

**NELSON BLACKLEY**

Regional Retail Research Knowledge Exchange  
Centre, Nottingham Business School

In addition to having a reputation as a long-standing regional shopping centre, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is also home to several well-known retail names which feature in the Top 200 Companies list.

These include Boots, whose first store opened in Goose Gate, on the edge of the city Market back in 1849, and employs 100 people at its Nottingham head office.

It is now a retailer part of a global pharmacy-led health and wellbeing business, Walgreens Boots Alliance.

Sports Direct, founded by Mike Ashley in 1992 and headquartered in Shirebrook, is also on the list and has 455 stores across the UK, as is Wilko, which has been based in Worksop since 1995. It was founded in 1970 and is a privately owned, value-led mixed-goods retailer with a large UK store portfolio and currently led by the founder's granddaughter, Lisa Wilkinson.

Vision Express has been a mid-market optical retailer for almost 30 years and its UK support offices are in Ruddington. Paul Smith opened his first shop in

# No room for complacency



While keeping its own shopping identity, Nottingham should be looking to match the likes of Birmingham and Leeds

in Victoria Centre is also closing as part of that retailer's rationalisation programme.

The city's two shopping centres are both owned by Intu properties. The Victoria Centre recently completed a £42 million refurbishment, part of which involved the Boots store, opened in 1972, being transformed during a £4m refit.

A £5m project is also underway which will make the centre's multi-store car park, which has around 2,500 spaces, lighter, brighter and more user-friendly.

The Broadmarsh revamp - funded by £86m from Intu and the remainder from Nottingham City Council - involves replacing the brick exterior with a glass frontage, new shops, a nine-screen cinema, bowling alley and food court. The main works of a £134m transformation begin later this year and are scheduled to be completed by 2020.

In February, planning permission was given for key parts of the wider proposed £250m redevelopment of the Broadmarsh area of the city. The development will include a 1,378-space car park, high quality retail units in Carrington Street and Collin Street and a new state-of-the-art bus station which complements the redevelopment of Intu Broadmarsh with the land next to the tram bridge in Canal Street will turn into Nottingham College's flagship campus building, with the public realm between the current Broadmarsh area and new college also due to be revamped.

So, whilst there are some very positive developments taking place to improve the current retail offer in Nottingham, the City Council and city's retail sector cannot be complacent, given the increasing competition not just from online, but many other regional shopping centres.

These include Derby, Sheffield and Leicester, but Leeds and Birmingham are the real retail magnet for consumers in Nottinghamshire and with whom Nottingham needs to aspire to match.

Leeds is a Mecca for shopping, with its compact city centre which has more than 1,000 shops combining quirky boutiques with high-end luxury and big name high street brands. Its flagship shopping complex, Trinity Leeds, is in the heart of the city covering three floors and more than 120 shops, bars and restaurants, and with one million square feet of retail floor space.

There's also a Harvey Nichols Department store in the Victoria Quarter.

Birmingham, a city just an hour away from Nottingham by car or train, with its 435,000 square foot rail station development, Grand Central, and refurbished Mailbox, is home to many upmarket stores including Selfridges, and the iconic Bullring Shopping Mall. The city is now led by the first ever West Midlands Mayor, and former boss of John Lewis, Andy Street, and so has not just an energetic and influential metro mayor, but one passionate and extremely knowledgeable about retail.

Byard Lane in 1970 and now trades from a store in Willoughby House on Low Pavement. It has expanded into more than 70 countries, selling its products via standalone stores, departments in high-end stores or malls and airport terminals.

Finally, Games Workshop is one of the biggest table-top wargames company in the world, boasting more than 400 retail stores in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China, and Europe.

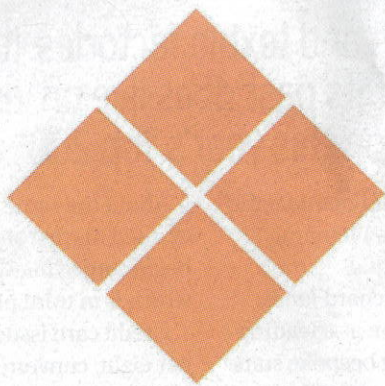
Since 1997 all UK operations have run from its headquarters in Lenton.

At the time of writing, the House of Fraser store in the Victoria Centre, Marks and Spencer stores in Nottingham and Mothercare in Castle Meadow Retail Park are not among the stores announced by these major retailers for closure.

However, there must be some real concern about their existence in the medium term as these retailers are closing stores in other large regional centres - and the challenges they all face are not disappearing.

However, Nottingham has not been totally immune to the recent raft of retail store closures across the UK. Toys R Us in Riverside Retail Park, Queen's Drive, and their smaller store in the Victoria Centre, have closed, as have the two Maplin Electronic stores in Radford Boulevard and Lower Parliament Street.

The American Apparel store in Bridle-Smithgate closed in early 2017 after the company went into administration, as did Poundworld this July and, as a result, the Poundworld Plus store in Trinity Square closed - as did the Poundland stores in the Broadmarsh Centre, Victoria Centre and Lady Bay Retail Park. New Look menswear



## Keep it simple

CALL US ON

0115 955 5500

enquiries@pagekirk.co.uk

www.pagekirk.co.uk