

John's 44 year key to business success

Lorraine Carey meets businessman John S Mitchell, who recently retired.

JOHN S Mitchell first turned the key to his office equipment premises in Mallow Street way back in 1963.

Now approaching his 80th year, he has officially retired from M Sign Products, Mallow Street, an enterprise initially set up by him to sell and service typewriters but which also

"economical refugee" compelled to seek work abroad.

He found employment in the UK and soon set up his first business in the English town of Cheltenham. "I went into partnership with a Corkman and sold office equipment from a shop there for a number of years before moving

just sell arts and crafts materials", which, he deadpans, "are much lighter to carry around than heavy typewriters".

Mr. Mitchell, of a quiet disposition and always willing to defend his native city, now resides in Castleconnell with his wife Camilla, while his three children have flown the nest, one to

all that much".

"It's a quaint street. M Sign Products is the second longest remaining business on that street."

adds Mr. Mitchell, "The type of business I was originally involved in has changed a lot as

technology has advanced. It's a huge industry now. But, most change is for the better".

Recalling one of the most memorable occasions associated with his time running his premises, Mr. Mitchell

says: "We moved from a smaller building to a larger one on the same street the same day that Charlie Haughey opened the new bridge. It was pouring wet the same day and someone threw an egg at him. There was uproar. Had I known

then, what I know now, I probably would have cheered them on!"

Mr. Mitchell is enjoying his retirement but says,

"I've been keeping busy, sowing up trees and encouraging the grass not to get too

long!"

New owner Tony Breen made a special presentation to her former employer on the day he retired.

"He always was and always will be a thorough gentleman", she told the Limerick Post.



Fiona Lysaght, Mary Hughes, John S. Mitchell and Toni Breen.

stocked a multiplicity of office related items.

"I sold it about five or six years ago to Tony Breen who had worked for me for many years. Since then I've been helping out, but now, as of last week, I'm officially retired," said John.

Typical of 1940's Ireland, John, originally from Lr Mallow Street, was a self-confessed

back to Ireland," recalls Mr. Mitchell, from Castleconnell.

"I moved back in '63 and decided to open a similar store in Limerick, one of the first of its kind, in fact. We sold and maintained Olivetti typewriters, etc, but as the years passed, and my back suffered from carrying the heavy electrical typewriters, I decided to

Galway, one to Wales, and one familiar name on the fashion circuit, his daughter Caroline Mitchell, the knitwear designer, lives locally.

When he casts his mind back to the bygone days of the forties and the comparatively more affluent sixties epoch, he says Limerick as a city has totally changed, but quaint Mallow Street, "hasn't altered

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