

10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK IN EG

29 Nov 1997

The government prepares to sell its surplus assets...

...call centres have a lot to answer for...

...and toothache is recession proof

Lucrative list

Labour's new "Domesday Book" and the announcement of a capital receipts holiday for government departments should see a surge in sales of national property assets.

The National Register of Assets makes fascinating reading. Ipswich Town FC's car park, Isaac Newton's apple tree, and prize-winning stallions all grabbed the headlines this week.

Sharp surveyors are poring over the many properties in the 550-page tome – which is free, by the way. It is a huge opportunity for property advisers.

Ring the changes

The UK is at the heart of Europe – as far as call centres are concerned. International firms are basing European operations here, taking advantage of deregulated telecoms, available property and lower wages.

Margaret Thatcher must take some credit – or criticism – for those conditions. But do call centres create real jobs? Much of the workforce is made up of part-time staff and students.

Those foreign companies do not have to set up in the UK. That is the reality of the truly global market.

Reason to smile

Dentists' waiting rooms, smelling faintly of disinfectant, have never been the most welcoming places. And their location – tucked away above shops or in converted houses – does not enhance their appeal.

This image is set to change, however, because dentistry, like optometry before it, is making its debut on the high street.

Unlike a dress shop, dentists cater for only a limited number of people. But a dental surgery is a pretty safe bet for a landlord: people will always get toothache and gum disease.

25 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK IN EG

27 Nov 1982

Broadmead extension could get the push as big stores open...

...BR sells nearly all of its hotels...

...an 18th-century house is destroyed...

...planners try to keep up with shifting sheds

Food of shove

The long-proposed extension to Bristol's Broadmead shopping centre has been thrown into doubt by the opening of a new Associated Dairies store and proposed Tesco shop on the outer fringes of the city.

For some years, the council has been considering extending Broadmead. But the difficulty of procuring a major food retailer as the anchor tenant now that the other stores are opening elsewhere has thrown the plan into jeopardy, says Bristol's chief valuer, Andrew Harris.

Railway sleepers

Almost the entire stock of hotels in the British Transport Hotel Group are being sold by tender.

It is unlikely that any chain would wish to buy all 21 hotels, since they are of such varying character and in very different states of repair and profitability.

Demolition "disaster"

A policy of demolishing many of Manchester's fine old buildings has led to a planning disaster.

Among those destroyed is the Manchester Arms hotel, one of only two significant early 18th-century houses in the city centre.

Moving picture

Planners, and the authorities they advise, are experiencing considerable difficulty in coping with the substantial relocation of British industry, and the massive redistribution of property that has followed.

Few expanding industries (such as plastics, electronics and chemicals) are in the same areas as those in decline.

The dispersal of jobs has been paralleled by an even greater dispersal of the population, from conurbations and large cities to a wide scatter of smaller towns and shire districts.

100 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK IN EG

23 Nov 1907

Musing on the future of the docks...

...praise for the town of biscuits and seeds...

...and NIMBYs see off a tuberculosis sanatorium

Port of call

London, as the great port of the world, is not at all likely to endeavour to shirk its financial responsibilities.

The only question, in the event of the failure of private enterprise, is whether we shall create a separate dock authority or entrust the matter to the London County Council.

The buying up of the dock interests will be a serious matter; and we are assuredly not of the opinion that so vital an issue as the seaborne traffic of the capital could successfully be relegated to any municipal committee.

Riverside hot spot

Reading, the beautiful Berkshire Thames-side town, which flourished under the ancient Britons as Redyng, still flaunts its banner as a thriving manufacturing town of the rural type, and as one of the most attractive residential settings within easy distance of London.

We must all wish well to the interesting town where our biscuits and seeds come from. Undoubtedly capitalists might with profit turn their eyes to where cheap and excellent sites and abundant supplies of labour are so readily available.

No hospital here

Oakwood Court, a fine country mansion with a park and terraced garden, was offered as a gift to the Cheshire County Council by a gentleman, on condition that the Council should equip it as a sanatorium for the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis.

Dr Hodgson, arguing in favour of the acceptance of the gift, said 600 persons died in Cheshire yearly from tuberculosis. There was, however, strong local opposition, and the Council declined the offer by 31 votes to 14.