

Penneys From Heaven



Up to 100 bargain-hunters queued in Barronstrand Street last Thursday morning to get a first glimpse of the newly-renovated and expanded Penneys store.

This most recent renovation has doubled the size of the store to 44,000 sq ft over two floors, taking in the former Belfry Hotel on Conduit Lane. The expansion has also resulted in 55 additional jobs at the busy store, bringing total staff numbers at the Waterford outlet to 160.

On hand to perform the opening ceremony was company director Breege O'Donoghue, donning a maxi dress which – she told the assembled crowd – cost her €17 in Penneys. She paid tribute to local staff and construction workers for their efforts in bringing the project to completion.

Cllr Lola O'Sullivan, Mayor of Waterford Metropolitan District, joined in the praise, telling local staff how much she was looking forward to shopping in the bright new store: "I love Penneys."



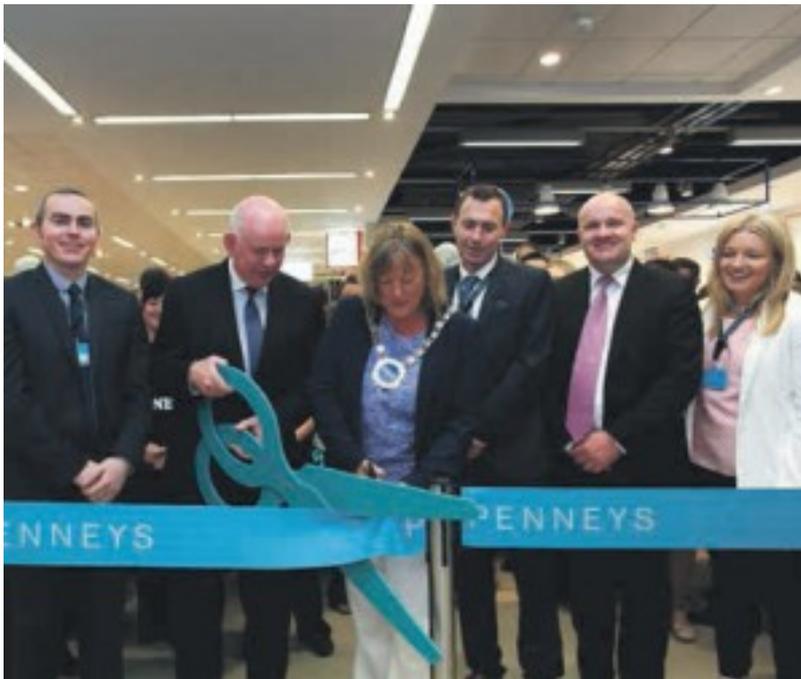
"With 160 staff, the company is a significant employer in Waterford and its role in the city's retail trade is very important", the Mayor continued.

Long-time staff members Helen Sprice and Antoinette Whelan, both of whom have worked for Penneys in Waterford for 29

years, recalled the early days in the store.

“We had about two tables and a kettle in the canteen when we opened first”, said Helen. “There were no televisions or anything like that. It was so different. It was a busy enough store even back then but nothing near as busy as it is now. You wouldn’t be run off your feet, there’d always be time for a little chat in the stock room. All the older girls will remember the chats in the stock room.”

“There have been so many changes over the years and all for the better”, continued Antoinette. “The extension is fantastic and it’s much needed for Waterford. It’s great having the new, young staff coming in. They keep us up-to-date on all the new trends, what’s in fashion. Sure we wouldn’t have a clue next to them.”



Pictured at the store opening were Cllr Lola O’Sullivan, Mayor of Waterford City and County and Ben Mansfield, Group Sales & Operations Director.

The two gave a special mention to their friend Helen Reville, who couldn’t make the opening due to ill health: “She’s been with the company 29 years as well and we always call her the Queen of Penneys.”

This latest renovation marks the store’s third extension since its opening on 7th March, 1985 on the site of the old Woolworths. In 2009, following the procurement of Egan’s pub, the store was extended to 21,400 sq ft.

Penneys currently has 277 stores across nine countries including 45 in all of Ireland. A further nine stores are due to open by December - in The Netherlands, Portugal and Germany. Earlier this year, Primark announced an expansion into the USA.