



**BLANCHE FAIRBROTHER**

**Don't you** wonder how much longer we are going to be bombarded with

these ridiculous vouchers? I have had more than ever to sort out and deal with this week and are we getting paid for sorting them out, listing them and sending them to WHSmith News? I can't think of any other industry that uses the source of its link with the public the way publishers use the newsagents, and there is never a word of thanks to be heard.

I've picked up some new customers. I've likened them to the Addams Family. The house has those tiny diamond-shaped windows and is very old, and it is

**I've picked up some new customers. I've likened them to the Addams Family. I wonder what wildlife is sharing the house with them?**

covered in creepers like ivy, wisteria, cotoneaster and other such things that have adhered themselves to the walls. I just wonder what wildlife has set up home in all the foliage and are sharing the house with them.

Today is 28 April and I've heard the first cuckoo, so that is a good sign and the swallows have been with us for a couple of weeks now.

The May bank holiday weekend is going to be a colourful event on the canal. There are a number of things going on, including a craft fair, an old working engine and lots of boats are gathering for a sort of festival. I hope the weather will be kind to them so that people will want to come out and visit.

## TRADE SHOWS

# P&H launches planogram tailored for independents

**Chris Rolfe reports from Pro-Retail (26-28 April)**

Palmer & Harvey used last week's Pro-Retail show to launch ProShopper Blueprints, a planogram service for independent retailers.

The service, available free of charge to all P&H symbol group members, gives planning advice based on sales data from

retailers – specifically forecourts, CTNs and c-stores – suppliers and the industry, with a wide range of sources providing a more objective opinion.

Information can be tailored to each store's location, meaning demographic factors unique to an individual store are considered before the most appropriate range is recommended.

"It's definitely not a one-size-fits-all process and it's all about categories and brands, not individual companies," said Dennis Scott, symbol marketing manager for P&H.

"Retailers are jacks of all trades, but they only have their own view of the market, so it's up to us to advise on keeping a balance and tracking trends."

## THE BRANDS MAKING WAVES AT PRO-RETAIL 2005...

**n** Walkers Nonsuch's latest launch, English Crocante, proved popular among independents at this year's Pro-Retail show.

The product, launched in January, was the main focus at the company's stand, with the show providing welcome advertising for a small company without the benefit of a huge advertising budget.

"Retailers' feedback says there are not many genuinely new products around, with the larger companies focusing on brand extension," said Katie Walker, head of UK sales. "As independents have to provide something different to survive, it is good to be able to offer them a brand-new type of product."

**n** Leaf UK is relaunching its Chewits kids' confectionery brand, with new flavours, recipes and pack designs set to hit shelves this month.

A new flavour will launch into the £2.5m Xtreme range. Xtremely Hot Lime joins Sour Apple, Tutti Frutti and Lemon flavours in a brand that has doubled in growth in 2005. An orange variant will also join the Chewits stickpack range. Answering

consumer concerns over health, artificial colours have been removed and fruit juice added.

The relaunch follows a two-year brand review by Leaf that has seen 650 SKUs reduced to 180, with the latest developments aiming to increase the brand's value from £20m to £30m by 2008 and increase customer attention within the confectionery fixture.

While a TV advertising and sampling campaign will target consumers, independent retailers, generating 60% of Leaf's sales, can increase sales through an on-pack 'three-for-two' promotion and win one of five £1,000 cash prizes available to retailers as part of the



relaunch.

## SOFT DRINKS

# Consumers wise up to water, the healthy choice

Bottled water provides not only a healthy alternative, but also high sales that are increasing, according to the latest report from Highland Spring.

Figures published last week in the UK Bottled Water Market guide show bottled water now makes up 15% of soft drinks sales, expected to grow to 21% by 2008, making it the

second most popular category after carbonates.

Growth was driven by still water sales, with sports bottles and kids' drinks also performing well. A growing demand for natural food and drink from a known and protected source means water now has 52% penetration among consumers.

Top-selling brands in the con-

venience sector are Volvic, Evian and Highland Spring, with 29.6%, 23.3% and 10.2% respective market shares.

While single bottles produce 90% of sales, because of impulse customers' trend towards immediate consumption, multipacks are becoming more popular in this channel, with sales increasing by 40%.