



Hoopers of James Street is but the latest of several businesses to occupy the property that was built in 1910-11 at numbers 30 & 32 for Marshall & Snelgrove, one of Britain's leading up-market department stores which specialised in top quality fashion.

For people of a certain age the name of Marshall & Snelgrove will conjure up memories of exquisitely dressed customers arriving by chauffeur driven Rolls Royces or Bentleys, the front doors being opened for them by obsequious doormen, before being accompanied to the department of choice.

As for the Marshall & Snelgrove restaurant, one did not simply walk in, seat ones-self at an empty table, and try to catch the eye of a waitress. The entrance was gained by catching the eye of the manager, who might or might not offer to show you to a table, with tables being usually reserved for regular customers. Queuing was simply not done.

Marshall's buyers were one of the sights of Harrogate. The perfume buyer was a vision in lilac, who tottered down James Street in the highest of high-heeled shoes, clad in various shades of mauve, amidst a cloud of French perfumes. Her job was to tour Europe's perfume manufacturers to select perfumes

for Marshall's special customers, work also done by the hat buyer, the fur buyer, the glove buyer, the coat buyer, and the dress buyer. Items of apparel were bought with individual customers in mind, but if the customer failed to buy them, they were used at the Marshall & Snelgrove private fashion shows – again for privileged customers.

Marshall & Snelgrove went the way of its once privileged customers, being part of a vanished lifestyle. The several businesses which came to occupy the old premises have all been stores for their times, and Hoopers is an excellent example of a store for today's discerning customers. But I can never pass its plate glass windows without recalling the majestically dressed doorman and the immaculately dressed customers who were such a regular sight at the old Marshall & Snelgrove store in the "Bond Street of the North", as James Street once styled itself.

