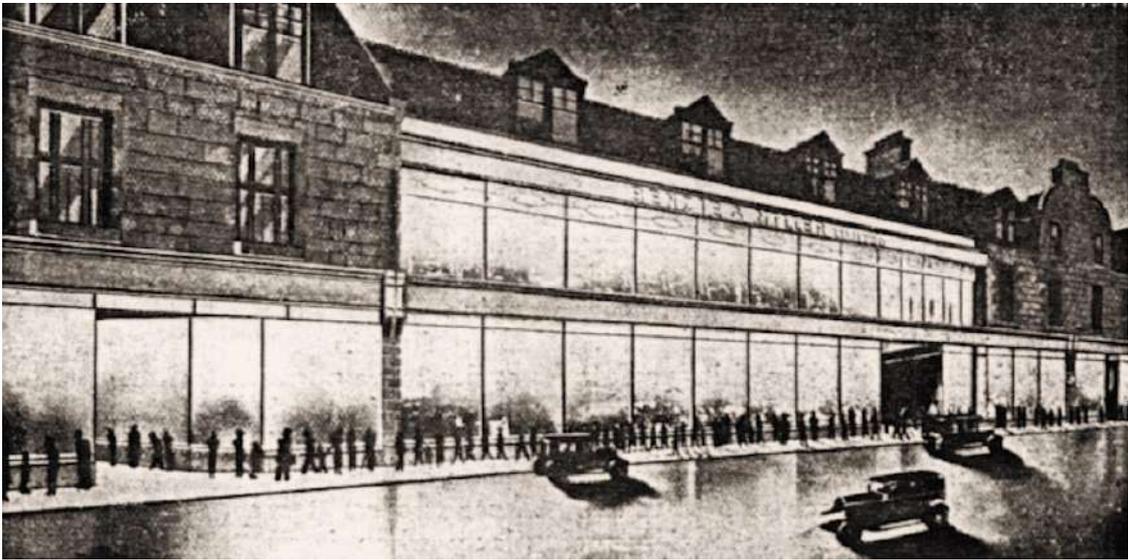


Benzie & Miller

Fraserburgh

1887 – 1958

A leading department store in the north of Scotland

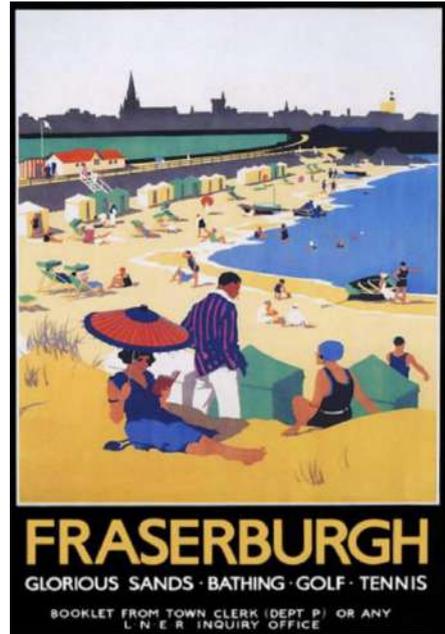


Gavin Holman

*[3rd edition]
August 2022*

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Fraserburgh – a town in north-east Scotland



Introduction

The foundations of Benzie & Miller Ltd lie in the late nineteenth century in north east Scotland. In 1887 William Benzie, a young businessman, took over the Colosseum Warehouse drapery business on 32 Mid Street, Fraserburgh, from Mitchell & Co. The business was extended in 1896 when a new store was built across the street. In 1898 a power plant was installed providing electricity and ensuring that the store was well lit. This impressed the locals as it was the first of its kind in the area.

The store increased in size and popularity over the years and in 1920 William Benzie started to think about establishing a department store. James Miller, a personal friend of William Benzie, trained as a cabinetmaker and, under William Benzie's recommendation, he established a cabinetmaker and furnishing business in Fraserburgh. His business was largely successful but when called up to serve in France in World War I he decided to sell his stock and machinery and abandon the business.

After the war he gradually began restoring it and it once again grew in popularity. After much discussion William Benzie and James Miller, along with William Benzie's manager John Halkett, decided to combine forces and set up a department store named Benzie & Miller Ltd in 1920. Robert Henderson, a shoemaker who owned a store nearby, also became one of the directors of the company as he had agreed for his store, the Fraserburgh branch of the Lerwick shoemakers Messrs Goodlad and Coutts, to be rebuilt and redesigned to assist the extension of William Benzie's existing property.

The company was registered in April 1920 with capital of £40,000 in £1 shares.

Around this time Benzie & Miller Ltd also bought over a new bootmaking firm called Abercromby Ltd. This business merged with Goodlad and Coutts, to form the footwear department in the Benzie & Miller store. Other departments, such as ironmongery, hardware, china, and glassware were soon established in the store as well as a small tearoom on the first floor.

The new store was expanded by buying up adjacent properties and building a new store which had a 120-foot frontage, with a large workshop added for the cabinetmaking business. Over the years the menswear department and fashion salon were also introduced, and other departments were extended and improved. The store also underwent a number of alterations over the years.

William Benzie died in 1931 and James Miller in 1934. Their sons, Alexander Benzie and John B. Miller, also became directors of the company. In 1934 the store was extended again with a three-storey building that increased its size by 11,500 square feet. Benzie & Miller Ltd stores were also established in Banff (formerly Rankin & Co), Elgin in 1950 (formerly the drapery business of A. L. Ramsay & Son, which was founded in 1845), Inverness (formerly Young & Chapman), and Peterhead, and these were often known simply as Benzies.

The Elgin and Inverness (Union Street) stores also housed Polyfoto Studios, where customers could obtain a series of small head and shoulder portraits of themselves or family members. This business was eventually killed off by the introduction of coin-operated photobooths in the 1960s.

See <http://www.photodetective.co.uk/Polyfoto.html> for more information.

The Benzie & Miller stores were taken over by the House of Fraser in 1958, retaining the name. The Fraserburgh Benzie & Miller store closed down on Saturday 30th March 1968. The building was later occupied by Alex McDonald and Sons who opened a supermarket there in November 1969, but it closed down in 1971. It was later owned by William Reid who had a shop there until 1975.

Benzie & Miller's store in Peterhead closed about 1977 or 1978 after a fire destroyed it. The Banff store closed around the mid-1980's and is now McKay's. The last part of the Benzie & Millers Fraserburgh store was demolished in 1985 and is now part of a sheltered housing complex. As part of the House of Fraser restructuring in the 1970s the remaining stores were absorbed into the Arnotts division and rebranded under this name. They have all since closed, with the last store of the Benzie & Miller empire shutting in Inverness in 2003.

Some archive material about Benzie & Miller is held in the House of Fraser Archive, which is physically located at the Glasgow University Archive Services.

[see: <http://www.housefraserarchive.ac.uk>]

Alexander Benzie, the owner of Benzie & Miller, moved south to Exmouth following the buyout by Hugh Fraser and bought the drapers/department store Thomas Tucker in the town. He ran this business, with his son Ronald, from 1961 until his death in 1991.

The stores were located at

- 15-33 Mid Street, Fraserburgh
- 34-38 High Street, Banff
- 121-123 High Street, Elgin
- 2-8 Marischal Street, Peterhead
- 3-17 Union Street, Inverness
- 1 Drummond Street, Inverness
- 33-49 Baron Taylor Street, Inverness

Golden Jubilee Brochure

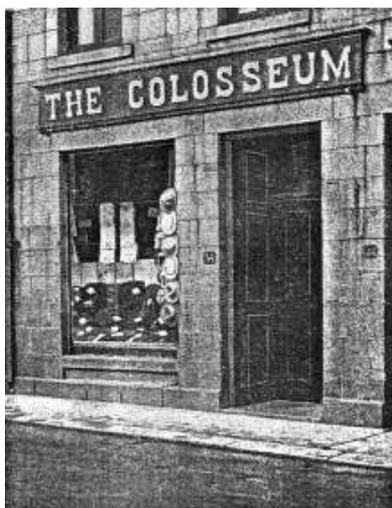
THE SHOPPING CENTRE OF THE NORTH

Through the Years with Benzie & Miller FRASERBURGH 1887 - 1937

Printer's ink and paper - even with the introduction of numerous photographs - cannot reproduce to the full the many Departments and Services of the House of Benzie & Miller Ltd. In one important particular a Booklet fails entirely - it cannot convey the spirit of friendly courtesy that has characterised and helped to build the business from its inception. Yet, if it has proved of interest to the reader, and perhaps fostered a desire to utilise our many Services, the Booklet will have served its purpose, and the work involved will have proved worthwhile.

How it began –

In the year 1886, William Benzie, a young man of 21, came to Fraserburgh to take over the management of a drapery business then being carried on at 32 Mid Street. After holding this position for a year he decided to start on his own account and bought a business along the coast at Buckie. When he informed his employers of his decision they asked him to take over the Fraserburgh business, which he agreed to do. The shop in Buckie was disposed of shortly afterwards and he concentrated his energies on The Colosseum as it was grandiloquently styled. This was the foundation of the firm as it is known to-day.



After a few years the business had increased to such an extent that larger premises became imperative. In 1896 Mr. Benzie bought a fine old house on the other side of the street, and to the shocked surprise of the surrounding residents he had the building pulled down. On this site a more modern shop was built, part of which is incorporated in the present building.

Always a pioneer, Mr. Benzie early showed his love of modern methods by installing in the year 1898 a power plant for making electric light. This innovation was practically unheard of in the district and no doubt had a corresponding advertising value. On a winter's night the huge arc lamps outside the shop made Mid Street the only well lit part of the town. Many are the stories told of frequent breakdowns in the first primitive installation and the consequent wild rush of customers to the door in the darkness, fearful of a threatened explosion or similar disaster. So uncertain was the lighting in these early days that Mr. Benzie, who was his own electrician and engineer, would be at home for tea while a watch was anxiously kept at the window for the first signs of a "black-out." Although at some distance from the shop, the glare of the lamps could be easily seen from the house and often a meal was hurriedly abandoned in a dash down town to put the plant in operation again.

During the next twenty years, as the scope of the business increased, extension after extension had to be made. New showrooms and stockrooms were added one after the other to the rear of the building until, in 1920, a momentous under-taking was begun and the first idea of a Departmental Store began to take shape.



In Mr. Benzie's first years of business there came to him for employment a young boy, by name James R. Miller. This was the beginning of a lifelong friendship, but they little thought in those days that their names would later be linked together in a business

which has become a household word in the North East of Scotland.

James Miller became an apprentice to a cabinetmaker in the town and after serving his time he took a situation in the south. A year or two later, another furnishing business in Fraserburgh coming into the market, Mr. Benzie wrote to the young man, in whom he had always taken a friendly interest, advising him to come back and take it over. Some persuasion was required, but eventually Mr. Miller set up in business as a Cabinetmaker and Furnisher. After a number of years his former employer died. Mr. Miller bought over the business, occupying the shop and commodious workshops. There he conducted a successful business in all branches of the furniture trade until the War intervened.

After spending two years in France on voluntary Y.M.C.A. work, Mr Miller went on active service and, in the uncertainty of the moment, he decided to dispose of his extensive plant. His modern machinery and stocks of seasoned woods were all sold and the business was carried on in a smaller fashion until the end of the War. From

Always in Stock. Quality Guaranteed.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

WILLIAM BENZIE

BENZIE is pleased to announce that he has bought from Mitchell & Co. the whole Stock in Trade of the **COLOSSEUM DRAPERY WAREHOUSE, 32 Mid Street, Fraserburgh.** The above Stock has all been bought within a few weeks, consequently every article is fresh. Large quantities have been made in addition to the above, and arrangements are now completed for a

GRAND OPENING SALE.

Every Department is stocked with new, fresh, and fashionable Goods and the Public of Fraserburgh and Neighbourhood will find this a splendid opportunity for supplying themselves with new goods of every description at prices impossible to be had in the regular way of business. W. B. Benzie, by strict attention to business, to render the same liberal patronage that has been extended to the Colosseum Drapery Warehouse since its opening with the Business, and has pleasure in recommending the following leading lines:-

<p>Dress Materials. Several Lots to be cleared out at 1/4d, 1/2d, 3/4d, and 1/2d; such water proof, and Hosiery, Cloths, &c. in all the Newest Styles. Special Lot of Cash. All-wool French Merino, only 1/12d, well worth 2/6d. Black Cashmere and French Merino from 1/6d to 1/2d. Prints, Prints, Prints. Some very Special Lines in Prints, New and Best styles, from 1/2d to 1/2d, well worth some 1/2d to 1/2d per yd. more. Very Fine Selection of Costly Prints.</p>	<p>Umbrellas. Ladies' Umbrellas, unopened, at 1/12d, 1/6d, 1/3d, 1/4d, 1/2d, 3/4d, 1/2d, 1/2d, and upwards. Lot of Gent's Umbrellas to be cleared out at 1/2d. Stays and Corsets. Elegant Selection, Spring Stays, at 1/12d, 1/6d, 1/3d, and 1/2d upwards. Great Supplies in Flannels, Drawings, Blankets, Linen, Shirts, Towels, and Tablecloths. Ties and Handkerchiefs at exceptional low prices. Hats, Caps, Bags. Gentlemen's Hats and Caps, new styles, Dresses and Patterns; Woollens and Ribbons all kinds, large variety.</p>
<p>Shirts. Magnificent Range of Shirts, extraordinary value, at 1/12d the Shirt. Large Variety in Shirts from 2/6d to 1/2d worth from 2/6d to 1/2d. New Millinery. Prices extremely Moderate. New Hats in great variety, and in all the latest styles. Neatly Trimmed Hats and Bonnets, Latest Fashions, Newest Designs. Laces, Flowers, and Ribbons at Tempting Prices. Gloves and Silk Squares. Large Assortment.</p>	<p>Gentlemen's Department. In the Gentlemen's Department will be had all available styles in Shirts, Hats, Caps, Collars, &c. Special Shirts at 1/12d and 2/6d. Tweed Caps, Newest Styles, from 1/2d. Hosiery from 1/2d per yd. Men's Tweeds. First-class Value, from 1/12d per yd. upwards. Yarns, Yarns, Yarns. Fingering and Worsted Yarns of best Prices, — Special Worsted at 1/2d per lb.</p>

A Call is respectfully solicited

**The Colosseum Drapery Warehouse,
32 MID STREET (Gordon's Buildings).**

then until 1920 his energies were spent in bringing it back to its former status, and, although handicapped by lack of suitable plant, he was entirely successful.

At this time Mr. Benzie began to think of forming his business into a limited company and he discussed with Mr. Miller various alterations which he contemplated. These included rebuilding a neighbouring shop which was occupied by a branch of a Lerwick firm of bootmakers, Messrs. Goodlad and Coutts. The manager of this branch was Mr. Robert Henderson, a brother-in-law of Mr. Miller. Mr. Henderson had come to the town in the year 1901 at the age of 20, to open this shop for his firm, and in the 20 years of its existence had built up a very fine connection. He naturally was interested in the proposed alterations and took part in the discussions. One thing led to another until the idea of a combine was mooted. It was finally decided to amalgamate the businesses of Mr. Benzie and Mr. Miller and also to take over the shoemaking business, Mr. Henderson joining the firm. The trading style decided upon was Benzie & Miller Ltd., and the first Directors were Mr. Benzie as Chairman, Mr. Miller, Mr. Henderson and Mr. John Halkett, who was Mr. Benzie's manager.

The first step was to acquire an extensive property adjacent to Mr. Benzie's shop and also a large property in the rear, giving access right through to the next street. In Mid Street a handsome building was erected and the frontage now had a total of over 120 feet. Just then another bootmaking business came into the market. This was Abercromby Ltd., an old established firm with a good reputation. This firm was bought over and these two businesses became the nucleus of the Footwear Department, which has flourished under the capable management of Mr. Henderson. During the first years of the amalgamation Mr. Miller's cabinetmaking department was carried on at his former shop until the lease had expired, but eventually a modern workshop was built at the rear of the Mid Street property and the whole of the firm's activities were concentrated at the one address.

The next few years saw the addition of departments for Household Ironmongery, Hardware, China and Glassware, and these were developed under Mr Miller's care. Other departments were gradually modernised by the installation of up-to-date fixtures and quickserving fittings. A Tea Room was opened on the first floor and, although not of great size, has proved a useful adjunct to the firm's business. Catering for snack lunches as well as teas, it has become a necessary service to a growing clientele.

In the year 1923 Mr. Halkett retired from the firm and Mr. Benzie's son, Mr. Alexander Benzie, who at the time was gaining experience in the south, was appointed a Director in his place. The following year he returned to Fraserburgh to take charge of the Men's Wear department. A shop adjoining the Drapery Department was taken over and fitted up with the latest equipment, with a separate entrance from the street and also an entrance from the main shop. Two years later the Fashion Salon was also put under Mr. A. Benzie's control.





Apart from improvements in various sections, little change took place for a number of years. In the year 1927 Mr. Miller's son, Mr. John B. Miller, joined the firm and took a course of practical training in the furniture workshops. He then went south for further experience in the retail side and, in 1931, returned to assist his father in the Furnishing Departments. It was in 1931 that the firm suffered its first great loss, for in the month of April its founder, Mr. William Benzie, died after a very short illness. By his death was removed one of the leading figures of the Drapery Trade in the North of Scotland, whose sterling character was a byword among those with whom he had any business dealings. One of the happiest memories we have of his genial nature was

his welcoming speech at the staff reunion that year, full of good humour and brimming over with friendship.

On Mr. Benzie's death Mr. Miller was appointed Chairman and Mr. John B. Miller was elected a Director. Mr. A. Benzie was appointed manager of the General Drapery, Ladies' Outfitting and Children's Departments. Later in that year an important reconstruction took place. The Entrance Hall was entirely remodelled and a handsome new stairway was built at the rear. All the offices were removed to the first floor and the amenities of the main entrance were thereby improved immensely.

The following year the Hardware and China Departments were put under the charge of Mr. John Miller, but before he had time to develop his position the firm was dealt another blow. In July, Mr. Miller, Sen. became seriously ill and for six months was confined to bed. In January, 1934, he died, less than two years after his lifelong friend and partner. In Mr. Miller the firm lost one of its ablest members whose integrity and devotion to building up its resources has been one of the chief causes of its high standing to-day.

After the death of Mr. Miller, Mr. A. Benzie was appointed Chairman and Managing Director and several changes were made in the departmental managements. Mr. J. B. Miller returned to the Furnishing and Cabinetmaking Departments to take control and the China and Ironmongery Departments were put under the charge of Mr. Henderson. It was in this year that the greatest extension since the inception of the firm took place. Excavations were made in an open piece of ground lying between the main shop and the workshops, and a three-storey building was erected. Each floor of the new extension was about 3,500 square feet and, when completed, added tremendously to the facilities for a "walk-round" store.



The lower floor has enjoyed a great success as a Bargain Basement and also houses the Toy Bazaar at Christmas. Spacious additions were made to the China and Hardware Departments on the ground floor and space was added to the sections for Wall-papers, Carpets and Rugs, and Linoleums. On the upper floor the Furniture Department was transferred to the new building and two attractive Furnished Rooms were opened. The former Furniture Showroom was fitted out with modern showcases and became the new Fashion Salon.

Consequent upon this big extension many improvements had to be made throughout the establishment. A new cash system of the latest Lamson pneumatic type was installed, with a central cash desk serving all departments, adjoining the Counting House. Another important development was the provision of adequate lighting. Since the first engine was installed in 1898 many additions had been made. This engine was replaced in 1900 by a gas engine which was still doing duty in 1924. By that time it had outlived its usefulness and a more powerful oil engine took its place.

A year or two later this had to be scrapped and a still larger one put in its place. With the addition of more lights even this proved inadequate and a second engine of a similar type was installed. These two ran for a few years until the big extension took place, when it was realised that a great increase in consumption would have to be faced. At this time the Grid Scheme was approaching the town but it was just too late and, in the Autumn of 1934, the present plant was assembled in a commodious new engine room. This consists of an 80 H.P. Diesel oil engine and one of the smaller engines of 24 H.P. from the old plant as a stand-by. These drive two generators of 400 and 150 amperes respectively, which allows an ample margin for future improvements.

Just as the new building was commencing, a neighbouring property came into the market and was bought with a view to the future. No extension in this direction was contemplated at the time, but as the plans for the new showrooms were examined it was seen that a large garden at the rear of this property could be used to advantage. Here was built a new workshop for the Cabinetmaking Department, where the whole of the work, both machining and handwork, could be carried out on one floor level. Some additions were made to the plant there bringing it up to most modern requirements. The former workshops were utilised for packing rooms, wood stores and stock rooms.

One improvement leads to another and it was seen that the older departments would have to be brought into line with the new showrooms. In the following year, therefore, a big reconstruction took place on the ground floor, the Footwear Department being entirely replanned, giving it much more floorspace and improved fitting rooms. The department for Cutlery and Crystal was also refurnished with attractive showcases, and a new department for Hosiery and Gloves was opened in the Entrance Hall.

The Underwear and Children's Departments were then remodelled and the former Fashion Salon thrown open to the rest of the shop. In 1936 this was fitted out as a Wool and Art Needlework Department and, at the same time, the Linens and Fabrics sections were redesigned. This year a new Soft Furnishing Department has been added, and a section for Cosmetics and Beauty preparations which has already proved a decided success.

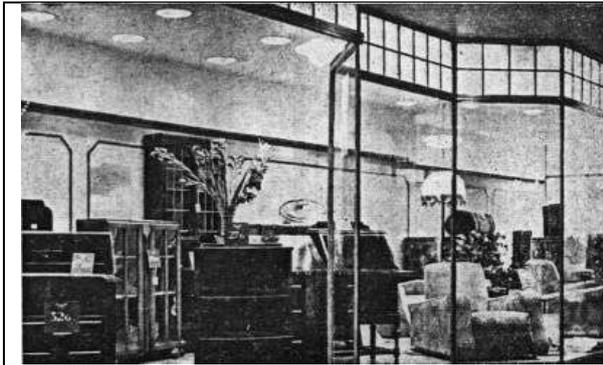
As a fitting celebration of the Jubilee the firm decided to further extend their window space this year by building a modern arcade. This occupies the ground floor of the property recently acquired at 15 Mid Street and extends 60 feet to the rear with an entrance to the Hardware Department. The arcade consists of deep furniture windows on the right, with fashions and soft goods windows on the left. Finished in bronze with a black base, terrazzo flooring, and attractive interior panelling, the

whole scheme is very striking. Altogether it is a worthy effort to mark this great occasion in the history of the firm.

And so we come to the end of the chapter, but not of the story. With such a history behind it the firm will go on to greater heights. There are plans for the future which will take shape in due course, new services will be added and improvements will continue to be made to bring a shopping ideal to this corner of Scotland.

Benzie & Miller Limited
15-33 Mid Street, Fraserburgh
FASHIONS - FOOTWEAR - FURNISHINGS - TEA
ROOM
Telephone - Fraserburgh No. 6

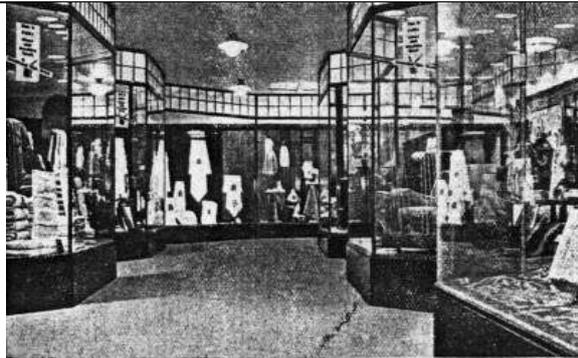




A display of modern furniture in one of the Arcade windows



Entrance to the new Arcade



A closer view of the new Arcade showing the splendid facilities for attractive display



A glimpse of the spacious Main Entrance Hall



The Handbag and Fancy Goods Section



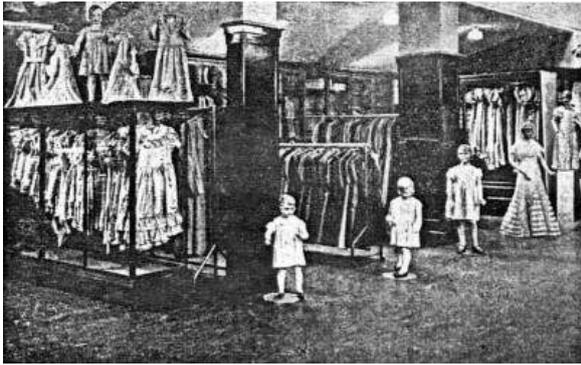
Where Gloves, Hosiery and Neckwear are on view



A general view of the extensive Drapery Department



Here, in the Baby Linen Section, the toddlers are fitted out



Mothers bring the children with confidence to this Department



In the Underwear and Knitwear Section



A corner of the Knitting Wools and Haberdashery Section



The new Perfumery Department with the latest in cosmetics and perfumes



The needs of the menfolk are catered for at this Department



The fitting rooms of the Men's Wear Department



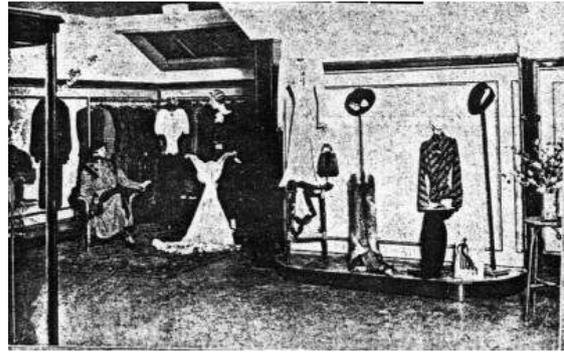
A display of fashions in Footwear



The world of fashion is brought to "Milady"



A corner of the Millinery Salon



Another glimpse of the Fashion Salon



Customers will recall these Fashion Parades with interest - in October 1936



in May 1935



in October 1935



Part of the widely stocked Dress Materials Section



The Linen Department



An attractive corner of the Soft Furnishings Department



At the Wallpaper and Furnishing Ironmongery counters



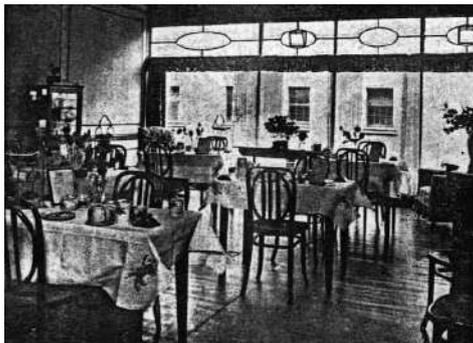
A suggestion of the extent of our Household Ironmongery Section



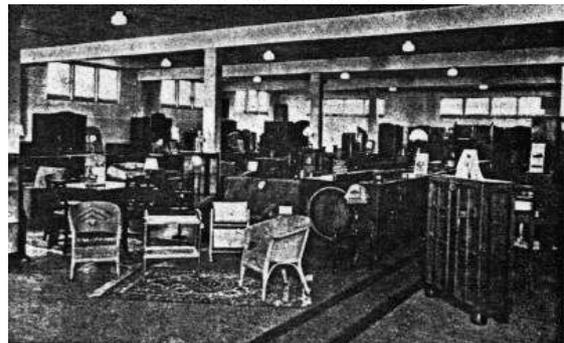
In the Fancy Hardware Department



A splendid selection of Carpets and Linoleums are available at all times



A sunny corner of the Tea Room



The Furniture Showroom



The Cutlery and Electro-plate Department



The China and Cut Glass Section always proves of absorbing interest



There are bargains in the Basement

The Fire of 1940

Destructive Blaze in North-East

Newspaper report – November 1940

The most destructive fire that ever occurred at a North-east of Scotland town occurred last night and caused damage roughly estimated at £50,000. It broke out about seven o'clock, and the conflagration, which must have been seen for fifty miles around, did not fail to attract an enemy bomber, which let fly a high explosive bomb. The fire originated in the premises of a large department stores.

AWE-INSPIRING - Apparently it was at the back, where the workshop is situated, that the fire originated. Packed with inflammable material, the building became an easy prey to the flames, which shot skywards in a most awe-inspiring manner, and a light breeze carried large embers and a shower of sparks all over the district. The Fire Brigade, assisted by the Auxiliary Fire Service, worked hard to save the Picture House on the other side of the street.

CROWDS WATCH - Large crowds gathered in the vicinity to watch the huge blaze which lit up the town. One or two enemy planes had passed over before the flames got a hold and many people were heard to say that the town would be an easy mark for them. Sure enough one bomber arrived shortly after nine o'clock. The fire engines were making such a noise that nobody was aware of its presence until it let fly a high explosive.

Fire Leads to Bombing Attack – Brutal Raid on N.E. Town

Newspaper report – 12 November 1940

A big fire in a North-East Scottish town led to a brutal attack by an enemy raider last week. Women and children were among those killed when the bombs dropped on a block of houses and shops a short distance from the scene of the fire. A large crowd was attracted to the scene when the fire broke out, in spite of the risk from enemy bombers known to be in the vicinity, and it is surmised that had the raider not already dropped part of his load the casualties might have been much more severe. A darts match was in progress in a public house and many of the victims were men who had been watching the play.

The bombed buildings also caught fire and the firemen had a hard task to keep the outbreak from becoming more serious. Throughout the night and the whole of the next day the firemen, demolition squads and A.R.P. workers toiled among the ruins in order to recover the bodies of the victims.

One family was thought to have perished but they had taken shelter in a passage-way and they had an amazing escape. They were ultimately taken out through the rear of the premises. In an adjoining church not even a window was broken, the blast having been directed across the street.

There can surely be few towns so unfortunate as one situated in the North East which must remain nameless until after the war. Misfortune was piled upon misfortune when a devastating fire was followed by death and destruction from the skies. No better, or worse, example of German callousness could be cited. It is in vain to beat

the wind with revengeful words, but those who have seen the unforgettable tragedy, out of all proportion to the town's inhabitants, will not easily forget or forgive.

Such a nation is fit to be ranked amongst the lowest savages and barbarians and if they are permitted ever again to bring their intolerable militarism into a position of ascendancy then our politicians deserve shooting. "The Germans are a kind-hearted people led astray by the Nazi regime?" Yes, and the heroic member of the German Air Force who rains down bombs on women and children is, we may remember, a representative of that race.

Another account:

My mother well remembers the night they bombed the Commercial Bar. She was living in the Old Police Buildings with her mother and sisters. Sergeant Dick Sim was on duty at Benzie & Miller's on Mid Street, which had been set alight by the chain-bomb. He had been sent to stop the looters who were using prams to escape with the spoils.

The Old Police Buildings were about a quarter of a mile away and when the alert sounded, they took cover under the stairs. The mortuary was just around the corner on Quarry Road and later they were to count the number of times the mortuary car went by and came to realise how bad the raid had been. They were very worried about the eldest sister who had gone out for the evening to Broadgate. She came home later quite breathless because she was to have taken cover in the bar, but didn't. She recalls the poor railway delivery horse that was killed by another bomb in Hanover Street and how they all went to have a look.

Extracts from the Channel 4 programme: "Fraserburgh during World War 2"

Eric Rennie - born in 1932 and lived in Fraserburgh for 21 years.

What I can remember 1939 when the war broke out. Went to the pictures and saw it on the movie news, the Pathe News, bombing in London. We used to think, "They'll never bomb Fraserburgh, little wee village like us, a town." And I think it was about a year later the Heinkels appeared, they started bombing. This was exciting, this. The bombs got nearer the house and the house started shaking, "Oh my Goodness. This is terrible."

The bombers used to come in after having a go at the convoy, they used to sweep in, skimming the water - I'm exaggerating but you could see the bombs coming in. Used to watch the Heinkels coming in, that's a Heinkel German bomber, you'd see a gunner right in the nose, used to lie flat on the stomach - and just machine-gun the pavements.

I think it was way back in 1940, 5th November Guy Fawkes Night, we had the biggest blaze I think in Europe. I wasn't exactly sound asleep, I must have been just on the verge of sleeping and I noticed something, a glow coming through the curtains. And during the war no lights should be shown coming out of the house, and the best light

was coming through. And a rap comes to the window, you can see the window from here, second window on the ground floor. And I'm not sure if it was George Ironside, but I'm sure it was, he says, "The town's on fire."

So I climbed out of the window, got dressed, come out the window, cut across the gardens. By the time we got down to the bottom it was all cordoned off with soldiers, police. And we got through, worked our way through the crowds to the front and we saw the Commercial Bar obliterated and this soldier turned round and asked us, "What are you two laddies doing out here at this time of night?"

And we said our house was bombed and of course he was so apologetic and he says, "I'm sorry, laddies." We realised we'd better get home and it wasn't long after that the police came up and said there was an unexploded bomb across the street, so I was evacuated to a house down in Pennyduff Road.

All this area was blasted, flattened. You couldn't see the street for rubble. Where Woolworth's stands now was the Commercial Bar with a few shops alongside. Of course the German Heinkel one-eleven bombers came in, bombed the Commercial Bar here, there was 34 people killed and over 50 injured. It was the night I sneaked out. It was down there I saw things going on. People being taken injured, out of the rubble and laid on wooden stretchers.

Newspaper report from November 1941

It's been bombed and machine-gunned many times. Seen a Nazi plane hurtling down in flames. Watched members of the Luftwaffe being rescued from the sea. Welcomed Norwegians who'd escaped their Nazi war lords. Had the biggest fire in its history.

Yes, Fraserburgh and district's been in it all right since war began. Most vivid memory of all is the fire. It occurred just a year ago this month. Damage was estimated at £70,000. It broke out in the department store of Benzie & Miller Ltd., Mid Street, firm with a staff of fifty people. Leaping flames lit up town and countryside - and sea for fifty miles around. Hundreds of townspeople crowded round to watch the blaze.

Then an extraordinary thing happened. A Nazi bomber stole in from the sea. Drone of its engines was drowned by the roar and crackle of the flames. Suddenly bombs began to fall. Mercifully, the first of them dropped on the outskirts of the town. The explosions came as a rude but effective warning to the crowds intent on the fire. They scattered. Just in time. Bombs fell in the town itself. Direct hits were scored on houses and shops, including the Commercial Hotel, one of the oldest hostelrys in the North of Scotland.

The crowd had been thickest at the end of Mid Street, not more than 50 or 60 yards from where bombs demolished the inn and other houses, causing many deaths. Men and women in the streets threw themselves to the ground, escaping with minor injuries from debris and flying glass.

Since July 1940, when the first bombs dropped, Fraserburgh's been one of the hit-and-run raiders' favourite calling places. One of the worst days was when big, black Nazi bombers swept over the town, raking it with machine-gun fire, while children played at their games and womenfolk went their messages. Another occurred in April this year. Four women workers were killed when a building was struck. The Broch took it bravely. As soon as casualties had been removed women workers, some of them slightly injured, helped to clear the debris so that work could go on. A third black day fell later in the month. One bomber dropped bombs in a daylight raid. Seven lives were lost.

But Jerry hasn't always had it all his own way. People in a neighbouring village saw a Dornier circle over them with smoke pouring from its tail. Fascinated, they watched it plunge into the sea, The crew of three were rescued by boat, uninjured. On another occasion great excitement ran through the town. A fishing boat brought in an unusual catch. Four German airmen shot down by a British fighter had been picked up off the coast. They had drifted in a rubber boat for two days. They were landed in an exhausted condition, one with a knee wound.

<p style="text-align: center;">TO OUR CUSTOMERS</p> <p>We would like to take this opportunity of expressing our thanks to all who have supported us in the past and enabled us to build up a business which was the pride and joy of not only ourselves and also our staff but also we hope of the many who patronised us.</p> <p>WE HAVE DECIDED TO CARRY ON although present circumstances will limit our activities.</p> <p>In coming to this decision, several factors have weighed with us. In the first place we have a duty to our staff who have served us loyally, and to keep as many as possible in employment we will shortly re-open several departments, it may be in various parts of the town. Shortage of supplies will confine these meantime to Men's Wear and some of the Drapery sections.</p> <p>We feel we have also a duty to you, our customers. The limitation of Supplies Order will very soon affect even those shops with the largest of stocks and our quotas, if we did not take them up, would not be passed on to other traders in this district. Our intention is therefore to take advantage of every avenue of supply, not only to keep up our wide connection but to ensure that these goods are available to the public of Fraserburgh.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Benzie & Miller Ltd.</p>	<p>Until further notice the following shops are open for business:-</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wools – 12 High Street</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Linen, Towels – 14 High Street</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Men's Wear – 70 High Street</p> <p>We will shortly open the following</p> <p style="text-align: center;">31 Commerce Street – Wools</p> <p style="text-align: center;">77 Broad Street – Stockings and Fancy Goods</p> <p style="text-align: center;">97 High Street – Toys</p> <p>Hours of business:- Week Days – 9 to 5 p.m. Wednesdays – 9 to 1 p.m. Saturdays – 9 to 6 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Benzie & Miller Ltd. 12, 14, 70 HIGH STREET</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>November 12, 1940</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">SALVAGE SALE ON Saturday 30th November</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Men's Underwear, Raincoats Etc., at 70 High Street</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Towels, Sheets, Etc., at 14 High Street</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wools, Ladies Underwear & Corsets at 12 High Street</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HOURS 9 to 6 p.m. CLOSED 1 to 2 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Benzie & Miller Ltd.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>December 3, 1940</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">ACCOUNTS</p> <p>Under present circumstances early payment of all outstanding accounts will be appreciated. Office address:- 12 High Street. Particulars of the departments which we hope to re-open will be announced as soon as possible.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PETROL RATIONING Members of Group 11 0/2/9 will now receive their Petrol Coupons at above address</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Benzie & Miller Ltd. 12, 14, 70 HIGH STREET</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>November 26, 1940</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>November 19, 1940</i></p>

The Shoe Store

[this section is taken from notes kindly supplied by Chris Reid, granddaughter of John Buchan, daughter-in-law of Ernest Reid, and wife of Ernie Reid – all associated with the shoe business]

John Buchan, worked for Goodlad and Coutts in the early part of the century having gone back to his trade after a spell on the family fishing boat. He made sea boots - one of a few craftsmen who did - and was there when Bob Henderson, as manager, opened the shop. The photo below is from Goodlad and Coutts, as two of the other men in the photo, Richard Minto and James Colvin, worked for them but never for Benzie & Miller's, and date from 1920 or before.



John (Soutar) Buchan, with one of the boots he was in the process of making. A skilled shoemaker, he could produce one and a half pairs of these boots in a week, which sold for £1 10s. Born in St Combs, he learned his craft as a shoemaker's apprentice in a house and workshop at the bend of the road to Pennan. He stayed in Pennan all week and made the journey to St Combs - often on foot - on a Saturday night, returning on Monday morning. After working as a shoemaker, he spent several years at sea, but came back to his trade and spent time in various shops in Fraserburgh.

Ernest (Ernie) Reid started in Benzie & Miller as an apprentice (he never worked for Goodlad and Coutts) about 1924/25 and John Buchan was still working at Benzie & Miller's then. There is no record of when he gave up work, but John Buchan died in 1943.

Benzie & Miller's shoe shop was a small shop at 28 Broad Street (Goodlad and Coutts was originally in Mid Street) with Robert Henderson as manager and the repair shop was in premises beside the cabinet makers outside the back of the main Benzie & Miller's shop. Ernest Reid became manager of the shoe dept after Robert Henderson retired.

Ernest Reid junior (Ernie) started as an apprentice in March 1951 working in the repair shop and with his father as manager in the 28 Broad Street shop. Just after his father was made manager of the shoe shop it moved from No. 28 to the bigger corner site on Broad Street in late 1951, until Benzie & Miller's closed.

When that closed my Ernest Reid started a small repair and retail business in rented premises in Castle Street, shown about 4 blocks along in the picture below, although he was quite poorly with cancer, during which time his son supported him in the background while employed at the local CPT and then took over the business when his father died, moving to premises at 27 Frithside Street. This was originally Benzie & Miller's property but was acquired by the Council when the store closed. He then bought property in Mid Street where he ran a successful repair and retail business until 2004. Eric and Chris Reid rented a flat at 27 Frithside Street from Benzie & Miller's when they were first married, and the other flats, apart from one, were all rented by Benzie & Miller's employees.



During the time Ernest and Ernie Reid were in Benzie & Miller's, there were between four to six benchmen employed at any one time. On a Saturday Ernie would work in the shoe shop in sales, being in the repair shop the other days. This actually proved beneficial when he took on his own business.

Later on, when Ernie Reid went on his own, he repaired saddles (although not a saddler), harness and even remade boots into thigh boots and reshaped leather coats and jackets into jerkins and waistcoats for the Sealed Knot. Skills he'd further developed from his initial apprenticeship in Benzie & Miller's It was amazing the work he did which other repairers might not have tackled.



The Reid's shop in Frithside Street, just behind the car



Ernie Reid sewing on leather soles by hand in the traditional manner using John Buchan's tools, and sitting on John Buchan's original shoemaker's stool.



Ernie & Chris Reid



Ernie - in his youth - outside the shoe shop



The Reid shop at Mid Street (no longer a shop – now 2 flats)



Ernie and his staff - a photo for the quarter centenary celebrations in 1992



*Benzie & Miller's Shoe Shop, 32 Broad Street, Fraserburgh.
Owned by Benzies from 1951-1967. A shop was at 28 Broad Street from 1940 to 1951*



The window, full of shoes

The Other Stores

Branches of Benzie & Miller's department store were also opened in Banff, Elgin, Peterhead and Inverness.

The Inverness store opened in 1952 at 13/17 Union Street, following the purchase of Young & Chapman. By 1960 the store had become known as Benzie's of Inverness and, in addition to their Union Street store, had departments at 33-49 Baron Taylor Street and 1 Drummond Street (TV and electrical department).



Benzie & Miller's Peterhead store



Benzie & Miller's store at 13/17 Union Street, Inverness



Ramsay's store at High Street, Elgin, which became Benzie & Miller's in 1950



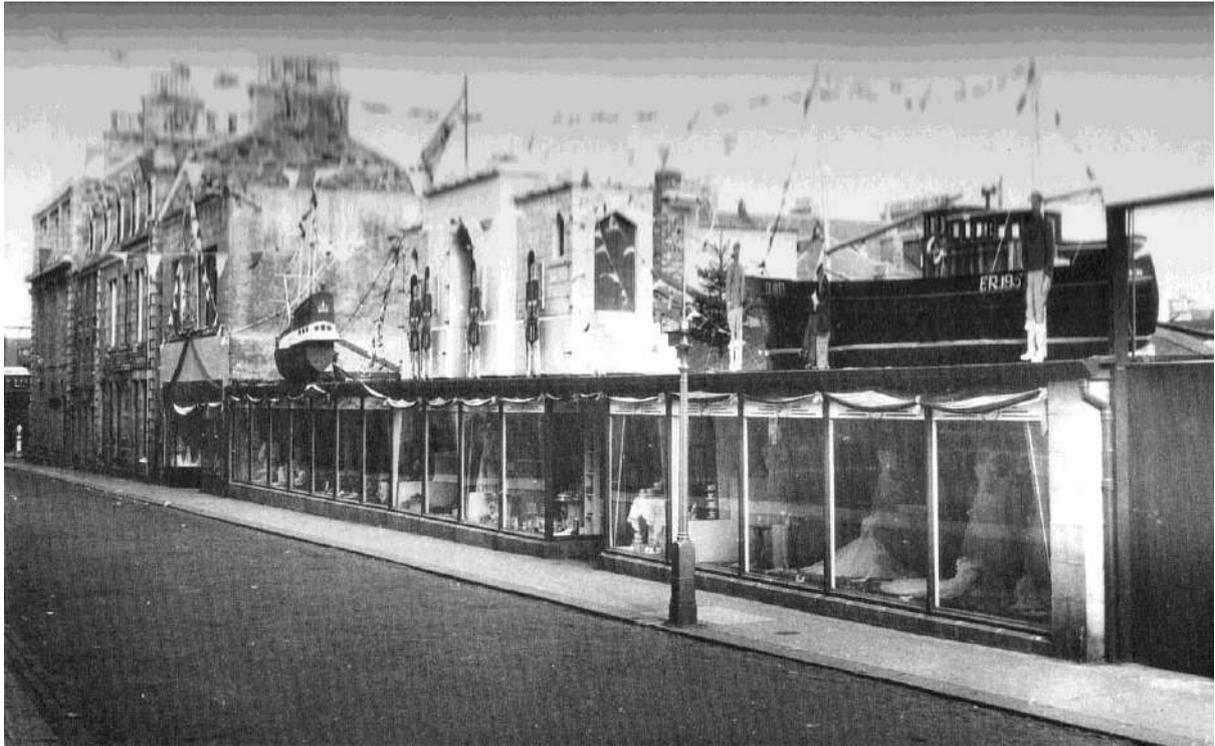
People crowded around Benzie & Miller's shop window, 13/17 Union Street, Inverness. Taken during the Queen Mother's visit to the town in 1953 and the window is full of royal memorabilia and union jacks. An anti-royalist notice written by the SRA (Scottish Republican Army) is stuck to the front of the window

Newspaper report – 26 March 1953

Inverness S.R.A. Warning – The Inverness branch of Benzie & Miller Ltd., drapers and furnishers, Union Street, today received a warning notice signed “S.R.A.” requesting them to remove E II R signs and ciphers from their window display of Coronation souvenirs. The message was contained in a typewritten envelope and left at the shop door before the premises opened this morning.

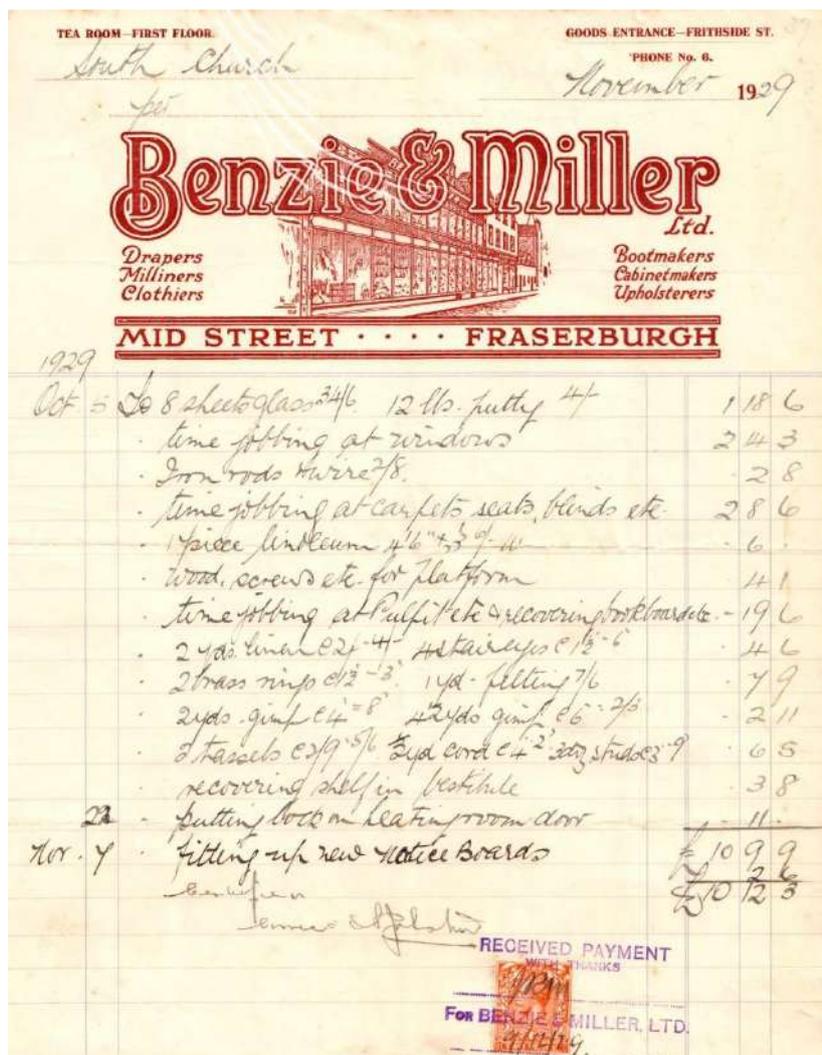
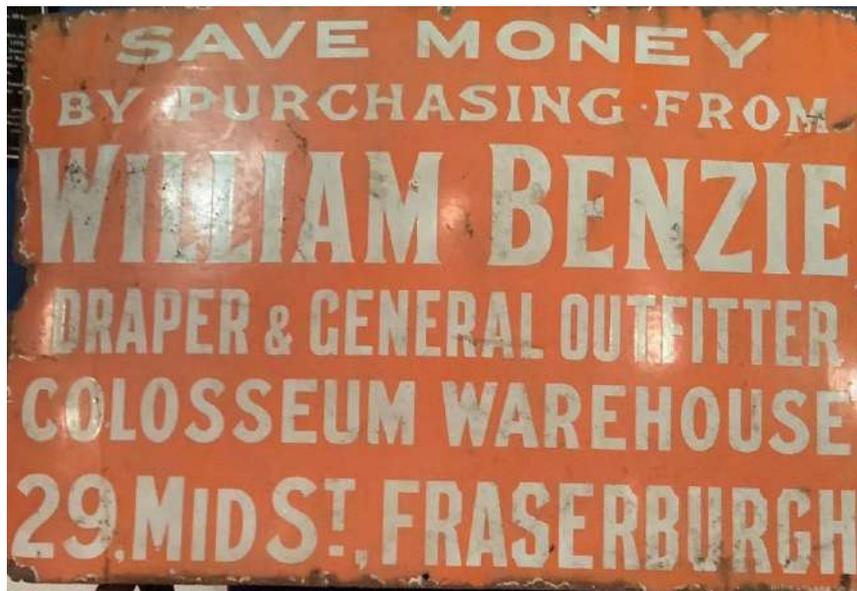
It read: “Warning. You are instructed to take all E II R signs and cyphers out of your window, otherwise we will be forced to take action. S.R.A.”

The notice has been posted in the shop window, and the police informed.



Display on the roof of Benzie & Miller's partially rebuilt store for the Coronation celebrations in 1953 - designed by Andrew Cardno

Other notes and images



Invoice from Benzie & Miller's for work carried out at the South Church, Fraserburgh, November 1929

A Lamson pneumatic tube cash system was installed in the Fraserburgh store in 1934. For details of this system of cash collection,
see: www.ids.u-net.com/cash/pneu-lamson.htm

Production records of Benzie & Miller Ltd., Fraserburgh, 1887-1937, are held in the University of Glasgow Archives -
see: www.archives.gla.ac.uk

A private ledger, 1944-1958 of Benzie & Miller Ltd., Fraserburgh, is held in the Glasgow University Archives
see: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

Forced entry into shop at Fraserburgh

“On 28 December 1931, burglars entered the business premises of Benzie & Miller (Ltd.), Fraserburgh, drapers and cabinetmakers. They entered from the rear, cutting out a panel in the door, through which they got access. Evidently they were disturbed as nothing has apparently been removed.”



Benzie & Miller's Wedding Fashion Parade



Benzie & Miller's Wedding Fashion Parade



Benzie & Miller's Wedding Fashion Parade Gala Dinner



Decoration of the shop for the Coronation of King George VI, 1937

22nd November 1958 – Santa Arrives

Santa Claus arrived at Peterhead today by train before taking up duty in Benzie & Miller's store for the Christmas season. He was escorted from the train to the strains of bagpipe music played by piper Alan Donaldson and took his seat in a decorated horse-drawn landau which was followed by hundreds of excited youngsters as it made its way to the store.



Santa arriving at Benzie & Miller's



Shoe display window at Benzie & Miller's shoe shop



Benzie & Miller's float for the Queen's Coronation parade in 1953



Benzie & Miller's float for the Queen's Coronation parade in 1953



B&M's Fashion Show in aid of the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary Appeal, October 1936



Some of the B&M staff



Benzie & Miller's 70 High Street shop window, c. 1950, recreated at the Fraserburgh Heritage Centre, where you can operate the 1950 Hornby-Dublo train

NORTH STORES STAFFS TOLD: CARRY ON

THE name Benzie and Miller will remain above five major stores in the North-east and no staff changes are contemplated. That assurance came yesterday from Baillie Alex. Benzie, Fraserburgh, one of the principal

announcement from the annual meeting that they had bought the company and its stores at Inverness, Aberdeen and Peterhead.



Mr A. BENZIE Mr R. J. MILLER

surprise news. "The change-over will not affect the staff in any way," he added. "I am staying on as manager. I have not yet had full details."

Mr A. S. Richardson, president of Inverness Chamber of Commerce, told our reporter that the take-over had come as a tremendous surprise. There had been rumours about other big stores moving into Inverness, he added, but not the House of Fraser.

The take-over was a No. 1 talking point everywhere at Inverness. For years there have been strong rumours of big property deals, but none ever came to anything. The House of Fraser were not among those mentioned in take-over bids—hence the surprise at their interest in the Highland Capital.

For some time efforts have been made to persuade Mr Fraser to take an interest in development in the Highlands because of his vast resources.

No Questions

No questions were asked at the House of Fraser annual meeting yesterday and the shareholders present unanimously agreed to a final dividend of 25 per cent.

In an indirect way Mr Fraser also gave a shattering reply to critics of his policy of occasionally selling property and then leasing it again. After pointing out that £11,000,000 of the company's fixed assets was in freehold property, he added that throughout their development the company had retained a greater value in freehold and heritable

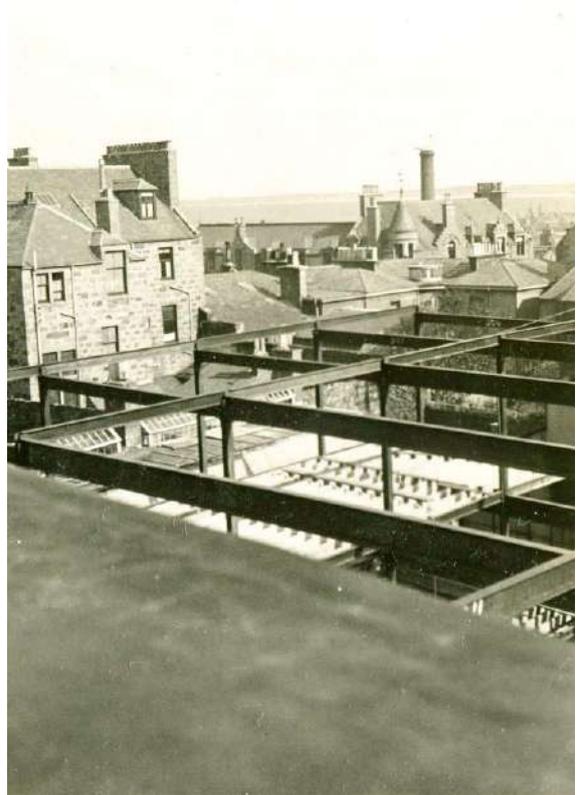
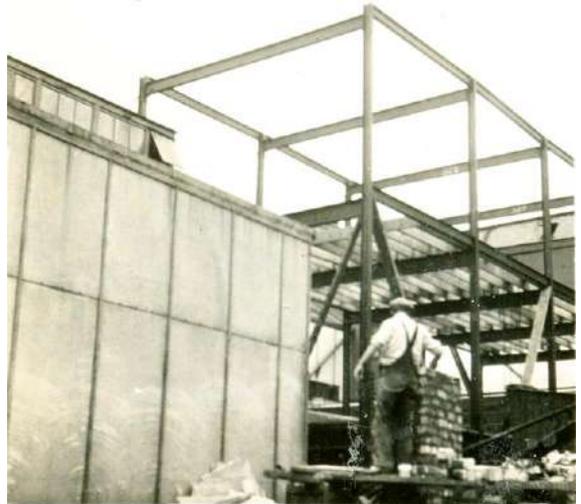
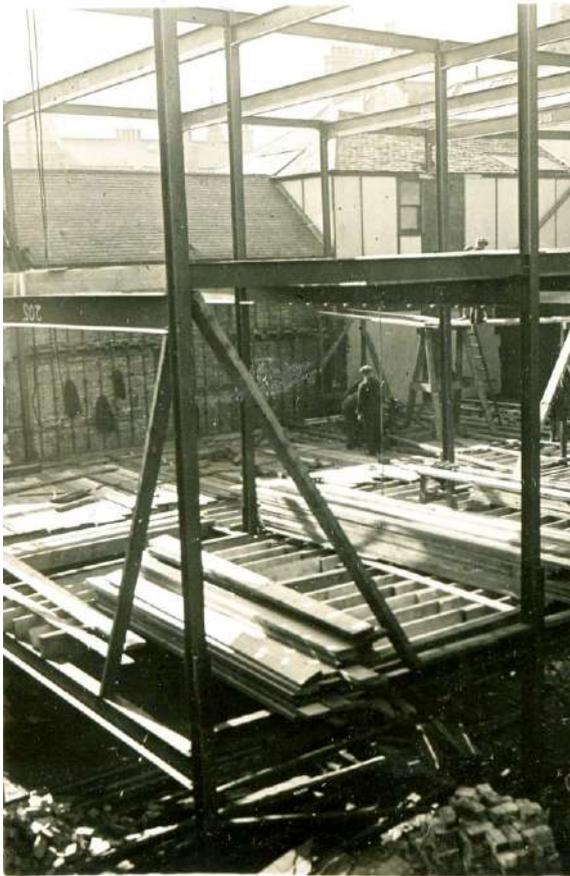
Sale of Benzie & Miller's to House of Fraser

Construction photographs

These pictures show some of the construction work undertaken at Benzie & Miller's in the mid-1930's.







Alexander Benzie (1902-1991)

BAILIE ALEXANDER BENZIE LEAVING FRASERBURGH

Bailie Alexander Benzie, the well-known Fraserburgh business man, is leaving the town to take up business interests at Exmouth, Devon.

From 1933 to 1958 Bailie Benzie was chairman and managing director of the firm of Messrs. Benzie & Miller Ltd., Mid Street, when the business was sold to the House of Fraser.

Bailie Benzie has been a member of the Town Council since 1946, and a magistrate since 1947. He has been a member of the Harbour Board since 1946, and is chairman of the Library Committee. He represents Fraserburgh Town Council on Aberdeen County Council. He has been Convener of Beach and Parks Committee since 1948.

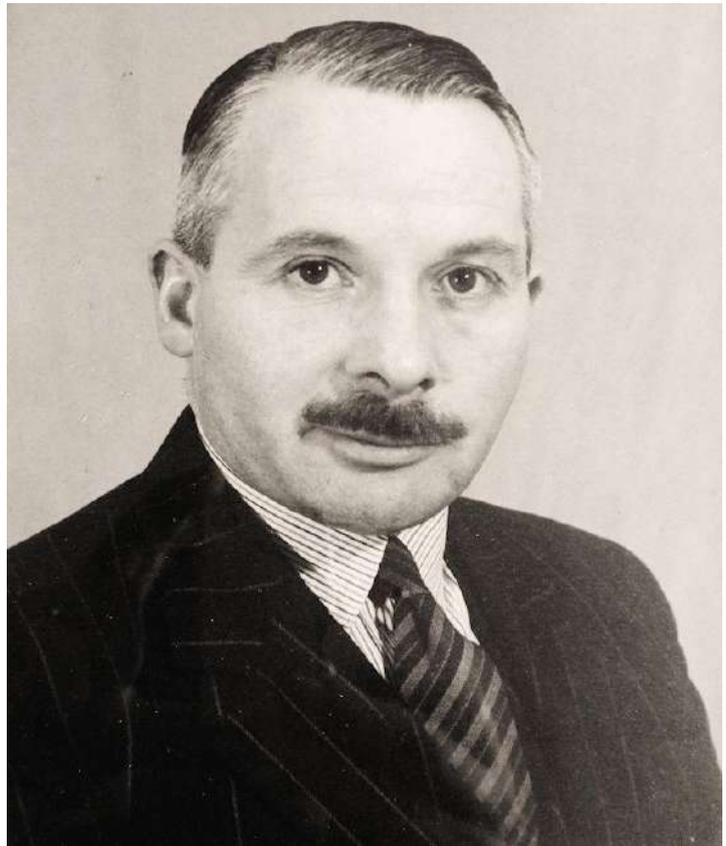
From 1924 to 1920 Bailie Benzie was secretary and treasurer of Fraserburgh Choral Society, and from 1925 to 1939 he was secretary of Fraserburgh Tennis Club and Tournament, and is at present Honorary Referee. He was first president of the Fraserburgh and District Horticultural Society and is meantime honorary president. He is a founder member of Fraserburgh Business Men's Club.

Before the war he was a leading member of the Fraserburgh Amateur Dramatic Society, when they produced "The Private Secretary", "The Creaking Chair", "It Pays to Advertise", "Tons of Money", "The Middle Watch", etc.

Mrs Gertrude Benzie, wife of Bailie Benzie, also took a prominent part in the acting side as well as arranging the settings which she has been doing recently for the Amateur Theatrical Club.

Bailie Benzie is a keen and enthusiastic gardener and has a wonderful garden at his home, "St. Elmo", Strichen Road. For years gardening has been his hobby.

The departure of Bailie Benzie will cause vacancies in the aforementioned bodies, and they are going to be hard to fill.



Alexander Benzie



Bailie Alexander Benzie - Fraserburgh Town Council

RUSSELL HILL, PURLEY, SURREY.

HIS MAJESTY THE KING PATRON

BALLARDS, ADMIRALTON, SURREY.

H.R.H. THE PRINCESS LOUISE DUCHESS OF ARGYLL - PRESIDENT OF APPEAL

H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES KING EDWARD VII OPENED THE NEW SCHOOL 1924

The Governing Body
of the
Warehousemen Clerks and Drapers' Schools
wish to place on record their sincere thanks to
Mr. Alex Benzie
for his services as a Steward in connection with the
Sixty-Ninth Anniversary Appeal
on behalf of the Schools. The Appeal was made under the Presidency of
H.R.H. The Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll
and resulted in contributions amounting to over £45,000 being made for the Schools' maintenance & extensions
as announced at the Festival Dinner held at the Connaught Rooms, St. James's, London,
on Friday April 23rd 1926.

Louise
President of the Appeal

No. Henderson
Treasurer

Robert Cook
Chairman of the Board of Management

J. W. A.
Secretary

OFFICES: WAKEFIELD HOUSE, 32 CHEAPSIDE, LONDON, E.C.2.



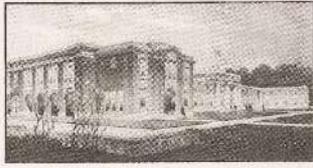
RUSSELL HILL, PURLEY, SURREY.





JAMES SPENCE, ESQ.





BALLARDS, ADDINGTON, SURREY.

The Governing Body of the
 Warehousmen Clerks and Drapers' Schools
 wish to place on record their sincere thanks to
Mr. Alex. Bonzie
 for his services as a Steward in connection with the
SEVENTY-THIRD ANNIVERSARY APPEAL
 on behalf of the Schools. The appeal was made under the Presidency of
Mr. James Spence,
(Messrs. Debenhams Ltd.)
 and resulted in contributions amounting to over £54,500 being made for the Schools' maintenance and the extension
 of the Hope Morley House, as announced at the Festival Dinner held at the Connaught Rooms, G. Queen St. London,
 on Thursday, 3rd April, 1930.

F. Richmond
Treasurer

J. Spence
President of the Appeal.



THE HOPE MORLEY HOUSE.

H. Menden
Chairman of the Board of Management

J. Ridley
Secretary

OFFICES: WAKEFIELD HOUSE, 32, CHEAPSIDE, LONDON, E.C.2.



BETTER A WEE BUIK THAN NEE BUIK

1885

THE BURNS FEDERATION

THIS IS TO CERTIFY
THAT *Mr. Alexander Bonzie*
IS A MEMBER OF
THASERBURGH BURNS CLUB

NO. 403 ON THE ROLL OF
THE FEDERATED SOCIETIES.

John W. Orr Hon. Secy
 KILMARNOCK. *26 January 1927*

**A MAN'S AS
 A MAN FOR A THAT**





William Benzie, with wife Helen and children Annie, Alexander (who later took over the business) and Jean (c.1910)

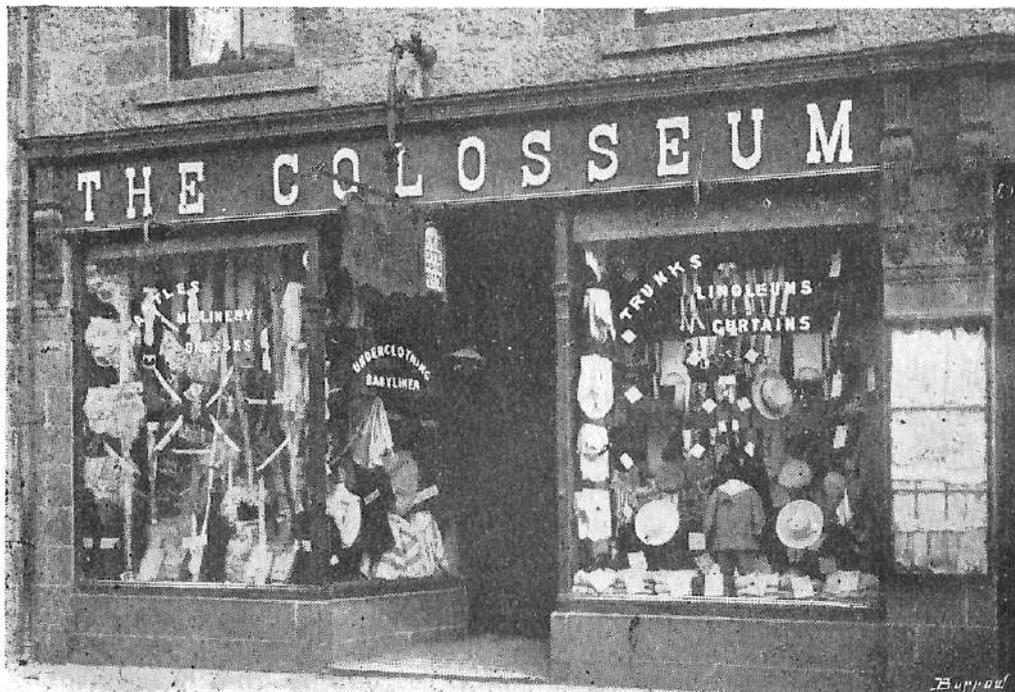
Advertisements

WHEN AT FRASERBURGH,
SHOP AT ———

Benzie's Colosseum

29, MID STREET.

He has a huge assortment of all classes
of Drapery Goods.



He buys in the keenest markets and sells at the
keenest prices.

**Specialists in Ladies' Blouses,
Gloves and Corsets.**

Up-to-date styles in Boys' Clothing.

A VISIT TO BENZIE'S WILL NOT DISAPPOINT YOU.

"GIVE HIM A TRIAL."

CALENDAR 1917												CALENDAR 1918											
MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER		

THE Fraserburgh Motor Car Co.

CLOSE and OPEN MOTOR CARS FOR HIRE. RELIABLE DRIVERS.

ROYAL HOTEL, FRASERBURGH.

Telephone No. 42.

Telegraphic Address: "Royal Hotel, Fraserburgh."

All Orders Strictly Attended to.



Telephone 42. Telegraphic Address: "Faithlie, Fraserburgh."

FAITHLIE & GRAY, LTD.

Coal Merchants. TRUCK LOADS to any Station. Shipping Supplied.

Ship Chandlers. SAIL MAKERS. Oil & Paint Merchants. Nets, Gutch, Rope and all Fishing Tackle.

FRITHSIDE STREET, Fraserburgh
BRANCH OFFICE: ROSEHEARTY.



Ask for **HENDRY'S** Famed

INVALID STOUTS SPARKLING ALES AND AERATED WATERS

Best Quality - THE BEST.

Castle Brewery, Fraserburgh.



John M. Bisset, THE MEAT MARKET.

Deliasses and Poultry.

65 Mid Street, Fraserburgh.



MAP OF FRASERBURGH DISTRICT



JAMES R. MILLER

Complete House Furnisher.

7 Broad St., Fraserburgh.



G. & J. MURISON

Jewellers and Watchmakers.

64 BROAD STREET, FRASERBURGH.

Choice Selection of Clocks, Watches, Jewellery, Plats, &c., suitable for Presentation and Prizes.

REPAIRS A SPECIALTY.




G. S. CHALMERS

Family Baker, Confectioner, & Pastrycook.

Frithside St., Fraserburgh.



Chas. B. Cranna

Saddler, Broad St., Fraserburgh.

REPAIRS of every description.



W. & J. GERRARD

Horse Hires and Carting Contractors.

Seaforth Stables, Fraserburgh.

POSTING IN ALL ITS BRANCHES.

FRASERBURGH



BENZIE'S

The Fashionable DRAPERS, Milliners & Costumiers.

FRASERBURGH



Low's Pharmacy

77 BROAD STREET, Fraserburgh.

JOHN H. LOW, M.P.S.

Qualified Chemist & Optician.



CALENDAR 1918												CALENDAR 1919											
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST



April 1937

Buyer wanted to take charge of children's and baby linen departments; state age and salary expected. Benzie & Miller Ltd, Fraserburgh

April 1938

Machinery, plant etc. Wanted 40 h.p. Diesel Engine for electric lighting.

August 1938

Machinery, plant etc. For sale, 22/24 h.p. Crossley Semi-Diesel Oil Engine, type FOE, in good running order, complete with water tanks, air bottle etc.

March 1941

Journeyman Shoemaker Wanted. Apply Benzie & Miller Ltd, Fraserburgh

December 1942

Shoe Repairers Wanted. Apply Benzie & Miller Ltd, 28 Broad Street, Fraserburgh

April 1944

Compton D.C. generators, 100/110 v., one 400 amp., 44 kw., compound, and one 100 amp., shunt; also two 3 h.p. motors, D.C., switchboard and fittings, several pulleys, starter, etc., for sale. Benzie & Miller Ltd, Fraserburgh

February 1946

Wanted. Cabinetmaker, preferably with machine experience.

June 1948

Shoe Repairer Wanted, experienced benchman; permanent situation to suitable applicant. House available shortly, Benzie & Miller Ltd, Fraserburgh

June 1948

Wood huts wanted, sizes 20ft. x 12ft., and 20ft x 8ft.

July 1948

Upholsterer wanted; 3-room house available. Benzie & Miller Ltd, 15 Mid Street, Fraserburgh

August 1948

Buyer required for Children's and Baby Linen departments. State experience and salary required. Benzie & Miller Ltd, Fraserburgh

February 1949

Cabinetmaker wanted; bench and machine experience; 2-roomed house available. Benzie & Miller Ltd, Fraserburgh

March 1949

Wanted, sectional Timber Hut or Huts, approx. 45ft x 12ft; also Wood Counters, 9 to 12 ft long. Benzie & Miller Ltd, Fraserburgh

October 1949

Manager wanted for Peterhead branch. Apply, giving full particulars of previous experience to Benzie & Miller Ltd, 15 Mid Street, Fraserburgh

October 1950

General manager wanted to Elgin branch (Ramsays). Apply, giving full particulars of previous experience and salary expected. Fashion buyer also wanted for above branch. Benzie & Miller Ltd, Fraserburgh



*In 1931 a series of adverts ran in the local cinemas promoting the Benzie and Miller store in Fraserburgh. These can be seen at **Scotland On Screen**: www.scotlandonscreen.org.uk/browse-films/007-000-002-403-c*

FRASERBURGH. OPENING OF NEW GRAND EMPORIUM.

THE NEW WAREHOUSE for BENZIE & MILLER, LTD., is completed. This will now be one of the most up-to-date shopping centres in the North. The frontage has 12 large windows.

The Departments are spacious and well equipped, brilliantly lighted by electricity, and efficiently heated by hot water radiators.

The Drapery and Clothing Department occupies 3684 square feet of floor space.

The Boot and Shoe Department 1386 square feet.

The Furniture Show Rooms 3245 square feet, and Carpets and Linoleums 1014 square feet.

To fittingly mark the occasion, B. & M. are to have a **CHEAP SALE**, beginning on **SATURDAY FIRST**, 19th November, and to continue for two weeks.

The prices of 1920 bear no relation to to-day's values, and B. & M. emphasise that they are to make deep cuts in to-day's prices.

B. & M. heartily invite all within the radius of the district to come on a visit of inspection.

BENZIE & MILLER, LTD.,
19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29 MID STREET, FRASERBURGH.

19th November 1921

B & M's Latest Extension

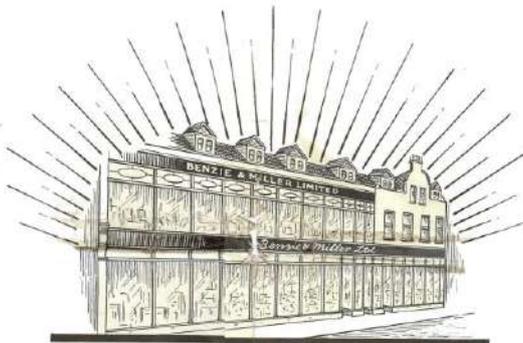
Means that Fraserburgh has now the Finest Store in the North.

THE New Wing just added in the last word in Store Construction. The Architect responsible for the building design is Mr John McWilliam who has also been master of works. In this building he has embodied the newest ideas in construction and under his direction the whole scheme has been completed in record time.

All contracts were placed locally wherever local men could undertake the work. Mason, Joiner, Plasterer, Timber Merchant, Slater, and Painter, are all local firms. The Steel Work, Heating Plant, Cash System and Roofing went to outside contractors who are specialists in their own spheres. On an average about twenty men have been employed continuously since the beginning of April on the actual construction.

The Excavation and Mason work was done by Mr Davies Smith. Here again up-to-date methods were used for speed. Pneumatic spades, made at the Toolworks, were employed in the excavations, and altogether over 500 loads of earth were dug out. The main structure of the building is of steel which was erected by Messrs Wm. Beattie & Sons. To give some idea of the strength of the fabric, over 30 tons of steel were used. All timber was supplied by Messrs Wm. Gray & Co., and the Joiners were Messrs Clark, May & Co., who erected the wood framing and all doors and sashes. The Plasterer was Mr Alexander Campbell, and Painter Messrs Bruce Scott & Co. The roof which is of the modern flat type was finished by Messrs Wm. Beattie & Sons, Ltd., who are experts in this class of work. Slating work was done by Mr James Reid.

The Heating, installed by Messrs A. L. Deacock & Co., is on the same lines as our old plant, which customers tell us has always been a pleasing feature in B & M's. The new system will ensure an even temperature throughout the whole store by means of thermostatic control. "Shop in comfort at B & M's" will never be truer. The Automatic Oil burning Plant which controls the heating, is the latest of its kind.



July 1934

One of the most important additions is the Pneumatic Cash Tube Service which is the newest type made by the Lawson Co. Over 2000 feet of pneumatic tubing have been used in this installation. All departments even in the furthest corners of the shop will be served by the central cash desk on the second floor. No time is wasted and there is no waiting.

All lighting equipment has been arranged by our own electrician, every section of the new building will have excellent lighting at all times.

An attractive section in the new Wing is the China & Glass Department. For the first time we are able to display our stocks to advantage. This also applies to the Hardware section which until now has always been cramped for room. Take a walk round these two sections and see for yourself the improvements we have made.

The Furnished Rooms in the new Furniture Showroom will be of interest to all. The interiors will be changed frequently. This spacious showroom leads to the new Men's & Millinery Departments which is almost completed. The immense stocks which we have to carry in these departments can now be seen with ease.

The extra space afforded by this extension will enable us to remodel many of the other departments in the store. Estimated for early improvement are the Book Department and the Children's Department, and we hope soon to provide open room for the Knickerbocker and Soft Furnishing Sections. All round there will be more show space and freedom to move about. It is our object to encourage Fraserburgh Shoppers to visit B & M's, and walk round the departments although they have no purchase in mind.

B.M.'s SALE

Begins TO-MORROW and will
continue until Saturday, 4th February.

THIS IS THE SALE FOR
REAL BARGAINS.

COME IN AND WALK ROUND.

**NOTE:—Our Premises are closed all day TODAY,
also TOMORROW AFTERNOON.**

FRASERBURGH'S SHOPPING HEADQUARTERS

TEA ROOM
FIRST FLOOR



TELEPHONE
Nº 6.

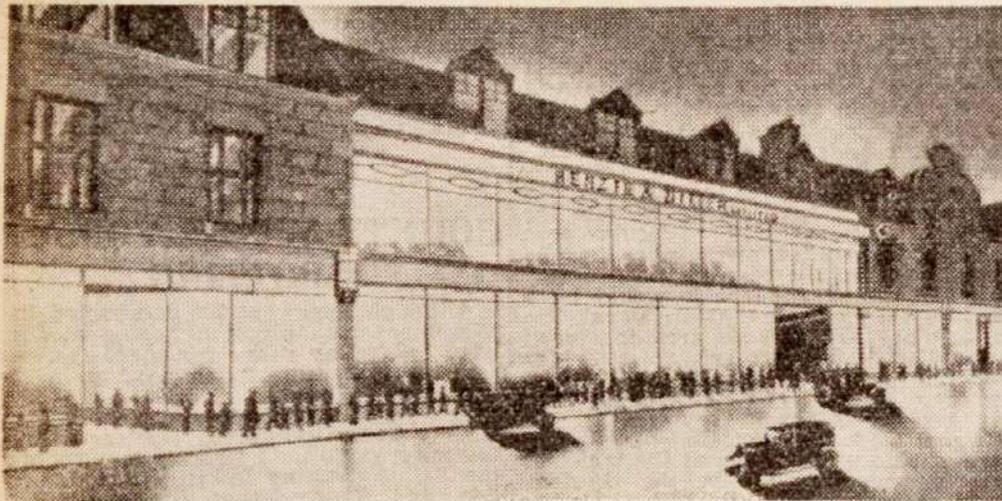
19-33 Mid Street. FRASERBURGH

Advert from 1933

B & M's

— OF —

FRASERBURGH



A WALK ROUND THIS MODERN STORE
WILL INTEREST AND REPAY YOU.
TWENTY UP-TO-DATE DEPARTMENTS
— ARE AT YOUR SERVICE —

●

VISIT THE TEA-ROOM

New Decorations and the addition of a cosy Lounge have increased the attraction of B. & M.'s TEAROOM. Here you will enjoy a LUNCH-HOUR SNACK or AFTERNOON TEA in pleasant surroundings.

●

BENZIE & MILLER Ltd., Fraserburgh

July 1939



MECCANO
DINKY TOYS
HORNBY TRAINS
HORNBY-DUBLO
hobbies for boys

The World's best

MECCANO The greatest of all constructional toys — unrivalled for fun and interest.

HORNBY-DUBLO ELECTRIC TRAINS The perfect scale-model railway system — a complete railway on a table-top.

HORNBY CLOCKWORK TRAINS The sturdiest clockwork railway for younger boys.

DINKY TOYS Strong, realistic miniatures of cars, lorries, tractors, planes, etc. All boys love to collect them!

BENZIE & MILLER LTD.



Mid Street

Fraserburgh - Tel. No. 6

November 1953

WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY AT B. & M.'S!!

Save on nylons with

CHARNOS BEE-LINES

They cost much less—but you'll have to hurry or you'll miss them! These fully-fashioned Grade B nylons look just like Perfects and are guaranteed to wear as well. Wonderful value at:

DESCRIPTION	REGULAR	BEE-LINE
COMMONSENSE 30 DENIER, 51 GAUGE	8/11	6/11
MOONBEAMS 15 DENIER, 60 GAUGE	10/11	7/11
HONEYMESH 15 DENIER PIN POINT MESH	10/11	8/11
NO-RUN 30-DENIER MESH	9/11	8/6
STURDIES SERVICE WEIGHT CREPE	16/11	12/11
CREPE CLOUDS 30 DENIER CREPE	14/11	10/11
SHEER CLOUDS 15 DENIER CREPE	14/11	10/11
SHEER STRETCH 15 DENIER CREPE	14/11	10/11

* ALL SIZES AVAILABLE *

BENZIE & MILLER Ltd

121-133 HIGH ST., ELGIN : 15-33 MID ST., FRASERBURGH
 34-38 HIGH ST., BANFF : 2-8 MARSHAL ST., PETERHEAD

BENZIES of Inverness

UNION STREET : INVERNESS

August 1959

October 1959



**SATURDAY IS
ODDMENT AND
REMNANT DAY**

at

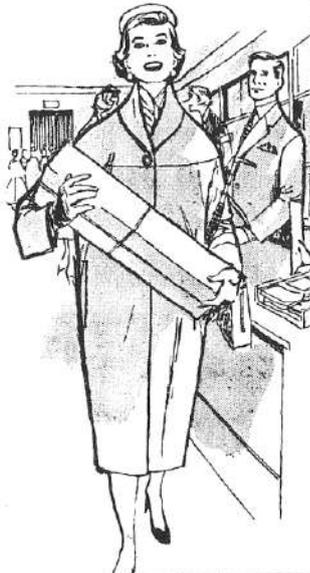
BENZIE & MILLER Ltd.
121 - 133 HIGH STREET, ELGIN

BENZIES of Inverness
UNION STREET, INVERNESS

**For Quality, Value
and Service**

SHOP AT . . .

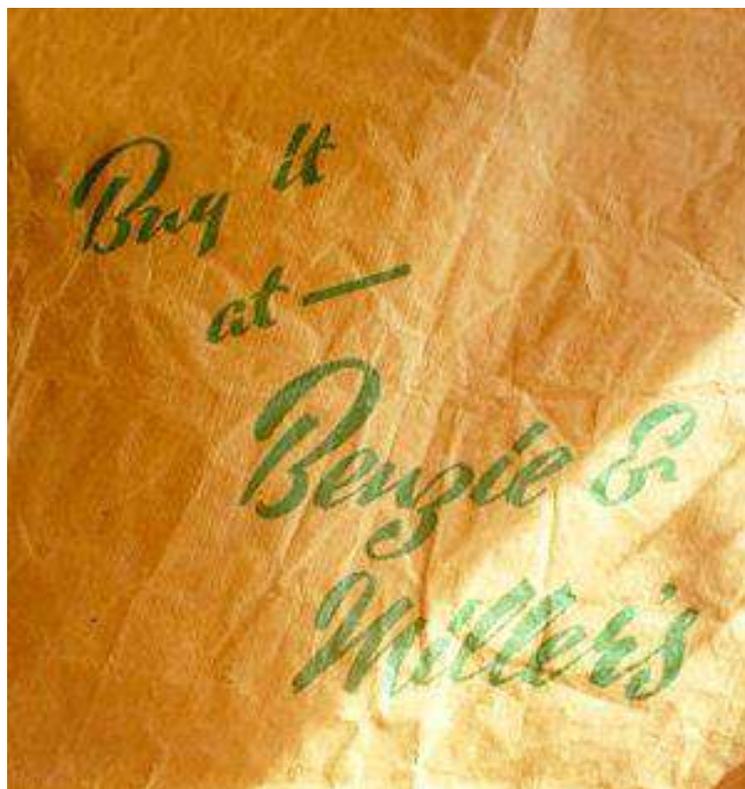
**BENZIE &
MILLER
LIMITED**



Year-round shopping values make B & M's a year-round shopping must. Our knitwear department for instance, carries at all times a representative selection of the current styles from the makers you know so well—"Braemar", "Lyle & Scott", "Two-Max", "Peter Scott", "Donbros", etc.

Our complete Departmental Store Organisation includes — Mens & Ladies Outfitting, Household Linens & Furnishings, Floor Coverings, Domestic Hardwear & China, etc... A comprehensive shopping service for the North East of Scotland.

15-33 MID STREET FRASERBURGH



B&M paper bag



B&M branded coat hanger

FOREMOST for **FASHIONS**

BENZIE & MILLER LTD.
HEAD OFFICE
MID STREET, FRASERBURGH

Also at **BANFF & PETERHEAD**

TEA ROOM - FIRST FLOOR

GOODS ENTRANCE - FRITHSIDE ST.

South Church

PHONE No. 6.

November 1929

Benzie & Miller Ltd.

Drapers
Milliners
Clothiers



Bootmakers
Cabinetmakers
Upholsterers

MID STREET FRASERBURGH

1929

Oct. 5	8 sheets glass $3\frac{1}{2} \times 6$	12 lbs. putty	4/-	1 18 6
	time jobbing at windows			2 4 3
	Iron rods wire $2\frac{1}{8}$			2 8
	time jobbing at carpets seats, blinds etc.			2 8 6
	1 piece linoleum $4\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2} \times 4$			6
	wood, screws etc. for platform			4 1
	time jobbing at Pulpit etc & recovering bookboards etc.			19 6
	2 yds. linen $2\frac{1}{2} \times 4$	4 stairs $1\frac{1}{2} \times 6$		4 6
	2 brass rings $2\frac{1}{2} \times 3$	1 yd. felt $7\frac{1}{6}$		7 9
	2 yds. gimp 4×8	4 yds gimp $6 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$		2 11
	2 tassels $2\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$	2 yd cord 4×2	2 yd studs 3×9	6 5
	recovering shelf in vestibule			3 8
22	putting lock on heating room door			11
Nov. 4	fitting up new notice boards			10 9 9
				2 6
				10 12 3

James A. Graham

RECEIVED PAYMENT WITH THANKS

For BENZIE & MILLER, LTD.

SAVE MONEY
 BY PURCHASING FROM
WILLIAM BENZIE
 DRAPER & GENERAL OUTFITTER
 COLOSSEUM WAREHOUSE
 29 MID ST., FRASERBURGH

BENZIE'S

*Aspartite Raincoats
for Ladies.*

**The Fashionable
DRAPERS,
Milliners &
Costumiers**

♣

*Costumes,
Coats,
Skirts,
Girls' Dresses,
Infants' Coats.*

29 Mid Street

*BLOUSE
SPECIALISTS.*

Gloves,
Corsets,
Furs,
Umbrellas,
Dressing Gowns,
Travelling Rugs.

*Gent's. & Youth's
Suits.*

**High-
... Class ...
Clothiers**

... AND ...

Outfitters.

♣

*Overcoats,
Underwear,
Hosiery,
Hats & Caps,
Braces.*

*Boys' Suits,
Large Selection.*

*Linoleums,
Mattresses,
Curtains,
Blankets,
Hearth Rugs.*

Keen Prices

FRASERBURGH

CALENDAR 1919

Y.	FEBRUARY.	MARCH.	APRIL.	MAY.	JUNE.	JULY.	AUGUST.	SEPTEMBER.	OCT.
9 26	S ... 2 9 16 23	S ... 2 9 16 23 30	S ... 6 13 20 27	S ... 4 11 18 25	S 1 8 15 22 29	S ... 6 13 20 27	S ... 8 10 17 24 31	S ... 7 14 21 28	S ...
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