

Ducker's shoe shop shuts after a century of trading

Bid to convert famous store's premises into a wine shop

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DUCKER & Son has closed and the premises could become a wine store.

Oxford famous shoe shop at 6 Turl Street was founded by Edward Ducker in 1898.

When he arrived in Oxford with his boot-making tools he joined at least 20 other shoemakers.

Ducker & Son was the only bespoke shoemaker left in the city and has now closed after displaying having a 'retirement sale' since the summer months.

The shop was run by Bob and Isobel Avery, who began planning their retirement earlier this year, but they did not want to discuss their future plans for the business any further.

Oxford Wine Company has now applied for a premises licence for the historic shop, which was still open at the weekend.

A message on the shop's



Bob Avery at Ducker & Son

answering machine from Mr and Mrs Avery said: "The shop is now closed permanently so we can no longer accept any inquiries regarding repairs or footwear.

"Thank you to all our customers for their support over the years."

Famous names who bought shoes from Ducker's included Lord of the Rings author JRR Tolkien, First World

War fighter pilot Baron von Richthofen, novelist Evelyn Waugh, comedian Rowan Atkinson and Top Gear presenter Jeremy Clarkson.

A pair of brogues from the store were featured in the 2007 movie adaptation of Ian McEwan's wartime novel *Atonement*.

Graham Jones, a spokesman for traders' group ROX, Backing Oxford Business, said: "Duckers were specialist bespoke shoemakers and former Oxford students would order their shoes from overseas.

"Duckers had a fantastic reputation and it's a shame for Oxford that the business has closed after all this time.

"Quite a few of these traditional skills appear to be going these days, Gill the ironmonger, which had a shop off the High Street closed a few years ago.

"I think it's fair to say that Duckers shoes were expensive and a little bit outside my price range but it was a

fantastic shop with a great reputation and fascinating history."

After Edward Ducker died in 1947 he left the business to his wife, who died two weeks later.

A limited company was formed, with directors and shareholders including Mr and Mrs Avery and descendants of Edward Ducker.

Oxford Wine Company has applied to the city council for a premises licence to sell alcohol, for consumption elsewhere, from Monday to Saturday from 10am to 9pm and on Sunday from 11am to 4pm.

Ted Sandbach, owner of Oxford Wine Company, said: "The premises is owned by Lincoln College and we are planning to open a wine shop in what was Duckers.

"It's rather sad that Duckers has closed, the deal is not quite done yet but the plan is to open a wine shop there.

"We would like to be open by the spring."