

ORBOST & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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NEWSLETTER

No. 95 MARCH, 2013

AN ORBOST BUSINESS —

CORDIAL FACTORY

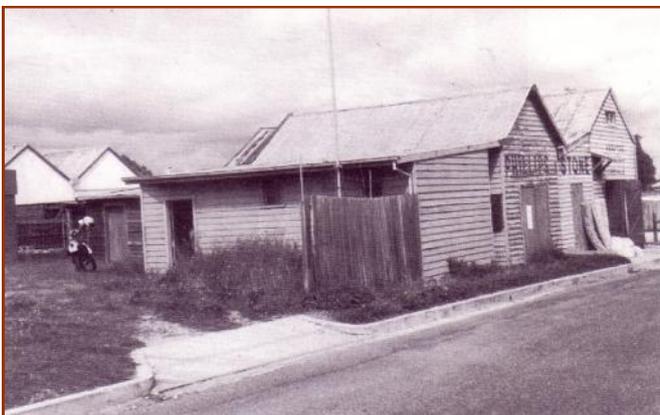
The Orbost Cordial factory was established in Lind Lane, it is believed, in the 1930s by Dross Drossou, a brother of Arthur Drossou who had established and operated the Athen's Cafe (more recently, the Timber Town Cafe) from 1915 to about 1946.

Dross Drossou sold his cordial manufacturing business to Phillips and Stone, a Bairnsdale company, in 1948.

Phillips & Stone continued to manufacture soft drinks at Orbost until the early 1970s when the factory became a distribution centre. It closed as a distribution centre in 1978 and later served as the headquarters of the Orbost State Emergency Service.

The site of the Cordial Factory now forms part of the carpark at the rear of the Orbost Newsagency.

The information for this Newsletter was provided by Lindsay Thomson and John Phillips.

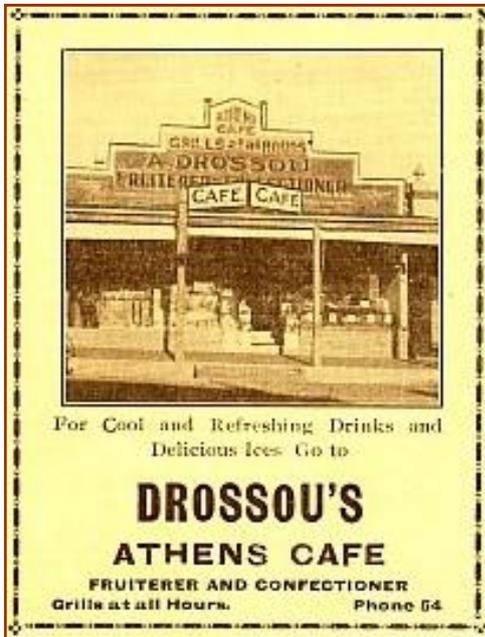


The Phillips & Stone Cordial Factory building in Lind Lane - demolished to make way for the Car park.

THE ORBOST CORDIAL FACTORY

The twin gable roof timber and weather board factory was painted in neatsfoot oil & red ochre. It was located on the south side of Lind Lane — the present SES building (formerly GP Motors body shop) is behind the old cordial factory site.

Dross Drossou was the owner of the business manufacturing aerated soft drinks, his brother, Arthur, had the Athens Cafe in the main street opposite the Orbost Timber and Hardware store. The Drossou's were of Greek origin.



Advertisement for Athanasios (Arthur) Drossou's Athens Café (1937). Arthur retired in 1944 and the business was carried on by Jack Drossou. In about 1946 the business was sold to Jim Comatos.

It is not known when the factory started but drinks were being made in the 1930's. A full range was made which included lemonade, orange, raspberry, cola, creaming soda, sarsaparilla and soda water.

The clear 26 oz bottle had the Drossou name raised on the surface of the bottle, and a small bottle was also made.

After the bottle was filled a crown seal was pressed on and a label pasted onto the outside of the bottle to describe its contents. The bottles were then packed in one dozen (12) lots in wooden crates.

A deposit on the bottles was added to all the sales as they left the factory. Children did not smash any bottles left lying around in the streets as, when collected, they provided good pocket money. The deposit money could be collected by returning the bottles to a reseller or the cordial factory.

The returned bottles were washed and the old label removed. The inside was cleaned by pushing the bottle onto a revolving brush. The reusing of the bottles went on until the bottle was broken or the top became chipped.

1939

When Ordering

SOFT DRINKS

Look for the "D. DROSSOU" Label

ON THE BOTTLE

SOFT DRINKS OF LATEST FLAVORS & HIGHEST QUALITY

D. DROSSOU'S

Cordial Factory - - Orbost



D. Drossou, Orbost, Lemonade bottle (left), and a Soda Water syphon (right). ODHS collection.

About four people worked in the factory, including Stan Robinson and Jim Ingram.

In 1948 Drossou sold the business to Phillips & Stone who also manufactured cordials in Bairnsdale. Mr Jack Briggs was sent to Orbost to manage the cordial factory.

Phillips & Stone bottles were similar to the Drossou type except the raised name was Phillips & Stone, Bairnsdale & Orbost.

Later on, the bottles were replaced with a 30 oz size with their name printed and fused into the glass and capped with a aluminium screw top with the type of drink printed across the top of the cap.

A building permit issued to Lindsay Thomson, dated Sept 1965, for the

construction of two small offices, and a storeroom under the existing skillion roof on the left hand side of the building, shows the cordial factory was on the same land title as the old plaster factory and owned by J F (Frank) McCoy. An old telephone directory lists the factory phone number as 173.

PHILLIPS & STONE
 CORDIAL MANUFACTURERS 1970

Lind St., Orbost. Phone 173.
 298 Main St., Bairnsdale. Phone 72.

SOFT DRINKS and CORDIALS

"TO BE REFRESHED INSIST ON P.&S."

Mr Jack Briggs said approx. 60 dozen bottles were made in a batch and about six people worked there at a time. Some of the workers were: Jim Ingram, Ian Hooper, Harry Perry (in between school bus runs) and Brian Turner (delivery man).

The Orbost plant ceased manufacturing drinks, but the factory remained as a depot for storage and a distribution centre for the Orbost area with supplies coming from the Bairnsdale plant. The Orbost distribution centre closed in about 1978.

The big Melbourne soft drink makers were pushing their products out into all the country towns therefore taking a large

share of the market. Also the arrival of aluminium cans caused the closing of the small country soft drink makers including the Bairnsdale plant.

The old factory building was later used as the headquarters of the Orbost Unit of the State Emergency Service for some time.

The Council bought the land, including the old McCoy's plaster works, and the land fronting Wolseley Street, demolishing the buildings to construct a much needed car park for the town.



THE PHILLIPS & STONE COMPANY

A BRIEF HISTORY

- The business of Phillips & Stone, Aerated Waters and Cordial Manufacturers, was established on 1st February 1907. On that date, John Phillips, in partnership with Sydney Stone, took over the Cordial Factory conducted by Fendley Bros., at 17 Riverine Street, Bairnsdale.
- In his book, *'Path Among The Years - History of Shire of Bairnsdale'*, John Adams reports that: "In 1911 and 1912 Bairnsdale residents had been faced with a small diphtheria epidemic which filled the hospital wards and resulted in a few deaths". John Phillips was a victim of this epidemic and, as a result of his illness, began taking epileptic fits which forced him to relinquish his partnership with Sydney Stone.
- The partnership was dissolved on 1st June 1911 and, from this date, Sydney Stone continued to operate the Phillips & Stone cordial manufacturing business, as sole proprietor, until 1st November, 1921, when he sold to Richard Thomas Ross Dunbar.
- The Dunbar's carried on the Phillips & Stone business into the 1940s. Following Richard's death in 1930 at the age of 33, his wife, Violet, with the assistance of a capable staff, continued the manufacturing of mineral waters and fruit drinks which were noted for their satisfying flavour and refreshing qualities.



A bottle with a marble inside, was called a *Codd* bottle. These marble bottles were invented by Hiram Codd in the 1870s and were commonly used from about 1900 to 1920. The gas inside the liquid would push the marble up against a rubber seal, effectively sealing the bottle. To pour a drink, the marble would be pushed into the neck and indentations in the neck would hold the marble while the lemonade was being poured.

- In the early 1950s the business moved from Riverine Street to 288 Main Street, Bairnsdale.
- Phillips & Stone ceased cordial manufacturing in the 1980s and became wholesale distributors. Laurie Gross took over and the business moved from 288 Main Street to the old Butter Factory building in Paynesville Road (cnr. McLeod Street).
- In 1993 Laurie Gross sold to Paul & J Germano who, in 1997, moved the wholesale distributing business to 215 Main Street, where it remained until 2004.
- In 2005 Phillips & Stone moved to 32 Gordon Street and was listed as a wholesale food service. It closed in 2008 and is now a deregistered company.

It is of interest to note that the Phillips & Stone company name survived for just over 100 years (1907-2008), despite the foundation owners, John Phillips and Sydney Stone, only being involved in the business for a relatively short period — John Phillips for 3½ years and Sydney Stone for just under 15 years.