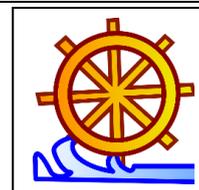




HELM



Heritage of East Lake Macquarie

July 2018

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HOME DELIVERIES

Before supermarkets, online shopping, home bread making machines, **fresh bread** was delivered by horse and cart and carried in big cane baskets to the door. Bread tokens were purchased by households from the bakers and left out to be collected in return for their loaf or half loaf of bread. That allowed buyer and vendor to budget more efficiently. It provided more security as they could only be exchanged for bread from a particular supplier, rather than leaving out untraceable money. It was safer, easier and faster for the bread carter to collect tokens. As no cash was carried; no change had to be given. Many tokens were made out of aluminium, which were thinner and lighter to carry than coins. Brass, copper and nickel were also used.



Many eagerly waited for the bread delivery to get warm bread, so delicious to eat straight away. Otherwise the token was left on a chair with a tea towel. The bread would be left under the tea towel to keep the flies away and to help stop it from drying out, as there were no plastic bags in those days. Competition was fierce with sometimes several bakers servicing the same areas. Woodland was one of the bakers for Belmont and Swansea. Andrew J. Croft ran a bakery in Main Rd Belmont from 1919-1929; and Swansea 1923-1952. Croft leased land just south of where the Swansea Library building now stands, in 1923. (1950 the police station was built there, to be superseded by the Beechwood homes building; now occupied by Chase Edwards.)

Please note: This publication is compiled by the Heritage of East Lake Macquarie Group – HELM - who are passionate about sharing the culture and heritage of Swansea and surrounding areas with you. We would love to hear your stories. It is published independently of East Lake Macquarie Historical Society.



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Kindly supporting the community – including Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club; this edition of HELM newsletter.

4972 1066 NOW AT SWANSEA!!!
SWANSEA PLAZA ARCADE
NEAR COLES, DARBY'S PIES AND BLONDIES!

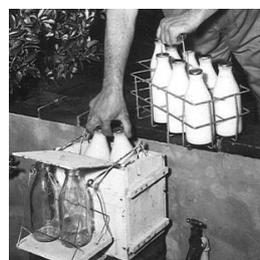
As business grew, Croft bought land at the Northern end of Swansea, in 1925, expanding again in 1933. A few years later Master Baker William Hardy took up a lease on the Croft Bakery. Then proceeded to buy adjoining land and built his own bakehouse, shop and house. The horse and cart were being superseded by vans to do the bread deliveries. In the 1960's the shop became "The Bridge Cake Shop" and was later demolished to make way for Woolworths Supermarket.



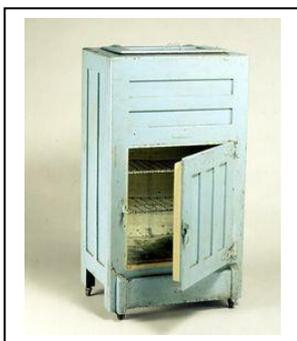
Source: George and Noelene Boyd

Flickr: Arnott's biscuit deliveries

Milk came from several sources. In 1931 Percy Read had purchased a house and dairy in Quarry Rd, Teralba. As the cows were milked, the milk was placed into mainly ten gallon milk cans made from galvanised tin. Some of this milk was ferried across to Swansea in the large milk urns. Milk deliveries also progressed from horse and cart to vans. Milking machines and a cool room were added. More locally, a dairy existed just north of the bridge, where the Blue Pacific Motel and the Men's Shed now stand. It was known as Nurse Cain's. A billy was hung on the fence, placing money or tokens in it. No-one thought about this not being a very hygienic practice. The milko would then come along with his horse and cart and ladle out the required amount of milk from the large milk urns. (Usually a half pint, pint or quart.) Later milk was supplied in glass bottles with aluminium foil lids; Dairy Farmers having set up distribution centres in Newcastle. The only two choices were: pasteurised milk (cream on top) or homogenised milk (a breakdown of the cream which was thoroughly mixed through the milk.) David Wells had the milk run from Pelican to Caves Beach about 50 years ago.



Source: Lake Macquarie Community History



Before refrigerators became commonplace, **ice chests** kept food cool and fresh. The ice cabinets had separate top and bottom sections with two doors. The ice block was placed in the upper compartment through either the front or top opening hinged door. The interior of the ice chest was lined with tin, zinc or galvanised iron for insulation. The cool air circulated to the bottom section and shelves. The ice melted slowly, and water drained through a hole, into a pan placed underneath.

Gordon Humphries remembers delivering **ice** to Catherine Hill Bay and the Air Force at Rathmines in the 1940's. Belmont Ice Works would make the ice in tanks about 4 foot long. These big slabs of ice were then put through the saws which cut channels through the ice to make it easier to break when they were delivered. Three hits with the ice pick usually broke off the ice blocks. Large tongs with spikes each side, which bit into the ice were used to carry them – usually one on each side. The chests with top opening lids were harder to load as you had to lift up and over. He had to carry them up the hill at Catho and sometimes when he got there, they were not wanted; so he let them slide back down. Sometimes the blocks had to be chipped down to a smaller size to fit. It was always a worry as to what size block was received – blocks too small or chipped down melted too quickly. The neighbourhood kids waited eagerly in summer to scramble into the back of the ice trucks for the ice chips as a treat.

Another regular delivery was the “**RABBIT_OHHH**”. He would work from a horse and dray, with all the rabbits under wet wheat bags. When he yelled out his arrival, women would drop whatever they were doing and run out to buy a rabbit or two. A bargain at two bob a pair! He would skin them and de-head them on a chopping board; and then wrap them up in newspaper. No-one worried about poisoning from the newspaper ink; or the non-refrigerated rabbits. He was a definite favourite with the flies in summer. Then there was the “**BOTTLE-OHHH**”, who had a cart full of wheat bags collecting beer bottles and paying a penny a dozen. Kerosene and all sorts of other commodities were delivered by horse and cart; then vans.

A number of **merchants** and **Co-operative Societies** serviced orders from the area, ranging from bread, milk, groceries, fruit and veg, to drapery, kitchenware, meat, tailoring, etc. Competition was keen.

T.C. Frith set up a store in Boolaroo and offered a free weekly delivery service. The Order Man would ride his horse on Mondays, collecting orders from Nords, Cams, and Catherine Hill Bay; Tuesday morning he would collect orders and money from Swansea, then Belmont and Warners Bay. Packed in brown paper bags, the filled orders were taken to the jetty at Speers Point for delivery by launch to Swansea, and other jetties in lakeside villages. Horse and cart deliveries were made to closer, inland suburbs.

The **West Wallsend Co-op** ran a store in Belmont St, Swansea. Here goods could be purchased and orders placed for items not available on site. Many people in Swansea originated from the Westy area and kept their loyalty to the co-op. One resident proudly was the number 6 member of the Co-op.

The **Newcastle and Suburban Co-operative Society** bought Crofts Bakery property, Main St, Swansea. The Newcastle Co-op (AKA The Store) was huge, in fact the largest in Australia, baking in North Hamilton and delivering some 62,800 loaves a week in 1942. Some 120 horse drawn carts delivered bread, milk, groceries, fruit and veg, even blocks of ice. Bakery runs ending, December, 1973. All things imaginable could be bought or ordered at the Swansea Store. It was replaced by a new building around 1969. With the collapse and closure of the Co-op and The Store, it became the Bi-Lo supermarket; now replaced by Woolworths.



Photos: Swansea branch of the Newcastle Co-op - Marie Long.

Westy Co-op – at West Wallsend - LMCC community history.

Mr Whippy and the music of “Greensleeves” often filled the streets, especially in the 60’s and 70’s;

originating in England in the 50’s. Kids would eagerly rush to the 200-odd Commer Karrier vans which were imported from the UK and painted bright pink; paying little heed to road safety in their excitement. The early vans used large blocks of dry ice for refrigeration; the chimes were operated by a hand driven crank. In the early days, simple soft

serve ice creams were a great novelty because only a few people owned freezers. The big decisions revolved around whether to have a single or double cone; have it choc-dipped; sprinkled or plain. As people began to acquire freezers, the vans began selling more novelty lines. Nowadays, street vending no longer continues, but the vans can be hired for events. (One operates out of Summerland Point.)



History in the Baking by Toni McLean

The condensed story behind Aunty Molly's Olde Bakehouse at Morisset.

The land was a Crown Land Grant, sold to James Wellings in 1888. In 1894 it was bought by a baker, Henry Frost, who is believed to have built the Bakehouse, which was run by his daughter-in-law from 1897 until around 1901. J. Taylor then listed the business as a Bake House and General Store; to be taken over in 1902 by William and Mina Walker.



William Walker
1861-1906

Mina was born in 1871 and grew up in Raymond Terrace. One of 14 kids, her father, John Cross was a respected market gardener and businessman, from whom Mina inherited a love of plants and a head for business.

The slim redhead married William Walker at 19, and was only 35 years old when widowed with 3 children under 12; with a bakery to keep going. Of necessity it was early rising for all; bread to be baked in fuel stoves and household chores such as wood cutting; caring for fowl and gardens. The children had their duties before and after school; their mother was very strict. Wells, the elder boy left school at 11 years of age to take his father's place.

He was responsible for the horse and cart being at the ready for the daily deliveries (except Sunday). To harness a workhorse was a big job for a small boy. His day was long, hard and in all weathers. Excess cakes, eggs and vegetables were sold; only keeping enough to be self sufficient. As soon as she could, Mina bought the Bakehouse building and the adjoining land. This allowed more room for the horses and gardens. By 1909, she had secured the tender to supply bread to the new Morisset Hospital staff, who were housed in tents for quite some time. Eventually the building was finished and the bread orders and deliveries required more help. A new oven (still on display at the restaurant today) was necessary to meet the orders. By 1913, Mina had bought a house at Toronto, a better location for her family for employment; her garden a showpiece with fruit trees, vegetables and flowers.

Clive Lean from Dora Creek leased the business in 1914, and went on to buy it in 1918. He was an active member of the community, the Morisset Progress Association and Lake Macquarie Council, helping to bring prosperity to the town. He extended the bakery, into the current building. The Lean family operated the business until 1956. Bought by the Ingrams, who sold one block to Hunter Water, and the other to J & R Bakery, which we are told were the Sylvesters - Bakers, now of Cessnock.

1987 saw the bakery purchased by the McLeans, at first selling old furniture and antiques, whilst carrying out Toni's passion for renovating old buildings and cultivating beautiful gardens, before turning it into the Stables Café and Aunty Molly's Theatre Restaurant. The Stables Café was where the horses were bridled and made ready for deliveries.



Clive Lean 1886-1957

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