

Brick business was family foundation stone

WHAT'S IN A NAME DELVES INTO THE FASCINATING STORIES AND PERSONALITIES BEHIND SOME OF THE CITY'S BEST-KNOWN STREET NAMES. THIS WEEK THE JOURNAL LOOKS AT ORDISH ROAD, NAMED AFTER ONE OF THE DANDENONG'S FIRST INDUSTRIAL FAMILIES.

WILLIAM Percival Ordish was one of Dandenong's pioneering business identities.

When he died in 1930, the Frankston and Somerville Standard paid tribute to Mr Ordish and his entrepreneurial spirit.

"Mr Ordish, who lived at Dandenong, set out one day with a barrow and a shovel to prospect for clay. In what was then a large open paddock on Stud Road, he found that for which he sought, and the digging of that first barrow load of clay laid the foundation stone of what was destined to become a flourishing business."

From humble beginnings in the early 1890s, the business flourished when Mr Ordish secured a contract to supply bricks to the Victorian Railways. It eventually became the best-known fire-brick manufacturer in Victoria.

"Today it is one of the leading industries of Dandenong, and no travel-

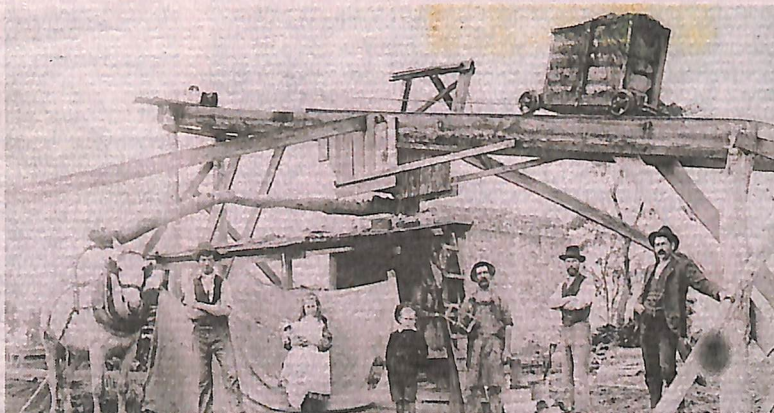


ler along Stud Road has passed without being impressed by the great line of kilns which have grown upon that spot where a young man delved for his first barrow load of clay."

The Ordish Fire Brick Company became a family business, with William's son Rowland and then grandson Joseph also among the Ordishes to work there.

Rowland had two sons Thomas and Joseph. Tragically, their mother died when the boys were very young and the siblings were separated, with Joe sent to live with family friends, the Fosters.

Joe attended Dandenong Primary School. He worked in the family busi-



The Ordish Fire Brick Company circa 1900.

Picture: Dandenong and District Historical Society

ness before volunteering for World War 1. He enlisted on 2 February 1916. He was 21 years old. He served on the Western Front in France and Belgium.

He was wounded in action at

Amiens on 8 Aug 1918. He re-joined his unit on 3 November 1918, just weeks before the war ended.

Joe returned to Australia in June 1919. He married wife Florence in

1919 and set up home in McPherson Street. Joe died in 1961.

Journal columnist Jack Johnson remembers visiting Joe and Florence's home as a boy in the 1930s.

"Their house in McPherson Street was on a corner and used to go there when we were little kids.

"They had a fabulous cactus garden and rockery that went around the whole front of house.

"They used to quite often put on open days raising money for the hospital. People would pay a penny to go in there."

William Ordish sold his business in 1922 but the works continued production to about 1975.

Want to know the history behind a street name in Greater Dandenong? Let us know and we'll find out! Email journal@starnewsgroup.com.au

LOOKING BACK

100 years ago 22 April 1915 Dandenong Soldiers Presentation Fund

The soldiers presentation fund has made presentations of razors to R. Pickett, John Ordish, Walter West, Robert Brock, Roy Nicholson, Samuel Pearce, George Byrnes, Albert Masters, Charles Christopherson, Ernest Smith, Lawrence Vincent Carroll, James Cotter, Charles Gordon, James Herrington, W. Tatham, John O'Leary, Andrew

McPherson, John Balderson, John Walker - 19 in all who are about to join the Expedition Forces overseas.

A British made (and ground) razor in case was handed to each man by Mrs Pearson. Private John Ordish expressed the thanks of the soldiers for their gifts.

50 years ago
21 April 1965
£543 from 'Barrow Push'
The traditional "Good Friday Barrow Push" from Dande-

nong to Melbourne raised a record £543 for the Royal Children's Hospital this year.

The barrow push was organised by the Dandenong Lions' Club and the Dodgers Basketball Club as a special effort to raise money for the children's hospital.

It got its initial "push off" from the Mayor of Dandenong, Cr Maurie Jarvis, on Good Friday morning and collected donations all the way from here to Melbourne.

Last year's effort raised £390 for the hospital.

20 years ago 24 April 1995 Karina sets sail

Secondary College student Karina Larsen has been sailing around Port Phillip Bay on the Alma Doepel.

Karina, a Year 11 student and a junior legatee nominated by Melbourne Legacy, was one of 32 young people who took part in the nine-day cruise under the guidance of

a professional crew.

The Alma Doepel was a transport ship in the South Pacific area in World War II and has been restored as a three-masted topsail schooner.

5 years ago 19 April 2010 True Blue support for battle against depression

There's a change to our masthead this week - the inclusion of the beyondblue logo.

Fairfax Community Networks and beyondblue have joined forces to raise awareness about depression.

We will be featuring the beyond blue logo on our masthead, and all publications will feature a blue front cover in the lead-up to mental Health Week in October.

-Compiled by Dandenong
and District Historical
Society