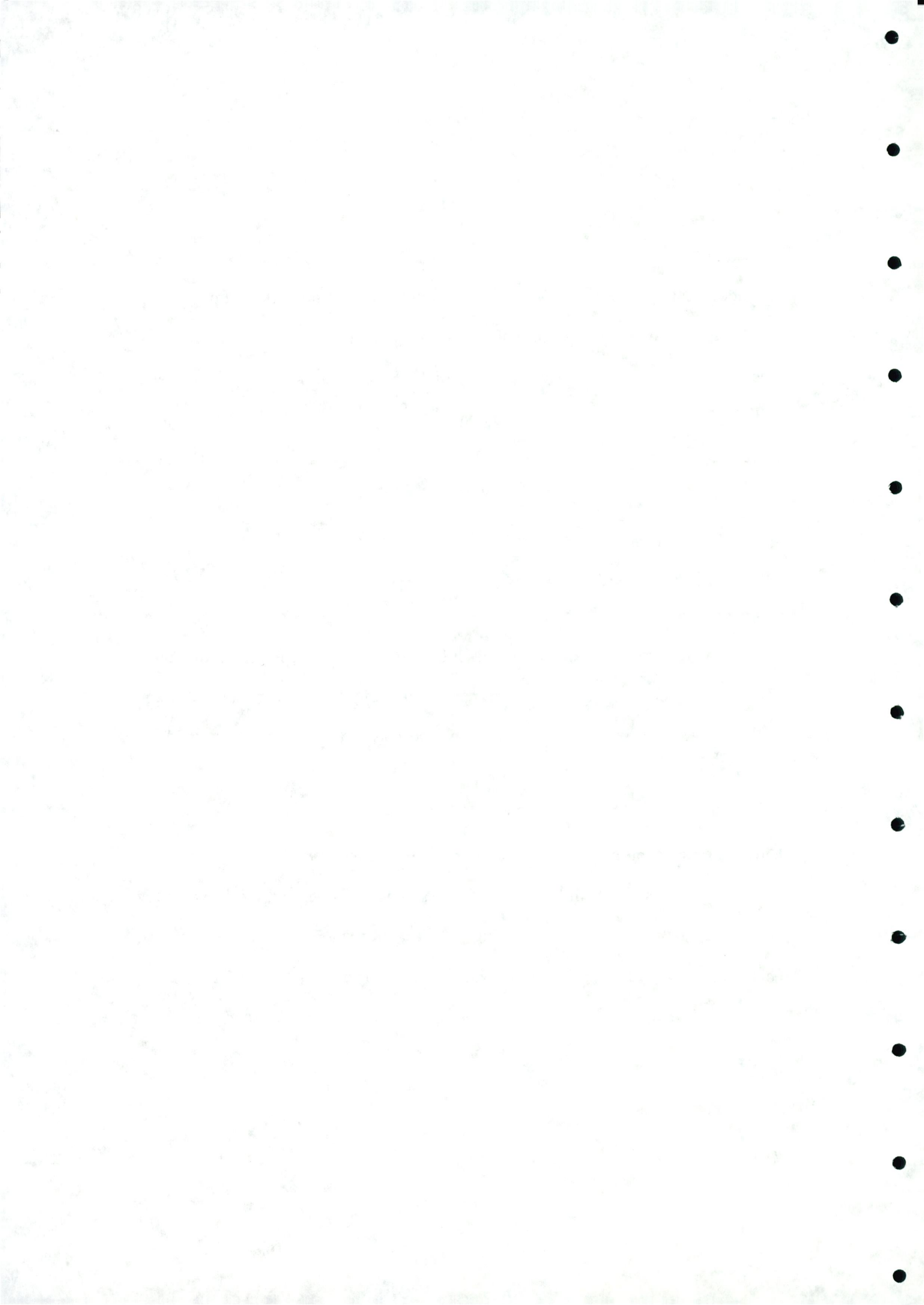


fine lingerie which would have been purchased by the well-off consumer, while Arnotts catered to the middle market.

Production in the workrooms increased and Arnotts were wholesaling their lingerie around Ireland. However it was hard to sell lingerie under the name Arnotts especially to shops which were not usually Arnott's customers. A solution to this was to register it as a separate company. In 1948 Arnott's lingerie workroom was called Walter Edwards Ltd. The company grew and moved to Dominick Street Upper where they began to produce ladies blouses and children's dresses alongside their lingerie production.

Duty on imports in 1957 was high as Ireland was in a recession. Few foreign companies could afford to import goods. A large English manufacture asked Arnotts to produce their brand for the Irish market. In exchange for one third equity of their company. Walter Edwards received the sole rights to manufacture and distribute 'gossard' lingerie. With this new boost in production, they dropped the production of blouses and dresses.

The 1960's saw the company's name change to 'Ballet Internationals'. Sixty per cent of production was being exported. With the continuing growth of the company 'Ballet' (Fig 19) was moved to the Finglas Industrial Estate and a larger premises. This new factory is large and modern with a facility for training. Ballet International produce their own range of lingerie as well as production for other brand names.



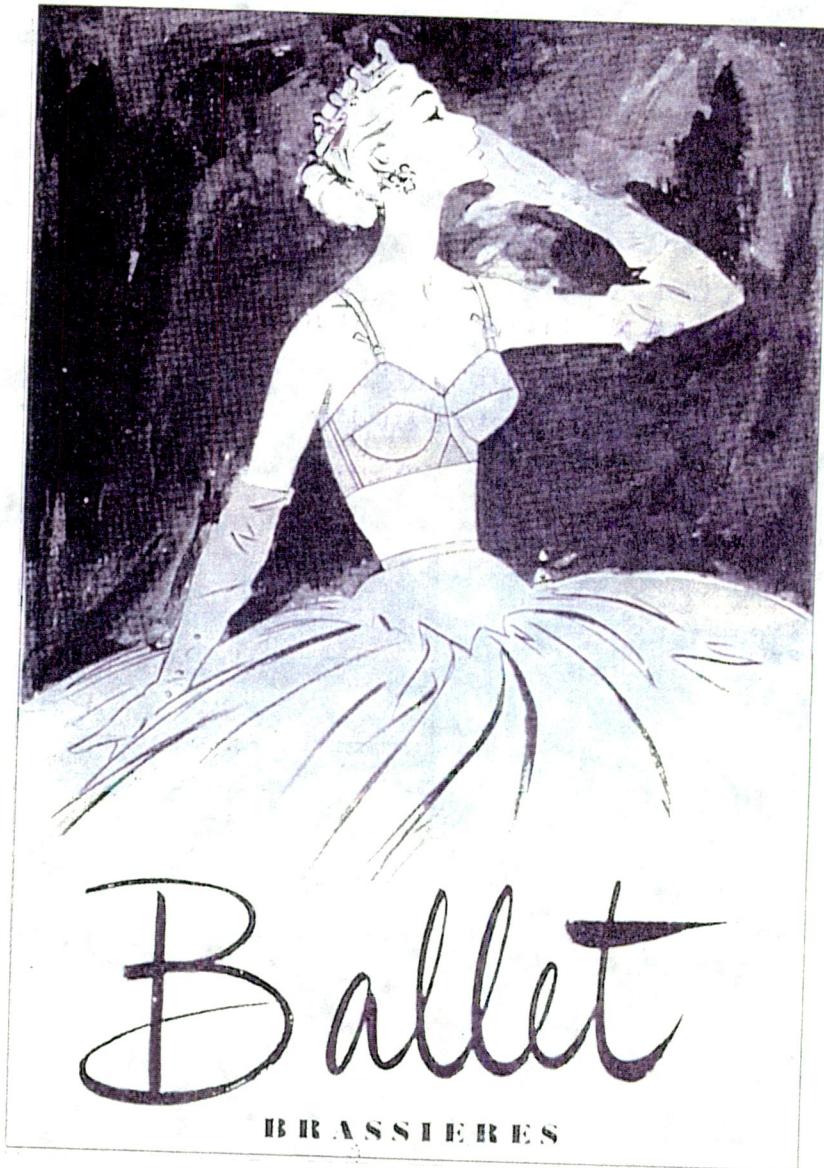
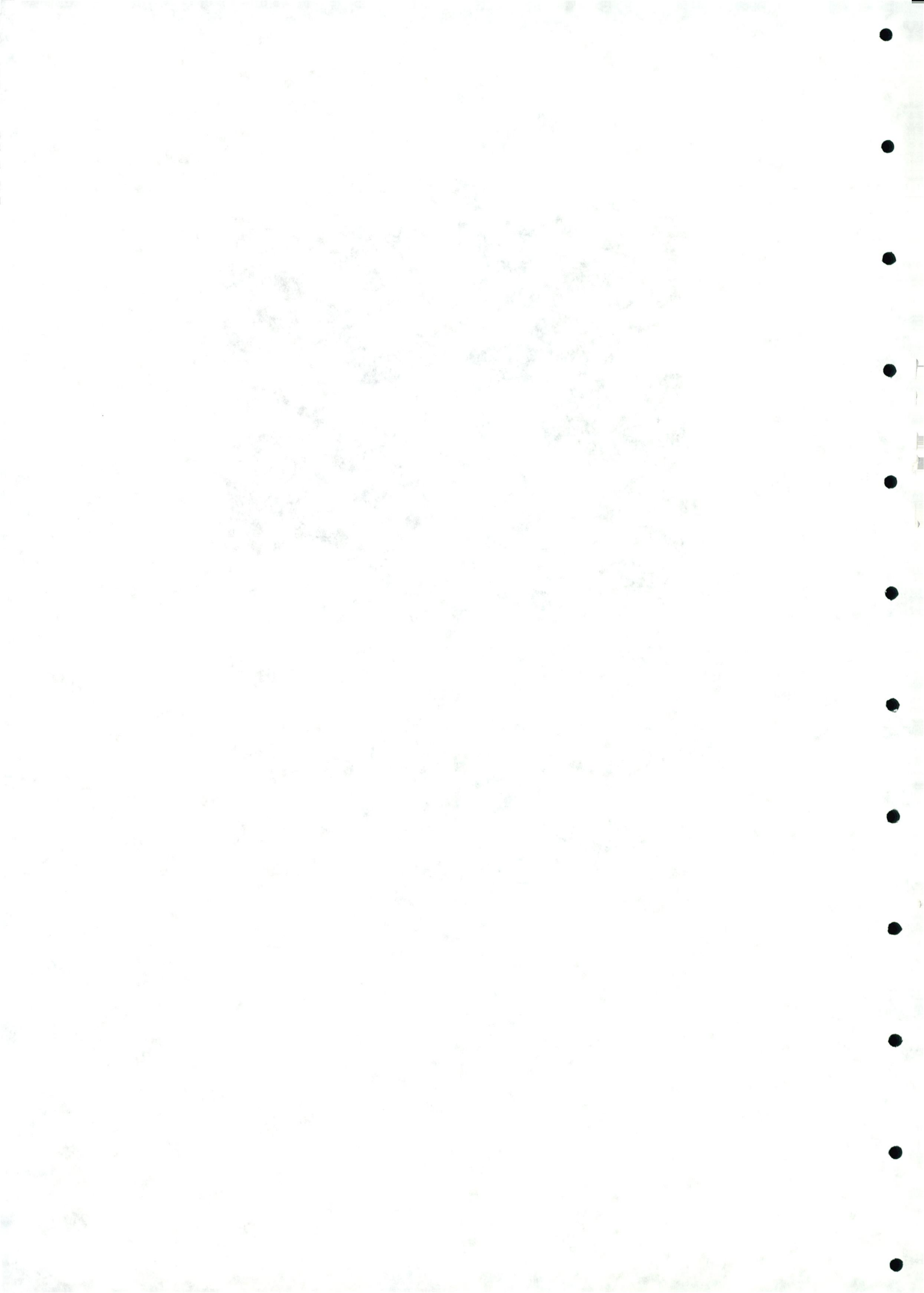


fig 19



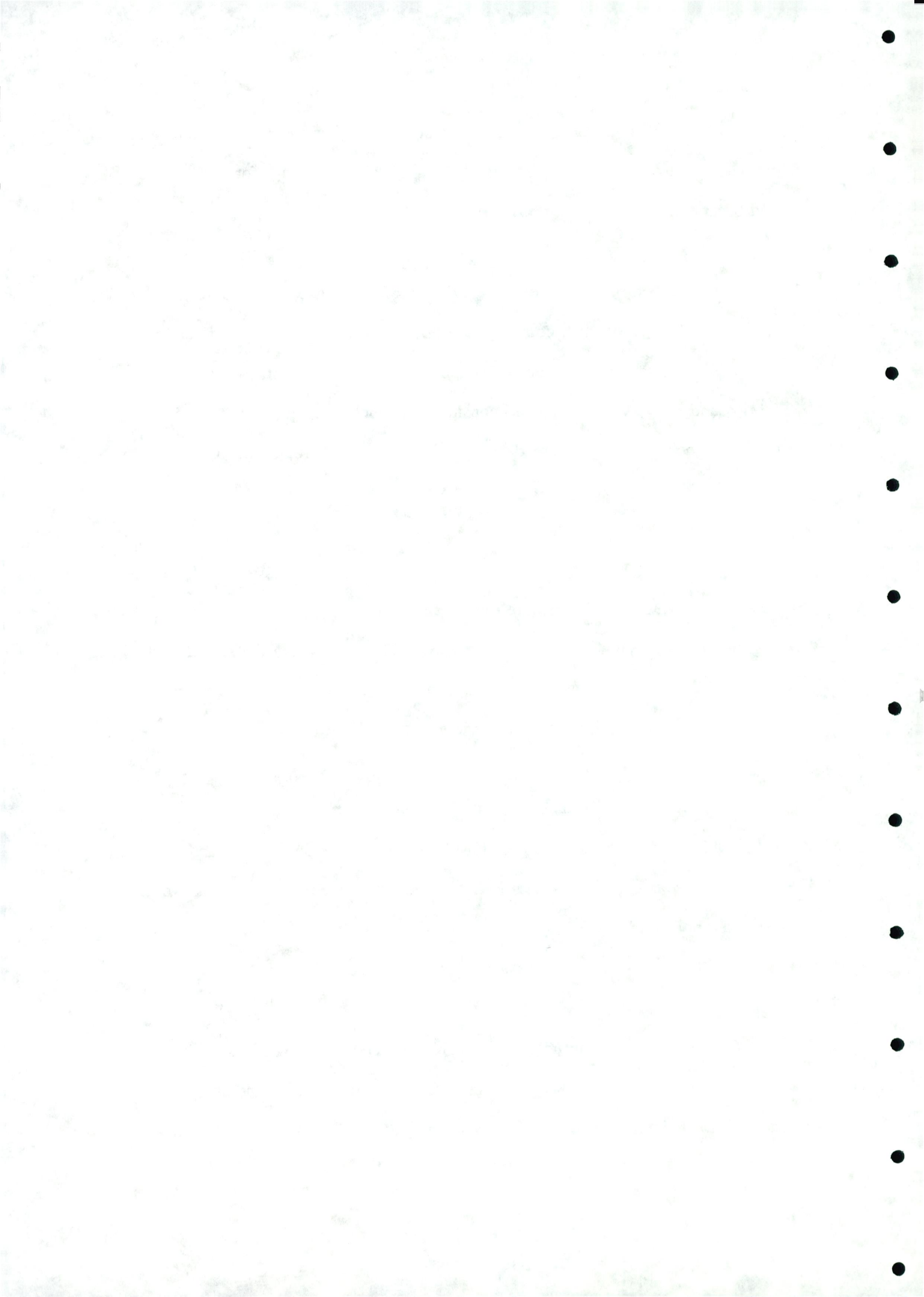
Courtauld's took over Gossard in 1958 just a year after their association with Ballet. By the end of the 1970's Arnotts bought back their shares from Courtaulds and became a wholly owned subsidiary of Arnotts.

With the reduction of wholesale and manufacturing Arnotts sold 'Ballet International' to a Swedish company and now trade as part of this international group. 'Ballet International' remain a supplier of lingerie to Arnotts. However their fabrics and designs have changed considerably since their establishment due to changing social and fashion trends. Ballet now produce a broad range of lingerie, from slip dresses, night dresses to underwired bras, sports bras and underwear (Fig. 20).

Arnotts still cater for the middle market as well as high fashion lingerie and lingerie is probably one of the most diverse departments within the store. Fabrics include silks, lace, stretch fabrics, lycra, nylon, cotton, and the various other elastics and fastenings involved in lingerie production.

'Milne Models,' registered in 1935, manufactured women's blouses and dresses as well as 'highland' knitwear. Also established in 1935, producing ladies and men's knitwear, were two other business financed and established by Arnotts. However they were not as successful as 'Ballet', but made a steady profit until their closure in the 1980's when Arnotts moved away from wholesale.

Manufacturing was not the only other business interest held by Arnotts. Arnotts financed 'Allied Couriers' a company established for the moving and securing of cash. Until their merger with Brinks-Matt in 1986 'Allied Couriers' were losing



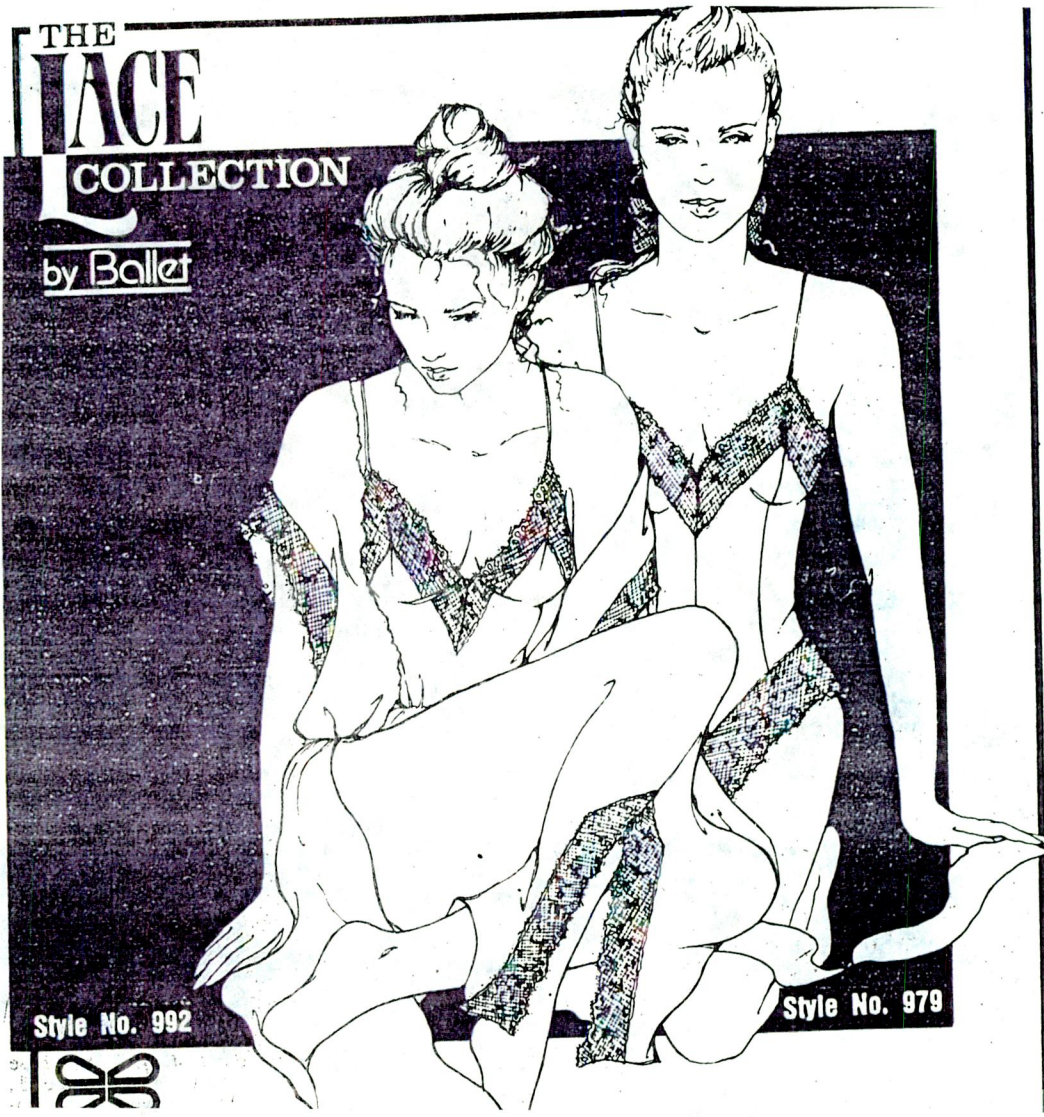
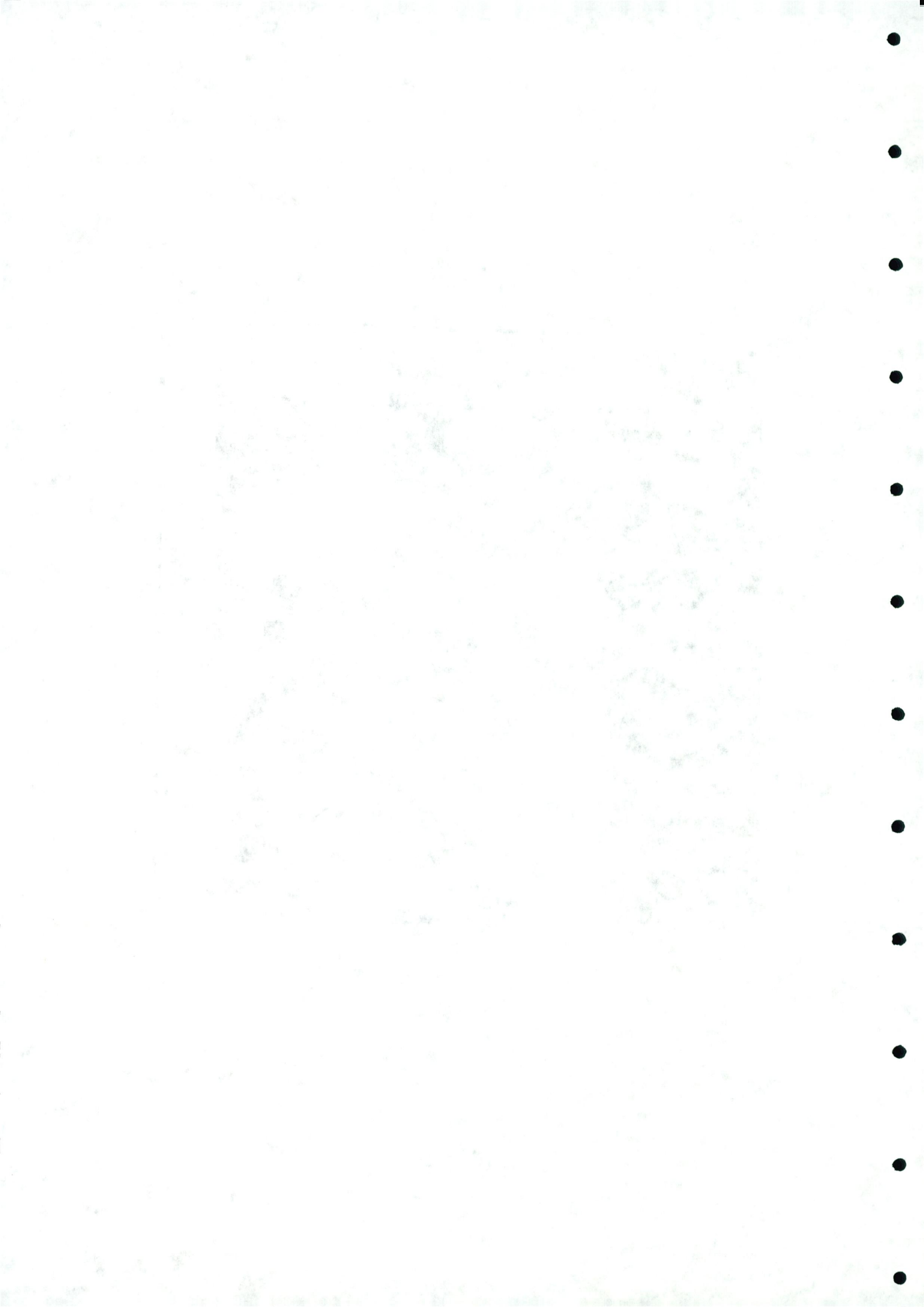


fig 20



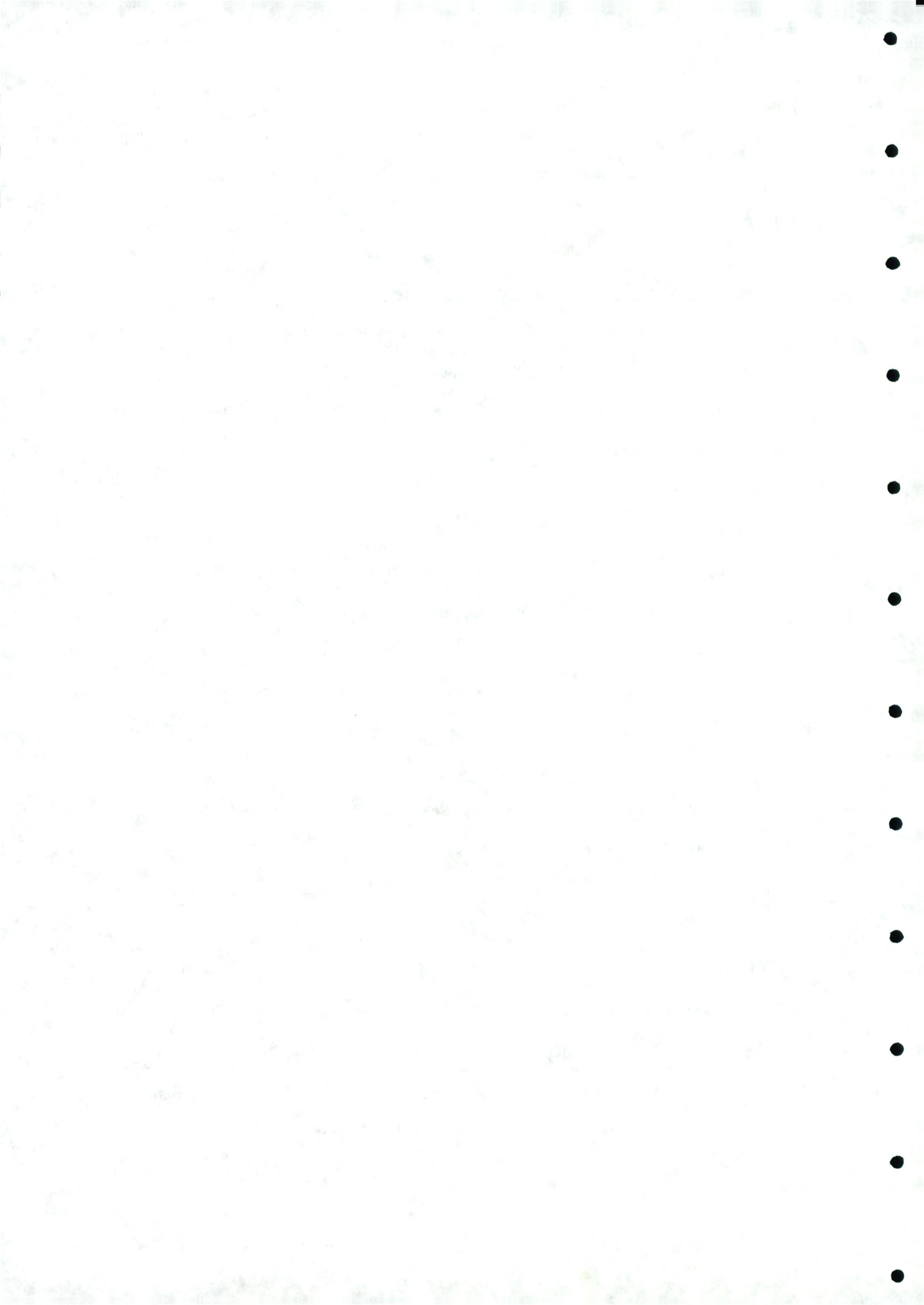
money. Now known as 'Brinks-Allied' they have returned to profit and Arnotts' current financial statement suggest 'Brinks-Allied' will continue to improve.

Expansion: Acquisition of other Retail Outlets

The 1960's saw Arnotts expanding again but not on Henry Street. The opportunity arose for Arnotts to sell retail in two other areas of the city. Grafton Street and North Earl Street. This would give them the ability to reach a broader range of customer in Dublin city (Fig 21).

William Nesbitt was offered 83 per cent of the ordinary shares of Boyers & Co. Limited North Earl Street, located just off the main thoroughfare of O'Connell Street, and Talbot Street, another shopping street. The purchase of this small department store would provide an opening to the customer who shopped on this side of the Liffey. The other directors were surprised at the offer as the nett profits in Boyers had virtually disappeared. The buy went ahead and it took a year to complete the change of ownership. At the time of purchase Boyers consisted of eleven departments and eleven buyers. Seen as a business starved of capital, Arnotts got to work at getting the small store back on its feet. A shoe department was opened as well as a restaurant.

By 1970 Boyers sales had passed £1 million, the departments grew to 21 including the cafe. Twelve of the buyers from Henry Street were also buying for Boyers. To make room for these new departments, Arnotts bought No. 17 North Earl Street and extended the frontage onto the street. The open yard at the back and neighbouring buildings which open onto Cathedral Street were incorporated to



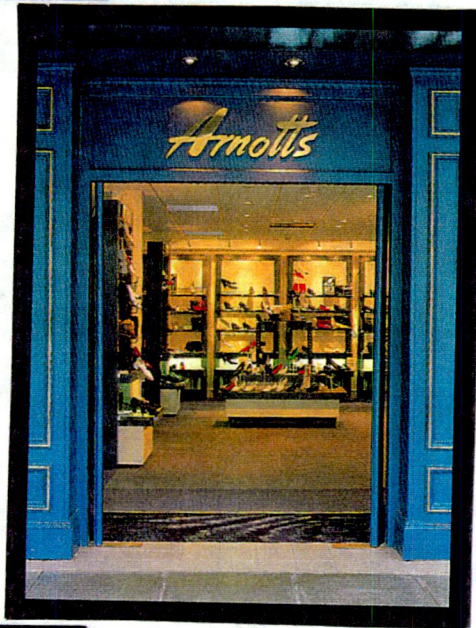
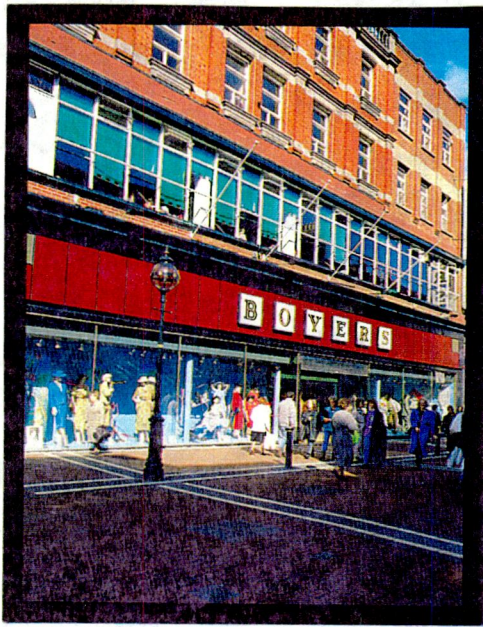
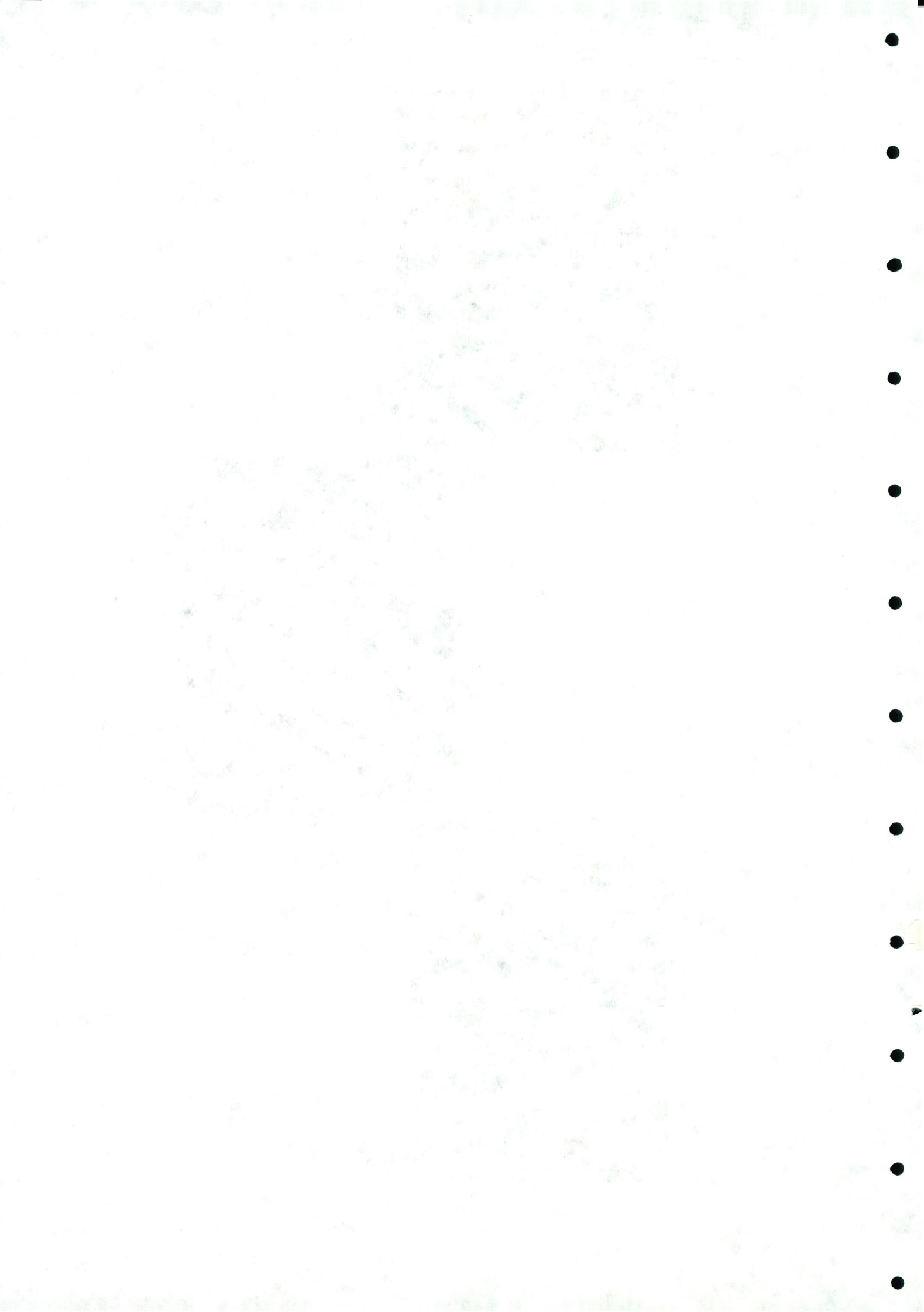


fig 21

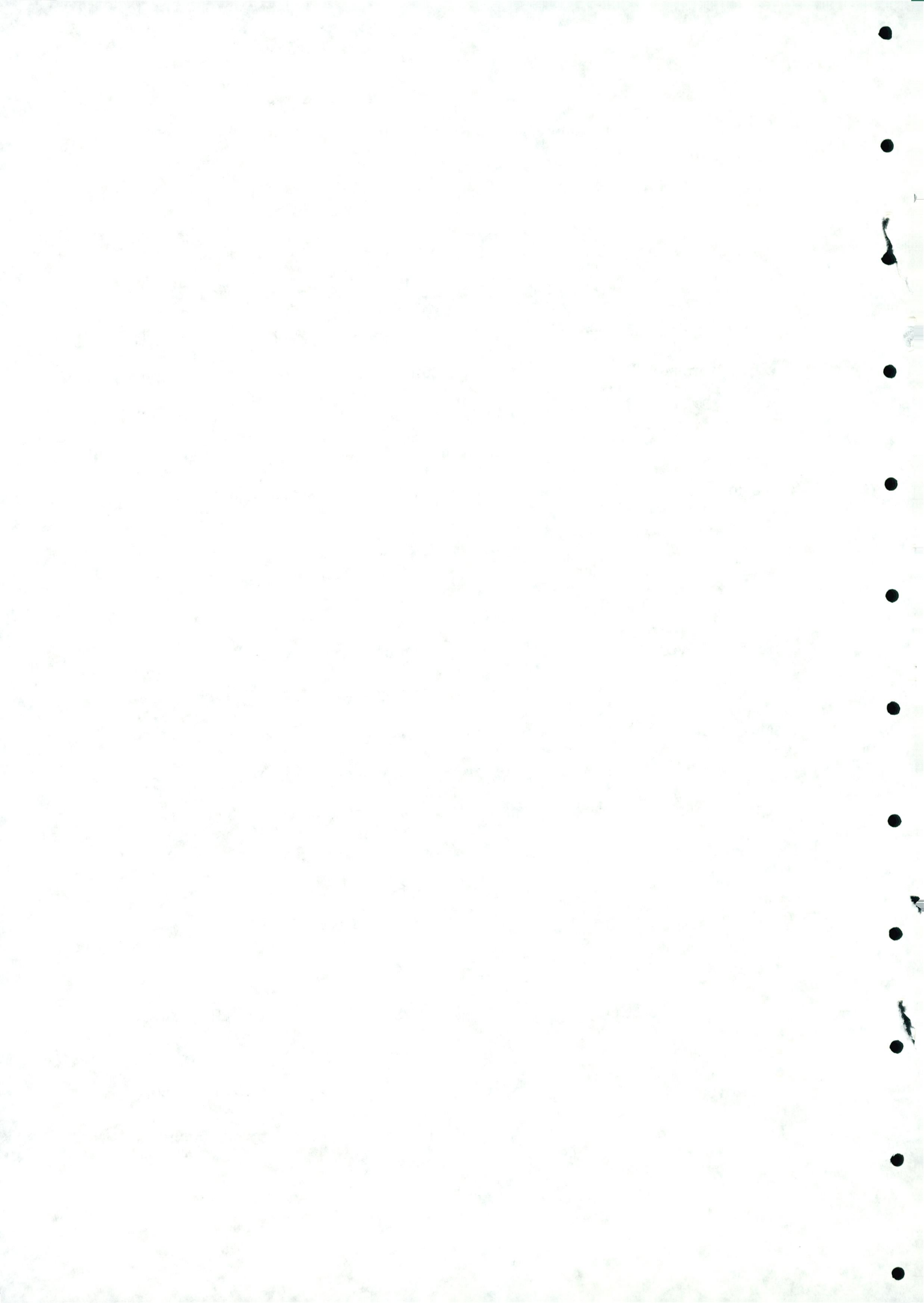


achieve a rectangular ground floor and customer flow from North Earl Street to Cathedral Street.

Around the same time as the purchase of Boyers and Co. Limited a premises on Grafton Street became available. An outlet on the street regarded as a fashion mecca for Dubliners would appeal to southside shoppers who did not cross the Liffey. formally 'West's' Jewellers, the building was purchased for £120,00 plus fees. The conversion of the building cost as much again because of the huge job of digging out the massive strong room from the basement. The new basement then had to be tanked to protect it from the stream which runs under Grafton Street. Cost also included extending the first floor from front to back. The rebuilding of new stairs and a lift to all floors.

It was believed Grafton Street was a different area and needed a different buying team. Vivian Dudgean, who was the first general manager carefully picked his sales team particularly the assistant managers of each department who worked closely with the buyers. The Grafton Street store was opened in May 1966 with a near riot by model Jean Shrimpton. Shrimpton had shot to fame in 1965 as a result of wearing the first mini skirt to the race's in Australia. Thousands of people flocked to the store to get a glimpse of the model.

Selling only fashion and accessories, the strongest of the twelve departments were women's outwear, separates and shoes. By 1970 sales in Grafton Street were just short of £5 million. The management of Arnotts, Grafton Street was taken over in 1974 by William (Bill) Kelly, who had come to the notice of John Doody in the man's shop in Henry Street. He had shown a talent for promotions



combined with a strong feeling for security. By 1981 Grafton Street's trade was doing well in a building which had been extended by the addition of No. 104 Grafton Street.

Even though Arnott's fashion gallery on Grafton Street was doing well, it still found it hard to compete with other high fashion stores on Grafton Street. The introduction of the River Island Clothing Company from the UK which rent ground floor and basement space from Arnotts, attracted a younger customer and helped reassociate Arnotts name with main-stream fashion.

Public Relations

'Now be believe that shopping should also be entertainment, even theatre.

With more space available in Henry Street we realised that the city had no obvious place for events or exhibitions. Where better than in Henry Street? declared Bill Kelly" - (Nesbitt, p. 215, 1983).

With 240,000 people passing Arnotts front doors every day Bill Kelly saw the opportunity of attracting potential shoppers into ~~the~~ store by enticing them to visit events held within the store. A space was provided for exhibition purposes. Exhibitions from Soviet postage stamps to Japanese dolls, were held along with the National Portrait Exhibition which has been held each year since 1985. It is a prestigious event with a committee of judges chaired by Robert Ballagh.

The exhibition of Lego began in Arnotts in the 1980's. Lego had created a touring exhibition models for children, the first exhibition of Lego held in Arnotts attracted 295,000 people, which was a world record Lego exhibition attendance. For Dublin's

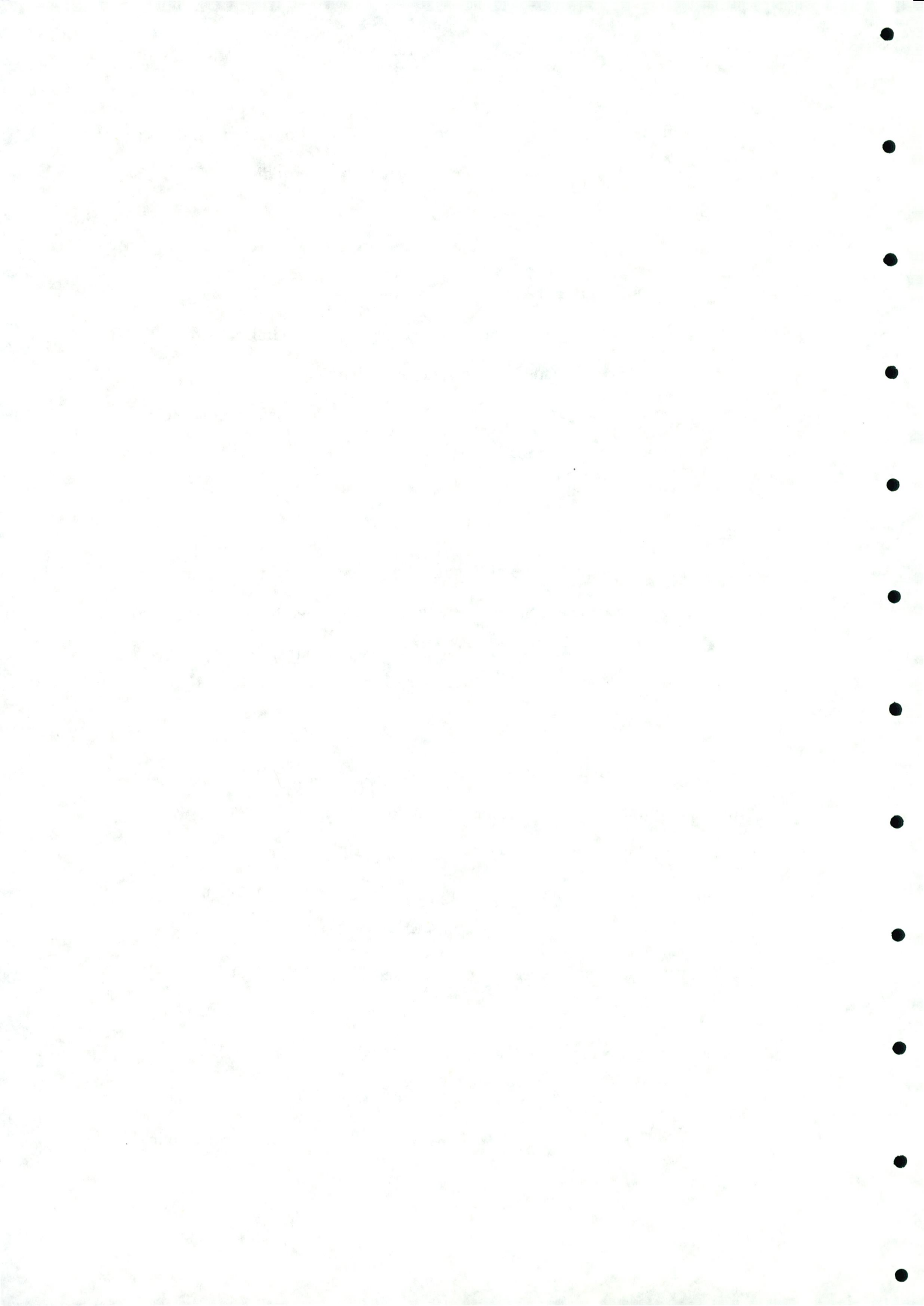




fig 22

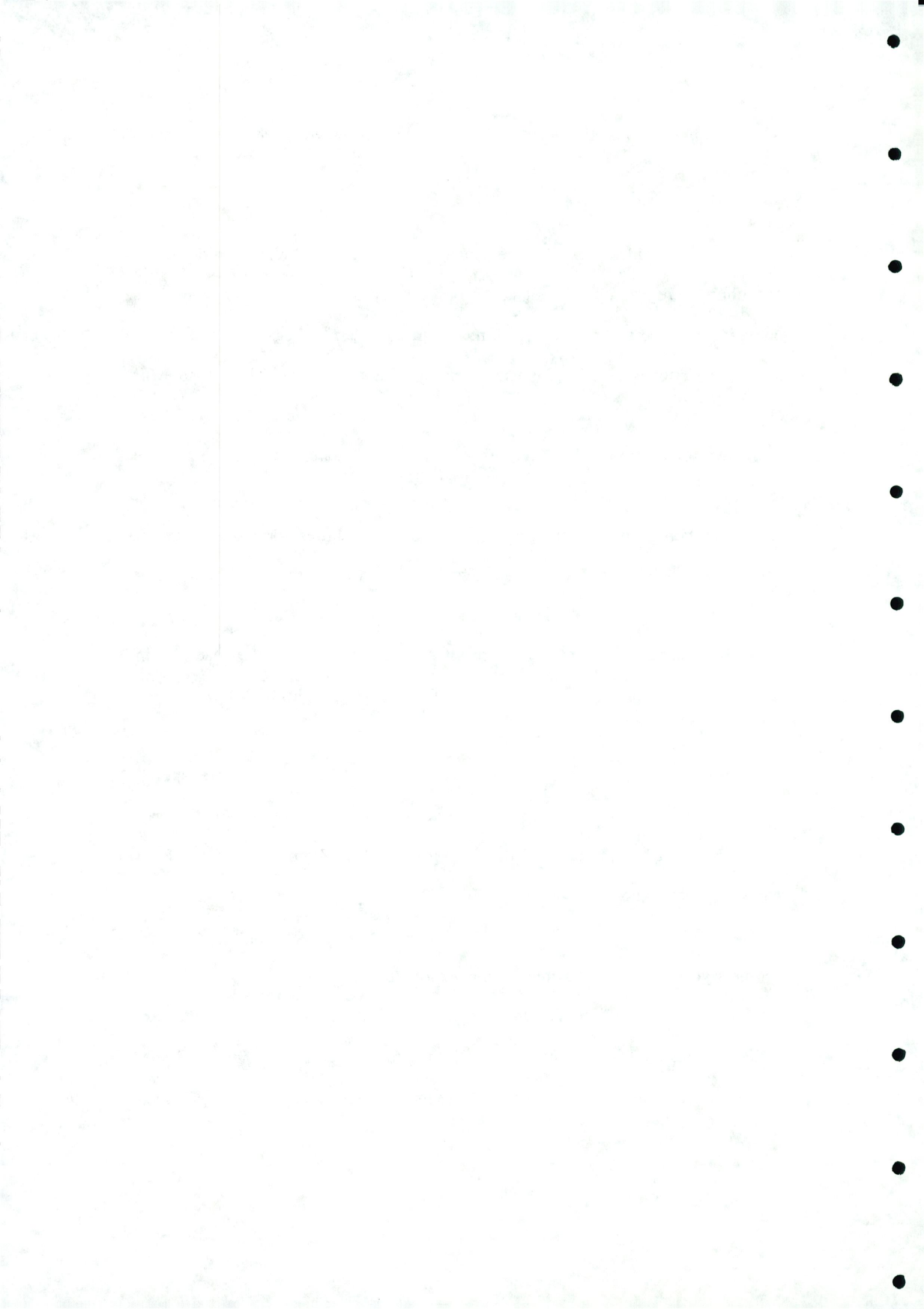


Millennium in 1988 a model of City Hall was presented to the Lord Mayor, Carmencita Hederman.

Arnotts also provided space for the runners in the Evening Press Women's Mini Marathon to register. Seeing it as an opportunity to attract 10,000 women as potential customers, Arnotts also printed a million carrier bags with a message about the National Blood Transfusion Service. Clinics were held in the store for customers and staff alike knowing the importance of public relations these activities, exhibitions and services ere an investment into the company's reputation. It did not stop there, Irish people love meeting celebrities, sports celebrities being no exception. Arnotts make opportunities for them to do so. During the 1980's Joan Tighe of the Evening Herald came to interview a young rising soccer star called Maradona, one of the girls working in the beauty shop acted as a Spanish interpreter. As a result Arnotts made front page headlines in the Herald that evening; advertising they could not have bought.

As it proved such a success Arnotts have continued to promote sports, sponsoring both the Dublin County GAA team and the Dublin Senior Football Championship 1995 and claimed the Sam Maguire Cup for the 22nd time. Both teams wear the Arnotts log on the kit (Fig 22).

The past year has seen film investment. Arnotts invested in a film under Section 35 of the 1987 Finance Act. The film is 'Michael Collins' directed by Neil Jordan. Set at the beginning of the century a lot of filming took place around Dublin Castle, O'Connell Street and other Earl Street where the frontage of Boyers & Co. Limited can be clearly seen during the film.



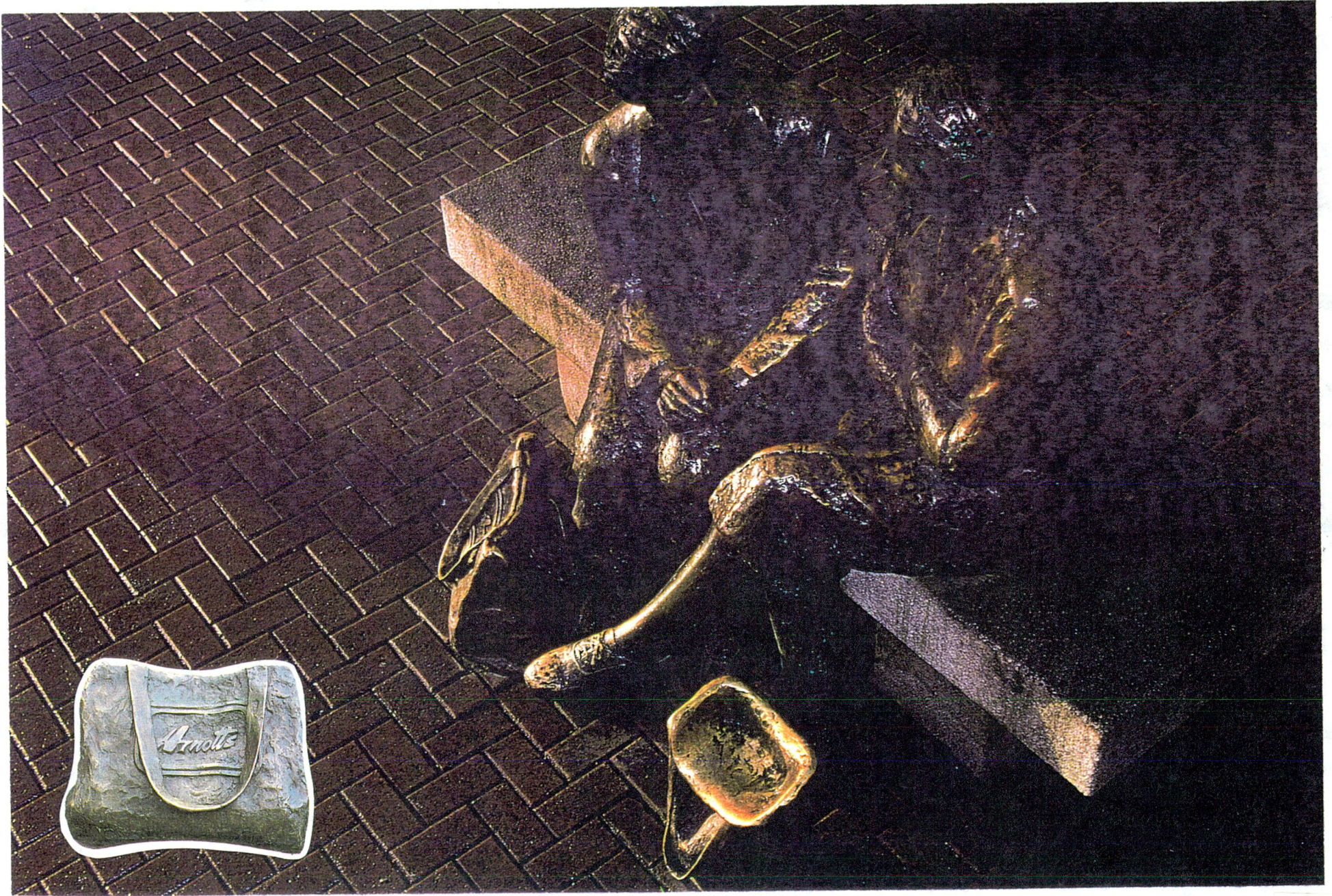
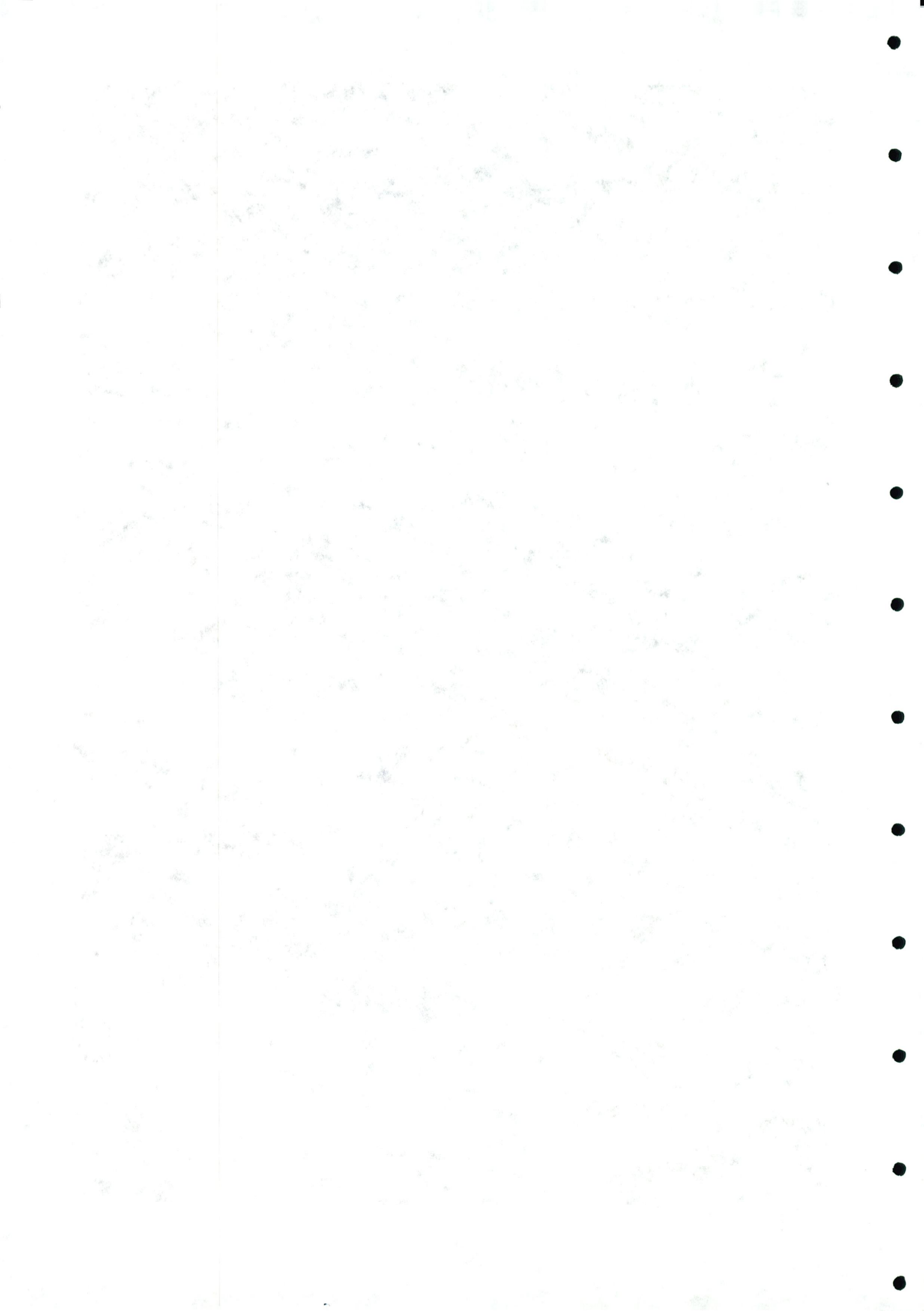
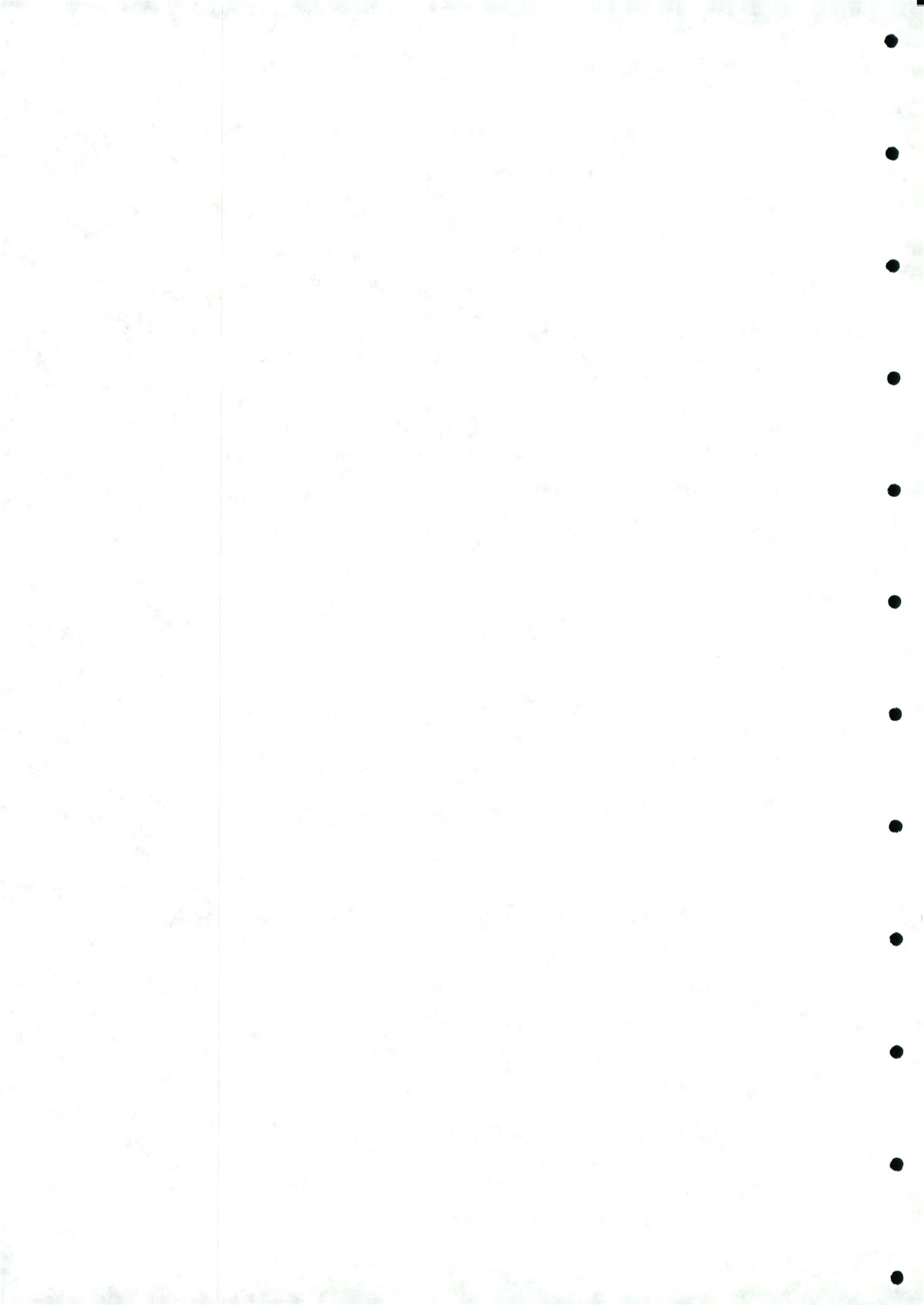


fig 23



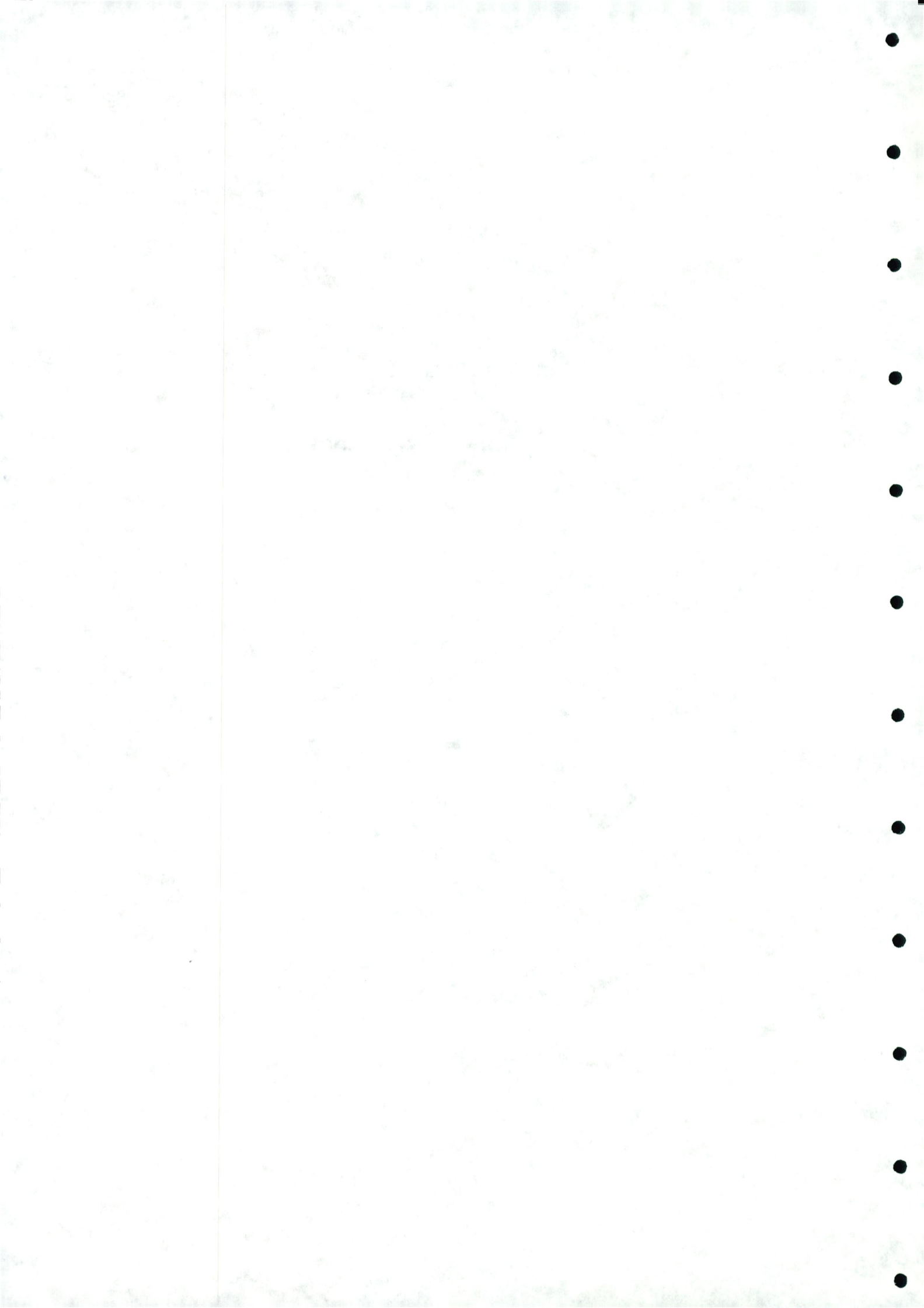
Arnotts name can be found in unexpected places, a plaque thanking Arnotts for the donation of a new filtration system for the sealarium in Dublin Zoo can be found among the sea lions. When crossing the Liffey across the Ha'penny Bridge from the south to the north side there is a sculpture at the end of Lower Liffey Street. The sculpture by Jackie McKenna is two women shoppers resting with an Arnotts bag being at their feet (Fig 23).

Since their establishment and especially in recent years Arnotts have had many other interests. As a company they believe in public relations and support various different exhibitions and events.



Chapter Four

Changes Since the 1990s



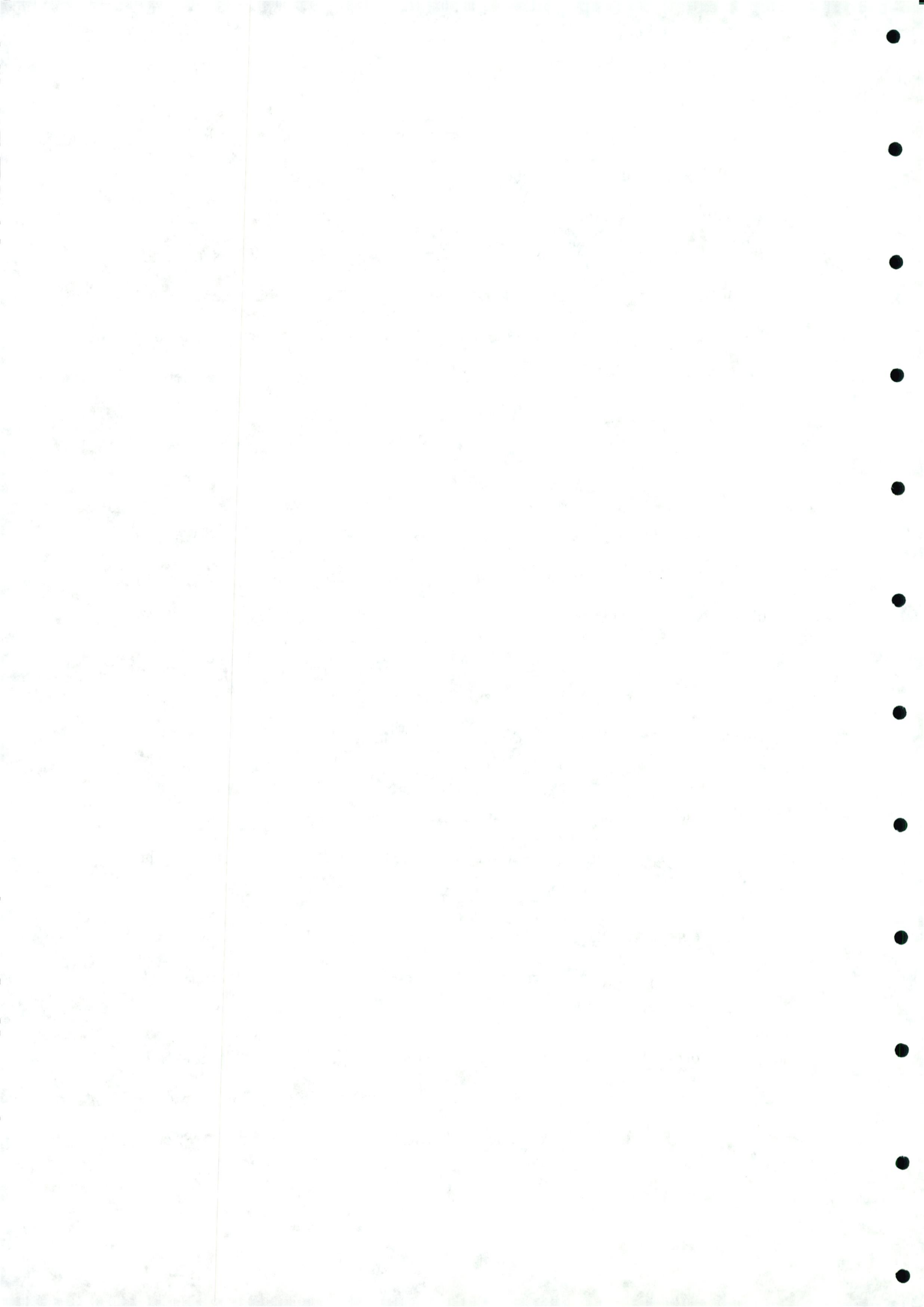
To celebrate 150 years of trading Arnotts engaged in a major renovation of the Henry Street store in 1993. The beautiful original Victorian building had become quite dated as a department store. With today's methods of merchandising and trading the store was in need of a new look. This was not the only reason for the new change. The city is growing rapidly. New shops, shopping centres and redeveloped department stores are in abundance. The immediate area around Arnotts is a particular area of growth. As a result Arnotts has a considerable amount of competition.

Competition

Over the years Arnotts have always considered Switzers to be a friendly rival and the two stores have enjoyed good relations. In 1912 Alexander Nesbitt deliberately chose Saturday for the half-day. Wednesday was the more usual half-day on the north of the Liffey but Alexander wished Arnotts to be classed with the more up-market stores on the south side of the Liffey such as Switzers and Pim Borthers, however Todd Burns and Clerys soon followed his example.

Although Clery's is the store closest to Arnotts and they sell the same type of product, Arnotts have in the past never considered them as competition. With the fast development of Dublin and the emergence of new department stores and shopping centres Arnotts competition has grown considerably, perhaps their hand has been forced into expansion in order to compete with the growing city.

With its prime location on Europe's busiest shopping street which was pedestrianised in 1976, Arnotts is in the centre of north side shopping as we see from a map of north Dublin city. Dunne's Stores, The Ilac Centre and Roches

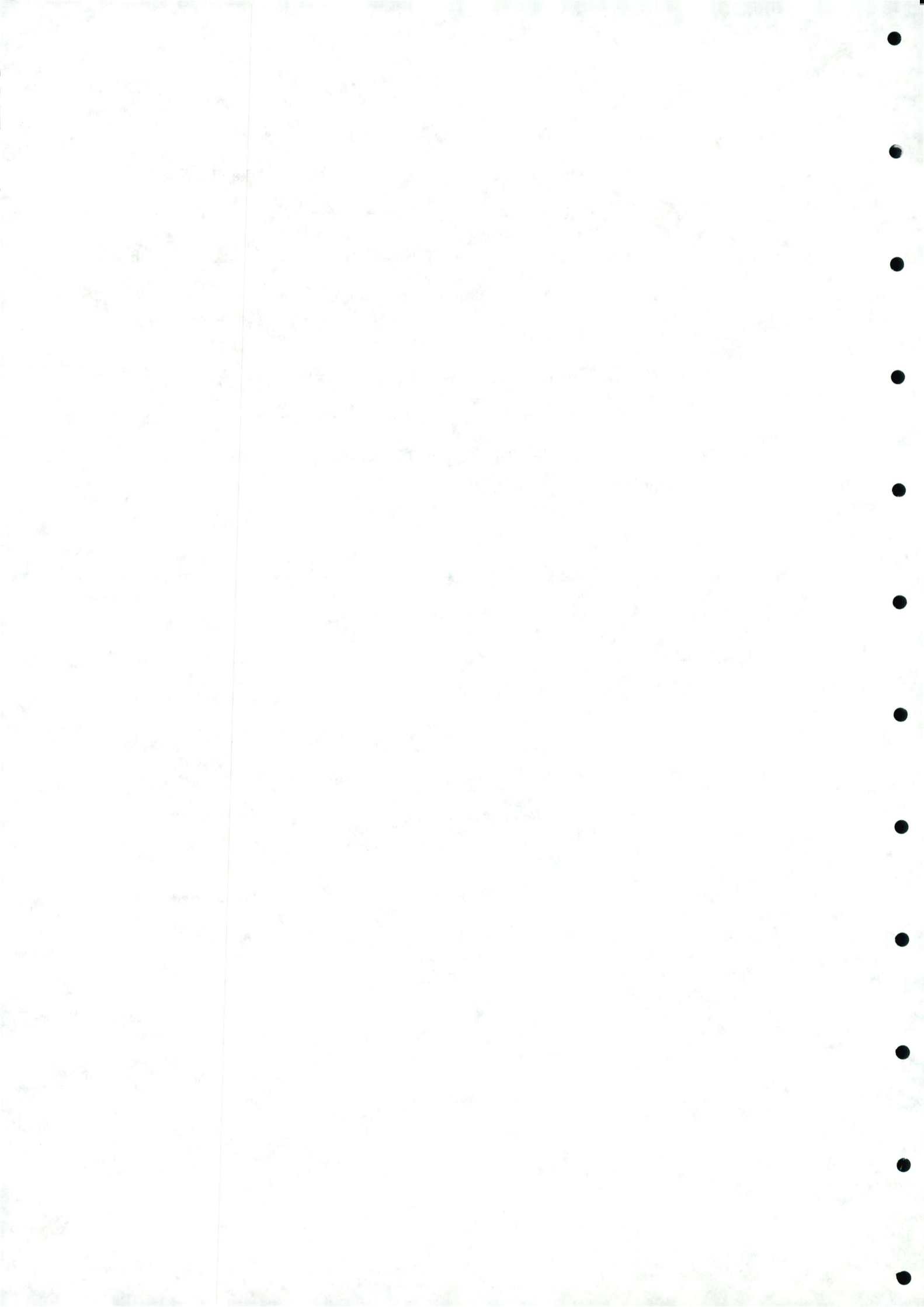


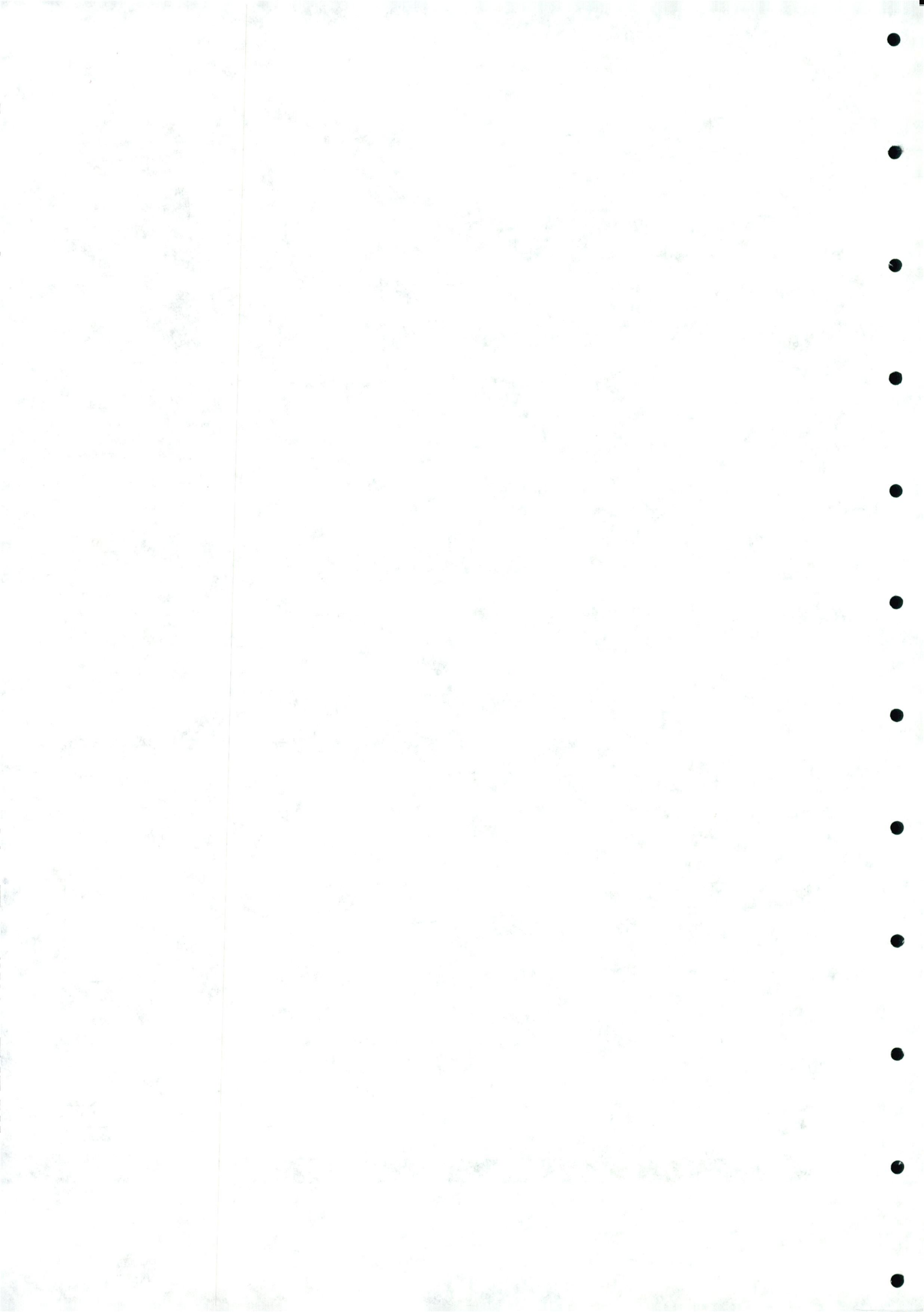
Stores have large premises facing Arnotts. Penny's have two stores both just a short distance from Arnotts, and the large English chain store Marks and Spenser opens onto Liffey Street. We can also see from the map that the area is awash with smaller shops and chain-stores. The last few years have seen an influx of British stores into Ireland especially in fashions with, for example Oasis, M & S, Warehouse, Next, Vera Moda, Wallis as well as home furnishings, for example, Habitat and Next. 1996 saw the opening of the new Jervis Street Shopping Centre which mostly comprises of stores from the UK such as Debenhams, Dorothy Perkins, Boots, Evens, Principles, Top Shop and Top Man, all of which are in direct competition with Arnotts.

The Jervis Street Shopping Centre offers one stop shopping, selling everything from fashion and accessories for all ages to home furnishings as well as cosmetics and groceries. A huge attractive building allows you to shop in different stores under one roof. The centre has a large airy layout enabling you to get around comfortably. With the parking available across the road it seems that this would be the perfect place to shop. However on visiting the Jervis Street Shopping Centre one can see that it lacks the service and welcoming atmosphere of Arnotts Department Store. As well as a broad range of services and merchandise Arnotts have a good reputation for service and customer relations that cannot be matched in larger shopping centres. A lot of Irish shoppers still require good service and staff knowledge from a store qualities Arnotts have to offer.

Structural Development

Arnotts development plans places an important emphasis in bringing the store into the next century (Fig 24).

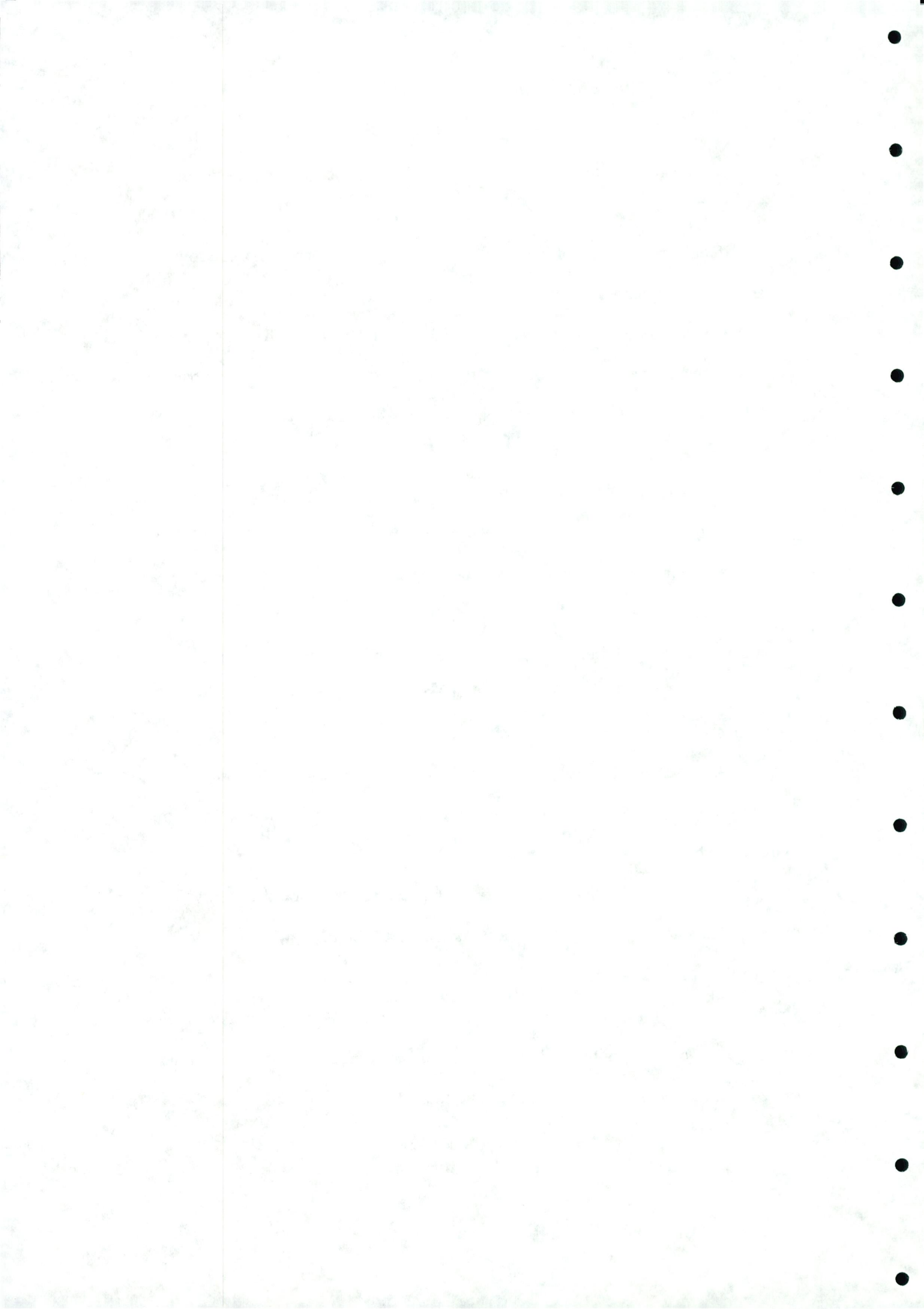




The first and probably the most significant development is structural. Arnotts hope to achieve a striking new interior, but to also increase retail space by about 20,000 square feet. The removal of the cast iron capitals and other Victoriana over the years for easier cleaning and maintenance has always been regretted by Arnotts, and the store lost some of its Victorian character in their loss. However in their recent changes Arnotts hope to return the store to its former glory in a positively 1990's way but still retain the Victorian style.

In 1992 the central well of the building was raised so it is the same height as the surrounding roof level. The narrow balconies of the original single-storey retail floor was extended in stages purely to provide more retail space. In recent years the company have decided to redevelop the entire premises which now has frontages on Henry Street ,Princes Street, North Liffey Street, Upper and Middle Abbey Street. The developments were put into a four phase plan so as minimum disturbance is caused to trading.

Phase one include the main four storeys of retailing space in the Henry Street building which is a total floor area of 16,000 square meters. Clever replanning of store room and office space on the first and second floors of the Henry Street building added some extra retail space. As the 1890's building with frontage on to Henry Street was built on a domestic scale following the 18th century building, the ceiling heights on all upper floors measure only some three meters plus or minus. This gives a claustrophobic feeling to the store. To overcome this problem a large glazed rooflight cupola was introduced into the main retailing area.



Designed and installed by 'Pivalal' this octagonal cupola is 18 meters in diameter and 7.5 meters high, (Fig 25), (Fig. 26), it allows natural light to flood down over the balconies to the ground floor. It also is a good ventilation source. The cupola is the most dominant feature to the store and provides a good central point over escalators that serve all floors. The cupola is somewhat a replacement of the copper dome which was removed during the 1940's. Subdued finishes were selected as a backdrop for counters and goods-display so displays and various presentations can be frequently changed. Up to date sympathetic lighting incorporated in suspended ceilings was chosen in both new areas and the unchanged furnishing departments on the second floor. These combine to create a pleasant atmosphere throughout the store. The stairs, balustrading and principal areas of the atrium are finished in a 1990's version of Victorian style in keeping with the 1890's building (Fig. 27).

Another important factor in the new developments was considering the electricity and heating systems. A new ESB substation, air conditioning and heating facilities have been installed. This was an intricate job and the design and installation had a few problems to overcome; one being the low floor and ceiling heights. However the new conditions make the store more comfortable to shop and work in. Fire escape facilities were also a large part of the upgrading. Internal fire detecting systems as well as fire escape stairs were installed. The premises already had a sprinkler system which was also upgraded.

Phase Phone of the development is probably the most dramatic and Arnotts hope it will bring the store into line as a place for comfortable and competitive trading in

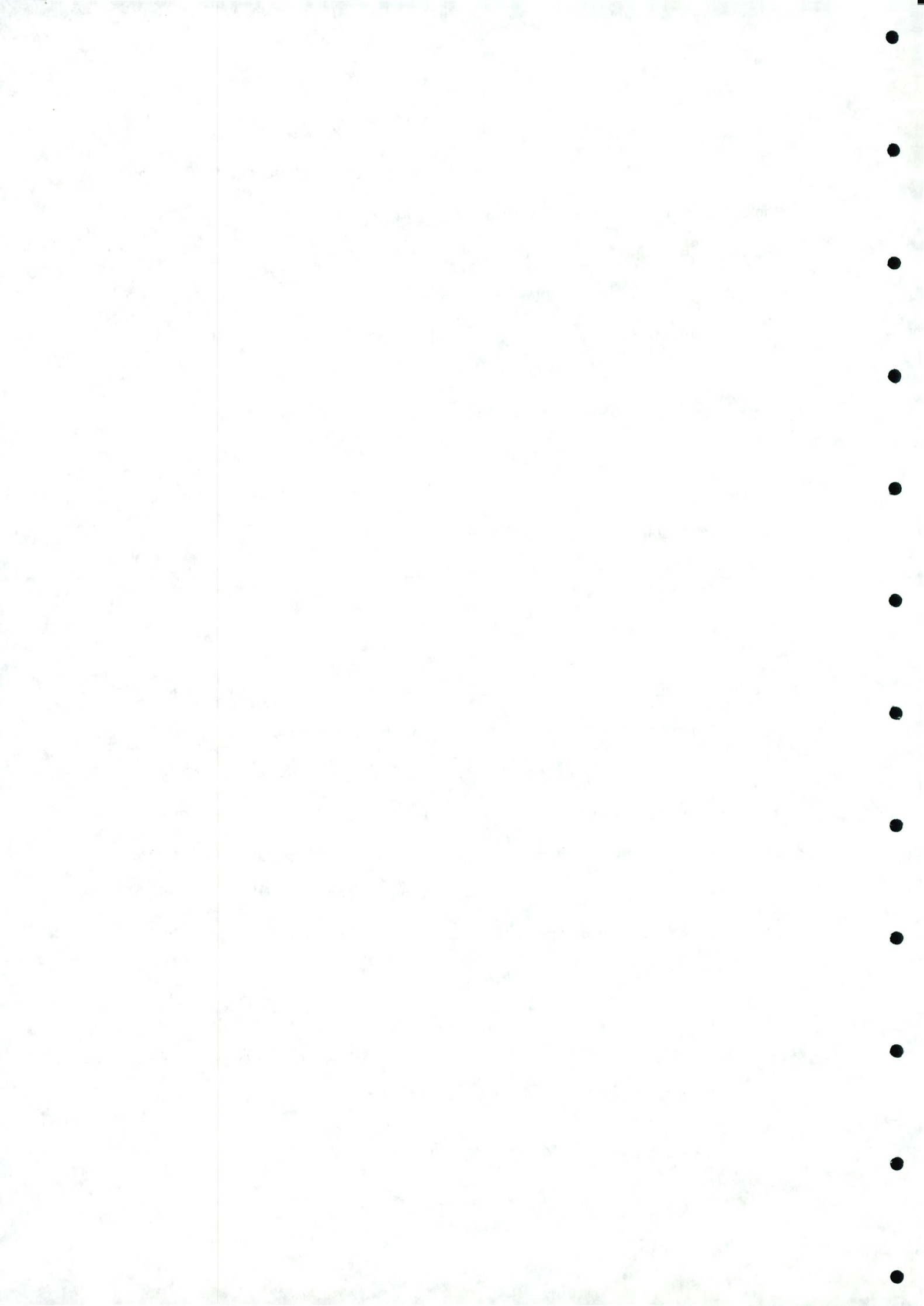




fig 25

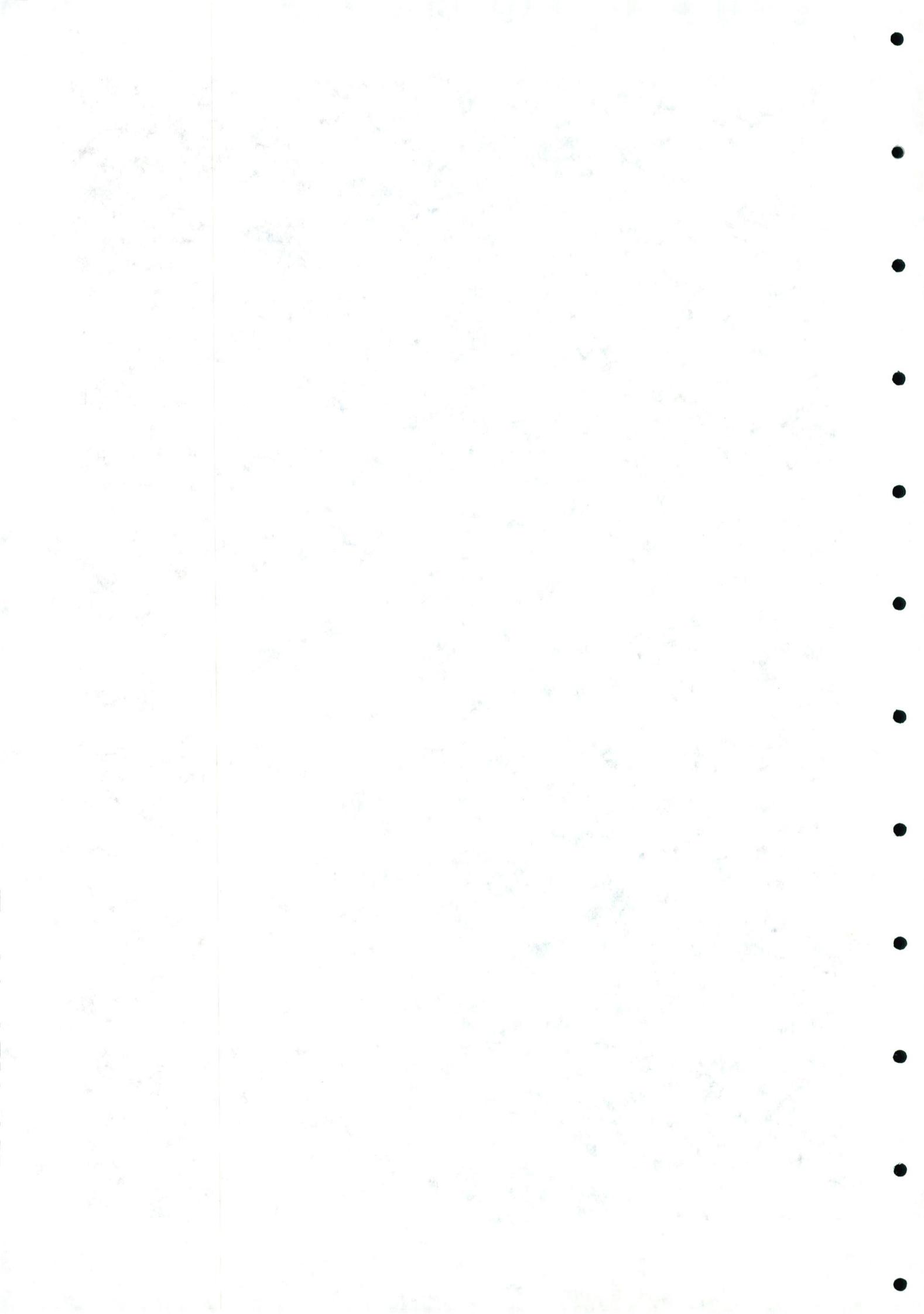




fig 26

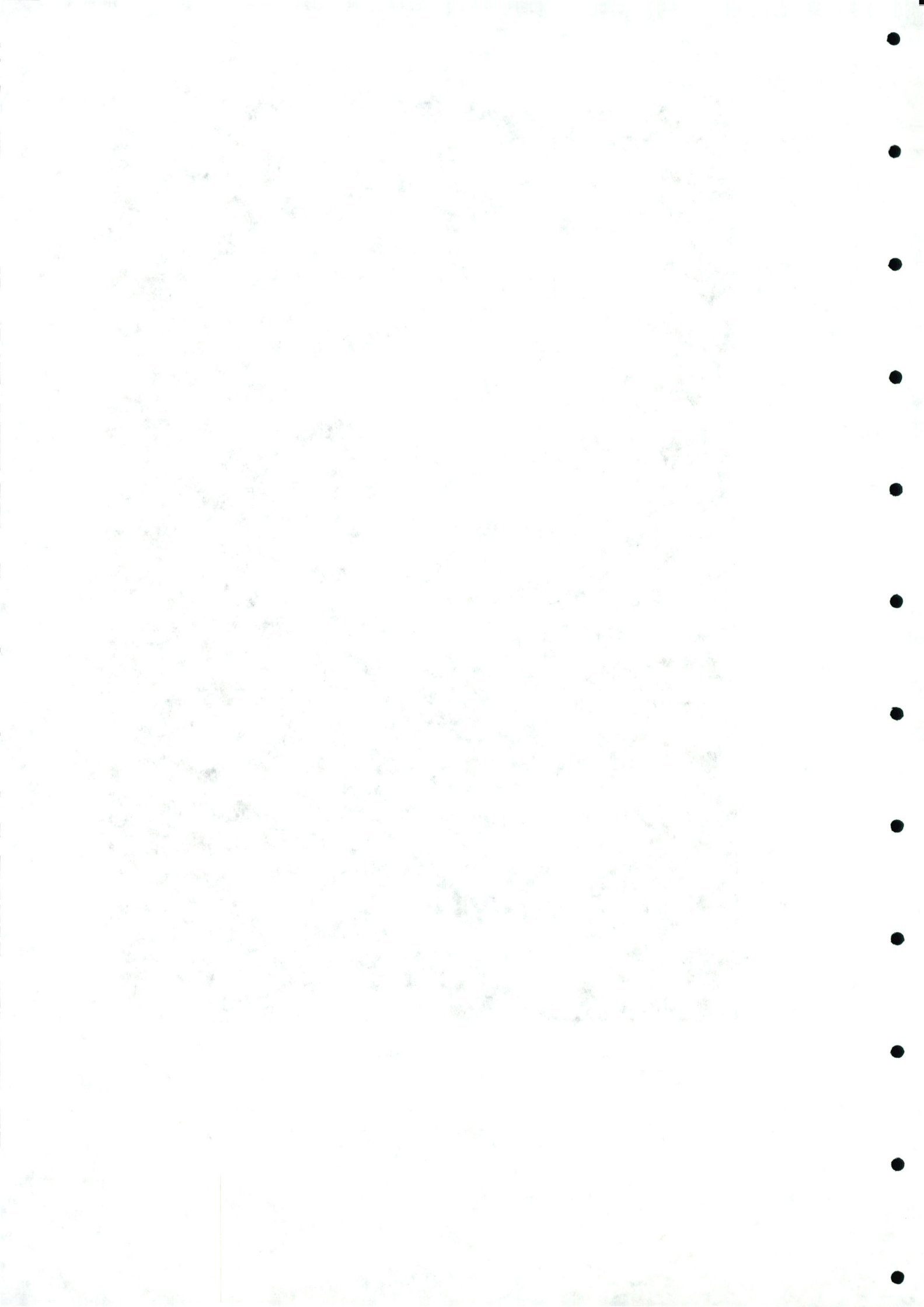
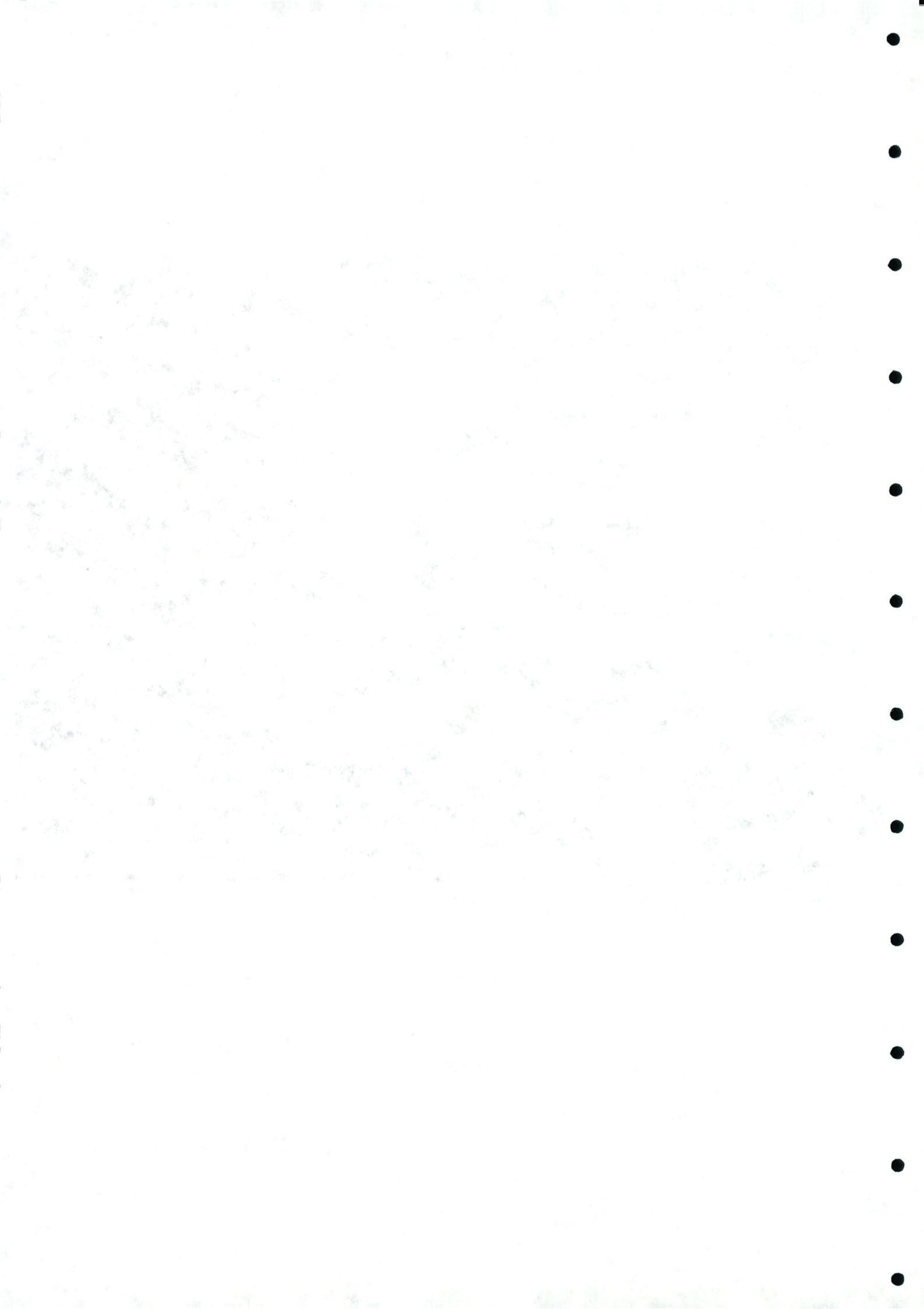




fig 27





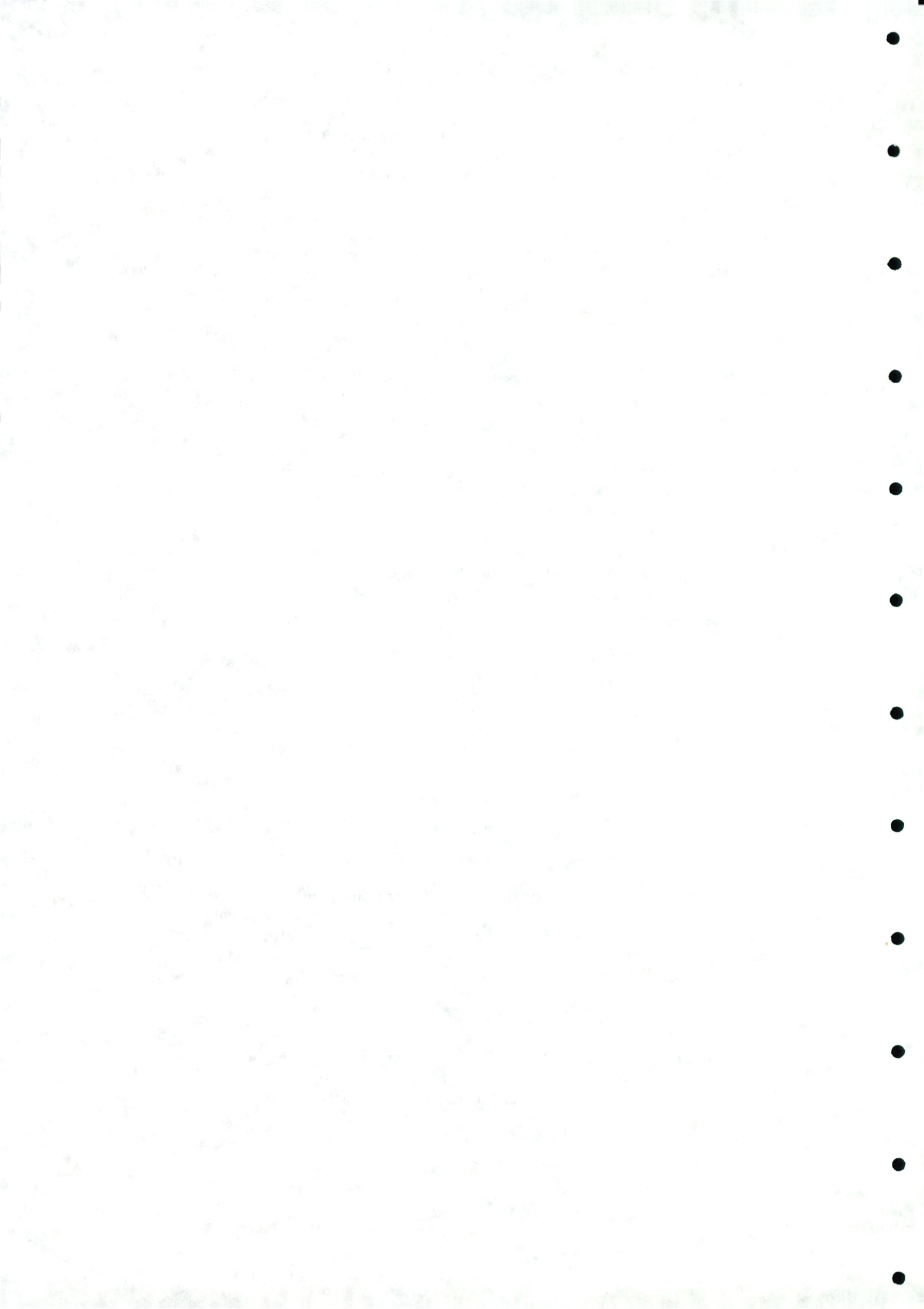


the next century. Phase One was finished in the autumn of 1992 and was achieved over just eight months with little disturbance to regular trading.

The next three phases of building are currently in progress and should be finished within the year. As well as the extended retail space Arnotts will offer parking to their customers. This is one of the four car parks planned for the immediate area. The Jervis Street Centre, Parnell Centre will also have parking facilities. Arnotts will also receive considerable revenue from the car-park which will provide 450 car spaces. The entrance and exit to the car park will be on Abbey Street and will occupy the space where the Adelphi Cinema once stood. Part of these phases involved the demolition of buildings acquired by Arnotts such as the Adelphi Cinema. The facade of the Adelphi will be maintained with the car park behind it. Also, demolished in whole were Avery Scales premises as well as their own sports shop on Liffey Street. As this area was designated as an urban renewal area the company can avail of significant tax incentives which should mean savings of about 3£.5 million.

Concession Shops

Sales developments are also in progress. Concession shops currently occupy 20 per cent of retail space and accounts for 20-25 per cent of sales generated. Current concession shops include 'Liz Claiborne', 'Principles', 'Clarks', 'Windsmoor', 'Adams Children's Wear', 'Manchester United Football Club' as well as 'River Island Clothing Company' which has been a considerable success since its opening in 1993. With the new retail space provided in the extension Arnotts hop to increase concession shops to 40 to 60 per cent of retailing. Concession shops



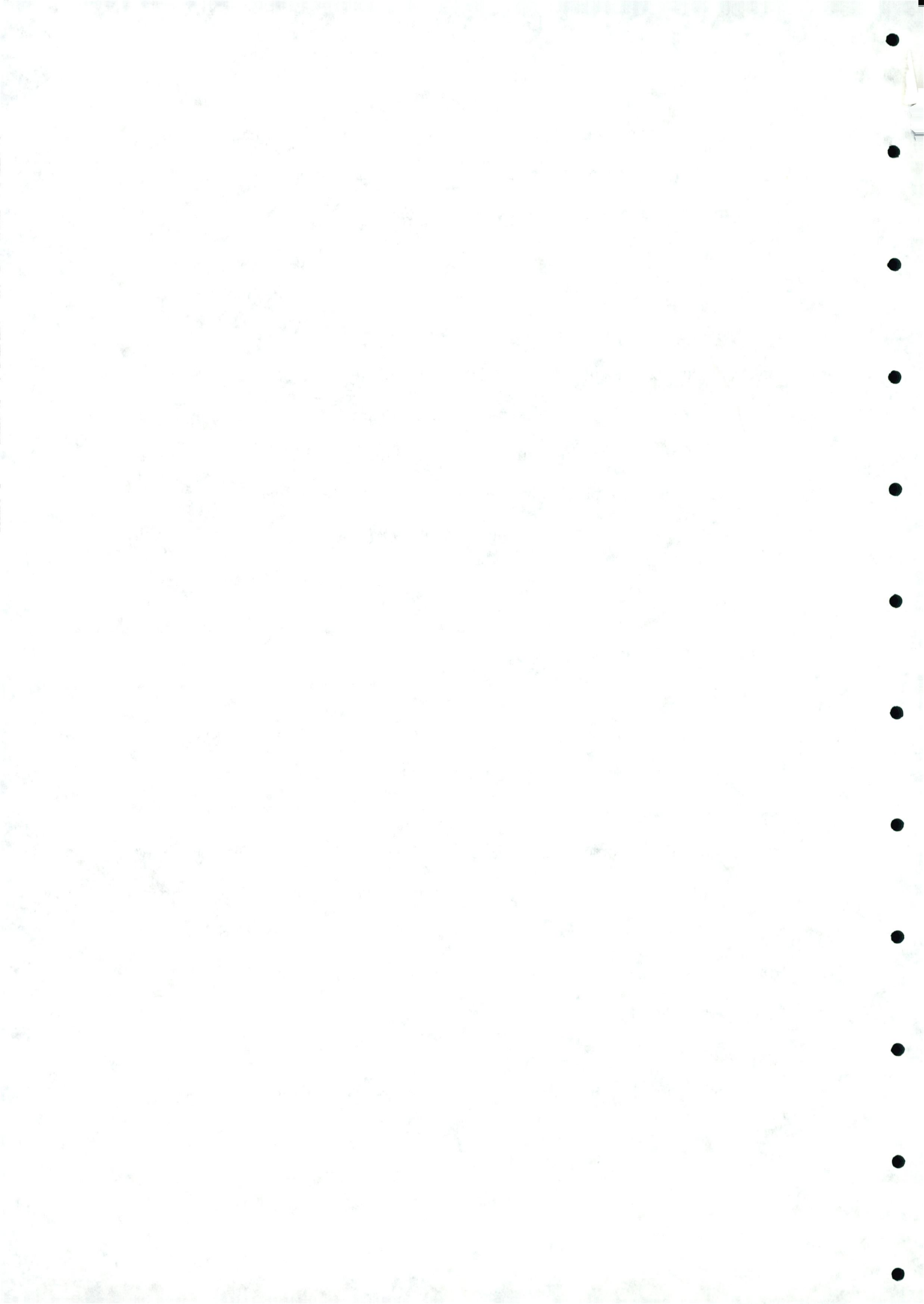
'provide a unique opportunity for retailers to trade on a partnership basis within Ireland's premier department store.' - Arnotts plc, promotional brochure aimed at prospective concession stores.

However Arnotts do not want concessions to take over the store but rather work along side the current 'own bought departments', as Arnotts term them. These 'own bought departments' were trading exceptionally well in recent years and required extra retailing space" / some 125,000 square feet has been assigned to these departments. Part of the strategy behind bringing in more concessions was that Arnotts wanted to provide a wide range of merchandise under one roof for its customers hoping to attract a wide range of customer with its different designs and price points.

Into the Next Century

The immediate area surrounding Arnotts has and will go through a considerable amount of development. This area of Dublin which has been somewhat neglected in recent years is now receiving a lot of attention. Thus creating a lot of competition for Arnotts. Irish Life are planning on upgrading the Ilac Centre. Other strong competition comes from the converted Jervis Hospital, now a shopping centre, while Primark are planning to fund a major international-style department store on the site of the existing Pennys. All of these important shops have frontage onto Henry Street. In order to compete with recent and upcoming developments Arnotts believe what they offer the customer will help them greatly.

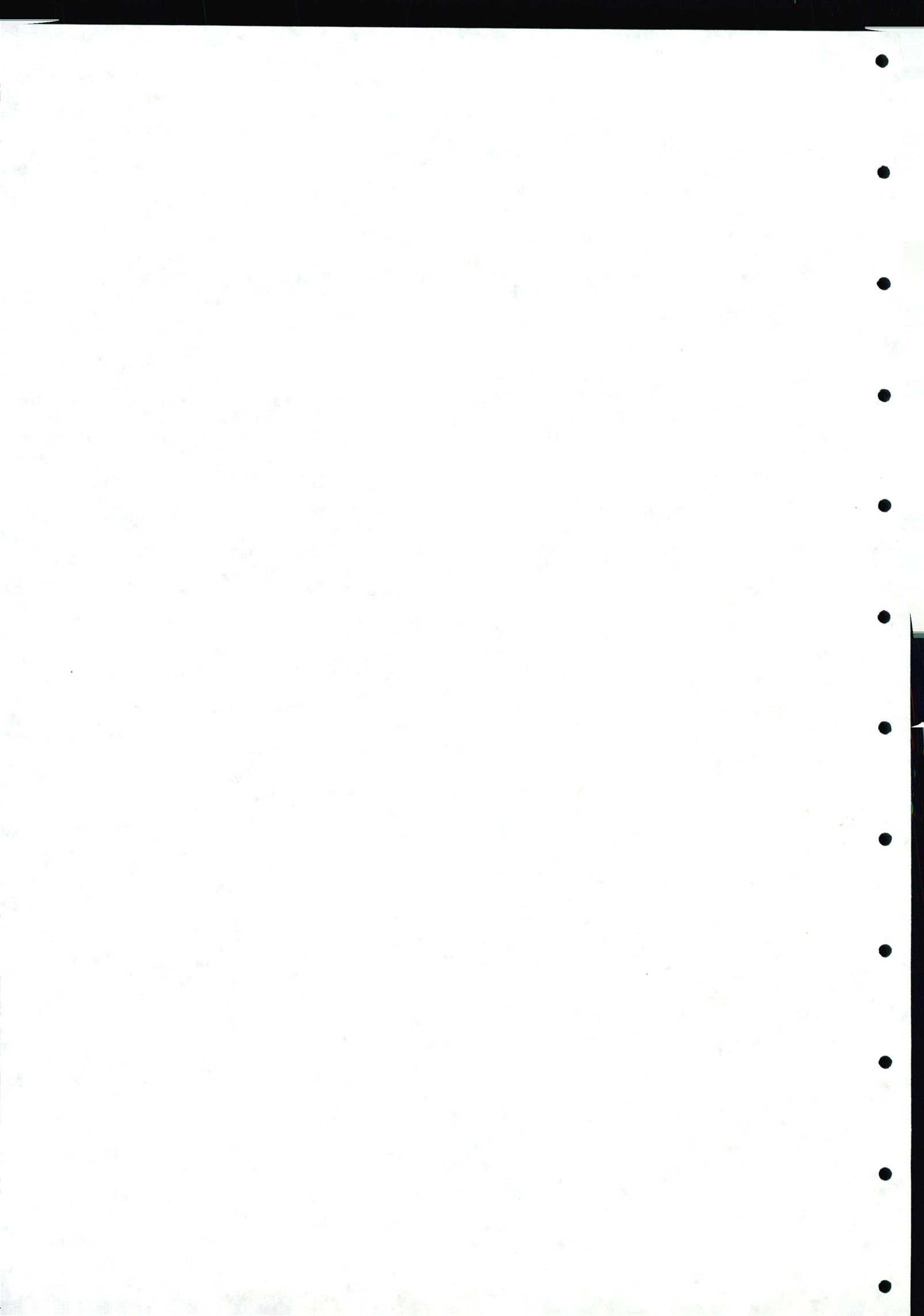
Customer satisfaction and services are two points Arnotts regard very highly. Arnotts have tried to create a store that is a convenient and comfortable place to



shop, offering everything under one roof. Some of the extra services Arnotts provide are baby changing facilities in both male and female rest rooms, One Hour Photo Services, Bureau de Change, Pass Machine, phone box, Lotto, shoe repair service, wedding lists, mens tailoring, alterations services, Euro Restaurant, exhibition hall and interior design services.

Arnotts also believe in convenience and accept a wide range of credit cards as well as if tokens, Euro cheques and personal cheques. The company also have their own credit card and have about 50,000 current active accounts nationwide (Fig. 28). Being a member of Arnotts own credit card service also has its benefits as the company arrange sale evenings, mail order services and special preview evenings like many other leading department stores such as Brown Thomas.

Arnotts hope to widen their customer range with their new changes. With special attention being paid to their fashion areas Arnotts hope to gain a reputation as a high fashion store thus attracting customers with a wide age profile (Fig. 29)



ARNOTTSCARD

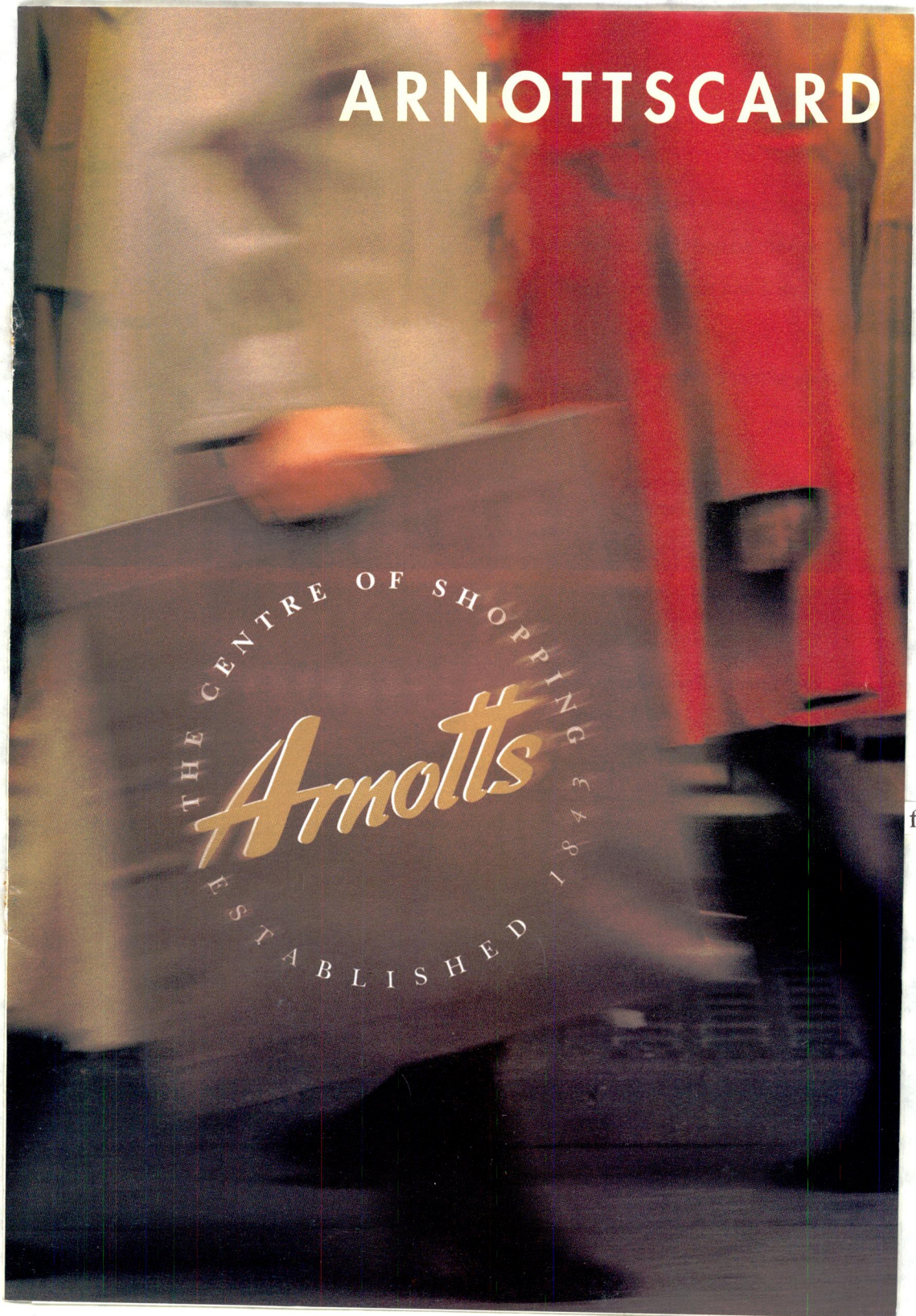


fig 28

Our Stores

Arnotts Henry Street

Established for over 150 years and the flagship store of the Arnotts Group, it is a landmark building in the heart of the city. It caters for customers in search of everything from quality furniture and furnishings to the latest in fashion and fashion accessories by the best of Irish and international designers.

Arnotts Fashion Centre

Crafton Street is the centre of Dublin's glamorous south city location between the city's main business area at Stephen's Green and Trinity College. It is the fashion mecca for Dubliners. Arnotts has a key position in the fashion scene and stocks all the best in European, Irish and international footwear and accessories.

Arnotts the Shoe Store

Shannon

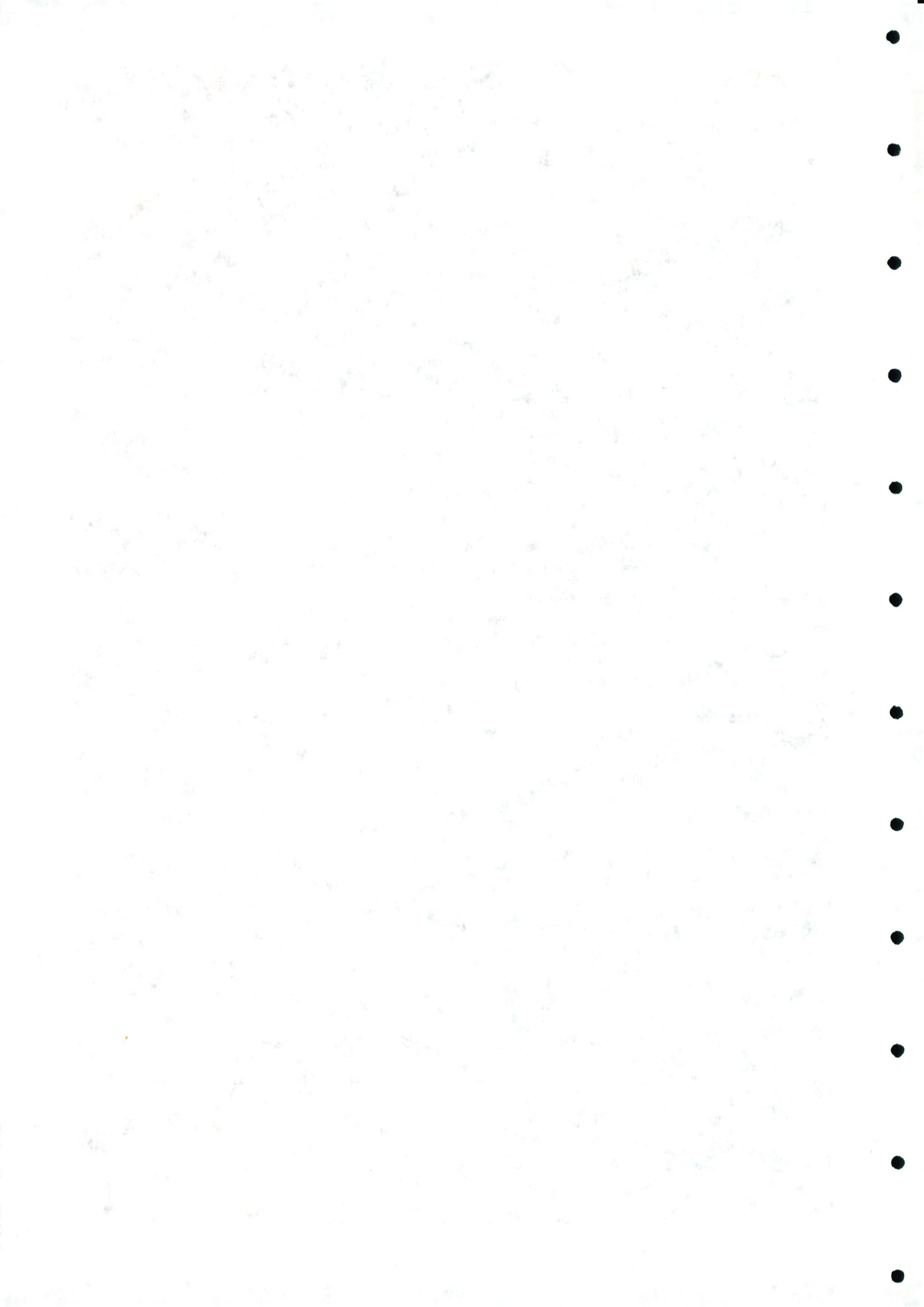
In the south-west suburb of Shannon, Arnotts has acquired a branch in the Shannon Shopping Centre. This was the first use of a town shopping centre in Ireland and is one of the most successful and prestigious. This Arnotts store specialises in footwear for adults and children as well as a full range of fashion accessories.

Boyers & Co. Limited

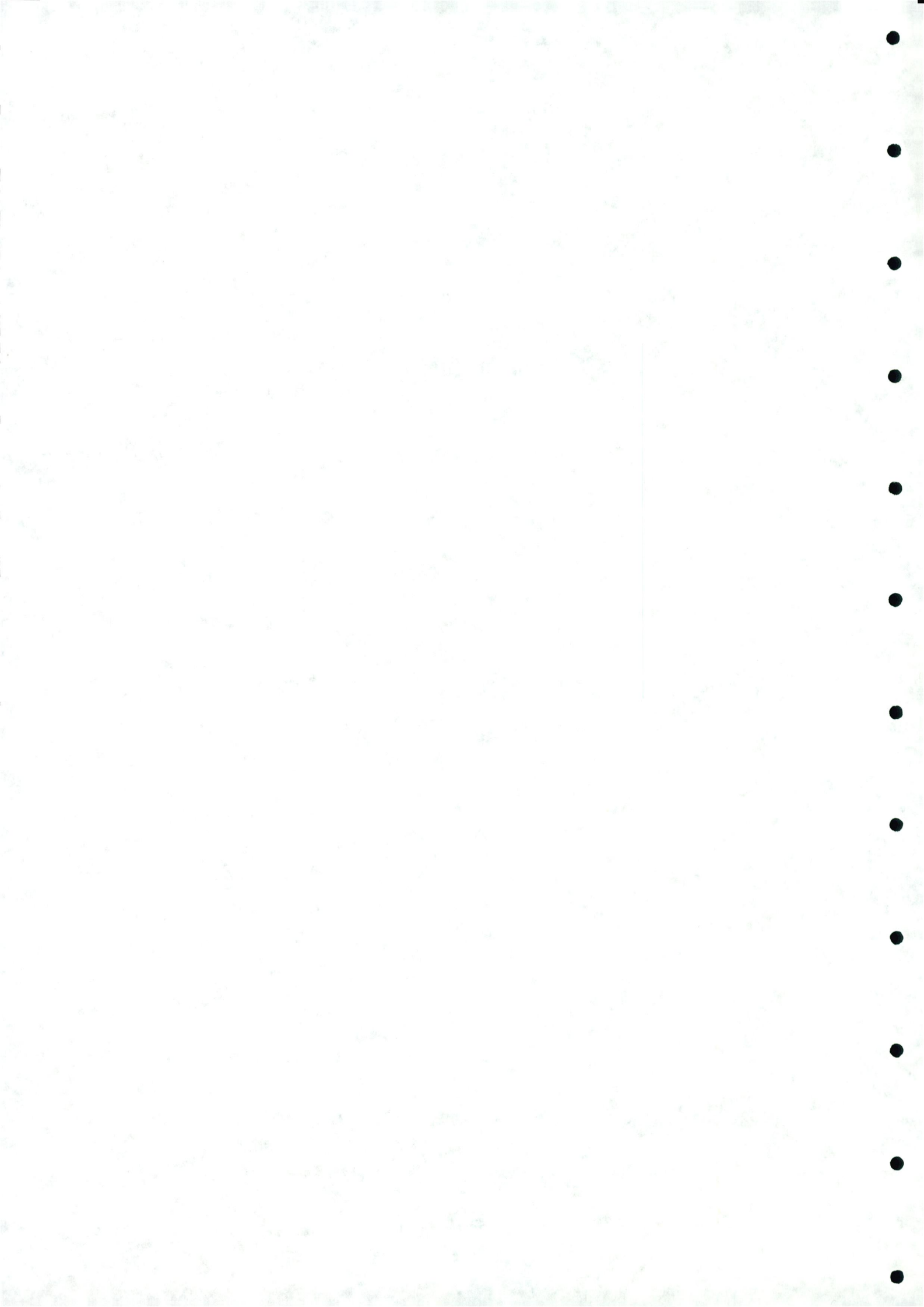
Boyers is a famous Irish mark for Irish design and quality. Located just off the main shopping street of O'Connell Street. The store is friendly and convenient and, like its sister store, Boyers, specialises in the best of European and Irish design. It also has a highly regarded Household Department.



fig 29



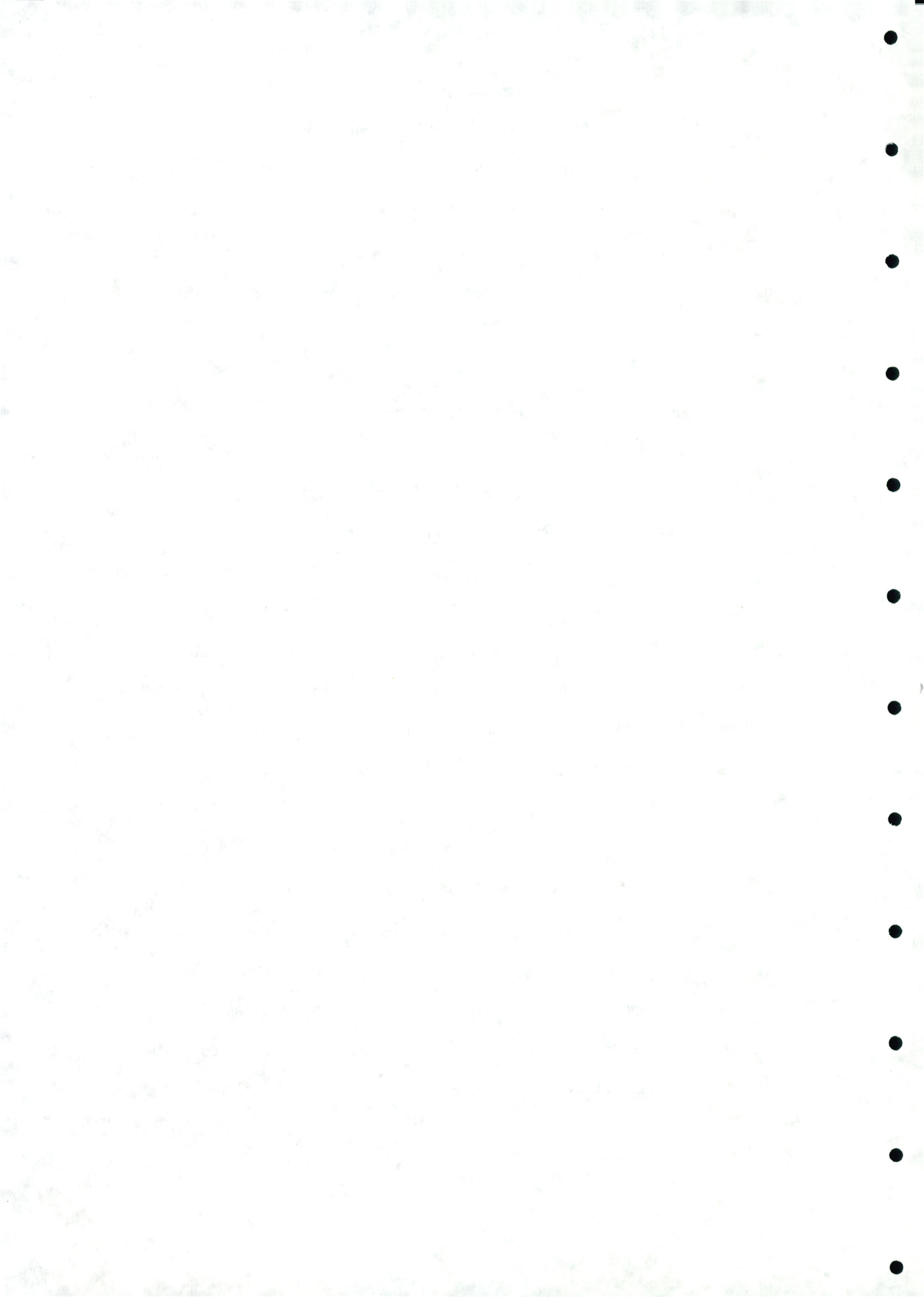
Conclusion



Arnotts have been established in Dublin for over 150 years and is a familiar landmark to generations of central city shoppers. It is located on Henry Street, which has the distinction of being Ireland's busiest shopping street. It is just a stone's throw away from O'Connell Street, one of Europe's most famous main streets. The attractive 19th century facade dominates the bustling area. Elegant window displays that line the pavement give a hint of what is to be found inside.

Arnotts began in the early days of the store to cater to the wealthy manufacturer and industrialist who enjoyed success in the prosperous times that followed the famine in Ireland. Later in the late 19th century and early 20th century the fashionable working girl turned to Arnotts to purchase her up to date but reasonably priced clothes. However during the 1970's and 1980's Arnotts seemed to gain a reputation as a less fashionable store supplying nurses and school uniforms. This is how most of us remember it and how we regard it. In recent years Arnotts have paid particular attention to their fashion departments. Bringing in concession shops like River Island and Watercolours. Arnotts hope to attract the fashionable customer they once had.

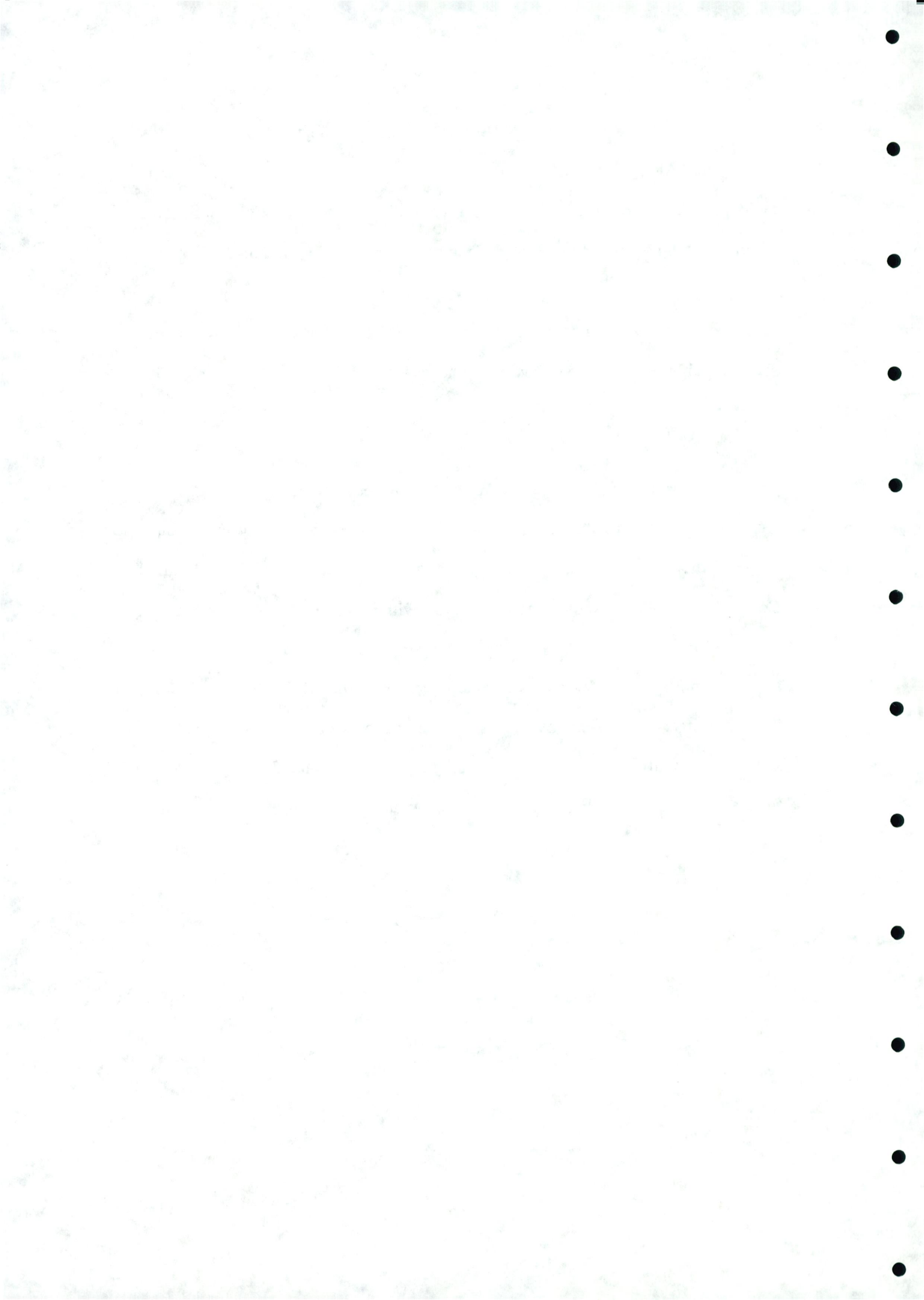
Arnotts current strengths can probably be found in their service and services. Arnotts have always had a good reputation when it comes to their furnishings department and they are one of the leading suppliers of top quality furniture and furnishings. In recent years Arnotts have introduced an interior design service into this department and their delivery service is efficient and reasonable. Other services within the store included the men's made to measure suits department which has always proven to be a profitable area.

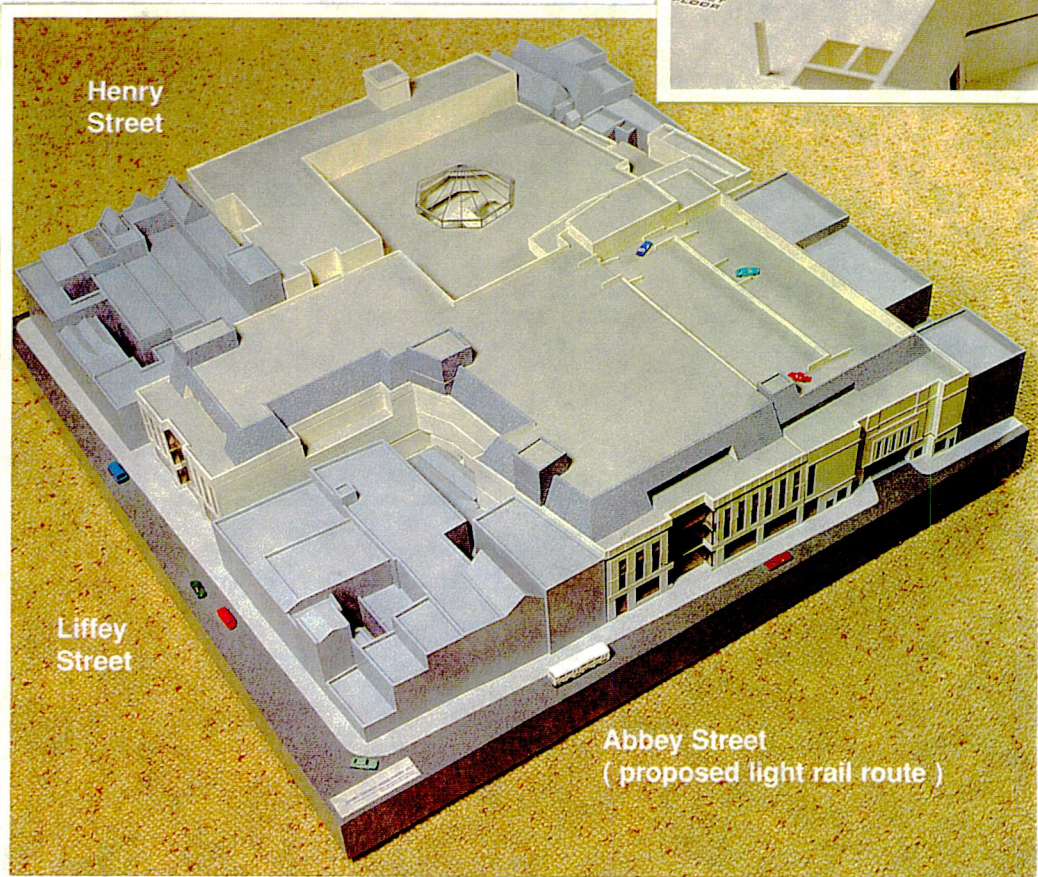
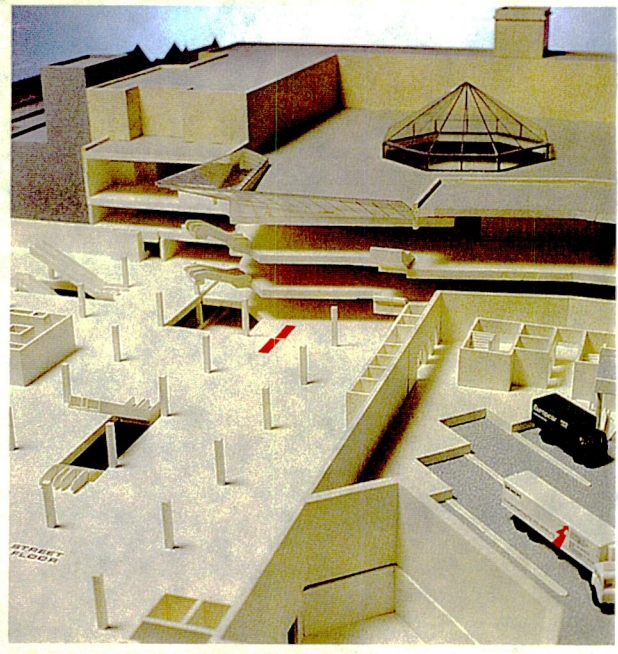
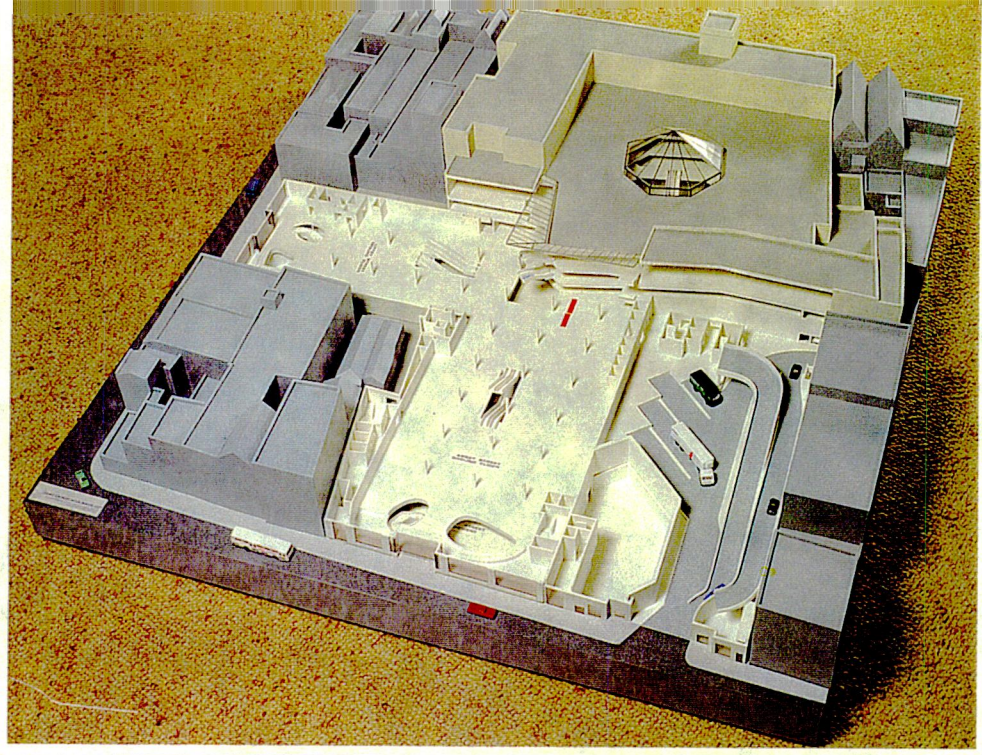


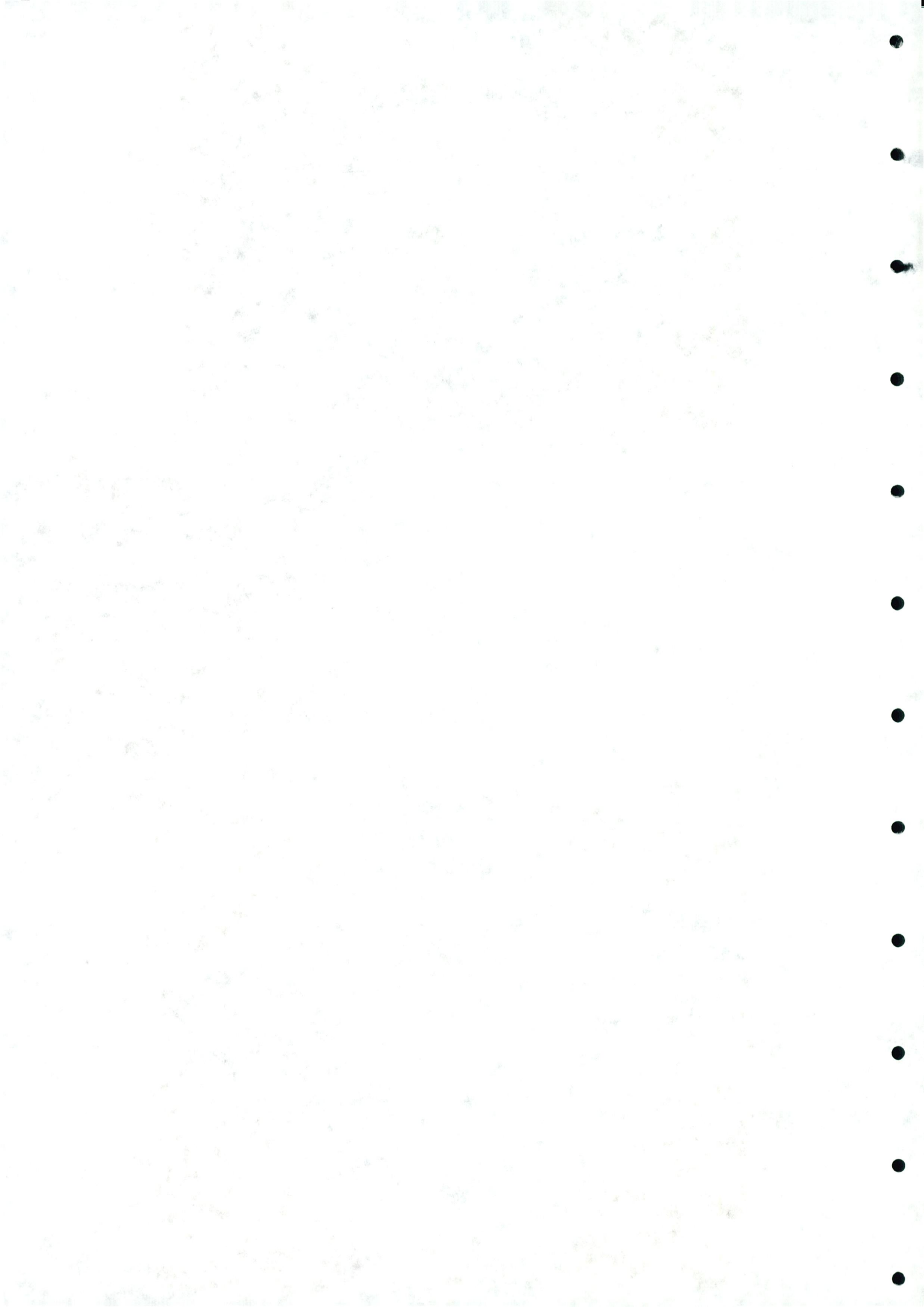
Other less well known aspects of Arnotts are among their public relations and promotions. Along with many art exhibitions and various promotions. Such as the national portrait exhibition and the Lego exhibition. Arnotts also sponsor various activities such as the Dublin GAA team and the sculpture by Patricia McKenna.

Employees, have always been an area of particular attention. Staff knowledge and servicing abilities are very important. Education and training are incorporated into the store's system.

Competition in the immediate area surrounding Arnotts has grown considerably in recent years. Changes Arnotts have made and are making are very important in helping them to compete with these other shops and shopping centres. Convenience is one of the major concerns with shopping today and with the introduction of Arnott's car park and their accessibility from various different streets Arnotts can offer one stop shopping that appeals to the fast moving lifestyles of consumers in the 1990's. I think Arnott's changes have been most successful in attracting new customers and when all the developments are finished, I'm sure it will be a store to compete with.







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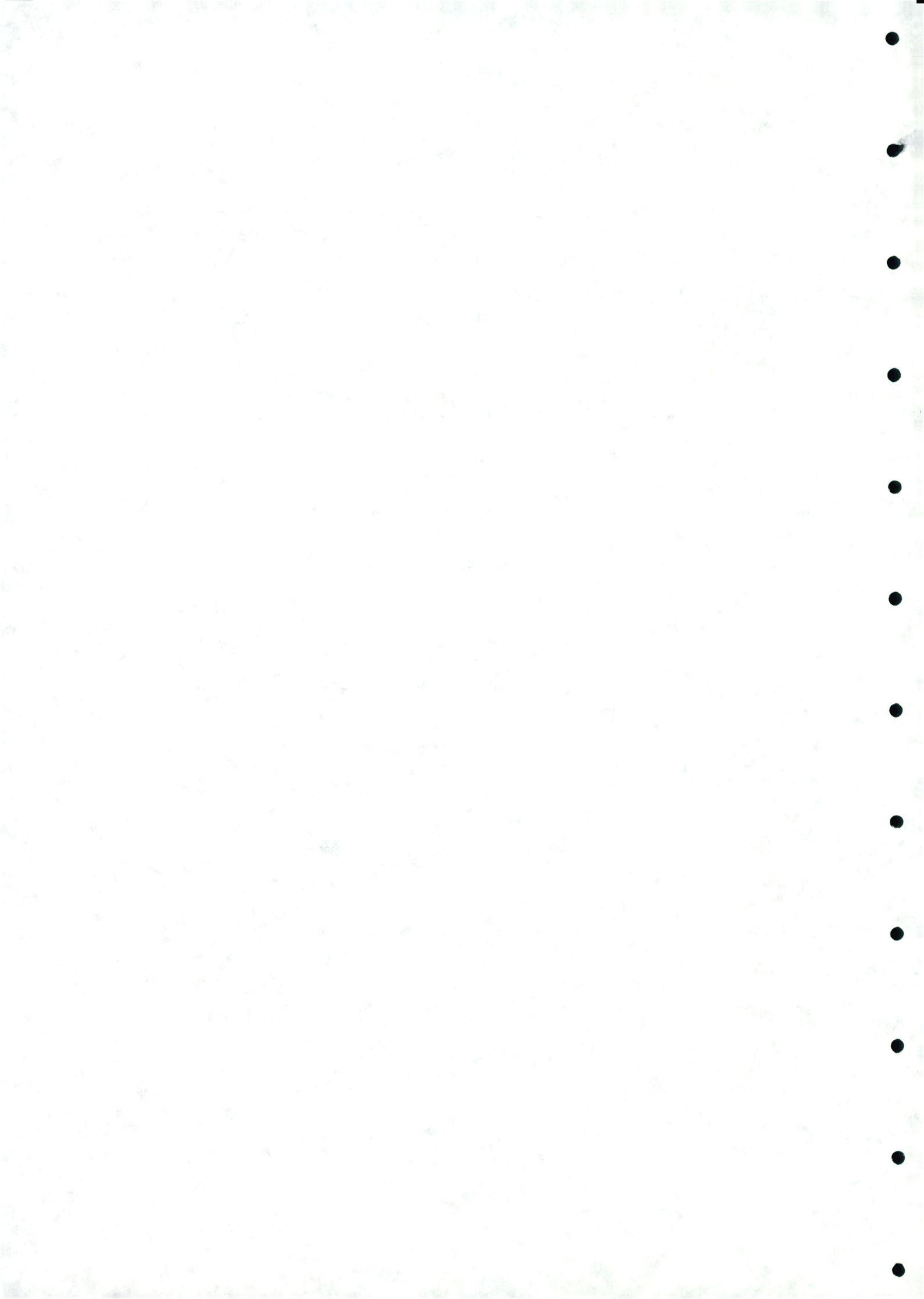
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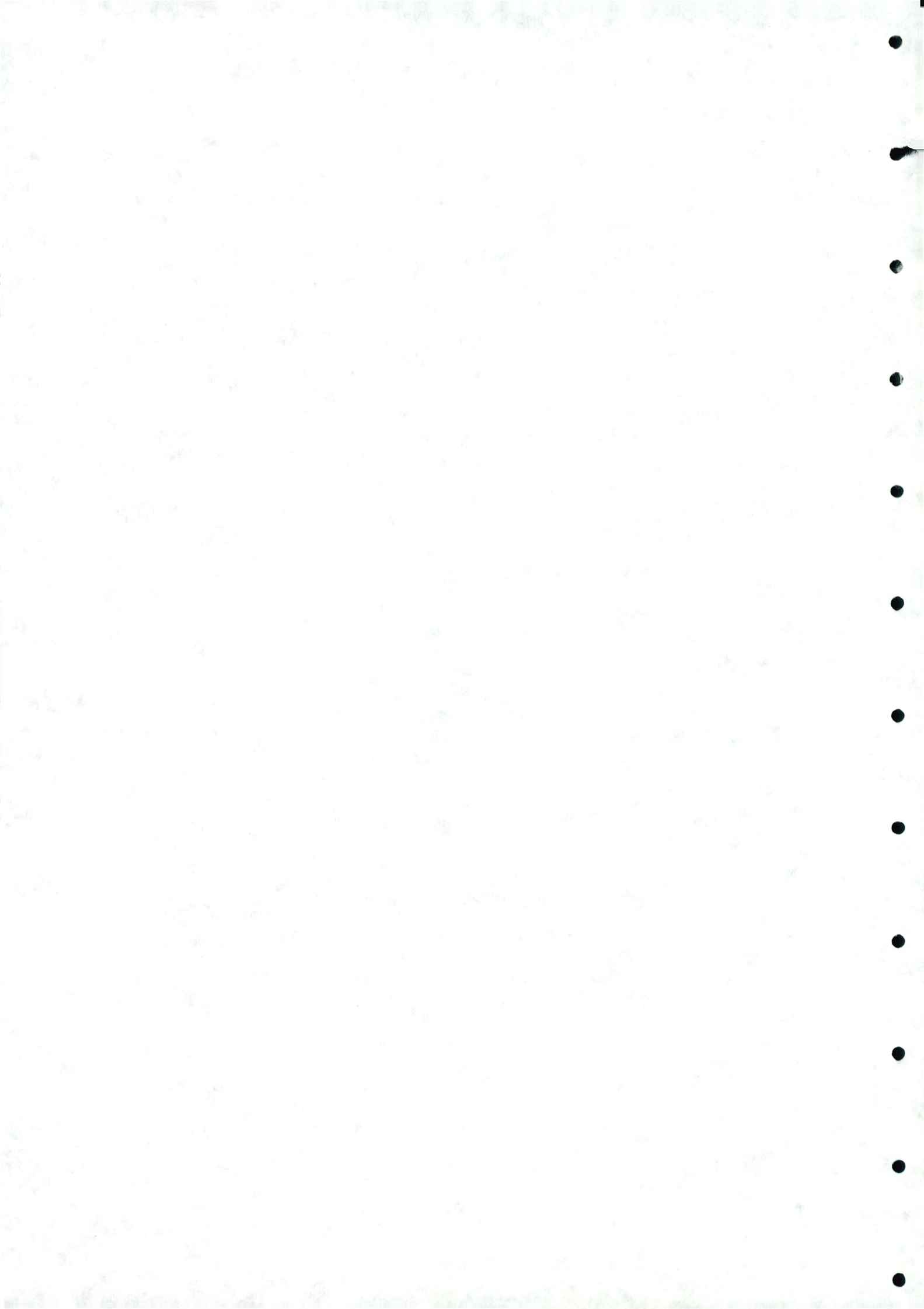


Interviews

- Bill Kelly,
Head of Concessions and Sales Promotions,
Arnotts.
- Andrew S. Knowles,
Company Secretary,
Arnotts.
- Brian Tucker,
Manufacturer of Ladies Clothing,
former employee of Arnotts

Other Sources

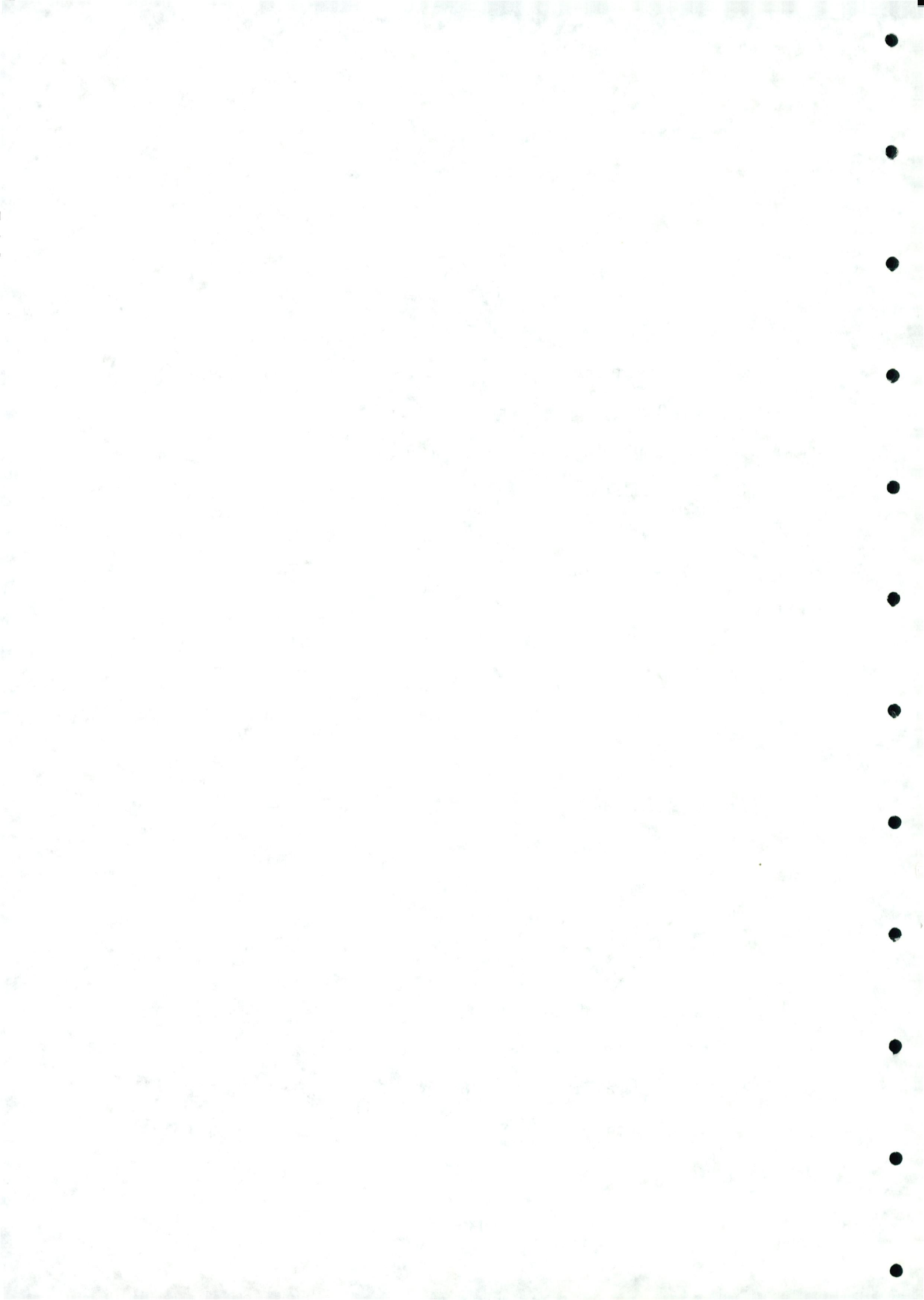
- Irish National Architectural Archives.
- Promotional Literature fro Arnotts.
- Factory tour of Ballet International.



List of Plates

PAGE:

- Fig. 1. Henry Street.
- A Fig. 2 Women's Dress fo the 1850's.
- B Fig. 3 Transport of the late 19th century.
- C Fig. 4 Building map of Grafton Street in the late 19th century.
- D Fig. 5 Advertisement from 'The General Advertiser/ 26 November, 1892.
- E Fig. 6 Building map of Henry Street 1840's.
- F Fig. 7 Map of the Henry Street district in the late 19th century.
- F Fig. 8 Facade of Arnott and Co. Ltd. in the 1870's.
- G Fig. 9 2nd and 3rd floor mezzanine in the 1880's.
- H Fig. 10 Burnt-out site of Arnotts May 1894.
- I Fig. 11 Plan of Arnotts, showing the extent of the fire damage in 1894,
issued by the fire brigade.
- H Fig 12. Facade of the temporary store on the original site, June 1894.
- J Fig. 13 Interior of the new store, looking towards the main entrance along
the central aisle, late 1890's
- K Fig. 14 Facade of new building designed by George Beater.
- L Fig. 15 Copperdomed towers on Denmark Street and Pennys.
- M Fig. 16 Carriage entrance from furniture department.
- N Fig. 17 Arnotts logo then and now.
- O Fig. 18 Tower removed in 1949.
- P Fig. 19 Cover of sales brochure 1955.
- Q Fig. 20 Newspaper add for Ballet December 1986.
- R Fig. 21 Frontage of Arnotts retail outlets on Grafton Street, North Earl
Street and Stillorgan Shopping Centre.



- S Fig. 22 Dublin GAA kit. Sponsored by Arnotts.
- T Fig. 23 Sculpture by Patricia McKenna.
- U Fig. 24 Map showing Arnotts competition in the Henry Street area.
- V Fig. 25 Glass cupola.
- W Fig. 26 Glass cupola.
- X Fig. 27 Victorian style details on balustrading.
- Y Fig. 28 Arnotts credit card.
- Z Fig. 29 Arnotts today.

