

swell party

By JOHN THOMPSON

A street breakfast party in Dandenong marked the 50-year celebrations of Gerald Maggs Pty. Ltd. ironmonger and agricultural engineers.

Mr Geoff Maggs, son of founder Gerald, arranged to have a section of Langmead St. outside his shop closed so that over 200 clients and shopkeeper friends could attend a chicken and wine breakfast.

Mr Maggs' father migrated to Australia from England in 1918 and opened the Dandenong blacksmith's shop in 1931.

However, as the motor car became more popular he switched to ironmongery.

From a humble beginning the shop now specialises in parts for cream separators, milking machines, engines, mowers, pumps, batteries, locks and farm spares.

In its labyrinth of shelves there are patterns for numerous machinery parts and the company can arrange to have them produced.

The business exports parts to all over the world and Mr Maggs has made a number of overseas trips where he has met many of his customers.

Mr Maggs' business philosophy is a fair go for everybody.

And his secret for success is to be honest with your customer, he said. That and personal service.

"However if you want to make a million dollars don't become an ironmonger" he laughed.

He estimates that there are only about 18 ironmongery businesses left in Australia.

To commemorate the occasion his staff of eight which includes his wife Nancy and daughter Ruth received gold watches.

Also to mark the occasion schoolchildren were invited to write a short essay on "what is an ironmonger."

Winners were Leanne Shell of Dandenong North and Anthony Battersby, Noble Park, both aged 11 who received \$50 cheques.

The morning's festivities included a demonstration in karate from a nearby club.

One of Mr Maggs' dreams could soon come true. He hopes that a museum of agricultural and dairy science can be established in Dandenong.

He has approached the local council and has had a favorable reply. Land may be made available near the Drill Hall.



↑ Mr Geoff Maggs (sunglasses) with his wife Nancy beside him, raises his glass to a toast, surrounded by clients and shopkeeper friends, as Osman Palanci, a local music shop proprietor, entertains with his accordion.

→ Mr Maggs and Nancy cut the 50th anniversary cake.

↓ The breakfast table outside the shop as Mr Maggs addresses his friends and clients, flanked by members of his staff.



50 years on for the man of iron

