

The Closure of Dover's Award-winning Independent Quality Menswear Retail Outlet

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"I'm sorry to read this. It was my clothes shop for many years and I have a great respect and affection for Arthur Salisbury." "It's been an amazing shop over the years and it is very sad to see it go. Thank you to Arthur and Mary for all the years of service they gave to the people of Dover and enjoy your retirement and all the best to you both." "Always made me think of 'Are you being served'....." "T've bought loads of suits from here. Love the place, just sad to see it go."



Arthur & Mary Salisbury following ceasing trading

two and which links Stembrook and Cannon Street.

Arthur Alfred Salisbury was born in Cranfield, a village in northwest Bedfordshire between Bedford and Milton Keynes, on 26 November 1948. Although classified as a village it boasts the only British postgraduate and research-based public university specialising in science, engineering, technology and management. Following education in Cranfield and

The 6th August 2019 was the final trading day in Dover of the established quality menswear shop, operating under the name of Allan Hughes for over 50 years in Cannon Street, which ceased operations upon the retirement of its proprietor Arthur Salisbury who with his wife, Mary, of 45 years, hopes to settle in the West Country. Arthur had been the proprietor of the business for some 22 years from August 26th 1997 during which time he was held in high esteem by those who had the privilege of knowing him as he ran his business as well as by those who witnessed significant contributions he made to the life of our town. In 2004 his business was given the prestigious 'Shop of the Year' Award by the White Cliffs Country Tourism Association. The quotes at the start of this article are a random sample of very many responses recorded on Facebook as the news of the closure of the business became public knowledge. It is a sad loss to Dover both in human terms and in terms of the nature of the business operating from the iconic building located just below St Mary's Church adjoining the footpath running between the

nearby Stewartby, noted for being a model village originally built for the workers of the London Brick Company, Arthur left school at the age of 15 and began his career in the men's clothing industry by joining Hepworth Menswear with whom he would remain for 25 years. He became a shop manager at the age of 19 in Rushton, Northamptonshire and over the years was manager in a number of towns' stores, including at Bedford, St Albans and Milton Keynes. The company was taken over by the business familiarly known today as NEXT. Arthur met Mary in church in Cranfield after she had moved to the village and they were married in Cranfield on 26th August 1974. Their four daughters and a son, were all educated in local schools and live independently from the family home in East Studdal.

It seems that the Salisbury family arrived in Dover through a combination of chance and calling. In a menswear magazine Arthur saw an advertisement of a menswear business for sale with a Dorset telephone number which interested Arthur and Mary as their

preference was to move to the west. When Arthur made contact with the seller he was given details of the business and its catchment area, which included references to a port, ferries, cruise liner trade and Dover! The town had not been on Arthur and Mary's radar for a move from Bedfordshire. Nevertheless, Arthur viewed the business and the area in the process discovering another purchaser was already proceeding with the purchase of the business! Sometime later he was advised the initial purchaser had withdrawn from transaction, so Arthur proceeded to acquire the business. At this point things all seemed to fall into place. Arthur recalls visiting the bank manager, based in what was then Burlington House, to secure a supportive response on the financial front. He then considered the question of family housing settling on a property in East Studdal that had, ironically, featured in a dream experienced by Mary regarding certain of its features. The die was cast and it seemed that the move was meant to be. As for the business the rest is history.

Outside of the business Arthur is a man of faith, a Methodist by persuasion. Upon arrival he and Mary considered various churches eventually settling upon River Methodist Church in Lewisham Road River. It appealed to them due to the warmth of their reception by the Revd. Gordon Newton and his wife Elaine and because it had an active and thriving youth group suitable for their children then aged between 18 down to 2. Arthur became an active member of Christians Together in Dover (CTID) having been encouraged to join by the then Baptist minister Revd. Bill Kirk. Arthur served as Vice Chairman for two years then Chairman for two years being deeply committed to the introduction of the Dover Street Pastor Scheme ably supported by the Revd. Bill Kirk, his wife Marie and by Noel Beamish who later become leader of CTID. Arthur had encouraged Noel to become engaged with

CTID from which was to flow several Christian initiatives in Dover including The Dover Outreach Centre and the Food Bank, the latter being initiated by Jonathan Wheeler. Right to the end of his stay in Dover Arthur remains a supporter of CTID.

After his active engagement with CTID Arthur, who had been a Methodist Lay Preacher since the age of 27, became a Circuit Steward for the local Methodist Circuit which involved taking care of the ministries of the Circuit and being supportive of the ministers. Methodist ministers remain in place for a finite term, usually five years. One of Arthur's functions was to ensure the local Circuit had an identified and allocated minister in place to succeed an outgoing minister. Not always a straightforward or easy task!

So, Dover has lost and said farewell to a quality menswear retail outlet and to two lovely people who had been with the town since 1997. Arthur said of his experience in the clothing trade in Dover that in the 22 years of his proprietorship the business had been steady and survived the recession that claimed many other businesses. It had provided a living enough to sustain his large family and seeing all the children grow up and move away. Now is the turn of Arthur and Mary to move away and Dover is indebted to them both for their contributions to the town, primarily through the dignified and efficient management of the business but also through their Christian commitment and activities flowing from that. It is to be hoped that this lovely couple will be granted a long and healthy retirement together as they hope to see more of their children and 22 grandchildren in the time ahead.

Meantime Dover waits to see what the future holds for the building vacated in Cannon Street from which a variety of business uses have operated in the past.