

Bricks and mortar of early industry

By Marg Stork

A SPECIAL part of Dandenong's history is being put under the microscope at the Heritage Hill Museum this month.

Until June 26 the museum is hosting an exhibition titled *Made by the hands of man* which explores the history of the city's brick making industry, one of Dandenong's earliest and most important industries.

In the 1840s one of Dandenong's pioneers, a Mr Lyall, used clay bricks fashioned from the soil on his property to make chimneys on his Yarraman Park home.

During the building boom of the 1880s there were at least seven clay pits operating in Dandenong and the Centennial Brickworks, located along Railway Parade from 1881 to 1911, employed up to 50 men. The bricks were used in the building of the Dandenong Town Hall in 1890.

Dandenong was particularly well known as a source of a special type of clay resistant to high temperatures and was used in the building of industrial furnaces and chimneys.

One of the world's largest deposits of fire clay was found



Past industry: The Ordish Brickworks in Stud Road were an important part of Dandenong for many years.

along Stud Road by WP Ordish, and fire brick production continued at Ordish Firebricks until the 1980s.

The Heritage Hill exhibition showcases a detailed model of the Ordish brickworks, archival photographs and heritage bricks and equipment used in brick making. It also includes a plan showing locations of early clay deposits and an explanation of the brick making process.

On Monday, June 15 from noon-3pm, the Hand Tool Preservation

Association of Australia, assisted by local collectors, will hold a demonstration day of tools and their uses, past and present.

Guided school tours of the exhibition are available on Mondays and Tuesdays but bookings are essential. Entry is free to students, and members of the public are welcome, but it is essential to book.

For school tours, call 9793 4511 or for public bookings call 9239 5134 or email gxsnt@cgd.vic.gov.au



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ONE OF THE oldest industries in our city is the Ordish Firebrick Co. works on Stud Road.

Brickmaking on this site was commenced in 1894 by Mr. W. P. Ordish, who disposed of the property in 1919 to a proprietary company formed by Mr. James Stewart, uncle of the present managing director, Mr. Colin Wedgwood.

The company carried out many extensions under Mr. R. W. Allen, managing director, and it was not long before Ordish firebricks were being sent to various parts of Australia.

On the death of Mr. Allen, Mr. Wedgwood was appointed managing director and under his capable guidance, the manufacture of thousands of different shapes of firebricks was further developed, and all the latest developments in production have been installed.

The motto of the company, "Ordish firebricks are known by the customers they keep," is borne out by their big list of customers, which includes the Railway Departments of every State, the State Electricity Commission, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and many of the leading manufacturers throughout the Commonwealth.

"Ordish" has been a grand advertisement for Dandenong for many years now.

IN THE EARLY days most of the red gravel used for footpaths in the town came from a pit on the property of

John Hemmings. (This pit formed a hazard for many years on the Forest Hills Golf Links).

roads. This year, 62 pedestrians have been killed in Victoria, seven of them in the Dandenong district.

50 years ago May 27, 1959

THE biggest local night on the Rotary calendar since the Dandenong club was formed was the presentation of the charter to the new Rotary Club of Springvale at the Dandenong Town Hall on May 18. Dandenong's pride was shared by Springvale's 24 new Rotarians.

Berwick Council has received Treasury approval to raise a £6000 loan for the erection of a hall at Doveton.

25 years ago May 21, 1984

TWO of three remaining 50-metre chimneys at the former Kaiser brickworks in Stud Road, Dandenong, were demolished last week. An application has been made to build a retirement village on the site.

Dandenong police are worried about the increasing number of pedestrians killed on the

JOURNAL - Mon., MAY 25-2009 P. 11