



## JOHN RYAN'S STORE OF THE WEEK

# Mr Arkwright's Tool Emporium Leeds

Those of a certain age will remember a time when tools, DIY paraphernalia and maybe plumbing supplies were sold from shops that looked pretty much like this. Then suddenly they all seemed to disappear – at least the great bulk of them – as shoppers headed for the edge-of-town DIY sheds.

Visit central Leeds however, quite close to the main railway station, and it's hard to miss Mr Arkwright's Tool Emporium. The front of the store is like a throwback to a bygone age and the name itself brings to mind the classic TV comedy *Open All Hours*, which starred Ronnie Barker as a grumpy, brown-coated hardware store proprietor.

The name is in fact very deliberate. Far from being a leftover retail relic, the shop is just eight months old and is intended to pander to shoppers' nostalgia – there is even a signed picture of the late Ronnie Barker in Arkwright character on display.

Walk past the store's windows and they are full of fun, ranging from the images of a Jack Russell with a



hammer in its mouth, to an England supporters' 'car kit' (possibly a little past its sell-by date). Head inside and the nostalgia continues with the sense that this is a store where the shopper will discover something. It's the sort of place that encourages lingering.

There is another branch of Mr

Arkwright's Tool Emporium in Harrogate and to date both outlets have proved popular with locals. Given the absence of this sort of retail from most high streets, it's not hard to see why it works in Leeds, but it does rather raise the issue of whether in ridding our town centres of shops



like this, something has been lost that could yet be profitable to an enterprising type who likes looking back to the future.



For more images of the store visit the website at [retail-week.com/sotw](http://retail-week.com/sotw)