

S P R I N G 2 0 1 6

# the Memory Bank

Quarterly Newsletter of the Millthorpe & District Historical Society



## The President Writes

The Great Western Milling Company's Flour Mill played an enormous part in the development and progress of Millthorpe. (formally known as Spring Grove)

*According to a report in The Orange Leader Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 1912 :-*

“ At a meeting of The Spring Hill, Spring Grove Farmers Union at Spring Grove on February 11th, 1882, it first discussed the subject of the inauguration of the Great Western Flour Mill. The subject was adjourned to the next meeting for consideration. At this meeting (March 29th, 1882) it was moved by Mr. Thomas Goodman, seconded by Mr. T. Worboys, and carried:— First, that a co-operative mill be established in the vicinity of Spring Grove; and secondly that the following gentlemen shall form a provisional committee to carry out the proposal: Messrs A. T. Kerr, M.L.A., V. Clarke, M.L.A., T. S. Pearce, J.P., Geo. Hawke, J.P., Thos. Worboys, T. Goodman, C. Crowson, A. Montgomery, and W. M. Baker (Spring Terrace). The motion was supported by Messrs Webb and Gainsford. It was moved by Mr. Gainsford seconded by Mr. W. Unwin, that the proposed flour mill be erected at Spring Grove. **Mr. T. Worboys moved an amendment, and Mr. E. Reece seconded that the mill be erected at Spring Hill.** (They were the only representatives from Spring Hill). Mr Worboys stated:- The Spring Hill people wished to have the mill there, where a good situation was available in the township. It appears the farmers of Spring Hill thought it of more important to attend to their work than to attend the meeting at Spring Grove.”

**The original motion was carried and Millthorpe gained the mill.** (How fortunate for Millthorpe!)

The Mill was one of the most up to date mills in the district. The Orange Leader, 31 Jan 1902 states, *100 tons of flour was dispatched by rail in the previous week from the Millthorpe Flour Mill.* Millthorpe also owes its name to the Mill. There were so many other localities in the area beginning with Spring it was confusing for the mail deliveries, and also Spring Grove and Spring Hill being adjoining railway stations even more confusing for the railway department, thus the name change,

All the machinery in the mill was driven by steam power until it closed down in 1931, to reopen in 1946, after an upgrade of machinery and conversion to electricity for powering the machinery. After the mill closed in 1960, it had quite a few career changes including:- Potato Washing and Packing Depot, House Frame and Truss Factory, and presently being a Wood Blind Factory.

The Museum has a paved area leading into the Museum of Rural Technology with the names of as many employees of The Mill as we could find, engraved in the pavers. **Peter Whiley**





Groceries were delivered around the town every week. Regular fortnightly deliveries were made to Tallwood, Beneree, Browns Creek and Forest Reefs and on the alternate fortnight deliveries would go out to Greghamstown, Guyong and Shadforth. During the 50s there were up to five employees working in the shop and business was brisk.

In 1960 Lyndhurst Shire Council placed orders on most of the buildings in Millthorpe to remove their verandahs. They considered the posts a safety hazard for vehicles when parking and if bumped could cause the verandahs to fall. The Amos family pulled the verandah down and replaced it with an awning to protect the customers on rainy days.

Peter Amos left school in 1960 and began work in the shop with his father Jack. Peter changed the in-store layout by establishing a self-serve grocery and still delivered groceries in town. The shop continued to trade as the "Best Value Store", selling hardware, drapery, haberdashery, menswear, shoes, giftware, ammunition and other general items.

Jack retired from the business in 1984 and three years later Peter sold the shop to Ron Berger. The Amos' (3 generations) had traded for 61 years on the corner of Pym and Victoria Streets.



The owners of the General Store since the Amos' sold out have been, Ron & Margarite Berger, Eric & Claire Fitzgerald, the Simpsons, Sue Buesnel, Sam & Shona Kay and Elwyn, Liz, Matt & Catherine Lang. Sam and Shona Kay had the verandah rebuilt in 2012 using the original design. This blended the building back into the streetscape of what it had been like for many years prior.



The Millthorpe corner store has long been an important focus in our town. This article on its history has been contributed by previous owner of the store and stalwart of the museum, Peter Amos.

We believe Frank & Ada Wiles were the first storekeepers when they purchased the land from John Richards in 1902 and had the shop built. Deeds state that Alfred Small (Storekeeper) then purchased the land in 1904 and later in 1906 it was transferred to Bradley and Atkins. The Bradley and Atkins partnership moved into the store that year. They also



operated another store on the opposite corner in the Hall of Commerce, where Tonic is today. They traded under the banner of "Premier Stores".

Business must have been brisk as in 1908 they built extensions on the western side of the building and had plate glass windows installed along the Pym St front to display their goods. Mr. Bradley and his family lived above the shop while the Atkins family lived in William St in the house in which Ada Clarke now resides. They traded very well over the years having two horses kept in the shop yard for deliveries to customers and for carting goods from the railway station and produce from farmers.

Early in 1925 Mr. Bradley left the partnership and went to Sydney to live. The Atkins moved down from William St to live above the shop and continued to trade. Alfred Amos who had been employed by Bradley & Atkins purchased the premises in 1926. At the time all stock had been removed and he took over the vacant shop. Alfred, Bessie and their five children moved in upstairs. They re-established the business to include menswear, drapery, grocery, hardware, produce and farm supplies. Alfred's son, Jack Amos, left school in 1931 to work in the shop and in later years took over the running of the business. Jack married Leila Willis in 1939 and purchased the paper shop at 7 Pym St. Jack later enlisted and served in New Guinea, leaving Leila to run the paper shop with two small children. After the war Jack sold the paper shop and moved back to work with his father. Alfred continued working in the shop as well as becoming a Councillor for the Lyndhurst Shire in 1937. He was the Shire President for 11 years a position he held until 1962. Alfred was a tireless worker for Millthorpe being involved in many committees for the betterment of the village. He was the President of the Progress Association and successfully had electricity connected to Millthorpe in 1934.

# Historic Homes of Millthorpe And District



In celebration of Millthorpe's sesquicentenary in 2017, a committee of enthusiastic historians is compiling a book of Historic Homes of Millthorpe and District. Homes appeared in Millthorpe as early as 1834 and with the continual growth of agriculture, mining and tourism, a large range of homes reflecting Australia's boom and bust, have been constructed in the local area. The range of styles from high Victorian to rural vernacular, post

war and everything in between are still largely in existence. Many were built of stone, brick and local timber by hand, by early settlers, by craftsmen, both in town and on surrounding farms.

It is the aim of the committee to compile a book of stories written by the homes' owners. A limited number of books will be available and pre orders available from the museum are advised.

