

# ORBOST & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

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**NEWSLETTER 183 - August 2025**

## **HISTORY WALK along Orbost's main street, 21 July 2025**



Western side of Nicholson Street c.1950s. Photo taken looking northwards.

### **A WALK UP THE WESTERN SIDE OF NICHOLSON STREET BETWEEN MCLEOD STREET AND TARRA STREET**

From time to time, it's a good idea to check on the changes to our streetscape. On 21 July 2025, our Society did just that. We walked on the footpath in front of only one block of shops, but it took quite a while to reflect on the changes over the past century. Many of the original frontages (facades) to the buildings remain recognizable. A few have gone through major renovations. The main changes have been in the businesses and of course, the lay-out within the shops.

The c.1950s photo above shows most of the McLeod Street to Tarra Street block which we walked. Notice the verandah awnings, and the angle parking to a high curb. In the far background is the two story Commonwealth Hotel which will be covered in our next history walk.

## NAB Bank and Manager's residence

This was built for the Bank of Victoria in 1921 and is now the NAB. To the rear and right-hand-side of the bank is the Manager's residence.



Above: Corner of Nicholson Street and McLeod Street.

As described in the S R Mail in 1921, *'This bank occupies a fine position in town, the architect being Mr A. McNaughton and construction was carried out under the direction of Mr H. Heatherly. The interior had quality fittings, French polished counters, a stationery room, and one essential feature being the strong room. The other essential feature was the clerks' well fitted-up lavatory, conveniently placed behind the banking chamber! There was also a 3 bedroomed manager's residence with a bathroom and hot and cold running water, a kitchen, pantry and an electric bell to summon the manager to the bank. Outside were stables, a feed house, a buggy shed, and space for a garden.'*

Several banks have occupied this building, most recently the NAB.

## Orbost Community Opportunity Shop

De Forest's Ladies' and children's wear, 1922

As well as clothing, De Forests also sold boots and shoes. May De Forest lived in Orbost for 30 years and her husband was a blacksmith and wheelwright in Orbost.

The current Op Shop in Nicholson Street used to be **Stoddart's** then **Kerr's Furniture Store**. The showrooms were well stocked with quality furniture of all types. In March 1958 a huge fire swept through the store due to a probable electrical fault, causing enormous damage to the building and stock.



More recently, **Betty and Tops Winchester** had the furniture shop in this building.

## Orbost Home Timber and Hardware



**Carl Drevermann** came to Orbost in around 1900 and operated a hardware store known as 'Carl Drevermann & Co.' until 1917 when the name was changed to Orbost Hardware and Timber Co. Carl Drevermann was appointed as a Justice of the Peace for the Eastern Bailiwick in 1928, and was deputy coroner for Orbost in 1932. The business was handed on to his son, **Bill Dreverman** in 1946, who in turn passed it on to his son **Peter Dreverman**. The business was sold in 2005.



Drevermans operated their business as 'Hammer Hardware', and 'Home Hardware'. Bill Dreverman delighted local children with his model railway display in the front window at Christmas time.

This business is now operated by **Chris Shanahan**.



## Andrews Land & Surf — originally 3 shops

These three shops have been joined together and are now owned by **Ellis and Vicky Stevens**, operating under the name 'Andrews Land and Surf'.

**Rothberg and Hansen** occupied the first two shops (from left, 93 & 95). After Rothberg and Hansen closed in 1935, **Game's General Drapers** occupied one shop and **O.C. Delfendahl** selling furniture in the other. This furniture shop closed down in March 1942. Orme Andrews also had the middle shop for some time before moving across the street.



In the third shop was a **chemist**. Over the years there were about ten chemists in this pharmacy. **Keith Steele** was the last one before moving to the present Orbost Pharmacy building.

In the first shop (No. 93) people also remember **Don McKenzie's Toy Shop and Photography**, with toys stacked from floor to ceiling. Don was a well-known photographer around Orbost for many years, also doing wedding photographs and event photographs for the Snowy River Mail.

## Audrey & Ivy

'**Saunders General Store**' opened here in 1900, later purchased by **Gippsland & Northern (G & N)** in buildings later occupied by Coulton's, McNamara's and 'Williams the Shoeman'. Following a fire in 1930 in which Eric Wilton's shop was gutted and the adjoining shops were extensively damaged, the owner Mr A. E. Rodwell had the premises remodeled.

For many years this was a tearoom. **Mrs Coad and the Robinson sisters, Mavis, Phyllis, and Valerie** ran the 'Robin Cafe' from 1944 to 1947 with **Lyle Stephenson** as their baker. Lyle was a pastry maker and took orders for Christmas cakes. It is understood that the name of the '**Robin Café**' was an abbreviation of the Robinson surname.



**Mrs Kettle** and family took over from 1947 to about 1956. **Peter and Lorraine Coulton's store** opened on the left side of this building in 1967, later extending to occupy the whole shop. It included a plant nursery at the back of the business. The two most recent operators have been **Marion and Rob Gibbs** with 'Country Living', and 'Audrey & Ivy' which is run by **Jane Keats**.

## Chooky's Roost

This shop has always been some sort of café. Originally, it had a hitching rail to tether horses out the front.

A café operated by **Alfred Wilkinson** was opened in August 1927. Alfred also sold fruit, ice cream, soft drinks, and confectionery from the premises. Alfred was a WW1 returned Soldier after serving with the Australian Imperial Force.

The next owner was **Domenico Dimattina** in 1930 and later, **Joseph Santamaria**, followed by **Silvio Cardillo**.

Other more recent owners were **McNamaras, Kershaws, Coulton, Steed, Burgess, 'Crowies Cruise Inn', and 'Chooky's Roost' (C. McDonald)**.



## Tobacco Products and Gifts Shop, previously Wavez hair salon.

This shop was once **Harold Sederlan's** bakers shop. He had a wood-fired oven at Newmerella and moved to this shop, owned by **Silvio Cardillo**, in 1960. As well as bread, cakes and baked goods, it was equipped with tables and chairs. Sederlan's bakery worked together with the other bakeries in Orbost, including Weston's Bakery and Herbert's.

The shop then became a pharmacy. **David Torley** from Timaru, NZ, who had taken over Harry Murray's chemist shop in the Club Hotel building, moved to this premises in 1970. Other chemists to follow were **Stewart McLeod**, and **John Zimmer**.

It later became **Jill Robinson's** hair salon, and more recently **Fay Campbell** operating as 'Wavez Salon'.

Presently, it is a 'Tobacco Product & Gifts Shop'.



## The Gymnasium

This was '**Williams the Shoeman**' (photo at right) with manager Jack Stagholll between the years of 1942 -1950. Jack (Walter John Stagholll) had served in the A.I.F. during WW11. Other managers were **Jim Taylor** for 10 years, **Bob Smith** 25 years, **David Perry** 5 years, and **Nita Picersville**.

When 'Williams Shoes' closed, it became '**Shoex**' operated by Ellis and Vicky Stevens. **Lisa McClusky** had a 'Toys and Hobbies' shop in this building, followed by a household, clothing and gifts shop run by **Susan Waddell** called 'Urban Nest Gifts'. More recently, **Veronique Stevenson** had 'Hof Design & Boutique', and now **Theo Stevenson's** 'Gymnasium' is in this premises.



## One Stop Discount Shop

It's obvious from the frontages that this used to be two separate shops.

The first shop (on the left) was a butcher's shop.

**Lionel Suding** owned the butchers shop from 1935-1940 with **Ted Donovan** as manager. Next was **R. (Ron) Hosie & Co.**, followed by **George Kettle** who took over the business after Ron's death in 1947. Next came **William (Bill) McKenna** who, in turn, sold to **Tom Allardice**. By the early 1950s **Leo Scott** was in partnership with **Tom Allardice** and operated as **Allardice & Scott**. Following Tom's death, **Leo and Norma Scott** purchased the Allardice share. The last butcher to operate from these premises were **K.B. and J.E. Heyne**. Ken Heyne was the son-in-law of Leo Scott.

The second shop (on the right) was a grocery store owned by **Moran and Cato**, who had 160 shops throughout Australia. This was a big chain of grocery stores at the time with 1,000 employees in 1935. In a remodeled store, they did a lot of research into shelving, and developed shelves '*best suited for the woman of average size*'. They had trolley baskets and a self-service unit offering a wide selection of well-known products at bargain prices. Customers could place orders which would be taken out to their cars. What excellent service! **They were competitors to Coles and Woolworths in 1965.**

A **Supermarket (Rite-way)** operated by the **Price family** burned down here in 1998, relocating temporarily to the Mechanics Hall in Browning Street, and later to their present site as 'Foodworks'.

Present owners of the 'One Stop Discount Shop' are **Alina and Jason Maddison**.





## Dicken building

Originally one shop, now two shops.



This brick building with a frontage of 40 feet to Nicholson Street was erected in 1922 by Pardew Bros. for **Messrs John Scott Tomlinson & Co.**, general storekeepers, bakery, groceries, drapery, ironmongery, boots, etc.

**Frank and May Dicken** arrived in Orbost in 1936 and purchased the store in 1945. In 1947 Frank's son **Selwyn** joined his father in the business and it was renamed '**F. B. Dicken & Son**'. A bakery out the back of this store was taken over by **Arthur Worsley** in April 1938 and later operated by **Weston's Bakery**.

The left side of the store with Drapery, Crockery and Ladies Fashions was managed by **Mrs Inez Dicken** and the right side, originally the Grocery section, became Radio and Electrical goods and was managed by **Selwyn Dicken**.



After 1981 the shop was converted into two separate shops – '**Dicken's Drapery**' (left hand side) and '**Orbost Colour T.V. Centre**' (right hand side). **Annette Towns** (photo at right) has operated her clothing shop under the name **F.B. Dicken & Son** for 18 years. Prior to this, she worked at Orbost Timber and Hardware for 11 years, and Orbost Colour T.V. Centre for 15 years. Annette closed the door one last time on 26 June 2025.

**Orbost Real Estate**, also in the Dicken Building. (See above photo).

After the Dicken's shop was sold in 1981, **John and Helen Martin** had the 'Orbost Colour T.V. Centre' in the right-hand shop which had videos and CD's. **Alan and Marcelle Fry** also operated this shop as 'Snowy River Video'. This shop then became 'Elders Real Estate' and is currently occupied by **Luke Oakley** operating as 'Orbost Real Estate'.

## Orbost Bakery

This was always a bakery.

**Amanda and Bevan Storr** (current owners), **John and Susan Waddell**, **Wendy Robinson**, **Ian Matthews** (who was known as 'Sticks') and **Graham McKerlie** who operated as **Matthews & McKerlie**, and **Westons**.

**Weston's Bakery** was a tea rooms as well, with a bakehouse behind the back of the building.

**Arthur Worsley** took over from **Jennings and Dickens** around 1938 and it was sold to **Westons** in 1945.

In the *Snowy River Mail* in 1954 Mr Weston and Mr Sederlan, United Bread Supply, advertised that owing to regulations under the Act, they would no longer bake fresh bread for sale on Sundays.



## Café One 2 Five

On this site was a small kiosk-type structure with a covered roof for shelter and a locked metal door which opened backwards. People ordered their food from the footpath. It was used by local fundraising groups and organisations like the C.W.A., Brownies and Guides, and Schools, to sell cakes, etc. Bookings were made at the Orbst Shire Office for use of the facility.

Later, to fill the gap between the two shops, a narrow building was constructed and has since served as a café.

The first business called '**Gilsons' Café**', was operated by two sisters, **Kerrin Gargan** and **Janette Monk**. The name 'Gilson' was taken from their father's middle name (Francis **Gilson** 'Mick' Gargan).

Next, **John Harmer** and **Margaret Heywood** had a coffee shop called 'Wagtails.' Then came 'A Lovely Little Lunch' with **Juliet Jones**, who also did catering for the galley on the (new) Paddle Steamer 'Curlip', 'Two Little Owls' Café with **Tara Morgan**, and finally 'Café One 2 Five' with **Julie Leatham**, as it is today.



## Orbst Pharmacy

The first premises on this corner site of Nicholson and Tarra streets was a grocery and general store owned by **A. J. Royce** with a bakery at the rear. The bakery has been demolished.

Later, **Baughurst & Hefford's** had a Groceries and Ironmongery Store. **Harry Baughurst**, who was a returned soldier from WW1 purchased the business with Mr Hefford.

In 1927, **Robert Gall and Herbert & Co.** operated the bakery section of the business as the **United Bread Supply Company**.

Customers were able to buy cheaper bread with occasionally a small bag of lollies as a thank you for their purchase. Staff had extra duties such as weighing sugar, flour and rice into paper bags. Bacon and blocks of cheese were individually wrapped by hand.

The building on this corner has also been '**Herbert's Menswear and Deli Land**', and the '**Bank of New South Wales**' for about 12 months while the bank's premises were undergoing renovations.



**Keith Steele** relocated his pharmacy to this building in the late 1990s. The present operator is **Alliance Pharmacy**.

**THIS HAS BEEN A BRIEF WALK THROUGH A SECTION OF ORBST'S BUSINESS DISTRICT. IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION WHICH COULD FILL OUT THE STORIES OF OUR BUSINESSES, WE WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU. EMAIL THE ORBST & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT [orbosthistorical@gmail.com](mailto:orbosthistorical@gmail.com) OR MAIL TO PO Box 284, Orbst 3888.**

**ALSO, IF YOU ARE A LOCAL PERSON, YOU MIGHT LIKE TO JOIN IN OUR NEXT HISTORY WALK AROUND TOWN.**

**WE USUALLY END UP WITH A CUPPA AT A LOCAL CAFÉ.**