The appliance channel, as seen through the pages of Wares magazine. What was happening 10, 15 and 20 years ago? Wares’ very own time machine, Merv Robertson, reports.

20 YEARS AGO – JUNE 1995
In June 1995, our news was dominated by the Rugby World Cup in South Africa. On the 24th it culminated in the All Blacks loss to the Springboks in the final.

The ABs were clearly the best side at the tournament but, in a try-less if dramatic final, Joel Stransky kicked a field goal in extra time to see Nelson Mandela present the Webb Ellis Trophy to Francois Pienaar, the victorious skipper.

Was it Suzie? Manager Colin Meads reckons Suzie was fictitious and blamed the outbreak on tainted milk. No other news mattered that month, really.

Auckland a fridge magnet – An international meeting had been held in Auckland, attended by 32 delegates from the world’s refrigerator manufacturers and standards officials, the outcome of which was the establishment of an accord on consumer safety requirements.

Danielle Marion from Italy was Chairman of the Technical Working Group on flammable refrigerants and she visited Fisher & Paykel with Derek Johns, a New Zealand Safety Consultant. Gary Paykel was on hand for the guided tour.

Applico’s inaugural conference – The June 1995 issue included a comprehensive report on Applico Group’s first national conference. Held at the sadly defunct Hotel du Vin south of Auckland, the message was that Applico (agents for Smeg, Classique and Mastermaid) was deadly serious about supplying New Zealand with an increasing range of European products.

The almost 60 delegates went away highly impressed, not just by the range on offer, but also by the fact that Applico had sweetened the whole deal with a “typically innovative incentive programme” for retailers and their staff.

Joint Managing Director with Mark Jones, Robert Eng, in opening the 1995 conference, viewed the event as a major step forward in the group’s partnership development programme.

Kitchen Things by then was already 7 years old as a brand. These days, both Applico Group and Kitchen Things are under the Jones Family Investments banner. (Also see our exclusive insights into JFI with Mark Jones on page 14 of this issue.)

Parex, DeLonghi’s ‘Best in World’ – 20 years ago, we were reporting that Parex, DeLonghi’s NZ distributor was excited and with good cause. They had been adjudged “Best in World” for sales and promotions and Sergio Carobba and Stefano Cappellini visited New Zealand to present the award to Paul Tooley and Diane Phillips. Diane is Key Account Manager at Sika these days.

Mid-1995 and the world’s refrigeration experts were calling on F&P to see what the firm was up to. Gary Paykel showed them round.
rolling back the years

DéLonghi sales and promotions during the Domotechnica Fair in Germany – a terrific achievement.

The award was announced by none other than Giuseppe DéLonghi himself, at a gathering of 500 international distributors. Two HQ executives, Sergio Carobba and Stefano Cappellini visited New Zealand to present the award to Paul Tooley and Diane Phillips.

These days Diane is a Key Account Manager with Sika (NZ), a speciality chemicals company. I asked her about the feeling at Parex around being recognised in such a prestigious manner those 20 years ago. “It was a surprise,” she recalls, “but we felt really excited and proud that Kiwis could compete with the best in the world.”

Paul Tooley now has his own customised sales training consultancy and is sure he can increase your sales and margins.

doing a National Qualification in Appliance Servicing. Two of them are ours and we have recently taken on three more who are not yet signed up with the ITO. We also have seven registered technicians.”

Today, Axial is an authorised parts distributor for Electrolux Home Products (Simpson, Westinghouse & AEG) and is accredited to service virtually every whiteware brand. Ironically, Roger Blincoe believes the service industry has become harder with the proliferation of brands sometimes making ready access to parts and information difficult, and the fact that with retail wars forcing prices down, often the customer will opt for a new appliance over repair.

(For more on the state of servicing in our industry today, see our lead feature starting on page 6 of this issue.)

What price service? – Roger Blincoe established Axial Appliance Servicing in 1987 and 20 years ago Wares was reporting the business had just won some important contracts and needed to expand. With an exclusive new whiteware servicing agreement for Hill & Stewart/Selectrix, Axial was now looking after 30 stores across Auckland. A new computer system was installed, five technicians and three apprentices were flat out and, with Eileen Andrew in charge, the office staff doubled.

In 1995, Roger said: “The biggest problem in the industry at the moment is the vast shortage of skilled qualified technicians.” Today, Roger still laments the shortage of qualified techs: “The situation has not improved! Currently, Skills (the Industry Training Organisation) has just 54 trainees across the country

Appnet gets it together – By 1995 Appliance Network Society (Appnet) had 41 Betta Electrical stores up and running across the country. One to sing the group’s praises was Graeme Wingate whose business had long since been serving the people of New Lynn and the opportunity to join Betta was exciting.

“The whole package has come together very well,” he said at the time. “It’s an easy name to remember and it means what it says.”

The group’s positioning statement was “Betta Electrical, for the world’s best appliances” and at its first conference in March 1995 had appointed co-ordinators to handle advertising. Regional meetings were to be held and a six-member Board had been elected with Graeme Wingate in the Chair. Warren Brewin was General Manager.

Graeme sold his business in 2006 and, with wife Mary, did some travelling before moving to Orewa. He is now Patron of the New Zealand Offshore Powerboat Association. Warren is CEO of Lifestyle Retail Group in the equestrian industry.

Movers & shakers 20 years ago – Alone but not forlorn in the June 1995 magazine was David Haslett, who had
been appointed General Sales & Marketing Manager at Simpson Appliances. David was to develop the company’s strategic planning function and take responsibility for the direction of the product range and, although I contacted industry folk who had worked with him, his current location is unknown.

15 YEARS AGO – JUNE 2000
In June 15 years ago, Independent Newspapers had just launched Stuff.co.nz in an Auckland cybercafé, Saatchi & Saatchi having conceived the brand name.

Earlier in the month The Patriot, starring Mel Gibson, hit our screens and the Labour-led Government announced its Y2K budget which included a “suite of measures to assist business and regional development”.

Matters digital – Sony’s was a striking front cover, heralding its “Collection 2000”. The cover had a circular cut-out and inside was a DPS headlining new products for the digital age. The magazine’s Editorial also majored on matters digital and made the observation that “Multi-room and whole-house networks may very soon become as common as our telephone and electrical systems are today.” Just 15 years on and well, who predicted the half of it?

When cashbacks worked – The concept of cashback promotions had gathered a full head of steam and this time it was Sunbeam’s turn. More than just the $20 cash back on the Ellise frypan though, punters had the opportunity to “Fry their way to Fiji” by sending in their favourite frypan recipes with their cash back applications. The best recipe would be rewarded with a vacation for two in beautiful Fiji. These days, cashbacks are sometimes seen as yet another way to further reduce the shelf price of a product, rather than adding value. Oh well…

Whose move next? – According to Email, the world was a chess board and the magazine said that Ray Hughes and Kathy Dunn had done a great job of revealing the upcoming strategies for Simpson & Westinghouse cooking appliances. The dealer function was held in the Auckland Town Hall and a great night was had by all with excellent food & wine following the presentation – checkmate to Email.
NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN!

The Appliance & Electronics Industry New Zealand Hall of Fame was established to run alongside Wares magazine’s annual Awards. Wares magazine and a formal committee comprised of respected people in the industry are the engine behind the Hall of Fame, cementing it as a reputable celebration of the most influential people in the industry.

TO NOMINATE GO TO: www.hof.org.nz/make-a-nomination
for a sharp, evenly focussed image from corner to corner.

Having just recently left the firm this year, Kim Naylor had then only been in the top job at Fujitsu a couple of months at that stage but recalls: “We made a conscious decision to confine our distribution to independent AV specialists rather than run with the mass merchants, therefore asserting our position.

“As I remember it, our new 42-inch panels retailed for around $7,000 [$9,900 in today’s money] and for as long as possible, we were determined to maintain the best margins possible, for us and our trade customers.”

That was 15 years ago. These days, the words “best margin” and “flat panel products” aren’t often seen in the same sentence.

The AEIA’s first Apex Awards were MC’d by Peter Drummond. A variety of plaudits were handed out included Harvey Norman being voted top of its category by suppliers.

AEIA’s Y2K Awards – The Wares Awards are now well and truly established as the industry event that recognises and rewards excellence. But, back in Y2K, the Appliance & Electronics Industry Association (AEIA) organised its inaugural awards function at Auckland’s Sheraton Hotel (now of course the Langham).

AEIA, formerly the Appliance Industry Guild, included suppliers, retailers and service companies alike, all signed up to the same charter. AEIA’s President then was Roger Blincoe and the Executive Director was the late Dennis Amiss.

Not surprisingly, the three categories were Retail, Service and Supplier. The night’s MC was Peter Drummond, now CEO of Appliance Connexion, with Dick Hubbard, founder of Hubbard Foods and future Mayor of Auckland, as guest speaker.

Harvey Norman took the honours in the multi-store section with Mason Appliances being adjudged top independent and LV Martin & Son picking up a special judges’ award. Trade Tech Products won the supplier components award whilst for finished product Panasonic was tops. Philips was recognised for advertising and promotions and for service dealers, The Shaver Shop in Auckland won in appliances and Next Electronics Petone was top dog in electronics servicing.

What’s afoot in retail? – In retail, Briscoes announced that Breville was its Supplier of the Year and Harvey Norman was celebrating success at the Apex Awards with Jude Walker, David Kerr, Heather Chovanetz, Majid Poortoossi and Roger & Christine Flegg on hand to accept the spoils. Back then, Harvey Norman was a five-store chain.

It was in the June issue of the year 2000 when Wares announced that Halls Appliances, formally a 100% YES member, had taken over Howsons Retravision in Wellsford, converting both its Wellsford & Warkworth stores to the Retravision brand.

At the time, David Hall said: “The Retravision brand is the right one for the future.” Sadly, Retravision NZ became a casualty of the global recession in 2009 and Halls became an unidentified ACL member until the Warkworth business was sold to Noel Leeming in November 2012. The shop in Wellsford is now a large Four Square store and David and Julie-Anne Hall live in Auckland where David is Shop Floor Manager at Noel Leeming Wairau Park.

Wares’ Sunbeam-sponsored June 2000 Award for Excellence in Retailing went to Flemings Betta Electrical (now Mike Mann Betta Electrical) in Waipukurau with Elaine Andersen presenting the trophy to manager Tim Fleming (no relation to the owners) and his sales team. Tim’s winning philosophy was built around one word – team – simple but effective.

Tim had a variety of retail jobs including with Brightspot YES in Waipukurau with Barbara Lowe, but now enjoys the freedom of being a handyman around town. On finishing with Sunbeam in 2003, Elaine concentrated on the boarding cattery business set up in 1999 with husband Ross. This was recently sold and after celebrating 50 years of marriage in April, the pair are set for some serious travel.

Betta team building – The Mines City Resort in Kuala Lumpur is a fabulous venue, and in 2000, Betta Electrical held its annual conference there, centre...
Appnet’s first ever offshore conference was in Kuala Lumpur in 2000. There was reason to celebrate however with 23% year on year growth, well above the industry norm at the time...

McArthur and Graeme Wingate welcomed delegates, reminding them that the group’s continued success depended on members’ ability to adapt to change more quickly than competitors. Warren Brewin outlined the group’s performance of the previous year, which showed a growth of 23% against the overall industry which was closer to 10%.

Tim Bibby and Mike Lopes from CFL spoke about finance and Scott Kendall of IUL stressed the extra profits to be made from extended warranties. Mr Lim, the Malaysian LG agent gave an address on Asian retail trends whilst Malcolm McBain (Email), John Mahar (Electrolux), Calvin Sandford (Whirlpool) and Brent Malone (Teac) revealed future plans and product initiatives. Rob Savelkoul of Philips Asia enlightened his audience on the future of digital technology in home entertainment and Phil Jayne of Panasonic released a new product range.

Breville moves & shakes – Carol Dunn was June 2000’s only local Mover & Shaker, having been appointed to Breville as Northern Regional Sales Representative. She is now National Accounts Manager at Asco, a company providing uniform, linen, floorcare, first aid systems & washroom services.

Locals may have been slim 15 years ago this month, but we are fortunate to have international movers & shakers visit our shores regularly and in June 2000, in my Nilfisk role I was delighted to welcome our Global Vice President – Consumer, Henrik Theisler, back to Godzone. Some readers will remember Henrik well, I know. He is now a Vice President of Copenhagen-based architectural hardware specialists D Line A/S.

10 YEARS AGO – JUNE 2005

A decade past, Michael Cullen presented his 5th Budget and pop star Michael Jackson was cleared of all child abuse charges after a four-month trial. In sport, the touring British & Irish Lions lost the first test to the All Blacks in Christchurch.

Philips devoted Wares’ front cover package 10 years ago to the All Blacks. Together, they were not only celebrating 10 years of the Tri Nations in the opulent Palace of the Golden Horses Hotel. The conference theme was “Team Betta”.

The MC was Morgan McArthur and Graeme Wingate welcomed delegates, reminding them that the group’s continued success depended on members’ ability to adapt to change more quickly than competitors. Warren Brewin outlined the group’s performance of the previous year, which showed a growth of 23% against the overall industry which was closer to 10%.

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Philips used Wares’ front cover package 10 years ago to celebrate 10 years of the Tri Nations Championship as well as recognising a similar milestone for Philips’ sponsorship of our premier sporting team. Ian Jones was the brand’s well-known ambassador at the time...

Championship, but also recognising a similar milestone for Philips’ sponsorship of our premier sporting team.

Ian Jones had become a Philips Ambassador during his playing time and, although he retired at the end of the 1999 season, had retained that Philips connection. Today of course, “Kamo” is an expert analyst and sideline eye for Sky Sports.

Dual plaudits for HWI NZ – The launch of the GfK No.1 Awards meant massive recognition for HWI NZ (Breville, Philips and Kambrook) which had won no less than 14 awards in the Asia Pacific region. The award was presented to the top selling brand, according to GfK retail audit data in a variety of consumer categories.

HWI was presented a certificate for each and every category and was granted the right to use the No.1 logo throughout 2005. “We have the team, we have the product, we have the brands,” said MD Brett O’Neill at the time. Some things simply stand the test of time.

In the same issue, you won’t be surprised to read that Noel Leeming Group’s Supplier of the Year was – you guessed it – HWI NZ.

HWI NZ (aka Breville) was performing very well indeed in 2005 and was rightly recognised for its sterling service by both GfK and Noel Leeming. Brett O’Neill as usual praised his team for these achievements and rightly so.

What’s afoot in the industry? – There was a report on the Chicago Home & Housewares Show and we saw two Kiwi personalities in attendance. Paul Holdsworth, now Sales Manager at Speed Queen Laundry Systems, was checking out the George Foreman stand while Norm Scott preferred the Homedics massage expert. I still can’t find Norm.

A Q&A forum in the same issue featured Rick Helling’s of Smiths City, Paul Fenn of Chris Fenn Appliances and suppliers Steve Hodson of JVC and Paul Ravlich of Bosch were quizzed on the state of the industry.

The last word was taken by Steve Hodson: “Our population is getting older. And what does the older generation want? Service. When was the last time you saw an advert about ‘how good our service will be to you, for the rest of your life when you buy from us?’

10 years ago, our JVC Retailer of the Month was Barrell’s 100% YES in Whangarei, a vibrant store of 10,000ft², up from the 4,000 ft² of the previous iteration. Gary Peterken, Paul Edwards and Peter Hill were the owners back then.

WP

WHOLESALER

W ARE S  J U N E  2 0 1 5  <55>
As part of an industry Q&A style forum, we were quizzing Rick Hellings, Paul Fenn, Steve Hodson (now of Fujifilm but then at JVC) and Paul Ravlich of Bosch about the state of the industry.

“If you don’t grow you don’t survive,” said Peter Hill at the time, and working on the business rather than in it was the way forward. How prophetic. Now perhaps the largest single member of the 100% group, including 100% Barrell’s Albany Extreme, Gary departed Barrell’s some nine years ago.

Haier arrives in NZ – In 2002 a joint venture operation had been heralded between Chinese giant Haier and Black Diamond Holdings (BDH), resulting in a new entity, Haier Appliances (NZ), being formed.

The brand was launched exclusively through Noel Leeming and Bond & Bond, but by 2005, Haier HQ took over and the Kiwi operation became a wholly owned subsidiary. Exclusivity for NLG was revoked and Haier NZ presented the whiteware range to dealers nationwide.

Back then, Alison Drury was General Manager and had been brought on board by BDH to manage the launch. Today, she is based on the beautiful Kapiti Coast and is an Account Manager with The Radio Network.

In the same article, Jade Cuthbert was noted as the new Area Sales Manager Northern Region. She is now Jade Clarkson and is currently on maternity leave from the family business, Clarkson Electrical.

Mega movers & shakers – Finally in this instalment of Rolling back the Years, I set out to track down the movers & shakers profiled in the mag 10 years ago. Russell Stanners was appointed MD of Vodafone, Christine Johnson had taken up the position of GM at Sunbeam and Nik Papa was returning to Harvey Norman NZ. Nik had set up the operation in 1997, before moving to in NZ. Nik had set up the operation in 1997, before moving to Harvey Norman and the Kiwi operation became a wholly owned subsidiary. Exclusivity for NLG was revoked and Haier NZ presented the whiteware range to dealers nationwide.

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Russell is currently CEO of Vodafone NZ and, after an overseas trip and a decent break back home, Christine is ready for a new challenge, although she confesses she is relishing her new vocation of housewife and chief dog walker. We find Nik still at Harvey Norman, in Chadstone Victoria, as Electrical Franchisee/State Manager.

10 years ago, Andy Higgs became GM at Parex after an eight-year stint in the UK, Craig Fuller was the new GM at Robinhood and Warren Roach became CTV Product Manager at Philips.

Today Andy is with Auckland City Council, working with Auckland Tourism, Events & Economic Development (ATEED), Craig is Australia & NZ Business Unit Manager for Dees Industries based in Melbourne and Warren is with The Comfort Group (Sleepyhead, Dunlop Foams, Sleepmaker etc) as Group Digital Marketing Manager.

10 years ago, Groupe SEB announced the appointment of Darryl Brown in the role of National Sales Manager, Canon recruited Craig Manson as National Sales Manager for its Business Imaging Solutions group and there were three new faces at HWI

– Customer Service Representatives Leonie Lawson and Janelle Ganley, with Pam Robertson becoming Regional Manager for Waikato/Bay of Plenty.

Darryl became Country Manager for Groupe SEB (a position he holds to this day) and Craig is still with Canon in Australia as Director Canon Business Services. I have not found Leonie but Janelle is back home in Mount Maunganui selling residential real estate for Bayleys, whilst Pam is Area Sales Manager for HPM Legrand specialising in lighting and switch gear.

Back in 2005 again, JVC had expanded rapidly and five new appointments were announced. Rachel Pym became Customer Services Manager with Kelly Baker and Dale Lubbe as her two Customer Services Representatives while Daniel Robinson and Megan Dixon were in the field as Account Managers.

Rachel is believed to be away from New Zealand, Kelly asks that her current status is kept private and Dale is a Systems Engineer at Virage IT in Melbourne. Dan is Senior Product & Marketing Manager at Harvey Norman, while Megan is Advertising Sales Manager at Little Treasures magazine as well as being co-founder and MD of her own business called Complete Kids Nutrition.

At Uniden, our good friend Ross Kirkland had hired Tania Bowden as his PA and on leaving the company, she and her husband moved to Australia.

10 years ago, the new Consumer Products Account Manager at Fujifilm was Amanda Robilliard. Karl Brooks was the heating expert at Monaco Corp, while Carol Gidden had taken over the reins of GE refrigeration, also at Monaco Corp. Chris Ireland landed the job of Account Manager for the lower North Island at Sharp.

Whilst I haven’t been able to locate Amanda, Karl is GM at Glen Dimplex and Carol, recently returned from maternity leave, is Windows & Surface Business Group Lead at Microsoft. Chris is Sales Manager at Adel Specialty Group, based in Wellington and responsible for specialty cabling.

Then as now, Wares was also busy building anticipation in the industry towards that year’s Wares awards…

Looking forward to the August issue, we will take a look at the 15th conference of the Electronic Appliance Guild, see who won what at the ACL knees-up on the Gold Coast and track down the movers & shakers who featured back in the day.
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