

#M0054328 NC

T1962 ✓

NC 0021677 1



NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

FACULTY OF DESIGN

DEPARTMENT OF FASHION AND TEXTILES

"THE RETAIL OF IRISH FURNISHING FABRICS:
HICKEYS' IN CONTEXT"

BY TRACEY HAUGHEY

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN AND
COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
"BACHELOR OF DESIGN IN TEXTILES"

1998

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Sarah Foster, my tutor, and the staff in the N.C.A.D. library.

I would especially like to thank Jackie O'Reilly, Paschal Donnelly and Eileen Cullen for all their help.

Many thanks to all those who aided my investigations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
LIST OF PLATES	3
INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER ONE: IRISH TEXTILES AND THEIR INFLUENCE	7
CHAPTER TWO: EMERGENCE OF HICKEYS'	17
CHAPTER THREE: AN INVESTIGATION OF HICKEYS' DISPLAY METHODS AND FABRIC RANGES IN RELATION TO COMPETITORS	31
SECTION ONE: THE RETAILING OF FURNISHING FABRICS IN DEPARTMENT STORES	32
SECTION TWO: THE RETAILING OF FURNISHING FABRICS IN HABERDASHERY STORES	45
CONCLUSION	57
BIBLIOGRAPHY	59
ARTICLES	62
PRIMARY RESEARCH: INTERVIEWS	64

LIST OF PLATES

	Page
Fig. No. 1 Photo of Eamon D Donnelly	18
Fig. No. 2 Hickey's Credit Note, 1950's	19
Fig. No. 3 Early example of Advertising by Hickey (11.12.52)	22
Fig. No. 4 Advertisement for Interior Design Consultancy	27A
Fig. No. 5 Example of Hickey's Advertising Methods	29
Fig. No. 6 Example of Hickey's Advertisement	30A
Fig. No. 7 Brown Thomas Window Display	33
Fig. No. 8 Brown Thomas Mini-Room Setting	33
Fig. No. 9 Brown Thomas Display Cabinet	33A
Fig. No. 10 Brown Thomas Display Methods	33A
Fig. No. 11 Laura Ashley Window Display	35
Fig. No. 12 Laura Ashley Bedroom Setting	35
Fig. No. 13 Laura Ashley Inner Display Methods	37
Fig. No. 14 Laura Ashley Inner Display	37
Fig. No. 15 Clerys' Window Display	39
Fig. No. 16 Clerys' Display Cabinets	39
Fig. No. 17 Arnotts' Store Layout	41
Fig. No. 18 Arnotts' Inner Display Methods	41
Fig. No. 19 Hickeys' Henry Street Window Display	46
Fig. No. 20 Hickey's Consumer Service Desk	46
Fig. No. 21 Hickeys' Fabric Displays	48
Fig. No. 22 Hickeys' St. Stephen's Green Shop Layout	48
Fig. No. 23 Hickeys' Accessory Display Unit	49
Fig. No. 24 Hickeys' Bedroom Setting	49
Fig. No. 25 Hickeys' Curtain Display	51
Fig. No. 26 Nicholls' Window Display	51
Fig. No. 27 Nicholls' Inner Store Display	53
Fig. No. 28 Nicholls' Display Methods	53

INTRODUCTION

Irish consumers are becoming much more adventurous in their selection, and use of interior fabrics. The 1990's has seen the rise of an increasingly interiors conscious society. In the past few years, fabrics have never been regarded as more important.

The search for unusual, interesting and well designed fabric is constant. Interior retailers in Dublin are modernising their premises, in order to meet consumer demands. Action has been taken to provide more innovative methods of displaying fabrics.

Display people are currently exploring new methods and treatments of furnishing fabrics, and giving new life to an era that has changed.
(Wheeler, 1986, p. 61).

Each retailer strives towards projecting its own personal identity. This identity is projected through the range of fabrics retailed, and the methods of display.

The interior retail market is becoming increasingly competitive with more British shops in Ireland than ever before. "Due to this increased competition display and advertising have never been more important". (O'Reilly. 21.11.97). Retailers each strive to be, the first to emulate new fabrics and display ideas. "House style, advertising and public relations are closely linked to the image of any retailer". (Wheeler, 1986 p. 12). Consumers are becoming even more sophisticated and choosy. The interior furnishings market in Ireland is booming business at present.

Having lived in the countryside for most of my life, the range of fabrics retailed in small village shops, were quite limiting. When I first came to Dublin in 1995, I was quite fascinated by the endless selection of interior fabrics. These fabrics featured novelty and excitement in a variety of colours and designs. I always enjoyed shopping at Hickeys, as it retailed such a large selection,

solely specialising in fabric. I appreciated the clean, easy to read image conveyed through the shop's graphic design.

When planning to write a thesis, it seemed only natural to select the world of interior retailing. This will enable an understanding of how the industry works.

I found the work of various writers extremely interesting such as Alan Wheeler's writings on shop display. The work of Anne Massey was most helpful, in her book, *Interior Design of the 20th Century*, (1990). The work of Elizabeth McCrum, *Fabric and Form, Irish Fashion since 1950*, (1996). This book gives the Irish context, although its primary focus is the fashion industry.

The information for this thesis, was obtained through reading specific books on textiles, interior design and retail. I found it difficult to obtain recent information specifically on Irish interior retailing. In order to overcome this I read around the subject and was fortunate to gather some information from retail articles and company files. These files were researched in the Ilac Business Library.

Primary research was vital, as the role of this thesis concerns the present interior retail situation. Primary research was carried out through the process of various interviews, held with Jackie O'Reilly, Head of Merchandising for Hickeys, Company Historian, Pashcal Donnelly, and Interior Design Consultant, Eileen Cullen. This provided me with an insight into how Hickeys function as a company and the meaning behind their shop advertising and methods of display.

Other primary research with regards to fabric prices and collections, was obtained through the process of informal interviews carried out with sales assistants, in the different retail outlets. These retail stores are Hickeys' competitors.

A series of photographs was taken, in order to document fabric display units and shop window displays. This has provided a successful method of recording shop structures, in order for comparisons to be made.

The aim of this thesis is to combine both primary and secondary sources, to build a picture of how Hickeys function as a company, and its position in relation to competitors.

CHAPTER ONE

(Irish Textiles and their influence; The rise of the Interior Design profession; Shops and Retailing).

IRISH TEXTILES AND THEIR INFLUENCE

In order to understand the position of interior retailing today, it is necessary to look to the earlier periods. Thus any account of today's interior market needs to have this history evaluated.

In order to place the retailing of interiors in context, other contributing issues will be addressed. These include social and economic factors, the progression of interior design in Ireland, and the nature of the textile market. These issues all interrelate with each other. The previous fifty years will be documented, as they are more recent, with regards to this present day study.

Ireland has a culture, which combines social, economic and political issues. There is a strong tradition of textile making in Ireland, which has helped the industrial growth of the country over the years. The importance of Ireland as a textile centre has its origins in the 18th Century, when the linen industry received protection from the government.

Many textile products are considered Irish such as tweeds, linens and fine embroidery. Irish linen is associated with the finest of textiles, which is heavily exported. The fabrics of Ireland have been crucial for the progression in dress history as Elizabeth McCrum has shown in her book, *Fabric and Form, Irish Fashion since 1950*, (1996).

The houses of Ireland are varied in character. Dublin's Georgian heart was built during the second part of the 18th Century. (Corrigan Kearns, 1983 p. 12). Some of these interiors are of great beauty. Today some houses have been restored through the process of traditional decorating, while some have

become tenement dwellings and others have been used as offices and flats. The houses of Ireland vary from traditional style, where ornamentation is an important feature to that of contemporary flats which project modern ideas. Emphasis today is placed on saving space and inexpensive ways of changing a style.

Modernist ideas from Britain and Europe began to filter into design of interior furnishings in Dublin suburbs during the 1930's. Robinson and Keefe designed the 'Sunshine' houses situated at Dollymount, which had white walls and tiled chimney pieces. (Caffrey, P. 1997, p. 620).

The second World War limited many developments. Fabrics were limited, in both fabric type and design, due to tightly drawn utility regulations, which standardised colour and design. (Dover, 1997, p. 1327).

When the war ended in 1945 this gave the industry more opportunity for development. There was a desire amongst the Irish consumers for a broader fabric range.

Fibres such as man-made nylon, Terylene and Orlon reached Ireland in the 1950's. However the Irish economy at the start of the 1950's was in a poor state. There was high unemployment, and emigration with little growth and capital investment. Government measures including the setting up of the "Underdeveloped Areas Act" in order to evaluate the problem. This Act helped the development of textile firms in Ireland. "Coras Tráchtála", set up in 1951, helped promote Irish products abroad. Towards the late 1950's and early 1960's, fabrics were exported to North America. (McCrum E., 1996, p. 14).

In the 1950's, Mr and Mrs Desmond Guinness re-established the Irish Georgian Society. This helped to make people aware of the history of Irish interiors. The redecoration of Leixlip Castle situated in Co Kildare, meant that a specific Irish look was developed. The style of this castle was quite simple,

"The style may be characterized by an overall simplicity, the use of strong colours... the dramatic placing of furniture". (Caffrey, P, 1997, p. 620). The paint-work was left untouched, projecting an informal interior style. This look encouraged many country house owners to restore their houses.

In 1952 fashion designer Sybil Connolly used Irish tweeds, "fine and fancy wearers of wools and tweeds in new colours". (McCrum E, 1996, p. 16). This helped to give Irish fabrics an international profile, with wide press coverage in Western Europe and America. The fabric and fashion makers served each other. Irish weavers produced various weights of weaves in a variety of colours, in order to meet fashion demands.

Ireland's economic situation, began to improve, by the 1960's due to the increased investment of foreign capital. This meant that there now was less unemployment in the country. The whole approach to business and marketing was also being taken more seriously. The setting up of the Kilkenny Design Work-shop in 1964, helped create better public awareness about design.

New designers continued to use Irish fabrics in a contemporary way, such as Mary O'Donnell and Maureen Evans, "all of whom used primarily Irish materials" in their fashion show in 1977. (McCrum E, 1996, p. 51).

The situation in Ireland in the 1970's did not improve economically or politically, through the means of the recession, inflation and mass unemployment. This caused many established department stores to close.

In the 1970's and 1980's, there was a rise in glossy magazines. This helped to promote looks and lifestyles. *Image* magazine was founded in Dublin in 1976, its prime focus was to advertise, Irish interiors and fashion, as well as covering beauty and health. I would argue that this magazine has helped to create a more interior conscious society in Ireland. As it provides consumers with a sense of inspiration, through the attractive visual presentation and

especially since it started producing interiors supplements.

The recession continued into the 1980's, the Industrial Development Board helped with bringing foreign business to Ireland. An Bórd Tráchtála (the Irish Trade Board) helped textile companies. 'Show Case' is a trade event organised by the I.D.A., which promotes international buying. A huge selection of Irish craft and fashion for the home is exhibited. This event is held every January in The Royal Dublin Society, in Dublin. This event attracts a huge amount of international buyers each year, generating a huge export business.

The variety of Irish fabrics available grows significantly every year, the competition increases amongst producers. "Irish fabrics have inspired, European, American and Japanese designers". (McCrum, 1996, p. 94).

In the 1990's, Ireland has seen the awareness of good design increase. The interior retail market, has become more and more competitive, with the increase of English interior retail outlets. Increased importation of fabrics from other countries has meant competition in both price, quality of fabric and design.

Better design has been singled out as the key to doubling Ireland's share in the home furnishings market. It appears that the interior decoration field in Ireland is on an upward growing curve. (P.M.P.A., 1997, p. 59).

There is such a boom in the construction of houses at present, this increases trade for the interior market. In most home furnishings, purchase of interior fabrics and accessories is greatly influenced by house moves. However it is important to acknowledge that "Irish consumers are re-decorating their homes more often". (O'Reilly, 21.11.97).

Textile manufacturers have created a public awareness through the process of

conscious marketing, highlighting successful firms. In 1990 Ireland I.D.D.A. Branch was formed. This means Ireland now has its own branch of the world recognised association of interior designers. (I.D.D.A., 1997, p. 126).

Events such as the *Ideal Homes' Exhibition* and the *Knit and Stitch Show* have played their part in contributing to an increase in design consciousness.

The Ideal Homes Exhibition is held annually in the Royal Dublin Society, in Dublin. This exhibition is primarily concerned with dressing-up your own home, featuring the most recent fabrics, and new display ideas. The biggest stands at the show are those taken by the interior retailers. Show-houses, have played their part in introducing new ideas and inspirations to a wider audience. "29% of people who visit show-houses come away with ideas for their own houses". (P.M.P.A., 1997, p. 60).

THE RISE OF THE INTERIOR DESIGN PROFESSION

It is important to acknowledge that "before the 20th Century the profession of 'Interior decorator' or designer did not exist". (Massey, 1997, p. 609). Interiors would have been designed by architects.

The role of interior decorators was primarily filled by a female, acting upon her own natural instinct rather than on professional training. (Massey, 1997, p. 609).

The interior decorator was responsible for the selection of suitable floor coverings, wall-coverings, furniture and lighting concerning the overall scheme.

Throughout the 19th Century decorating the home was regarded as an acceptable pastime for married women.

Towards the turn of the Century, professional decorators, and fitters, were greatly inspired by Edwardian and "eclectic late Victorian styles". (Caffrey, 1997, p. 619). Many of the firms survived into the 1960's and 1970's, producing neo-Rococo interior styles.

Millar and Beatty Ltd., situated in Grafton Street, Dublin, was the largest firm of decorators. They specialised in French Rococo. Sibthorpe continued their work as leading decorators in Ireland until the 1960's. Other decorators were Pilkingtons of Kildare Street and J F Keating and Sons Ltd. (Caffrey, 1997, p. 619).

The post-war interior decorators worked for the more wealthy client and aimed to create an environment of luxury. David Hicks in Britain is a well known decorator, who emerged during the post-war years. (Massey, 1996, p. 143). The influence of American modern style had an enormous influence throughout Europe.

In 1953, the transformation from interior decorating to interior designer was marked. In 1976 this became the 'British Institute of Interior Design' and in 1987, merged with the 'Chartered Society of Designers.'

The late 1960's saw the Royal College of Art in London, creating a department for interior design. Art Colleges began to carry out diploma courses in interior design, such as Tiernan Interior Design College, situated on South Circular Road, Dublin.

The 1980's, has seen increased assistance of interior designers in the retail field. Nearly all of Dublin's interior retail stores have an interior design consultant, in order to help consumers with teaming up fabrics. "Irish consumers value the professional interior design touch". (O'Reilly, 21.11.97). "Interior design is now a well established profession, enjoying a distinct identity". (Massey, 1997, p. 612).

SHOPS AND RETAILING

Any investigation of shops and retailing, will have to analyse the historic influence. As interior retailing today owes much of its distinctive quality to the earlier years. Both America and Britain have influenced Irish shops and methods of retailing. The design and display techniques of shops have played a vital role in the history of consumption. The retail element of Dublin has been part of life, culture and architecture.

Shops have been in existence for a very long time. From as early as the 17th and 18th Century efforts were made to increase the attractiveness of the shop, in order to present the consumer with an attractive atmosphere. "The interiors of shops have always been designed to entice customers". (Walsh, 1997, p. 1055).

Ailson Adburgham argues that the shop is influenced by the social history of its environment. (Adburgham, 1964, p. 5). I would agree with this as social trends of the time, effect the shop design.

The 19th Century saw the rise of the department store. In 1922 Clery's on O'Connell Street, Dublin, was rebuilt to become a model department store. Other developments included the bazaar and larger size department store. The department store at this time, retailed goods for the middle class, as they had the disposable income to spend on travelling to towns. "By the mid 19th Century the department store had achieved the form recognizable today". (Walsh, 1997, p. 1055).

The rise of department stores caused a split in retailing, this meant that there now were separate specific retail outlets for fabrics, carpets and furniture. In work-rooms themes were put together. This meant that collections could be viewed by the consumer.

Larger department stores in the mid 19th Century featured spiral stair cases,

wide hallways and surrounding display. Display techniques such as these were employed by specialist shops such as Liberty's in Regent Street, London. Brown Thomas was established in Dublin in the early 19th Century, and expanded to become a department store.

Chain stores were developed in the 20th Century and later became increasingly popular. "Their design was dependent on the creation of a strong corporate identity". (Walsh, 1997, p. 1055). The supermarket emerged from the 1950's, which involved self-service. This idea filtered from America. The first Shopping Centre opened in Stillorgan, Dublin in 1966 and led to the development of many more.

Habitat was established in London in April, 1964, retailing basic simple interiors to a middle market. "Habitat rejected the formal and often dreary environments... in favour of exciting modern design". (Weaver, 1997, p. 541). This shop layout became very influential, as it inspired many other shops. Habitat came to Ireland in the 1980's as part of a store house, situated on O'Connell Street, Dublin. This influenced other stores at this market level. Interior design played an important role in the retail boom in the 1980's as it aided the identity of the retail store.

David Davies revolutionised the shop layout, in an approach to create a more spacious, clutter-free atmosphere. Davies introduced plain colours of wood for *Next* the retail chain. This inspiration influenced many shops of the 1980's.

The Ilac Shopping Centre situated on Henry Street, Dublin, opened for business in 1980, being the first tailor-made Shopping Centre planned for Dublin. This was later followed by the opening of St. Stephen's Green Shopping Complex, situated on Dublin's Grafton Street, featuring a luxurious development. The recently opened Tallaght town centre is designed to house a huge amount of consumers. New shops, shopping centres and redeveloped department stores are in abundance.

The architecture of Irish shops developed over the decades usually following British or American trends. Grafton Street and Henry Street are the city's two prime retail areas today. "Consumers today expect quality of environment". (O'Reilly, 21.11.97).

CHAPTER 2

(The Emergence of Hickeys; Interior Design at Hickeys; Hickeys' Methods of Advertising).

THE EMERGENCE OF HICKEYS

This chapter features the emergence of Hickeys, detailing the developments through the years. The company structure today, consumer profiles, advertising methods and fabric ranges will be documented. The services that Hickeys provide, will also be addressed, such as the interior design consultancy.

Hickey and Co. Ltd., was established in 1940 by Eamon Donnelly (See fig No.1) directors being James and Paschal Donnelly and Bernard Buggy. As documented on the 1950's Credit Note (see fig No.2). The Donnelly family are still the present owners.

The first Hickeys' outlet was situated on 6 North Earl Street, Dublin. Dress fabric and haberdashery were retailed. It was not until the 1950's that they supplied furnishing fabrics. (Donnelly, 21.11.97).

The premises consisted of a ground floor and a basement. The shop floor was 2,500 square feet in size. A significant amount of this space was dedicated to the shop display. Fourteen members of staff were employed.

After the Second World War, employment was scarce. Individuals from both urban and rural areas had little money to spare. The period 1929-1950 was one of general economic depression. This was partly due to the Wall Street Crash of 1929, the Second World War, and the economic war with Britain. This economic war meant that British products were boycotted on the Irish market.



(Fig. No. 1)

EAMON D DONNELLY 1924-1984
ESTABLISHED HICKEYS IN 1940



Hickey & Co. Ltd.

*Wholesale
Textile
Merchants*

108/109 MIDDLE ABBEY STREET
DUBLIN 1

RETAIL BRANCH:
6 NORTH EARL STREET, DUBLIN.

CREDIT NOTE

Page 19

The large department stores had either improved on existing business or had gone under new ownership. The improvement of housing was a slow process, with thatched housing in the country and slums in the inner city still surviving.

Many goods, including fabric were in limited supply due to the shortage of commercial shipping. (Dover, 1997, p. 1326). The government introduced rationing. Each commodity was priced on a point system, which could be purchased by coupons. This was a method of controlling consumer spending, in order to control the war-time economy. Garments had to be made from the "utility" fabrics. "Of all the aspects of the utility scheme, furniture was the most rigorously supervised". (Dover, 1997, p. 1326). Utility products in general, retained a type of functional simplicity. "... clean, straight lines, functional forms...". (Dover, 1997, p. 1326).

After the war, personal spending rose by one quarter between 1946-1950. The Irish people began to crave more comfort after the deprivation of the war years. In fabric manufacturing the trend was to simplify and standardise production. This meant limiting colours and design. "Fabrics at this time were sleek and smooth". (Donnelly, 21.11.97).

Hickeys in the early 1940's, retailed a large range of black fabrics. The most popular fabric being winter wools and suiting for clerical work and evening wear. (Donnelly, 21.11.97). Quite a number of wools came from Ireland. The fabrics cost between ½d and 3 shillings and 6d per yard. (1 shilling = 5p.).

The shop front consisted of a large window, with "Hickeys" displayed in lettering on a white marble across the front window. "The shop window in the early 1940's was considered a very important feature." (Donnelly, 21.11.97). The shop front display consisted of five models. These models were situated in a sequence. The sequence consisted of one centre model, with four surrounding models. The fashion fabrics were draped on the models.

EARLY METHODS OF ADVERTISING

Advertising, even as early as the 1950's, was considered an important asset for Hickeys. Hickeys developed different methods of publicity at this time. One method which is particularly interesting is the 1952 idea of a "Lucky Hour".

"Lucky Hour" meant that every purchase receipt had a time stamped on it. At the end of each day, a special hour would be selected. This hour would be published in the following day's *Evening Herald*. If the time on the consumer's receipt was within this chosen hour, their money would be refunded, on their returning to the shop and producing the receipt.

A quotation from this advertisement is indeed enticing (fig. No.3). "Thousands of yards of fabric, given away absolutely free everyday". (*Evening Herald* 11.12.52). The word "free" features in heavy bold writing, this would capture the consumer's attention. The advert is inspiring and has a good visual impact. This was a successful method of publicity and increased sales significantly. "This gave consumers the incentive to purchase more fabric". (Donnelly, 21.11.97). It is noticeable that visually the advertisement is not very coherent.

Sometimes this would have worked out expensive for the company, as they had no control over what hour was chosen. Today no business would use this promotion method due to the expense involved.

Hickey's

NTH. EARL ST.



**FOR WED.
SHOPPERS WAS
11-12 Noon**

Will any person who purchased goods between the hours of 11-12 noon, please call to Hickey's at their convenience and their
MONEY WILL BE REFUNDED

★ *Thousands of
yards of FABRICS
given away absolutely
FREE
every day!*

HOW IT WORKS

Every day while the Sale lasts your Receipt for goods purchased will be TIME STAMPED, and at the end of each day a special hour will be selected by

THE EDITOR OF A DUBLIN NEWSPAPER

If the time on your Receipt is within this special hour (which will vary from day to day), then you return your Receipt to us and

YOUR MONEY WILL BE REFUNDED

The "Special Hour" will

A FEW OF THE LUCKY CUSTOMERS

Miss Byrne, 58 Brian Avenue, Marino; Miss Tucker, 46 Swilly Rd., Cabra; Miss Doyle, 87 Carnlough Rd., Cabra; Miss Flynn, 35 South Lotts Rd., Dublin; Miss Doyle, 4 Zion Hill Ave., Harold's Cross; Miss Lennon, 68 Mountjoy Square; Miss Lougheed, 417 Carnlough Rd., Cabra; Mrs. Moles, 16 Usher's Quay; Mrs. Mounaghan, 89 McKee Rd., Finglas; Miss E. Harmon, 170 Kildare Rd., Grangliffe; Miss Gibson, 13 Ardara Rd., Malahide Rd.; Miss F. Heade, 77 Harcourt St., Miss Mulcairn, 16 Halliday Rd., Dublin; Miss Rigley, 41 St. Bernard's Villas, Dalkey; Miss U. Whelan, 50 Ranelagh Road; Miss Ayres, 10 Portland Place; Miss B. Leddy, 69 Cabra Road; Miss Smith, 12B Pearse House; Miss M. O'Brien, 2 Duke Road, Ballybough.

(Fig. No. 3) AN EARLY EXAMPLE OF HICKEY'S ADVERTISING
(EVENING HERALD, 11.12.52)

THE COMPANY TODAY

Hickeys have, no doubt, grown and advanced significantly over the past fifty years. During the same period the field of textiles has seen many radical changes. The industry is rapidly changing, creating new ideas, fibres and products for home furnishings.

The company today is made up of three directors and three buyers. It employs 190 members of staff. Hickeys today now have have eleven retail outlets which are situated in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford and Galway. Their main area of focus is the soft furnishings market. However they still retail some fashion fabrics. They also provide fabrics on a wholesale basis to small outlets around the country. (O'Reilly, 21.11.97).

Hickeys' fabrics are well known throughout Dublin and other parts of Ireland, due to their distinctive retail image and services. I would argue that Hickeys are considered to be a leading retail specialist of interior fabric, with reputation for being first to pick up on new trends.

The company's main focus today is the furnishing market. This is due to the increased consumer demand in the Irish market at present. Purchase is strongly influenced by house-moves. In 1998 the housing market is booming madly. There are hundreds, even thousands, of distinguished new houses being built. (P.M.P.A. Home Survey, 1997, p. 59) Reports have shown that consumers are now re-decorating more often, and are influenced by changing trends. "Our mothers and grand-mothers would have bought brown velvet to last fifteen years, now purchase is much more trend driven". (O'Reilly, 21.11.97).

The company have recently opened two new stores in November, 1997. These two new stores are situated in Blanchardstown in Dublin and Waterford. These stores are much larger in size than their other stores. Blanchardstown's store is 3,500 square feet and Waterford is 6,500 square feet. The larger size

of the stores is a new venture for Hickeys. It appears to be the new way forward, for the company. (O'Reilly, 21.11.97).

One third of both these new stores supply ready-made bed linen sets and curtains. Hickeys have more plans in the future to increase upon their range of ready-made sets. This appears to be a growing sector in the market.

Both these new stores have a larger selection of fabrics, in comparison to other stores. Blanchardstown and Waterford Hickeys' stores have over 600 rolls of fabrics, opposed to 350 rolls in the Henry Street branch. This appears to be quite a significant advancement, as they have greatly increased upon fabric ranges. (Donnelly, 21.11.97).

Interior fabric retailing is a very competitive field at present in Dublin, with the increased growth of English stores bringing in competitively priced designs and fabrics. In order to resist this, Hickeys strive towards providing a visual identity, and strive towards being the first to pick up on trends.

FABRIC RANGES

The fabrics are sourced by buyers. Each individual department has specific buyers. The fabrics are sourced at Trade shows. The main Trade show is *Heimtex*, which is held annually in January in Frankfurt. Other trade shows include those in London, Manchester and Birmingham. Representatives for major houses also visit. These fairs give an opportunity for retailers and the press to get an overview of the market. It also helps Hickeys keep on top of trends.

Most of Hickeys' fabrics are imported, however they do retail some Irish linen. It is less expensive for the company to import their fabrics, than to purchase Irish fabrics from Irish producers. (O'Reilly, 21.11.97). Importation has meant that a much broader range of fabrics can be retailed.

The most busy time of the year for the company is October, November and December. Consumers tend to re-decorate more often, for Christmas. (O'Reilly, 21.11.97). Soft furnishings don't have changing seasons, however due to increased demand at certain periods, they have an influx of stock. More stock arrives in August and September, which is for the increased demand in November and December. In February there is another influx of stock which is due to the increased demand at Easter time.

Hickeys' fabrics are aimed towards a middle market level. Hickeys most popular consumer is primarily female aged 30-50 years with children present. (O'Reilly, 21.11.97). With increased changes of values in society, this consumer profile is now changing.

“The fabrics cover a broad range, which is defined as volume selling. The range of fabrics can be adapted to suit a broad range of house-styles.” (O'Reilly, 21.11.97). However a lot of Hickeys' ideas are projecting traditional styles with a twist.

Hickeys do not retail the same fabrics in each store. Location plays an important role in determining the type of fabric that will sell. Different locations mean different consumer profiles. Take for example the Hickeys' store on Henry Street and the Hickeys' store in St. Stephen's Green shopping complex at the top of Dublin's Grafton Street. This Street is the most expensive area of the city. Consumers are more willing to pay higher prices for better quality goods in this area. It is difficult for Hickeys to retail any fabric which is less than £9.95 per yard, in this store. However on the other hand, the Henry Street store, situated on the North-Side of Dublin, which caters for a less expensive market level, finds it difficult to retail any fabric which is more expensive than £9.95 per yard. The location of stores affects the consumer profiles, hence the fabric ranges. Hickeys' Henry Street store, is located two doors from Arnotts and opposite Roches stores. Hickeys' premises on Henry Street retails to a variety of consumer profiles, this is due to the volume of people. It is viewed as the company's "Flag-Ship" as it retails the largest amount of fabrics of all the stores.

"The Henry Street area has picked up dramatically in the last twelve months". (Fagan, 1997, p. 26). This could be attributed to the impact of the new Jervis Centre, with its range of U.K. stores:- Debenhams, Boots and others. The Street has been predicted to improve even more over the next few years.

INTERIOR DESIGN AT HICKEYS

Interior design consultancy is available at Hickeys' branch in St. Stephen's Green Shopping Centre. (see fig. No.4). The new Hickeys' soft furnishing store at Blanchardstown also has a resident interior designer. Interior design consultancy has become increasingly popular. Many interior retailers such as Laura Ashley, Grafton Street, Dublin, and Clery's, O'Connell Street, Dublin, also have interior consultants.

Consumers are now becoming more aware about quality of design. Some years ago interior design was considered as something only used by the middle-higher class. This is not the case today, as it is a service, widely used within society.

It appears that a decade ago, refurbishing only took place every 15 years. Now rooms are being revamped on average every 5-7 years. "Consumers are now prepared to spend more money decorating more often and are absolutely more liberal". (Cullen, 21.11.97).

The function of the interior design consultant is to analyse and advise what appeals to the consumer, to help team up, a suitable collection.

The consultancy costs £50.00 for a house call. With a purchase over £500.00, this money will be refunded. Service of the interior design consultancy is free, from within the store premises. The only cost is for measuring which is refundable from curtain cost. (Cullen, 21.11.97).

Fitting, tying back, draping and make-up can all be purchased on the premises. "So with a bit of mixing and matching and a dash of flair, a not so expensive fabric, can look as good". (Cullen, 21.11.97).



(Fig. No. 4) INTERIOR DESIGN CONSULTANCY, HICKEYS' STORE
ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN, DUBLIN, (21.11.97)



HICKEYS' METHODS OF ADVERTISING

Hickeys' products are advertised in a range of Irish papers and Irish magazines. According to a house-hold Survey carried out by (P.M.P.A. 1997, p. 60) "69% of women claim magazines as the source of their inspiration". The magazines Hickeys feature, include *Image*, and *Irish Homes*, newspapers include *The Evening Herald*, *Irish Independent*, *Evening Echo*, *Munster Express* and *Limerick Leader*. Hickeys regard advertisement as a vital tool for the success of their retailing. (Donnelly, 21.11.97). "Advertising is the image creator for the store". (Segal, 1982, p. 121).

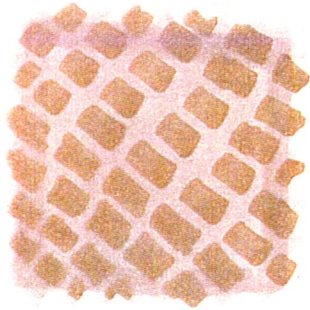
Photographic images are an essential method for interior advertising, as visual impact, can be projected in an attractive manner. Advertising brings information about services and products to the consumer.

Advertisements for Hickeys usually consist of highlighting new fabric ranges. "New ideas and inspirations help to keep up consumer interest". (O'Reilly, 21.11.97). The company have taken part in 'house make-overs', where Hickeys' fabrics are used to redecorate, renovated rooms. "Contemporary Meets Rustic". (*Irish Homes*, September/October 1997). In this article Hickeys' fabrics were used for the window treatment. I would argue that this is a successful method of publicity, as it increases consumer knowledge of fabric ranges, and shows fabric potential.

Hickeys engage in sponsoring various competitions such as the more recent "Make a Model" in association with *Woman's Way*. This competition was judged in November, 1997 in the Royal Dublin Society. Hickeys also feature stands at the *Ideal Homes Exhibition* and *The Knit and Stitch Show*. These events feature annually in the R.D.S.

I have chosen to analyse the effectiveness of typical Hickeys' advertisements. The first example features an article "Do you have the material to transform life into Art?" (*Image Interiors*, 1997, p. 6). (See fig. No.5)

Do you have the
material to transform
life into Art?



Mitre
140cm wide £12.95 yd



Cameo
135cm wide £8.95 yd



Balmoral
140cm wide £15.95 yd



Maze
140cm wide £12.95 yd

NEW SEASON FABRICS TO HELP CREATE YOUR *ideal* HOME



HICKEYS

THE SOFT FURNISHING SPECIALISTS

DUBLIN CORK LIMERICK WATERFORD GALWAY

(Fig. No. 5) HICKEY ADVERTISING (*IMAGE INTERIORS*, OCT./NOV.
1997

The advert firstly asks a question in green sans serif lettering "Do you have the material to transform life into Art?" This title is somewhat intriguing and adventurous, offering the consumer the opportunity, to do what they want with the fabric. This feature is surrounded by a white background, in my view this highlights the fabric illustrations, Mitre, Cameo, Balmoral and Maze. These are a collection of cotton prints. The designs include repeat structures of circular lines, tiny spacious floral motifs and a geometric repeat. The colour range includes, cream and plum, with some hints of green. The prices and collection names can clearly be read, displayed in small black writing under each fabric swatch.

I would argue that although this advert, is clear to read and understand it is difficult to visualize the true fabric potential. This advert does not give ideas about how these fabrics could be used, hence it does not project a certain style. The consumer is presented with the opportunity to use their own imagination with regards to fabric use.

The second example of Hickeys' advertising features an article "Robert Coleman age 37, head-waiter". (*Image Interiors*, 1997, p. 39). (See fig. No.6). This advert features symbols, it does not feature any fabrics or interior ideas. It tells a story, in a convincing manner in which the consumer can relate to, about how a specific individual transforms his kitchen. Hickeys' fabric selection is explained in an interesting manner. "He chose from a rich menu of fabulous oil cloths...". This advert highlights Hickeys' fabric selection, and interior design consultancy. "Expert advice ensured ...". This advert has used symbols to give a fresh twist, through projecting interior furnishing retailing, from a different angle. (Wheeler, 1986, p. 33).

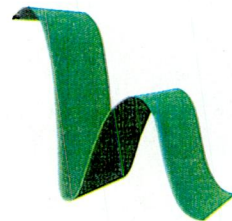
Robert Coleman *age* 37 head-waiter

INDEED, ROBERT HAS BEEN WAITING
patiently for months to see his precious kitchen revamped. Finally he
was let loose in Hickeys - So many choices, so little time!

He chose from a rich menu of fabulous
oil cloths with matching fabrics in
checks, stripes and bold patterns.
Expert advice ensured that his kitchen
transformation was as easy as pie.

To check out your recipe for success
on the home front, call into Hickeys.

Robert found it was well worth the wait.



HICKEYS
THE FABRIC SPECIALISTS

HICKEYS GREAT IDEAS *for* IDEAL HOMES

DUBLIN CORK LIMERICK WATERFORD GALWAY

(Fig. No. 6) HICKEY ADVERTISING, *IMAGE INTERIORS*,
SPRING /SUMMER 1997

CHAPTER 3

An Investigation of Hickeys' Display Methods and Fabric Ranges in relation to Competitors; The Retailing of furnishing Fabrics in Department and Haberdashery Stores

AN INVESTIGATION OF HICKEYS' DISPLAY METHODS AND FABRIC RANGES IN RELATION TO COMPETITORS.

The window display, shop layout, display units and fabric range, all contribute to projecting a retail identity. Interior retailers each strive towards achieving their own personal identity. "Furniture and fixtures, set the image you wish to project". (Segal 1982, p. 73).

An influx of British shops and increase of discount stores has contributed to a rise in competition. Increased importation has meant that fabrics can be retailed at cheaper prices.

Shop displays are of major importance, as they inspire consumers through projecting retail identity. "Sixty percent of home owners get decorating ideas from browsing in shops". (P.M.P.A., Home Survey results, 1997, p. 59).

Section One:

THE RETAILING OF FURNISHING FABRICS IN DEPARTMENT STORES

The following department stores, will be discussed in relation to shop display and fabric ranges: Brown Thomas, Laura Ashley, Clery's and Arnotts. These department stores are Hickeys' competitors.

Brown Thomas is situated in Grafton Street, Dublin, and is owned by a Canadian, Galen Weston. Brown Thomas retails fabric at a higher market level. Laura Ashley, on Grafton Street, is a British chain store, retailing fabric at a middle-higher market level. Grafton Street retails goods at a more expensive market level. Clery's, situated on O'Connell Street, Dublin, is an Irish department store retailing goods at a middle-higher market level. Arnotts retail fabric at a middle market, and is situated in Henry Street, north of the city. Arnotts is an Irish owned department store.

Brown Thomas fabrics are retailed at a higher market level, featuring a range of labels including Designer's Guild, Liberties and Malabar. The products and fabrics are top quality and exclusive. The fabrics are imported from all parts of the world, such as France, Germany, India and Switzerland. Some of the fabrics are retailed exclusively for Brown Thomas. Due to the high price range the fabrics are retailed to middle-higher class consumers. The fabrics resemble a rich lifestyle and a total consumer look.

Brown Thomas window display (01.02.98) projects a sophisticated look. (see fig No.7). According to Segal, "windows are your most valuable selling aid". (Segal, 1982, p. 79). This sophisticated look is projected through the selection of objects. The display consists of a wooden dresser draped with a sheer, white silk scarf and gloves, a selection of pure fur and chenille cushions, feature in rich colours of beige and brown.

(Fig. No. 7)
BROWN THOMAS WINDOW
DISPLAY 01.02.98.



(Fig. No. 8)
BROWN THOMAS
MINI-ROOM SETTING
01.02.98.



(Fig. No. 9)
BROWN THOMAS DISPLAY
CABINET 01.02.98.



(Fig. No. 10)
BROWN THOMAS
DISPLAY METHODS
01.02.98



On the opposite side of the dresser, wine glasses, a bottle of wine and candles are placed in a collection. The selective use of objects create a luxurious lifestyle. The fabrics and objects are colour co-ordinated and blend successfully. It is important to acknowledge that prices are not included. This is because price is not important to Brown Thomas consumers, as money is no object.

Brown Thomas inner shop display units include mini, room settings, (see fig. No.8), which include a lemon suite, complemented with a woven two-tone purple drape. This display highlights what the upholstery fabric will look like when made up. I would argue this display projects a contemporary ideal, due to the selective use of colour, and no unnecessary decoration. The complementary side table, vase and flower container, feature simple basic structures, which also project a contemporary outlook.

Other displays include tall white wooden cabinets with boxed shelves (see fig. No.9). These units hold handcrafted cushions. Designers Guild fabrics are displayed by suspending tall strips of fabric from a height, upon a rack. (see fig. No.10). This is an effective method of display, as the fabrics can be viewed from a height. Most of Brown Thomas fabrics are displayed in small sample books, these are hung from metal railings or placed in shelves. I would argue that small fabric swatches, do not display fabric successfully, as these samples are too small for the consumer to assess and appreciate.

The fabrics retailed in Brown Thomas include "Collins and Hayes", "Blendworths" and "Designers Guild", among their vast range. "John Wilman" fabrics are high quality consisting of 100% cotton, featuring traditional florals and check motifs. The "Collins and Hayes" collection include heavy woven woolen fabrics and textured cotton damask. These fabrics feature subtle colours, cream, peach and light beige. Designs include geometric shapes, consisting of abstracted images are priced at £10.95 per metre.

(Fig. No. 11)
LAURA ASHLEY
WINDOW DISPLAY
01.02.98



(Fig. No. 12)
LAURA ASHLEY
BEDROOM SETTING
01.02.98



Novelty and excitement features in Irish handcrafted cushions, consisting of unusual hand embroidery techniques in bright green and orange. These cushions are priced at £100.00 each. 'Bakha' fabrics include heavy woven fabrics in luxurious colours of purple and warm reds. These are priced at £29.00 per metre. Heavy printed fabrics consisting of a linen, cotton and nylon mix, are priced at £50.00 per metre. The most expensive fabric is chenille which is priced at £105.00 per metre. The least expensive fabric is a light muslim priced at £10.00 per metre. The fabrics range from strong, bright contemporary designs, to more traditional designs in deep colours. Brown Thomas fabrics are retailed to consumers, who request that extra rich quality and wish to project a luxurious image in their home.

Laura Ashley fabrics in comparasion to Brown Thomas project a traditional, rural, country-house theme. These fabrics are purchased by consumers who perhaps have a complete house, furnished in Laura Ashley fabrics. The fabrics reinforce old fashion traditions.

The shop display window (see fig No.11) includes an elegant white chair, covered in Laura Ashley upholstery fabric. The patterned green and white check blanket contrast with the plain white chair. Cushions are presented in large wooden boxes, consisting of plain white, subtle green and floral designs. A floral sheer curtain features as a back-drop in deep pink and garden green a curvy leaf motif, is dominant. The soft colour palette, provide subtle qualities. I would argue the window display projects traditional ideas at a sophishicated level. The collection of fabrics, colour scheme and design, all convey a Laura Ashley identity. This window display is similar to Brown Thomas, as both project a specific lifestyle aimed towards a specific consumer. However I would argue that Brown Thomas fabrics are more contemporary in comparsion to Laura Ashley. "With advertising it is extremely important to identify the audience ... setting your target". (Farbey, 1994, p. 32).



(Fig. No. 13)
LAURA ASHLEY INNER DISPLAY METHODS
 01.02.98



(Fig. No. 14)
LAURA ASHLEY DISPLAYS
 01.02.98



Laura Ashley in comparison to Brown Thomas, has gone one step ahead with their inner display. Laura Ashley feature complete rooms, fully furnished in fabric, with co-ordinated furniture and accessories. This method presents the consumer with the opportunity to step out of the retail atmosphere into the home environment. I would argue that fabrics become more real, as everything can be seen in the right proportion. Interior fabrics need to be displayed within an appropriate background and accessories, which complement each other. "Show-rooms create a much more visual impact, and will remain in the consumers mind". (O'Reilly, 21.11.97).

Laura Ashley's bed-room setting features (see fig. No.12) an old fashion white bed structure, dressed in a subtle floral lemon and white striped bed-spread. Contrasting pillows and cushions are randomly placed upon the bed, thus creating a real life environment. The room is complemented with lemon and white check curtains and enhanced with a lemon background. The wooden furniture complements the lighter subtle tones of the pastel fabrics. I would argue that these room settings show the fabrics to their full potential. However the displays do not feature a variety of different trends, rather one specific look, aimed towards a small section of the market.

The retail display units are each colour co-ordinated into various sections, (see fig. No's.13 & 14) and are sub-divided according to types of patterns. Each fabric can be purchased with co-ordinated wall-paper and borders. I would argue that this method of display does not provide consumers, with the freedom to co-ordinate fabrics and accessories of their choice as, co-ordinated ideas are already reinforced in the way items are displayed. The displays appear easy to read, and the shop floor, is quite organised. The traditional lighting, real wooden floors, background pictures, all project a country-house theme. "It is important that the floors, harmonize with the walls and ceiling". (Segal, 1982, p. 80).



(Fig. No. 15)
CLERY'S WINDOW
DISPLAY 01.02.98



(Fig. No. 16)
CLERY'S DISPLAY
CABINETS 01.02.98



Laura Ashley fabrics are imported from the U.K. and are made exclusively for Laura Ashley retail. Fabric designs include small scale floral repeat patterns, checks and stripes. The fabrics are very subtle in warm muted colours of mint green, lemon, light-blue and warm peach. Warm muted combinations of cream and smoke plum are also popular. Fabrics include woven jacquards priced at £29.95 per metre. Cotton prints in small floral motifs can be purchased in a variety of pastel colours and are priced at £9.95 per metre. The fabrics reinforce, traditional good quality, as they are mostly 93% cotton, 7% nylon. Brown Thomas fabrics are more easy care, as they consist of a more even fibre mix. Laura Ashley fabrics are more soft and subtle in comparison to the heavy printed damasks retailed in Brown Thomas. Brown Thomas offers consumers a broader variety of fabrics, which also provide better scope for styles, in comparison to Laura Ashley.

Clery's have adapted a similar approach to that of Laura Ashley in their window display. (February 1998). (see fig No.15). Clery's have recreated a bedroom life-style through careful colour co-ordination and use of accessories. The background and floor area feature a light wood, this complements the green damask bed-spread and floral, cream and green curtains. I would argue the colour green is too dominant within this display, an introduction of more colour, and design contrasts would create more excitement.

Clery's appear to have an organised structure to fabric display. The store atmosphere is spacious and well organised. The display units feature 3-Dimensional wooden cabinets. (see fig No. 16). Each cabinet features a curtain drape and on the opposite side, packaged curtains are displayed in boxed shelves which run vertical. These display units are placed in a sequence across the store floor. This allows the consumer, room to walk around each display and view the fabrics, from a comfortable distance. According to Segal, a certain flow can be established by keeping the floor loose and not over-crowding. (Segal, 1982, p. 76).



(Fig. No. 17)
ARNOTTS LAYOUT
01.02.98



(Fig. No. 18)
ARNOTTS DISPLAY
METHODS 01.02.98



Clery's fabrics are imported from Europe. The fabrics are retailed to consumers who desire quality for money, and at the same time sophistication. This sophistication is projected in their 'Montgomery' interior fabrics, featuring traditional, modern and innovative designs. Fabric designs include geometric repeats, bearing close resemblance to 1950's geometrics. Colour selections include rusty brown, radiant blue, beige and rich plum. The fabrics range from £8.70 per yard, to £20.00 per yard. These fabrics are generally less expensive in comparison to Laura Ashley and Brown Thomas. Clery's offer a broader selection of fabrics, which could be used to create many more styles, in comparison to Laura Ashley.

Arnotts window display, in comparison to Clery's, is less well organised. Arnotts window display, (February 1998), features a range of ready-made bed linen sets. These sets are displayed neatly folded, in a six-tier white display rack. Price ranges are projected on acetate holders, which feature names of collections and price ranges. I would argue that this method of display is more suitable for the inner shop display, than the outer window display, as no attempt is made to create a lifestyle. This display is not very focused, no one fabric is really displayed to its full potential. I would argue that interior fabrics have to be individually teamed up in a collection, in order for the display to become successful.

The ability to arrange or bring together related or unrelated items in an interesting and eye arresting manner is crucial to display.

(Wheeler, 1986, p. 44).

Arnotts interior display units are extremely close together, (see fig No. 17), this makes it difficult for the consumer to clearly see specific fabrics.

Arnotts retail atmosphere appears cluttered and tightly packed, this is due to limited space available.

The surrounding wall areas feature mini-room settings, these are situated in corner areas. I would argue that the mini-room settings do not project the true fabric potential, as the settings are too small and stage like. In my view they do not resemble a real-life style setting. I feel that Arnotts do have a good fabric selection, however the congested display does not highlight this fact. The merchandising team need to either expand upon the size of the area, or display less fabrics, this will create more room, which will make it easier to see and appreciate displays fully. Arnotts have made attempts to hang sheer fabrics in bright colours. (see fig. No.18). These fabrics are hung from a high store panel. This method is quite attractive and eye catching, as this display is situated at a higher eye level than the other display units. Perhaps Arnotts should engage in displaying more fabrics at various eye levels.

Arnotts emphasise a long tradition of service, quality and value. They retail an extensive range of interior fabrics and ready-made sets such as curtains and bedroom sets. Arnotts retail a much larger selection of fabric, in comparison to Clery's. A wide range of richly textured cotton damask upholstery, printed fabrics and woven fabrics, can be purchased in a variety of six different colour ways. Willow damasks feature in colours of beige, brown and cream, and are priced at £11.95 per yard. Cotton damasks and cotton viscose are priced at £12.95 per yard. Assorted cotton prints feature in a variety of blues, purples and greens. The fabrics retailed in Arnotts are wide and varied. Anything from plain coloured woven fabrics, to fabrics featuring bold geometrics. Arnotts fabrics sell to loyal consumers, the wide collection, enables consumers to pick and choose.

Irish department stores provide a variety of fabrics retailed in various contexts. Laura Ashley retailing is directed towards a specific market sector, this fails to cater for a wide selection of styles. Brown Thomas fabrics provide high quality exclusive fabrics, for those consumers who wish to project an image with interiors.

I would argue that these two stores have directed their market at a very specific consumer. Clery's and Arnotts provide a broader fabric selection in comparison to Brown Thomas and Laura Ashley, hence directing their market towards a broader consumer profile.

Section Two:

THE RETAILING OF FURNISHING FABRICS IN HABERDASHERY STORES

Hickeys' competitors amongst Haberdashery stores include Nicholls and Murphy Sheehy & Co.

Nicholls is an Irish chain store, situated on Henry Street, Dublin, and Thomas Street in the Liberties area of Dublin. Nicholls retail fabric at lower-middle market level. Murphy Sheehy & Co., located in Castle Market, Dublin, not far from Grafton Street, which runs parallel to William Street South. Murphy Sheehy & Co. is an Irish independent store, retailing fabric at a higher-middle market level. The window display, shop layout and fabric range of these haberdashery stores will be addressed.

Hickeys regard shop window and inner shop display as being of prime importance. "Display is one very vital and visual part of the pattern of retailing". (Wheeler, 1986, p. 15).

With reference to (fig. No.19), which is a window display of Hickeys in Henry Street. This display features a cream and blue curtain in a geometric and leaf shape design (similar to 1950's motifs). The curtain is accompanied with cream tie-backs, which are fabric strips tied. This idea gives traditional fabrics a twist. Contrasting cushions include a plain beige, played against a plain white cushion. The display includes two chairs, covered in Hickeys' upholstery fabrics, demonstrating the fabric use. A dark blue fabric is placed between both chairs, this integrates and blends the colours. I would argue this represents a spacious, easy to read image.



(Fig. No. 19)
HICKEYS' HENRY STREET
WINDOW DISPLAY
01.11.97



(Fig. No. 20)
HICKEYS' CONSUMER DESK 01.11.97



A consumer service desk is situated at the entrance to the Henry Street store, any consumer queries can be addressed immediately. (see fig. No.20). Labelled fabric swatches alert consumers about fabric location and range of fabrics available, before entering the store. This method is very organised and professional. The shop atmosphere appears clean and tidy. The background atmosphere is white, with wood effect flooring in comparison to real wooden floors in Laura Ashley. The display props are situated throughout the shop floor. "The floor should be used to highlight special items or groups". (Segal, 1982, p. 75).

Fabric rolls are displayed horizontally around the surrounding outer walls. (see fig No.21). 3-Dimensional wooden display units hold six to eight fabric rolls and are grouped according to specific collections. (see fig. No. 22). Accessories are displayed tightly faced in columns behind the service desk. (see fig. No.23). Bed linen and ready-made sets are displayed in white wooden display cabinets consisting of three shelves.

Hickeys have allocated parts of the premises for creating mini lifestyles, (see fig. No.24), which feature a bedroom setting, including a bed dressed in Hickeys' blue and cream check duvet and accessorised with cushions. This inspires consumers about how the products can be teamed together. Hickeys in St. Stephen's Green, features interesting curtain swags. (see fig. No.25). These drapes are embellished with ribbons and ties. This provides inspiration about innovative approaches for interior decorating.

Hickeys retail a large selection of fabrics which can be adapted to suit a wide variety of styles. Fabrics include cotton prints, upholstery, natural fabrics, linens, sateens, damasks and so forth. Hickeys' fabrics are aimed towards a middle market consumer, who requires traditional fabrics, with an added twist.

(Fig. No. 21)
HICKEYS' FABRIC
DISPLAYS 01.11.97



(Fig. No. 22)
HICKEYS' ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN
SHOP LAYOUT 01.11.97





(Fig. No. 23) HICKEYS' ACCESSORY DISPLAY UNIT 01.11.97



(Fig. No. 24)
HICKEYS' BEDROOM
SETTING 01.11.97



Upholstery fabrics feature heavy embossed floral motifs and calligraphy designs. Colour ranges include combinations of cream and plum, green and rust. These fabrics are rich in character. Floral cotton damasks belong to the 'Bruges' collection, in colours of pink, green and cream, priced at £9.95 per yard. The most expensive fabrics are in the 'Monkwell Sagusso' collection. These are upholstery fabrics at £19.95 per yard, and can be purchased in a variety of eight different colour ways. More expensive fabrics would be retailed in St. Stephen's Green store. Henry Street store retails fabrics from £2.95 per yard to £12.95 per yard. 'Haddah' fabrics feature floral traditional prints in a variety of colour combinations at £7.95 per yard. "Prices of fabric depend upon the quality of fibres and production methods". (O'Reilly, 21.11.97). This is evident in the price of the 'Shelbourne' curtain collection which is £149.99 per set. This expensive price is due to the high quality of fabric, which is 100% pure linen.

Nicholls window display is more busy in comparison to Hickeys. (see fig. No. 26). This display includes a collection of ready-made hanging curtains, towelling, sheet sets, duvets and lamp shades. It is evident from the photograph that price labels feature quite prominently. This alerts consumer attention, about discounts. The price labels push value for money, this meets the demands of Nicholls consumers, who are on tight budgets. According to Segal "Windows are your most valuable selling aid". (Segal, 1982, p. 79). The window features a huge abundance of choice, pushing quantity rather than quality, at value for money. The window features so much that it is somewhat distracting for the eye. "Proper backgrounds should enhance, not detract, from the merchandise". (Segal, 1982, p. 131). The background appears too overpowering. The fabrics displayed clash, due to the fact that too many patterned fabrics are displayed beside each other. Nicholls window display is a conscious effort to create an abundance of choice and value for money.



(Fig. No. 25)
HICKEY'S CURTAIN
DISPLAY 01.11.97



(Fig. No. 26) NICHOLLS WINDOW DISPLAY 01.11.97



According to Segal, "What you see, is what you get, in relation to advertising and windows". (Segal, 1982, p. 121). This display appeals to those who have less money to spend. I would argue that this display is too crowded and concentrated, it is difficult to see the true potential of any fabric. "The amount of good you put in your window, has a direct bearing on the image you wish to project". (Segal, 1982, p. 132). Hickeys' display is less cluttered and more structured in comparison to Nicholls. It is important to acknowledge that Hickeys retail fabrics to a middle class consumer, while on the other hand Nicholls retail to the 'less well off'. This difference in consumer profiles can effect the type of window display.

Nicholls methods of inner shop display are quite similar to that displayed in their window. Nicholls appear to have covered virtually every space within the shop with fabrics and accessories. (see fig. No.27). Sheet sets have been displayed above the indoor window, cushions have been attached with hooks above the window ledge. Methods such as these reflect, the value for money identity. Price ranges have been attached to the window, and are projected as an important feature. There appears to be such an abundance of stock, which creates an untidy, distracting atmosphere. Sheet sets are piled high upon metal display racks. The fabrics and accessories are not displayed in a specific order, this creates the idea of a bazaar market place.

Fabrics are draped in multitudes from the ceiling. (see fig. No.28). I would argue that it is difficult to see specific fabrics, as the clutter of fabrics clash in both design, colour and texture. "Proper backgrounds should enhance, not detract, from the merchandise". (Segal, 1982, p. 132). The displays are much too overpowering. Green and yellow checks are displayed with blue and white stripes, contrasted with floral motifs. Nicholls have a totally different strategy to Hickeys, in relation to shop display.



(Fig. No. 27) NICHOLLS INNER STORE DISPLAY 01.11.97



(Fig. No. 28)
NICHOLLS DISPLAY
METHODS 01.11.97

Hickeys' displays are precisely co-ordinated, and organised in a clear structure, Nicholls methods are quite the opposite. Nicholls could push their fabric potential through focusing on one or two ideas, and project fabrics in a collection, as opposed to a display featuring many ideas.

Nicholls retail a large range of ready-made sets and household accessories as well as fabrics. A range of traditional upholstery and furnishing fabrics are retailed. These designs feature quite a lot of movement in large floral designs, bold checks and pin stripe fabrics. Most of the fabrics are printed cottons, and voiles. Each design features a mixture of different bright colour combinations. Fabrics start at £3.99 per yard for printed cottons. Chintz can be purchased in colours which include blues and reds, priced at £2.99 per yard. The most popular price is £7.99 per yard. The 'Pendra' collection features a mix-match design in a combination of small floral shapes, contrasted with a bold stripe. Nicholls fabrics appear to offer mostly flat textured fabric, they do not retail a wide variety of different weaves, and damasks. The fabrics appear to be mostly patterned and often resemble each other. An introduction of more simple, subtle designs is needed, which feature less colour and design detail. Hickeys in comparison to Nicholls, retails a better variety of fabrics, providing more variety for consumer choice.

Murphy Sheehy & Co.'s window display bears a similar resemblance to Nicholls methods of display. Both appear unorganized and untidy with an abundance of merchandise displayed. It is important to acknowledge that this similarity is for different reasons. Nicholls abundance of fabrics, pushes value for money, while Murphy Sheehy & Co.'s window demonstrates the unusual, high quality fabrics. Murphy Sheehy & Co.'s retailing provides a sense of adventure.

Murphy Sheehy & Co.'s window display (November 1997), features colours which do not co-ordinate and contrasting fabric textures. Silks and shiny surface fabrics are draped in colours of blues, peaches, vibrant green and

rusty browns. The window display does not project any ideas about how the fabric will be used, thus the consumer is not reinforced with any inspiration. The layout of the window demonstrates the nature of Murphy Sheehy & Co. retailing which is unorganized.

The store is filled to capacity, with upholstery, furnishing and fashion fabrics, in an unorganized structure. The fabrics are piled vertically against the inner walls. It is like a treasure case, as you'll never know what you'll find, offering a sense of adventure. The consumer really has to look hard for the desired fabric. Murphy Sheehy & Co. does not project any ideas about interior styles, this is an advantage for those people such as designers and students, who want to use their imagination.

The fabrics retailed in Murphy Sheehy & Co. are of a high designer quality, as this shop specialises, in end of rolls, and so can price them competitively. Murphy Sheehy & Co. fabrics are consumed by many designers, an example being Arthur Duff, whom is an architect consumer for an opera theatre company, 'Cosi fan tuttie', obtained fabrics from Murphy Sheehy & Co. (*Irish Times*, 31.01.98). I would argue that Murphy Sheehy & Co. retail fabric to design conscious consumers, who have their own ideas for use of fabrics. Fabrics feature extra special qualities, hence providing novelty and excitement. Fabrics include a variety of subtle and elaborate textures. These fabrics project unusual qualities, such as shiny surfaces and pleated textures. The most expensive fabric there, on my visit, was a wool crepe priced at £17.00 per metre. The average price is £8.00 per metre. A range of household plastics, P.V.C. and leatherettes is retailed in opaque and dark plum colours. These fabrics would be suitable for upholstery. Polyesters and linens are priced at £5.00 per metre. Printed sheers in large floral motifs in colours of beige, cream and dark navy are priced at £4.95 per metre. This shop does not retail any household accessories or ready-made sets, in comparison to the wide range retailed by both Nicholls and Hickeys. The biggest contrast perhaps is the mode of presentation. Murphy Sheehy & Co. is a jumbled, overflowing,

collection of fabric rolls, which is not sorted in any way. Unlike Hickeys and Nicholls, it is an independent shop, not part of a chain.

It is evident from the haberdashery stores discussed, each retail outlet engage in different methods of shop display, projecting individual identities. Hickeys project an easy to read, clutter-free environment which is the opposite of Nicholls and Murphy Sheehy & Co. Shop window displays bear a close resemblance to the inner display methods. The consumer can define from the window, the nature of the outlet. The three haberdashery stores addressed, retail fabrics to different consumer types.

Hickeys' fabrics provide a more traditional twist, in comparison to Nicholls. Whilst Murphy Sheehy & Co. provide more unusual fabrics as opposed to Hickeys.

CONCLUSION

The range of retail outlets addressed in this thesis are familiar trade names to generations of City shopper. Although some of these shops have similarities in fabric range, shop atmosphere and display, each store is distinctively individual in character, and aimed at a different level of the market.

Identity in stores, can clearly be seen from the busy, cluttered bustle of Nicholls Haberdashery Store, this look targets 'the less well off'. Value for money is pushed, through the abundance of stock displayed. I would argue that improvements in store design and modern trends, now make Nicholls look old fashioned in comparison to the organised structure of Hickeys and Clery's, for example.

The sophisticated "classy" window display of Brown Thomas, projects the exclusive quality of products retailed, hence directing their market towards the middle to higher class.

Hickeys mid market level falls between the upmarket Brown Thomas, retailing a more exclusive range, and the lower to middle market fabrics retailed by Nicholls. Hickeys retail the biggest and most specialised range of fabrics under one roof. Many of the department stores, only feature a small section for fabric retail.

Hickeys appear to have been in touch with the current market, due to the quality and style of their products. Hickeys retail traditional fabrics in an inspiring manner, giving traditional fabrics a twist. However it is important to acknowledge that Hickeys do not provide the more unusual fabric, such as the unusual finishes and textures of those retailed by Murphy Sheehy & Co. Most of Hickeys fabrics, are at a standard, middle market level retailed at reasonable prices.

Hickeys has a strong visual identity, evident in the organised, spacious, easy to

read identity. This identity creates an easy to read structure to aid consumer selection, as fabrics are categorised according to collections and fabric use.

I would argue that Hickeys have developed a professional, systematic approach in comparison to other haberdashery stores such as Nicholls and Murphy Sheehy & Co. Hickeys is certainly more advanced than retailers such as Nicholls, where display is concerned.

I regard Laura Ashley as being the most sophisticated, in relation to fabric display, through the process of decorating complete rooms. This method enables the consumer to step out of the retail environment into a fully decorated lifestyle. The disadvantage of Laura Ashley retailing, is the fact that the fabrics and accessories, only cater for a very specific "Laura Ashley Look", hence a specific consumer. While Hickeys fabrics offer a larger variety of styles, to a larger variety of consumers.

"We, as a company, intend to continue successfully, in the competitive market. The 1990's appear to be a revolutionary, design conscious decade. Display and advertising have never been more important".
(O'Reilly, 21.11.97)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ADBURGHAM, Alison, Shops and Shopping, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1964.

BANHAM, Joanna, Encyclopedia of Interior Design, Volume 1 & 2, London & Chicago, Fitzroy Dearborn Publisher, 1997.

BOWLBY, Rachel, Shopping with Freud, London, Routledge, 1993.

CAFFREY, Paul, Ireland: In Banham, Joanna, Encyclopedia of Interior Design, Vol. 1, London and Chicago, Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997.

CALLOWAY, Stephen, 20th Century Decoration, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1988.

CONNOLLY, Sybil, In an Irish House, Great Britain, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1988.

CLABBURN, Pamela, The National Trust Book of Furnishing Textiles, London, Viking, 1988.

CORRIGAN KEARNS, Kevin, Georgian Dublin Ireland's Imperiled Architectural Heritage, Great Britain, 1983.

DORMER, Peter, Design since 1945, London, Thames & Hudson, 1993.

DOVER, Harriet, Utility: In Banham Joanna Encyclopedia of Interior Design, Vol. 1, London & Chicago, Fitzroy, Dearborn, 1997.

DUNLEAVY, Mairead, Dress in Ireland, London, Batsford, 1989.

FARBEY, A. D., How to Produce Successful Advertising, Britain, British Library, Cataloguing in Publication Data, 1994.

HICKS, David, Living with Taste, Great Britain, Leslie Frewin, 1968.

JONES, Peter, Taste Today, Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1991.

JOSEPH, Marjory, Essentials of Textiles, United States, Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1976.

KELLY, Anne, Cultural Policy in Ireland, Dublin, Irish Museum Trust, 1989.

LARSEN, Jack, Furnishing, Fabrics, Art International Source Book, Great Britain, Thames & Hudson, 1989.

LEBEAU, Caroline, The Decorative Art of Textiles, Great Britain, Thames & Hudson, 1944.

MASSEY, Anne, Interior Design of 20th Century, New York, Thames & Hudson, 1990.

MASSEY, Anne, Interior Design, History and Development: In Banham Joanna, Encyclopedia of Interior Design, Vol. 2, London & Chicago, Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997.

McCRUM, Elizabeth, Fabric and Form, Irish Fashion since 1950, Belfast, Sutton, 1996

PFEIFFER, Walter, HERON, Marianne, In the Houses of Ireland, Great Britain, Thames & Hudson, 1988.

ROTHERY, Sean, The Shops of Ireland, Dublin, Gill and MacMillan Ltd., 1978.

SAUNDERSON, kylie, British Fabrics, London, Columbus Press, 1987.

SCHOESER, Mary, RUFY, Celia, Textiles 1790 to Present Day, London, Thames & Hudson, 1989.

SEGAL, Marvin E., From Rags to Riches, Success in Apparel Retailing, New York, Wiley, 1982.

SPARKE, Penny, Design in Context, London, Bloombury, 1987.

TEXTILE INSTITUTE, Textiles Fashioning the Future, Papers presented at Annual World Conference Oct. 16-20, 1989, Great Britain, Eastern Press, 1990.

WALSH, Claire, Retail and Shop Interiors, In Banham Joanna, Encyclopedia of Interior Design, Vol. 2, London and Chicago, Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997.

WELBACHER, William, Advertising, United States, MacMillan, 1979.

WHEELER, Alan, Display by Design, New York, Cornwall Books, 1987.

ARTICLES

BALL, Heather, "The Textile Institute Commentary", Textile Horizons, Oct./Nov. 1997.

BUCKLIN, Louis P., "Service Marketing", Journal of Retailing, Vol. 73, No.1, Spring 1997, Ilac Business Library.

CORPORATE INTELLIGENCE, "Clothing, footwear and household textiles", Retail Business Sector Review, Jan./Mar. 1997, (p. 1 - p. 13)

CORPORATE INTELLIGENCE, "Market Survey 2, Bed linen", Retail Business Review, No. 474, Aug. 1997, (p. 43 - p. 60).

FAGAN, Jack, "Multiples to pay £300,000 premium in Grafton Street", The Irish Times, Oct. 29 1997, (p. 26).

GREEN, Daniel, "Textile dependent on the domestic consumer", Financial Times, 24 February 1992.

HARRISON, Jacqueline, "Low Cost Countries pose major challenge to textile industry", The Irish Times, 25 August 1997.

HICKEYS, "Do you have the material to transform life into Art?", Image Interiors, Oct./Nov. 1997, (p. 6).

HICKEYS, "Do you have the stuff of which dreams are made?", Sunday Independent, 28 Sept. 1997.

HICKEYS, "Laura Coleman age 35 make-over artist", Image Interior, Spring/Summer 1997 (p. 3).

HICKEYS, "Robert Coleman age 37, head waiter", Image Interiors, Spring/Summer 1997, (p. 39).

HICKEYS, "Thousands of yard given away, absolutely free, every day", Evening Herald, 11.12.52.

I.D.D.A., Image Interiors, Oct./Nov. 1997, (p. 126).

P.M.P.A., "Home Survey Results", Image Interiors, Spring/Summer 1997, (p. 59).

PRIMARY RESEARCH: INTERVIEWS

DONNELLY, Paschal, Hickeys' Company Historian, Paragate St. Dublin, Nov. 21 1997.

CULLEN, Eileen, Hickeys' Interior Design Consultant, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin, Nov. 21 1997.

O'REILLY, Jackie, Head of Merchandising for Hickeys, Paragate Street, Nov. 21 1997.

