



# H A B E R F I E L D S

*A Family Dairy Tradition*

*By*

*Howard C. Jones*









## A NOTE ON SOURCES.

The following were interviewed for this study:

- ▶ Jock Haberfield.
- ▶ John Haberfield.
- ▶ Ron Haberfield.
- ▶ Gwen Stevenson.
- ▶ Laurie Haberfield.
- ▶ Judy Rolevink.
- ▶ Bruce Haberfield.
- ▶ Les Gray.
- ▶ Shirley Gray.
- ▶ Ella Koschell.
- ▶ Bert Reuss.
- ▶ Stan Jackling.
- ▶ Doreen Watkins.
- ▶ Les Boyes.

Helen Livsey and other members of the Albury and District Historical Society provided additional information and advice. Several pictures were published courtesy of the Border Mail. Written sources: The Haberfield family supplied a collection of newspaper cuttings, a family tree and other personal information on the Grays and Haberfields. Microfilmed files of the Border Morning Mail from 1903 to date were researched. They provided extensive information on the family, on the background to dairying in the region and particularly on the Milk Wars. This information included advertisements as well as news stories. Elizabeth Close, director of the Albury Regional Museum, made available a file of newspaper cuttings relating to Dairy Farmers Co-operative and the dairy industry in general. Stan Jackling provided written legal information on the Milk Wars. Ross Coultard's book, *A Spirit of Co-operation* (1993), tells the history of co-operative dairy factories in North-East Victoria.

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*FRONT COVER: Annie and Jock Haberfield with 1928 Model A Ford delivery van purchased from Albury Rural Co-operative Butter Factory - 1931.*

*INSIDE FRONT: Farm Milk Pickup Tanker - Volvo F12 prime mover and 27,000 litre, tri-axel Byford stainless steel tanker - 1995.*

*OVER THE PAGE: Unloading one of Jack Haberfields milk trucks at the Nestles factory in Dennington Victoria - about 1917.*

## *Foreword*

**T**he story of Haberfields tells us much about the extraordinary changes that have taken place in the great Australian dairy industry in the past 60 or 70 years.

This family company has been a pioneer in many fields of milk and cheese production and distribution. Its continued insistence on achieving high health standards by introducing the latest available technology has proved a wise strategy.

Jock and Annie Haberfield built on firm foundations, but it is clear from Howard Jones's account that their progress was not achieved easily. The Milk Wars testify to their legal difficulties caused by operating across State boundaries, for example.

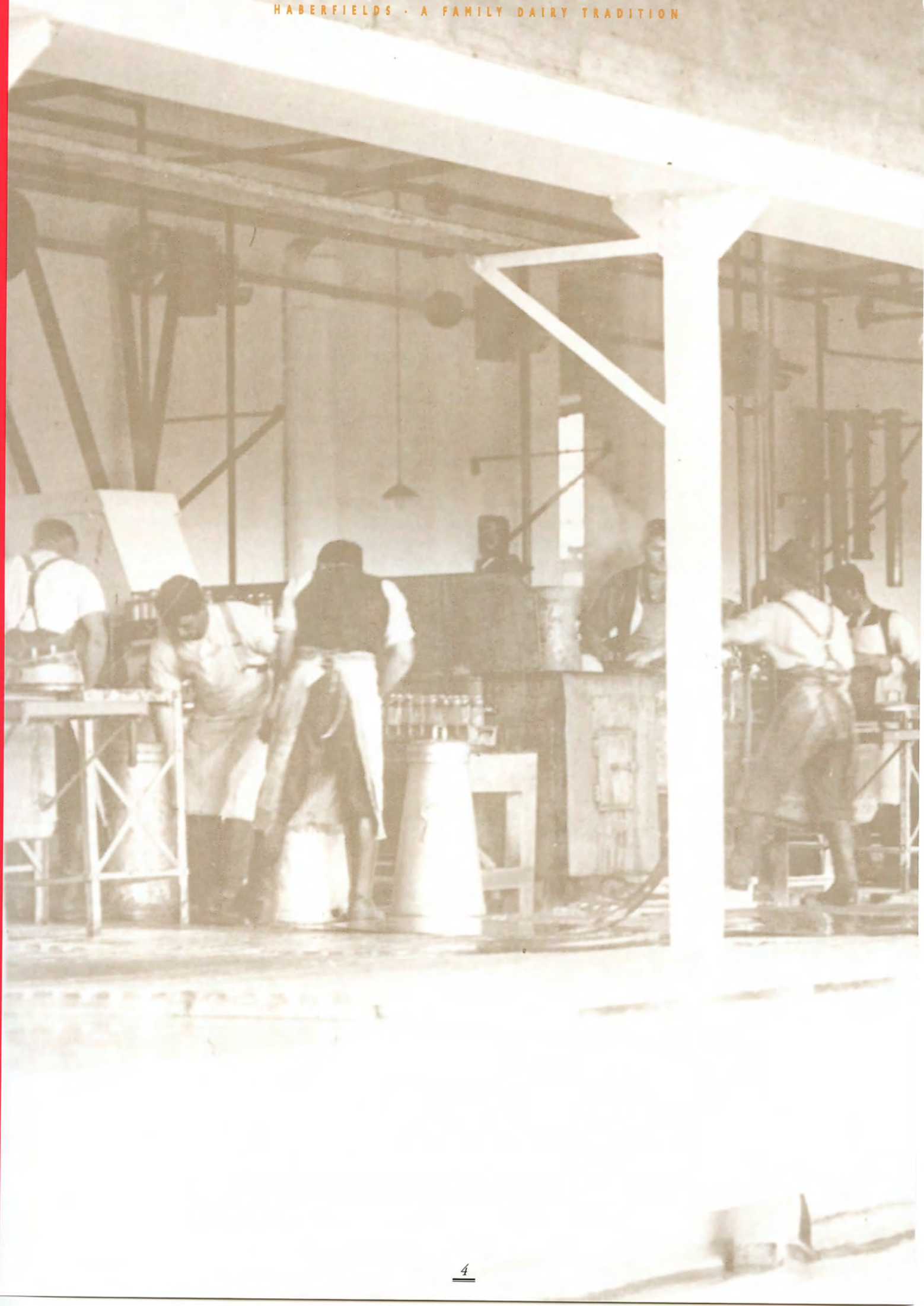
While such issues were of national significance, other parts of the Haberfields story show the impact the company had on social conditions locally. Free school milk from 1951 to 1974 improved children's health, while the demise of the humble, heavy milk can in the 1960s ended years of back-breaking work for farmers and dairy workers alike.

We congratulate the Haberfield family on commissioning this book and hope the story will inspire it to face the challenges of the future.

TIM FISCHER,  
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Trade and  
Member for Farrer.

LOU LIEBERMAN,  
Member for Indi.







## Introduction

**H**aberfields began in 1931 as a milk delivery run purchased by Jock Haberfield and joined with a run operated by his girlfriend, Annie Gray. "I bought the crates, bottles and a 1928 Ford Model A truck for 300 pounds," Jock said in interviews for this book. "We used to go out together in the truck on the combined early morning run delivering pasteurised bottled milk." Annie and Jock married in 1932 and bought a second-hand pasteurising plant. They took a block in South Albury, and built a house and a dairy. People were reluctant to accept pasteurised milk. "They wanted hot milk straight from the cow, not cold milk in bottles," Jock said.

Haberfields' persistence with pasteurised milk paid off. In 1993, the tremendous success of Haberfields in the local, national and overseas markets was brought to the attention of the highest in the land through a speech in Federal Parliament by the member for Indi, Lou Lieberman.

This study recounts the survival of Haberfields in the Great Depression and World War II, the many changes in collection, production and distribution in the 1950s and 1960s and the gradual handing over of responsibility to family members, particularly John, Ron and Laurie Haberfield. It continues through the extraordinary battles fought in the "Milk Wars" to Haberfields' involvement with Swissfield. It concludes with the purchase by Parmalat in 1996.

It is not merely a company or family story because it reflects social changes in Albury and the wider district, including the way people worked in a family company and how employees and suppliers felt part of that family. Jock and Annie Haberfield always set high standards and their advertising slogan from the 1930s perhaps sums up the company best: "YOU CAN WHIP OUR CREAM, BUT YOU CAN'T BEAT OUR MILK".

HOWARD C. JONES







## A family called Haberfield

The Haberfields of Albury trace their beginnings in Australia to an Englishman from Somerset, James Haberfield (1819-1886), but the family also has Scottish, Irish, Canadian and German ancestry. While the family have had a dairy business in Albury for more than 60 years, their dairying tradition in Australia goes back at least 120 years. And a Haberfield carried milk for Nestles in 1913-18.

The original Australian Haberfield, James, and his wife Maria (nee Hazlewood), were married in London about 1839. They had three sons, James, John and Joshua, born between 1840 and 1850. The family migrated to Melbourne about 1852, when the first gold rushes were on. The father was recorded as a boot maker in 1868. He died, a widower, in South Melbourne in 1886 and was buried at Colac.

The second James (1840-1913) moved to Warrnambool and in 1868 married a Scottish migrant from Aberdeen, Helen Anderson (1848-1927). Helen's cousin, the Hon William Anderson, lived at Rosemount, Koroit, near Warrnambool. Rosemount is classified by the National Trust and contains a photograph of James and Helen Haberfield. James was a labourer when they wed, but later he and Helen became dairy farmers at The Briars, Dennington, on the Merri River north of Warrnambool. Helen had 13 children, the 11th child being John "Jack" Haberfield, born 1884.

Jack Haberfield helped run the farm for some years. In 1905, he married Hannah Maloney, a daughter of a Warrnambool farmer from County Clare, Ireland, Patrick Maloney, and his wife, Catherine McNamara. They went to live in a house with a paddock of three acres. Hannah mothered five children: Nellie, Jock, Rita, Bill and Reg.

Jock Haberfield counts himself lucky he was born on April 2 1908. "My brother Bill wasn't so lucky. He was born four years later on April Fool's Day," Jock said.

In 1913, Jock's father, then about 29, won a large contract to carry milk to the Nestles factory at Dennington, picking up milk throughout the countryside. Jock said his father kept horses stabled and three horse lorries to bring the milk to the factory.

Much of the Nestles machinery had come in big boxes from Switzerland and Jock's father stored them at the bottom of the paddock, so the children could play in them.

*ABOVE LEFT: Jock's mother Hannah, with pony & pony cart Bill and Jock sitting in cart - 1916.*

*MAIN LEFT: John (Jack) and Hannah Haberfield (Jock's parents) 1905.*

*LEFT: Jack Haberfield and staff, Dennington - 1913.*  
*Back Row: Charlie Hoy, George Willis, Jack McLaren, ?, Allen Stevens, ?, True Noonan. Middle Row: Alec Black, Ted Berry, William Haberfield, Jack Haberfield, Alec Haberfield, Harry Willis, Doc Noonan, Sandy McLaughon. Front Row: Ernie (Soda) Haberfield, Robin Lee, Jack Barry, Tom Prentice, ?, Hetherington, Viv Fish, Andy Morgan.*  
*Children: Victor (Pod) & Gus Haberfield - sons of William Haberfield, Wild Dog Murname is one of the unidentified.*

*ABOVE RIGHT: The Stables, Dennington - 1913. John (Jack) & Alec Haberfield milk cartage contractors to Nestles, Dennington.*

"When I was about six years old, he bought his first motor lorry, a Fiat with carbide lamps and wood and canvas cabin," Jock said. "He brought a French driver and mechanic to Australia to work for him.

I can remember going about 30 miles out with my father to meet this truck and the drive back to Warrnambool with people coming out on the road to see this truck, which was one of the first in the district. This was the first of about six trucks. We used to get petrol in four-gallon (18 litres) cans, two to a case.

"They used to come to Warrnambool by ship in those days and we used to bring it back to the stables and store it in a big tin shed. It is a long time since ships went to Warrnambool, as the harbour silted up."

With no electric light in those days, homes were lit by kerosene lamps or candles, and trucks, cars and bikes were fitted with carbide lamps.

Jock's father sometimes took him to the Nestles depot on a summer night, when there might be eight or nine horse-drawn lorries with milk cans awaiting unloading. "My father let me drive the horse lorry back to the stables but I suppose the horses knew their way home and went by themselves," Jock said.

The family also kept a few cows and Jock's first job was to bring them home each night and help in milking. "The milk was heated on the stove and set in big dishes overnight and the cream scooped up from the top in the morning to be made into butter," Jock said.



## Jock's early years

"I recall going to the old Dennington school near the Merri River, which was pulled down when the new school was built in 1914. (The new school was destroyed by fire in 1928). I had a lot of sickness and could not read the blackboard from the floor with the other kids and had to sit at a desk on the platform. I found school work very hard because of my eyes."

During one of his spells of sickness, Jock's family doctor advised his parents to take him to Daylesford for two weeks. "Us kids had to go to the Hepburn Springs three times a day and drink the spa water - I don't know if it did me any good, but by the time I was 14 I was quite healthy."



Jock was given a pony when he was about nine years old and kept it for four years. "He was never very happy unless he was going flat out. It took some time before I was able to stay on him. I rode him daily to get the cows in and around the streets. At the same time, we had a pony cart which held our family and we used to go to Warrnambool each week to see our cousins. It was the only pony cart in the district at that time." (Later someone stole the pony from the farm and he was never recovered).

"During summer months, we used to go to the beach at Warrnambool in the pony cart quite often and swim where the pier used to start - today that is all sand. I used to go fishing at the mouth of the river where the mullet and bream were biting."

Tragedy struck the family when Jock was only 10. His father died after a brief illness in August 1918. "My mother died three years later when she was 34," Jock said. "The executors of the will employed an ex-hospital sister to housekeep for us kids, which she did for three years. My eldest sister, Nellie, then took over for a further two years. The home was then broken up and the three youngest were boarded out to families.

At 13, on Jock's first day at high school, he fell off his bike when the front wheel got caught in the railway line and broke his wrist. "I never went back to school," Jock said. "I wanted to go on a farm. I left home to work milking cows on Mr Russell's farm about 20 miles away. Mr Russell had been the milk grader at Nestles and had just bought the farm. He agreed to take me and gave me a job at 10 shillings a week. I was so happy to get on a farm I think I would have worked for nothing!

"However, I got a bit of a shock as my bed had a clean, washed oat bag for a quilt. After a while I got quite used to it as it kept me nice and warm. Also we used to wash ourselves outside with a dish of water and home-made soap and dried ourselves with a roller towel made out of two sugar bags opened up and sewn together over a round piece of timber.

"We used to get up at 4.30am summer and winter and milked 50-odd cows. My job was to go and get the cows in while they made a cup of tea and I got lost the first few days in the dark. But I got quite used to it and enjoyed the hand-milking. We did quite a lot of clearing the farm of trees and grubbing up the stumps before going into breakfast, which was mostly lamb fry and fried potatoes. Then we did farm work until dinner. After dinner, we would dig out old stumps or clear a new paddock so that we could plough it for a crop. Then we would sow it down. We did this for seven days a week, except on Sundays we would finish about 11 o'clock and have three or four hours off until we got

the cows in to milk again.

"On this farm, when we were three-quarters way through milking, I used to turn the separator and skim off the cream. I think it was about every third day I had to yoke up the horse and cart, and cart the cream down to the Allansford butter factory. The factory staff used to grade it and tip the cream. I would wash the cans in steel troughs. They supplied the brushes, hot water and soap. Russell's farm those days was nearly all new country and had plenty of wildlife. In the summer, another boy from a farm about a mile away and I used to go snake-killing. We would get up to 15 in a couple of hours.

Such was life on one Victorian dairy farm in the 1920s, but life was easier on some others that had acquired motorised vehicles.

"I stayed on Mr Russell's farm for about two years until he decided to sell out," Jock said. "A Mr Trigg about three miles away, a lay preacher, had two sons and a daughter. One of the sons, about 20, left and I took his place. This farm was quite different, cleared and sown down. They were also better off and had a Model T Ford. I really enjoyed working on this farm and did all the ploughing, learned how to build a haystack and lots of things. The horses were well-stabled and most things were good.

"The thing I missed most was a roast dinner on Sundays. Mrs Trigg refused to do any work of a Sunday so we had bread, butter and jam. About June each year, she would spend the day making rock cakes for the harvest about December. She would put them in tins and seal them up for the harvest. Three or four farmers would get together and do the harvest for one another and it worked quite well over the harvest season.

"After about 18 months, another boy, Jim Croft, asked me to go with him up to Mildura, grape-picking. This was my first holiday and we went by train and found a boarding house. After two days of very hot weather we got a job picking grapes. They picked us up and we put in the morning picking grapes - the juice was running down our arms. We knocked off for dinner expecting to get a feed but everybody had brought their own sandwiches and we had nothing. Jim said he had had grape picking and was giving it away and going home. I would have kept going because I had no home to go to, but I gave in and went back to Trigg's after one week's holiday."

Soon after this, Les Trigg and Les Wallace made a milking machine and Mr Trigg bought one and got a permit from Nestles as a trial, as at that time Nestles would not take machine milk.

"Anyway, after some months trial, Nestles said the best milk into the factory at Dennington was from Trigg's



Nellie & Jock Haberfield - 1921



milking machines," Jock said. "They opened it up to all the farmers and Les Trigg and Les Wallace put the machines "Acme" in the Melbourne Show. Les Trigg offered to take me with them to help man the stand - they would not pay me but would get me a place to stay. So I went with them to the show. Les Trigg stayed with his cousin off St Kilda Rd, and I stayed with them.

"While there, they suggested I go down the road to Wormald Bros and apply for a job. I filled out a form for Wormalds and they wrote to the Triggs about me. A few days later I got a message to start work on Monday, so I didn't go back to Trigg's. I boarded with Les Trigg's cousin Vi in Dow St, Port Melbourne, for 25 shillings a week. She had only just got married and her husband, Jack Smith, was out of work.

"When I was there I bought a new wireless that had valves and a speaker. Before that we had a cat's whisker with earphones. However, this was during the Depression and all Jack Smith's friends used to come in and pay a penny a night and play cards while listening to England playing the Tests. I went to bed because I was the only one working."

Somewhere about this time the executors of Jock's parents' estate decided to break up the Haberfield home at Dennington and hold an auction, but Jock did not attend.

"They found a job for my eldest sister, Nellie," Jock said. "Holloways, who lived across the road from the Triggs and were farmers milking cows, agreed to take my brother Bill, who was still going to school, and my youngest brother, Reg. They took these two school children and looked after them - I think they would have been paid. After a couple of years, Nellie married, then she took over looking after Reg, and saw him through his school days. Rita went to work in the house for another family until she married Jim Croft. That family were mean and strict and Rita had to work very hard.

"By this time, Bill had left school and some months later the boss asked me if I knew anybody who wanted a job so I told him of my brother. That's how Bill got the job at Wormald's. The boss also got a job for my cousin from Tatura, Ron McDermid. We were all country kids. When I brought Bill to Melbourne, Vi agreed to board him also, and my cousin Ron. We were very happy and well looked after. We worked outside at different new buildings and buildings that had to have fire doors under new fire laws. We soon learned how to find our way over Melbourne and suburbs.

"After about 12 months at Wormwalds, I got a gang of men, most of them older than me, to look after. We had a fine time in Melbourne. We worked 48 hours per week and had Saturday afternoon and Sundays off - a great treat."

Jock was later laid off from Worwalds and spent three weeks painting his sister Nellie's house at Koroit before being recalled. But a few weeks later he was retrenched

again and this time went to see his sister Rita, who had married his old friend, Jim Croft.

"After two days I got a job milking cows for one pound a week, working about 100 hours a week. After two weeks I was offered a job at 25 shillings a week and worked there from June to December. In all that time I didn't draw any wages and when it came to the time to leave I was very worried the employer would not be able to pay me - however, he did."

In another attempt to get work, Jock and Bill went to Shepparton to see their cousin, Ron McDermid. "Between us we bought a Chevrolet truck from the butter factory and two tons of oranges and set off to sell them in the Western District," Jock said.

"Our main objective was to buy skins and calves to kill, and send the skins to Melbourne. I could have sold all the oranges at Werribee for a profit, but thought I could do better 100 miles down the road. I hawked those oranges to the South Australian border and then back to Colac, finishing up selling them at a loss." Jock and Ron bought skins and calves for four to six months. Bill eventually bought a farm and milk run with brother, Reg, at Portland.

Jock had been working in Melbourne in 1929 when he met Annie Gray, "the best girl I had ever seen". Annie was 16 and Jock 19. "Annie had been down to Melbourne for a holiday with her cousin Mavis McCorkell," Jock said. He spent three days at Christmas 1929 with the Grays in Albury and promised to go back for Christmas 1930.

"I was to drive up in a car I had bought, stay there for two weeks and then come back and take on a farm I had an option on at Nullawarre, near Warrnamabool, with money inherited from my parents.

"However, this never happened as Annie's father, who was a director of the Albury Butter Factory, told me the factory was in trouble and wanted to sell the pasteurised milk run for 300 pounds including crates, bottles and truck.

And so began Jock's work in Albury.



Jock at Grays, Willow Bank - 1930.







## The Grays of Willow Bank

Annie Eileen Gray also came from a dairying family, but one with an interesting international background.

Her father, Nathaniel Gray (1883-1941), was a son of Charles and Ann Sophia (Granny) Gray, of Willow View, Wymah, upstream of Albury. Granny Gray, born in Adelaide in 1841, was a member of one of that city's very first families, the Lodgers. Nat lost two of his brothers by drowning and his father died in 1897, aged 54. His mother went on to marry her late husband's cousin, Harry Gray. Soon after the turn of the century, Harry and his wife bought 118 acres in South Albury, then known as Kennedy's Point, after John Alexander Kennedy, a pound keeper of the 1860s.

Harry later moved away and Granny Gray fell victim to a crippling illness that forced her to move to Lavington, where she died in 1929. Her surviving grandchildren remember her always in a wheelchair.

Nat Gray went to the West Australian goldfields with another brother, Charles, before he was 20 and helped A.W. Canning survey a coast-to-coast rabbit-proof fence in 1901-03. Returning to Albury in 1904, he married Rosa Anne Sharp in 1907 and raised a family of six daughters and two sons. Charles also came home and married Rosa Ann's sister, Nellie Sharp.

Here was the Haberfields' Canadian-German connection. Rosa and Nellie were two of 13 children of a Montreal-born Albury carrier, John Sharp (1837-1926) whose family had been in Canada since the 18th century. John Sharp's wife, Mary Ann Winzer, was a member of a German family who settled in Albury. Many Sharp descendants besides the Haberfields live in Albury today.

Nat and Charles ran Willow Bank for their mother for some years and bought the freehold, but eventually the partnership was dissolved. The name Willow Bank echoed that of the old Wymah home, Willow View.

Nat's son-in-law, Bert Reuss, who worked for him in 1920-26, recalled in 1992 that Nat had a herd of Ayrshires, replaced by Illawarra shorthorns in the 1920s. Nat developed about four milk rounds in Albury and in World War I he had the contract to supply passing troop trains. A nephew, Jack Maloney, had one of the rounds in the 1920s and later passed it to Norman Murray, who left to establish his own dairy farm. This was one reason why Nat found himself with surplus milk in about 1924-30. Charles acquired another 70 acres and took an adjoining property, Montana, next to the railway line on Olive St.

ABOVE LEFT: Rosa Anne Sharp - Annie's mother.

MAIN LEFT: Rosa & Nathaniel Gray on their Wedding day, 27 June 1907. Annie's parents

BELOW LEFT: John Sharp, Albury Carrier (1837-1926) Annie's maternal grandfather.

ABOVE RIGHT: The Gray Family - 1922. Left to Right: Grace, Rose, Jessie, Nat, Rosa, Jack, Annie, Ella, Lou.

The Grays planted willows on the river bank and allowed townfolk to use what was called Brighton Beach. Nat supplemented his dairy income by supplying sand and gravel for Albury buildings, such as the Abikhair's Big Store in Dean St, the Regent and Hoyts cinemas and the New Albury Hotel. He was also a dealer in cattle. Nat bought land in Victoria directly across the river, known to this day as Gray's Island. Nat's elder son, Jack, lived there from the 1930s, rowing his cows' milk across the river and taking it over to Haberfields.



Jack Gray's efforts in supplying milk to Haberfields by rowing it across the river were remarkable. His nephew, Ron Haberfield, often stayed with him overnight on Gray's Island in the 1940s and saw how Jack worked. "Jack milked the cows, then took the milk down by horse-drawn sled to the river a quarter of a mile away," Ron says. "Jack had to lump 10 or 12 cans down to the rowing boat, which was quite a large one. Then he rowed it across twice, lumped it up the other bank and took it by lorry to the factory."

## The growing twenties

The dairy industry in Albury experienced some changes in the mid-1920s, at a time when the town itself was growing rapidly. Before describing Jock and Annie's entry into the Albury scene, it is worth looking at how dairying in the Albury district and North-East Victoria was developing.

Albury's population rose from 8500 in 1925 to 10,750 in 1927, a more rapid rise than at any time in the previous 20 years. Wool valued at more than 1 million pounds was sold in Albury in 1927 and 340,000 sheep were sold at the Albury saleyards. Amalgamated Textiles' woollen mills (Macquarie Worsted) opened in September 1926 and was employing 280 by 1928. It processed 7000 to 8000 pounds (weight) of wool weekly.

Dairy farmers living around Albury generally delivered their own milk and there were about 35 licensed vendors at that time. They generally sold their cream to the Albury Rural Co-operative Butter Factory in Fallon St. About 1926,



Holdenson and Nielson Fresh Food Pty Ltd built its Albury and Wodonga Butter Factory near the Union Bridge, now the Gateway tourism centre. A new Kiewa Butter Factory at Tangambalanga was built in 1928, replacing the one established in 1893.

Most farms were using old methods, and milking was still done by hand, mostly by women and girls. Before creameries were established around the area, milk was set in shallow dishes and next morning the cream would be skimmed off and churned into butter, which was sold in "prints" of one pound to stores. When creameries were established, the creamery manager would separate the milk and farmers would take the skim milk back to the farm. There was no Sunday separating.

In the Kiewa Valley, for instance, milking would be done as usual and a preservative added to "keep" the milk over Sunday. Dairy inspectors were appointed in 1900 and encouraged farmers to install clean and hygienic milking sheds. Over the following 70 years, progress came gradually in the form of glazed walls, electric power and heating, milking machines, nickel-plated equipment, wash-up rooms and stainless steel refrigerated bulk milk tanks.

The Border Morning Mail of September 7 1928 stated that the Albury district was not contributing to Australia's dairy production to anything like the extent it could and should, considering the "favourable climatic conditions, perennial water supply and unfailing pastures".



## Annie Gray, teenage business woman

Annie Gray was born in 1911. Her father, Nat, was among the farmers who supplied cream to the Albury Rural Co-operative, but had difficulty with his milk runs. It seems Annie Gray left school and started delivering milk in 1924 when she was 13, in order to help her father sell his supplies.

She took to delivering milk, and her sisters helped around the house and dairy. Annie's elder sisters were Lucy (Mrs Hunt) and Grace (Mrs Reuss). After Annie came Rose (Mrs Nagle), Ella (Mrs Koschell) Jessie (Mrs Read), Jack and Les. Interviewed in 1992, Ella and Les recalled that they all walked to Albury Public School until they got bikes.

"We only had two bikes, so when the two eldest left school, they were passed on," said Ella, who had to wait a while because she was fifth in the family. In floods, the children took a pony to school. Grace went to Albury High School but the others left school at 13 or 14. Willow Bank is fairly isolated from Albury, so the children especially enjoyed visits by the Indian hawkers who occasionally camped at the mulberry tree on the property and made friends with them.

"She was the businesswoman, and she paid us 10 shillings a week," Ella recalled. The sisters helped in the house and dairy, starting at 5am to hand-milk the 70 to 100 cows. Then Annie, often wearing gum boots, would set off with a two-gallon (9 litres) can balanced delicately on the handlebars of her bike.

At each house she had to go into the kitchen, find the milk jug or billy and ladle a pint into it. She called at some homes before anyone was up, in the days when Albury people did not find it necessary to lock their doors. She charged two pence a pint and built up such a good round that her father bought her a horse and cart, and then a second cart. (The company offices display a 1928 picture of Annie and her first milk cart with "Ginger").

Annie's business grew so much she needed two 10-gallon (45 litres) cans with taps. Interviewed by Terry McGoverne in 1987, Annie recalled the competition from vendors "the likes of the Murrays, the Rixons and one,





Johnny Horan, who would walk the streets with his can." There was no refrigeration in those days, so Annie made morning and afternoon deliveries.

Ella Koschell remembers that Annie, despite her hard teenage years, managed to play hockey in Albury and was an active Girl Guide. Annie's mother died in 1929 when the youngest child, Les, was only two, and her husband remarried.

Annie nearly lost her life in a flood about 1931. Bert Reuss recalls that during floods, milk was taken from Willow Bank to Plummer's Farm in South Albury by boat. Returning one day in a small boat after delivering milk in Albury, Annie, Jack and two friends were in a creek near the river when the bottom gave way. They got to a tree and were rescued by Bill Brown, who kept a boat across the river.

Floods would prove to be a problem for many Haberfields suppliers until the Hume Dam was raised metres higher in the 1950s. There were also serious floods in 1973, 1974 and 1975 before the Dartmouth Dam was built. Dairy farms often occupied the rich flood plain areas, the first to be flooded. Not only would prolonged flooding wreck the pastures, but the waters also brought down weeds and debris.

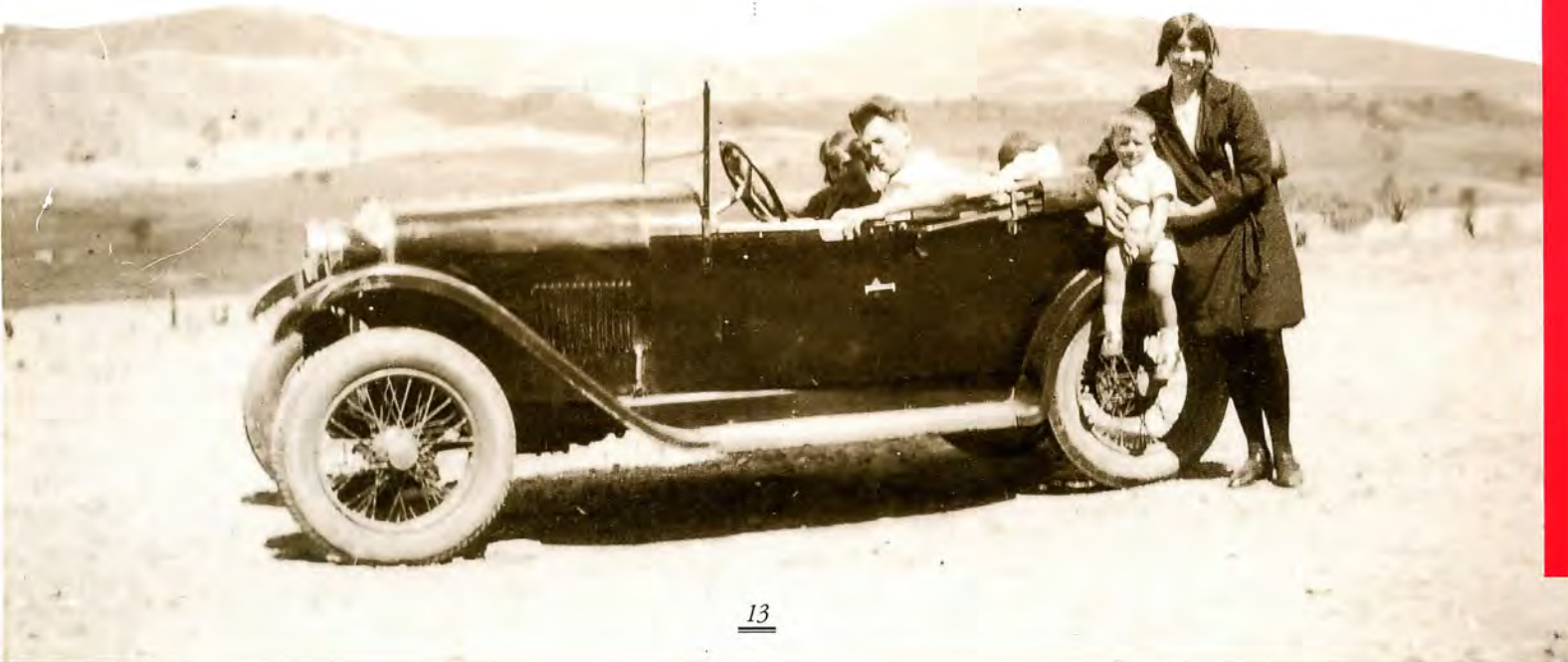
ABOVE LEFT: Annie and friend - milk cart & Ginger - 1927.

BELOW LEFT: Rose & Annie.

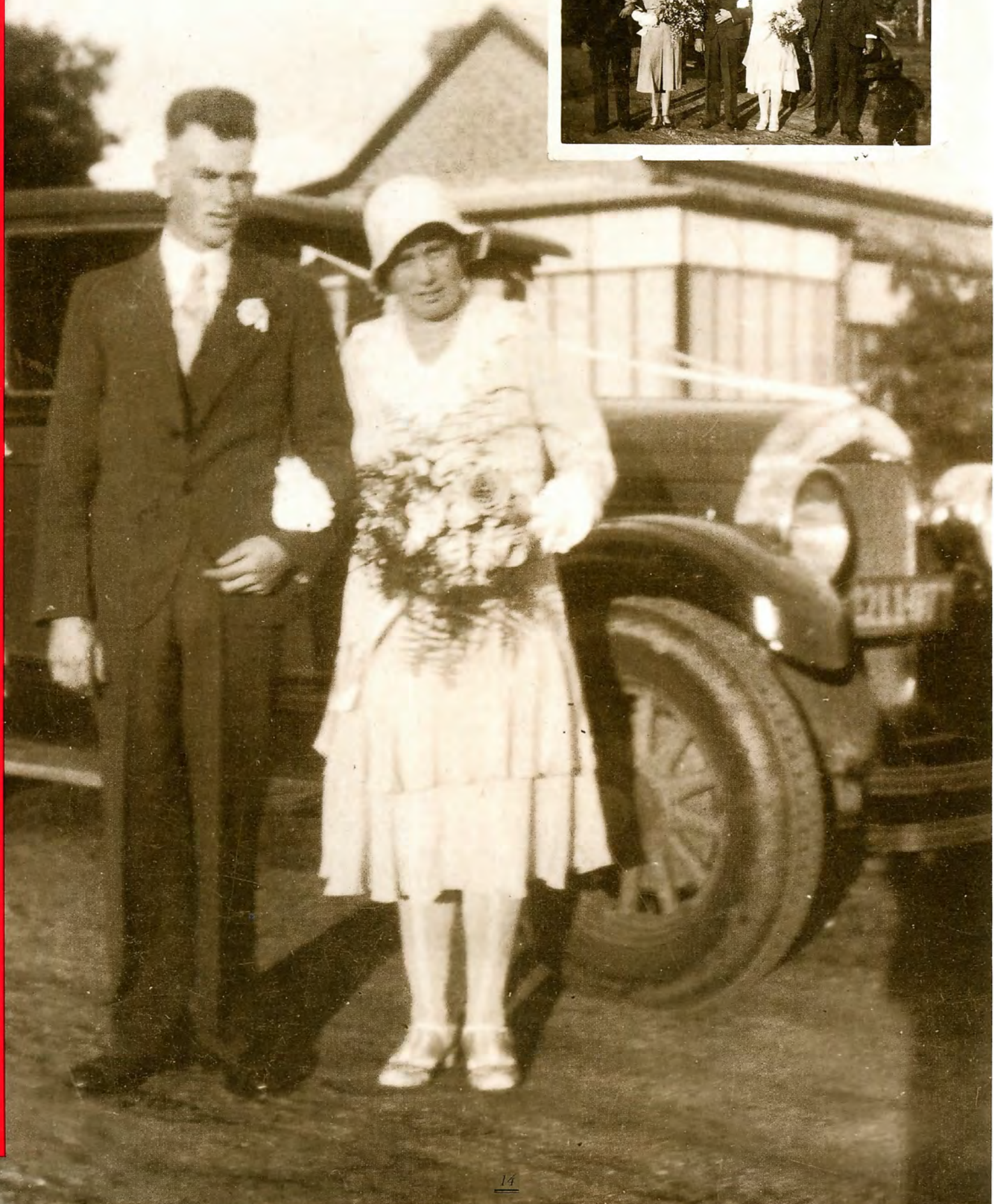
ABOVE: Albury Ladies' Hovell Hockey Club. B Grade Team. Holders of Thomas Chubb Cup - 1930. Left to Right: O. Adams (Captain), D. Roy, T. Fraser, I. Dodds, F. Hill, D. Carrol, I. Graham, D. Howarth, N. Shields. A. Gray, E. McGlynn, G. Rogers.

RIGHT: Annie and Barney - 1929.

BELOW: Annie, Jock, Les & Rose - Amil car 1929 at site of Hume Weir.









## The start of Haberfields

As we have seen, Jock Haberfield was holidaying at Willow Bank at Christmas 1930 when Nat Gray told him the Albury Rural Co-operative Butter Factory had a milk run for sale. Nat was a director of the butter factory, which had pioneered pasteurised milk in the area, and he supplied the factory with milk and cream.

There had also been a further increase in Albury's population, which first exceeded 10,000 in about 1931. By September 1932, the Border Morning Mail was reporting a boom in dairying and stated that the Albury Pastures Protection Board had 400 registered dairies, an increase of 100 over 1931.

Jock thought of the farm he had an option on at Nulla Warri, but decided to buy the milk run to help out Nat Gray, just as a temporary measure. "I reckon I'd take it on for six months, but after six months I was nearly broke so I had to keep going," Jock recalled in 1992. "I bought the crates, bottles and a 1928 Ford Model A truck for 300 pounds. Annie wanted to give me her milk run, but we joined the two together. We used to go out together in the truck on the combined run every morning delivering pasteurised milk. Because pasteurised milk would keep a day, we only had to do one delivery a day."

Haberfields Model Dairy is reckoned to have begun in this way in June 1931, but it remained a delivery run only for some months, trading as Gray & Haberfield, Willow Bank, Albury.

Annie and Jock were married at 7am on April 5 1932 at the Albury Wesleyan Methodist Church in Olive St, with a wedding breakfast at Willow Bank. "We drove to Melbourne for our honeymoon," Jock said. "We got caught in the floods at Seymour. The hotel put us up, but in single beds! However, despite this I managed to have a family. I'm very proud of four boys and two girls, all married except one, with three boys working in the business.

"After some months, and shortly after we were married, the butter factory was going bad and in trouble. They said they had to sell the pasteurising plant and offered me it first for 350 pounds. The day after I bought it, but hadn't paid for it, the NSW Savings Bank closed (during the height of the financial crisis between Premier Jack Lang and the Commonwealth).

"That put me in trouble as I couldn't get my money, but eventually things worked out. I bought a block of land at 395 David St for 200 pounds and Alan Stow built our house for a contract price of 500 pounds, and we put in 50 pounds worth of extras."

*ABOVE LEFT: Wedding Party: Charlie Gray, Rose Gray, Jock, Annie, Nat Gray.*

*MAIN LEFT: Annie Gray married Jock Haberfield 5th April, 1932 - taken at Wedding Breakfast at Willow Bank.*

*ABOVE RIGHT: Annie and Jock Haberfield with 1928 Model A ford van purchased from Albury Rural Co-operative Butter Factory - 1931.*

Interviewed in the same house in 1993, Jock recalled that it was built on the site of an old cottage where Annie's grandparents, John and Mary Ann Sharp had once lived.

"I built the factory under contract labour," Jock said. "I arranged for the Albury Rural Co-operative Butter Factory to pasteurise my milk until I could build a place. I took on George Lyons, who used to make the butter at the butter factory. Because I was up at 2am or 3am to deliver milk, I wanted someone who knew about pasteurising and George could keep the steam boilers working."



Mayor Alf Waugh declared the factory open, while Jock continued to work during the official ceremony.

Before the factory was built, they took on Annie's cousin, Frank Gray, and Norm Wissen, to help in the deliveries. These were Haberfield's first two employees. Norm was killed in Canada in World War II training for the air force. Frank served with the Army in North Africa and Crete, and still lives in South Albury. Frank and Norm lived at Jock and Annie's place in Paine St before 395 David St was finished and when the factory was ready a room was built on site to accommodate a few employees. "We boarded them, cooked and fed them and even did their washing," Jock said. Meanwhile, Jock and Annie's first son, John Nathaniel, was born in 1932.

## Milk the King of Foods

People were reluctant to accept the new pasteurised milk. "They wanted hot milk straight from the cow, not cold milk in bottles," Jock said. "What really got us going was that I got a couple of Albury shops to stock our pasteurised milk in their fridges. For the first time in Albury, people could get a bottle of milk from them any time and it would keep a day (homes then had ice chests rather than fridges). This was one of the reasons why we kept going in the 1930s and other vendors stopped."

The Depression was also on. "Those were hard days," Jock said. "Often we weren't paid, but what could you do?"



You just couldn't stop delivering milk just because the bill wasn't being paid, when little children were hungry."

Haberfields also began to buy milk from other dairy farms on Albury's outskirts as time went on. It paid a shilling (10c) a gallon (4.5 litres) and sold it for three pence (2.5c) a pint (568 ml), though sometimes had to add a halfpenny. (Phone calls and ordinary letter postage was two-pence and wages were about two pounds (\$4) plus keep. Petrol was one shilling and seven pence a gallon, the equivalent of 4c a litre).

Jock always treasured a record of some of his early costs in the 1930s, such as the Malvern Star bicycle and trailer bought for 12 pounds, 10 shillings. In 1932, he bought two Indian Chief motor-cycles with sidecars for delivery, and in 1936 a new Harley Davidson with sidecar. A new Rugby van replaced the original Ford truck, and an International panel van was acquired.



Jock and Annie did their own promotions in the 1930s. They advertised in The Border Morning Mail in January 1934 with the slogan: "MILK IS THE KING OF FOODS", but the message was to sell pasteurisation. "Why suffer inconvenience during summer months by using milk and cream that will not keep," the advertisement ran. "Pasteurised milk is pure, wholesome and protects your children from summer ailments, and is equally beneficial for adults."

In June 1936, Haberfields hammered home the message once again: "Our milk is pasteurised and is guaranteed free from the germs of the dread tuberculosis and other malignant disease germs. Our milk, when it reaches us, is never touched by human hands. Our milk is delivered in hermetically sealed bottles."

An advertisement quoted a London County Council survey that found 7.5 per cent of raw milk sampled contained the TB germ. Haberfields also boasted in the same advertisement: "We are the largest milk distributors in the district and have the latest machinery and equipment to handle all our milk in the most scientific way. We are supplying a commodity that cannot be procured anywhere else in the district."

Haberfields advertised in The Border Morning Mail and coined the slogan, "YOU CAN WHIP OUR CREAM, BUT YOU CAN'T BEAT OUR MILK".

In 1937, the NSW Health Department issued a statement saying milk would help protect people against disease and ill-health. Jock took this up in more health-orientated advertisements. TB and other bacilli had been eliminated from Haberfield's pasteurised milk "without reducing the vitamin value of the milk and immediately bottled to protect it from outside contamination of every kind." For good measure, Jock added: "Hygiene and cleanliness are almost a religion with us." Another slogan he adopted was "We pasteurise for health, we bottle for safety."

When Hoyts' Theatre was being built in Olive St in 1937, the dairy printed a photograph in The Border Morning Mail showing workmen at lunch. "Hoyts New Theatre was built by men who drink Haberfield's pasteurised milk," the headline stated. "Follow their example!"

Annie became a mother again with the birth of Ronald Leslie in 1937. Despite her family responsibilities, she worked hard in the dairy, washing bottles and keeping the place spotless.

The milk continued to come from Willow Bank, but Jock and Annie needed extra milk to cope with demand. As we have seen, Annie's brother, Jack, supplied milk from his farm on Gray's Island.

The family grew to three with the birth of Gwendoline Rose (Gwen) in 1938. Annie Haberfield continued to work in the factory, while bringing up a family and always managed to cook a hot lunch for Jock and the children. Later, one of her chief jobs was to dress the cheese hoops.



It is appropriate here to say that outside her work, Annie was involved with the 1st Albury Scouts for more than 30 years, earning the "thanks badge" for her service. She was proud John won the King's Scout award and Ron and Laurie the Queen's Scout award, and Judy and Gwen the First Class Guide award. All Ron's children are also Queen's Scouts or Guides. Annie served on the P and C committees of Albury Public School and Albury High School. Annie's great hobby was gardening and she spent hours tending her flowers. Naturally she was involved in preparing floats for the Albury Floral Festivals of the 1950s and 1960s, which raised





huge sums for charities and good causes. In later years she turned to collecting stamps and coins.

By 1938, which Jock recalled as one of the best years, Albury people started to buy pasteurised milk and there was no going back. He was proud of the fact that Haberfields was the among first to pasteurise, bottle and refrigerate milk in country Australia. In 1939, he bought the central block at the rear of 389 David St. In 1940, Jock, despite working long hours and having a shortage of labour, joined the Albury Rotary Club and so began a long period of service to the community that led, among other things, to the Trade Fairs of the 1960s.

Jock and Annie held the Peters American Icecream agency in 1940-46, building up business from three to 80 customers. "Many was the day my wife had to do the icecream run and look after the children," Jock said.

## Milk for the Military

Early in World War II, the Commonwealth of Australia selected Albury and Wodonga for large military training camps and for ordinance, storage and repair units.

The first training camp was for the 2/23rd (Albury's Own) Infantry Battalion and opened in 1940 with 800 men. Later in the war, the numbers of soldiers stationed in the two towns and at Bonegilla and Bandiana rose to between 8000 and 11,000, and in addition thousands of Australian and American troops passing through by train had to be fed. There was also a Royal Australian Air Force storage base at Ettamogah and a camp for Italian prisoners-of-war at Hawksway, near Lake Hume. Albury became something of a garrison town.

*FAR LEFT: Haberfield's original factory - David Street, built 1932.- bicycle and trailer and second vehicle Rugby Van, Note name on Van - "Gray & Haberfield"*

*ABOVE LEFT: Annie and son John - new Harley Davidson and sidecar for deliveries - rear of 395 David St - 1936.*

*TOP RIGHT: Delivery Fleet - 1936. Jock, Billy Dimoline, John, Harley D. Indian & sidecar, Pedal car, Rugby Van.*

*RIGHT: The Cart Horses.*

In 1939, Jock Haberfield had suffered a bleeding duodenal ulcer that made him unfit for military service. However, he was to serve his country and the military in a different way. Haberfields won various contracts to supply some of the Army units with milk. Despite their increased workload, both Jock and Annie worked on various committees raising funds for troops comforts while bringing up a young family: Lawrance James (Laurie) was born in 1942 and Judith Anne (Judy) in 1944.

## Horses make a comeback

Petrol shortages in the war forced a return to the horse for household deliveries. Jock got Jack Maloney and Jack Bauerle to build stables for five horses at the factory and home deliveries were by way of two-wheel floats pulled by "Bess", "Pet" or other horses.

Ron's earliest memories of the family business revolve around these wartime horses. "Jack Bauler built the stables on the corner of our site near the old St Patrick's tennis courts," Ron says. "There were five stables, a harness room and a feed room. The paddocks were across the road in Hovell St, where my house stands now, and there was an old shed there. It was my job when I was quite young to bring the horses across from the paddocks each night and to feed them chaff and oats.

"Often we had sat down to tea and Dad asked had I fed the horses. If I had forgotten, I would have to go across straight away to do it. I had to find the horses with a hurricane lamp even on screaming, howling nights. One night I went across to the shed where the horses were kept and there was a dead man there. He used to sleep there and he had died in his sleep. I had to go up to the inquest.







"The milk runs started between 1am and 3am and the stables had no electricity. So the drivers had to go down there with hurricane lamps to get the horses and harness them. We had terrible trouble teaching the drivers a run because labour was very scarce in the war and some of the drivers had no experience handling horses or the harness. The horses were shod at Eddy's blacksmith shop in Townsend St. Nev Eustace in Townsend St repaired harnesses and our vet was Bill Berry, of Fallon St.

"The horses were very cunning and would often get out of the paddock and go walkabout in South Albury, or down to Les Gray's farm or Doctor's Point.

"I'd find a gate open I and could spend an hour or two chasing them. (Gwen and Judy were called in to help find them, too). If some were still missing, the last desperate act was to cycle over to the pound near the saleyards (where the new Albury Base Hospital was opened in 1994) and they'd be looking at you over the fence. Of course, by this time it was evening and there was all the hassle of getting the pound keeper to release them, because we had to have them back to do the runs.

"Usually the horses would go back to Haberfields at the gallop. They were very 'human' horses and some would not do certain rounds. They might remember they had had an accident on a particular round. Some horses would bolt and wreck the cart."

Haberfields kept horses through the 1950s, though the company had more motor vehicles by then. Ron says: "In later years, when there were more motor vehicles about, we lost horses through being injured in accidents. We tried to get them back to health because a good horse for a milk run was very difficult to find and not all horses could do it. Ours were cross-breds and semi-draughts."

In the early 1940s, Albury was still relatively small, with the hillsides of Monument Hill, West Albury and East Albury being largely undeveloped. The town did not extend beyond the David St cemetery, and Glenroy had humpies for poor people who did not get a milk run.

"Mum's brother-in-law, Eric Nagle, was the foreman driver," Ron says. "He had been with Haberfields from early

days and knew all the runs and did all the relieving. He lived in Olive St near Brown's Lagoon.

One driver who was with Haberfields more than 30 years was Russell Murray, who did a run seven days a week, in addition to working at Arnold's the Olive St fruit and vegetables dealer. He was so dedicated to his job that if he was sick



he would get his wife to go out with him on the run.

Another driver who did a Lavington run liked to drink and would get arrested in the day for being drunk and disorderly. "Drivers who were too sick to do a run would come and knock us up late in the evening or early morning and I had to go and get Eric out by cycling down to his place in the dark," Ron says. "If Eric couldn't do it, I might have to do the run myself. I was 12 or 13 at the time."

Ron always had an affinity for horses and could ride from nine or 10 years old. He pestered Jock until he got his own pony. "It's name was Dynamite, and Dad bought it at the Wodonga horse sales," Ron says. "But Dynamite was one of those horses that would shy and it happened the first time I came across from Wodonga.

"We got rid of the horses in 1960 and took Morris and J2 Austin vans."

Like Ron, Laurie Haberfield's earliest memories of the business (in the late 1940s) are helping feed and collect the horses and going with his mother to dress the cheese hoops. The Haberfield family was completed in 1949 when Bruce Robert was born.

TOP LEFT: Radical new design, 4 wheel milk lorry.  
 ABOVE: Horse drawn milk cart - 1940's.





ABOVE: John 1935 - Back end of factory horse drawn wagon - "Boys" room and double garage. Workers were provided with lodgings and meals.  
 RIGHT: John & Jock, Rugby Van - 1935.  
 FAR RIGHT: House 395 David St with factory at rear - 1935.



CENTRE LEFT: Ron & Gwen - 1940  
 CENTRE RIGHT: Family - 1949. Left to Right: Jock, Laurie, John, Ron, Judy, Gwen, Bruce & Annie.  
 LEFT: John, Bruce, Judy, Gwen, Laurie, Ron - 1949.  
 ABOVE: Jock, Bruce & Ron - pictured with Ron's Stud Illawarra Shorthorn heifer. - 1950.





## Starting to make cheese

After the war, Haberfields gradually built up the business to meet a growing demand. It signed contracts with more farmers, especially in the Bonegilla, Bandiana, Leneva and Staghorn Flat areas, as well as parts of West Wodonga since covered by housing estates.

The Haberfield children got to know this area very well: they often went with their mother in a panel van as she picked up milk cans from the farmers, and delivered milk and ice-cream to the camps. Jock wanted a truck and bought an old ex-Army International which had a body made for the Tallangatta butter factory. Annie drove that, too.

Among Haberfields' small suppliers on the fringes of Wodonga was Les Boyes, of Willow Park, later a Mayor of Wodonga. Another was Streets' farm on Boyes Rd, Baranduda, which supplied Haberfields from the 1940s until the Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation bought the land 40 years later.

Albury was proclaimed a city on December 20, 1946, as it approached the required 15,000 population. City status brought a new optimism. Dean Street's shop verandas were outlawed and modern shopfronts being installed. Private house building picked up enormously after being virtually frozen during the war, with 148 new buildings being recorded in 1946. Albury's first six NSW Housing Commission homes were completed in February 1947 on the south side of Glenly Street, North Albury. Haberfields quickly extended its runs into North Albury and Lavington,

then beginning to develop as a suburb rather than a village of orchards.

Production of Cheddar cheese started in 1946 as a way of utilising surplus milk. Raw milk was used until 1952. The more dairy farmers that Haberfields took on, the bigger the milk surplus every spring. "After a lot of soul-searching, Dad started to make cheese at the rate of 300 tons a year," Ron says. "He had help from the Department of Agriculture and other people to do this."

Jock bought the cheese vats from a Walwa cheese factory that closed down. They had stainless steel inside and heavy wooden boards outside. John recalls: "They were quite large and we took one of them over to the house to be a swimming pool." Judy splashed around in that same vat, an experience she can still recall now that she is a champion Australian triathlete!

Norm Fellowes, formerly of Kiewa (whose father was long the Albury Botanic Gardens curator), was Haberfields' first cheese maker. In 1946 Haberfields started by making 14 and 40-pound cheeses and sent them to the Producers' Distributing Society Ltd (PDS), the big grocery produce people before supermarkets started. PDS, famous for its Allowrie butter, had a local depot at the corner of Macaulay and Wilson St.

TOP: Trucking Cheese - 1949. 14 and 40 pound round cheddar. Left to Right: Jock & Judy, Frank Daley (driver), Jim Cakebread (cheesemaker), ?, Henry Styles (book-keeper) - Cheese to Albury railway for delivery by iced cooled rail wagon to P.D.S. Sydney.



Ron explains, "At first the cheeses were sent by rail to Sydney, packed into trucks with ice boxes. Later Haberfields used Alec Anderson's Roadair Transport. Still we had a surplus of milk, so PDS told us to export it to England and we made 80-pound cheeses for this, waxed and boxed in eight-sided pine boxes with slats. These came from Arnold's, and part of my job as a teenager was to make up the boxes. It was heavy work lifting the cheeses in and out of wax baths. When we put in two to a box, we'd nail on the slats. This work went on until we had the Cryovac (vacuum packing in plastic) machine."

"Practically everything in the cheese-making process was done by hand, and involved heavy physical work, for example in leaning over vats or turning the heavy cheeses."

Cheese became more important from 1953, when exports to England began. John Haberfield took over as cheese-maker and quickly learnt the first statistic about cheese-making: 1000 gallons of milk makes 1000 pounds of cheese. (to put it metrically, 1000 litres makes about 100kg) John says the cheeses were not sold as "Haberfields" because in those days the company did not have the marketing facilities and stuck to 80-pound cheese.

Peters established its own icecream depot in Volt Lane, Albury in 1946. However, Haberfields handled other icecream, such as Swallows in 1950-54. Judy Rolevink remembers how the children loved Swallows icecream. "If we had any damaged packs, we would be allowed to eat the icecream," Judy says.

Records show that in December 1948, Haberfields employed six drivers, three factory hands and two clerks, a total of 11, plus Jock as owner-manager. Milk production continued to expand and in 1949 the company won the contract to supply milk for the Kiewa Hydro-electric Scheme at Mt Beauty. This was to have an important effect on Haberfields' operations in the 1950s. In late 1949, the company bought its first oil-fired steam generator, replacing an old wood-fired boiler. Judy remembers one Christmas when her father cleaned out the old boiler and left black footprints on the carpet. "I thought it was Santa Claus," she

says. Gwen's memories of the Christmas season include helping roll up hundreds of Haberfield calendars and put rubber bands on them

In 1947, a 15-year-old Albury girl, now Mrs Doreen Watkins, came to Haberfields to work in the small office, after an unusual encounter with her new boss. "A man came up to our house in bib and brace overalls and said he was Jock Haberfield and had advertised the job," Doreen recalls. "He worked really hard in those early days and hard work never did him any harm."

The office was really a tiny room at the front section of the factory, near Jock and Annie's home. "There was only one other girl (Marj Paech) in the office in 1946," Doreen says. "We had a typewriter and adding machine, but we had to do the accounts by hand. An accountant (J. Sinclair) came in about once a month and it was only later that Haberfields took on an accountant (Jack Rowe)."

In the late 1940s, there were about six milks runs, each requiring a round book of 200 to 300 customers that had to be written up by Doreen every fortnight. Eric Nagle was still working for Haberfields when Doreen joined, and so was Russell Murray, who had 32 years with Haberfields delivering milk. Doreen retired in 1990.

Another form of paperwork involved butter rationing. In 1946, butter was still rationed and dairies were supposed to supply shops only according to the ration coupons they received.



LEFT: Staff - 1950. Left to Right: Frank Daley (driver), Doreen Keller (office), Charlie Henry (book-keeper), Russel Murray (house deliveries and factory hand), John Haberfield, ?. Vincent (factory hand), Eric Nagle (house deliveries and collector), Charlie Nagle (factory hand) & Jock.







## Into the Fifties

The 1950s were marked by significant changes in operation and distribution almost every year. They will be looked at in more detail below:

1. John and Ron Haberfield joined the company after qualifying at Hawkesbury Agricultural College;
2. Bottles and bottle-washing underwent big changes and free school milk required another range of bottles, the one-third pint.
3. Horses were gradually replaced by motor vans.
4. Improved pasteurisation methods were introduced, enabling Haberfields to handle much bigger quantities.
5. Carton packaging of milk began in 1958.

In November 1950, Haberfields sales consisted of more than 600 gallons a day, made up of 276 gallons retail, 195 gallons wholesale, and 135 gallons to shops. It also sold 50 boxes of butter and 180 gallons of cream per week. Extra business was being picked up gradually, for example by buying a Bandiana run in 1950 and supplying milk to Henty in 1951.

All the Haberfield children helped their parents in the factory while they were still at school. The eldest, John, who was Albury High School captain in 1949, remembers washing bottles and bringing over the horses from the paddock across Hovell St to the dairy, for instance. In 1950 John went to Hawkesbury Agricultural College and two years later came home with a diploma in dairying, with honours pass.

John says: "When I came home, my youngest brother, Bruce, was still a baby but mum would have him with her when she worked in the cheese area. We had a spare cheese vat that made a perfect playpen. Mum would put Bruce in it with his toys and because it had an insulated jacket that could be heated by steam it was quite warm for him."

Sister Judy also remembers her mother hooping cheeses in the factory at this time while she and Bruce played with wax. "She always cooked a hot mid-day meal for us every day," Judy says. Doreen Watkins remembers Annie bringing in the washing to the factory to dry on wet days.

In 1955 John married Albury girl Joyce "Joy" Free who also had attended the Albury High School. After their marriage she returned to the Albury High School where she taught mathematics for a further 30 years while holding several executive positions on the staff.

Jock and Annie encouraged all the boys to obtain formal qualifications. Ron went to Hawkesbury in 1954-56 and received a diploma in agriculture and Laurie went there in

LEFT: John about to take Ron to Hawkesbury Agriculture College to enrol for Agriculture Diploma course - 1954.

TOP RIGHT: Commer Truck used for farm pickup of milk cans - 1956

CENTRE: John bottling school milk - 1960's.



1960-61 and took home a diploma in dairy technology. Judy attended a refresher's testing course at Hawkesbury. Bruce studied at the Australian National University and became a Bachelor of Economics in 1967, gaining a Masters in Business administration from the University of NSW in 1971. In the 1980s, Ron's sons, David and Ian, obtained a Bachelor of Applied Science in Food Technology and an Associate Diploma in Food Control respectively from Hawkesbury in the 1980s and returned to work at the factory. John's son, John Leslie, has worked at Haberfield's since 1972 and Ron's son, Brian, started in 1976 - and after a long break overseas, came back into the business.

John's memories of starting work full time in late 1951 are that "we all did a bit of everything in those days". He worked in the factory by day but occasionally had to be called in to relieve a delivery man who was sick. Horse-drawn floats were being withdrawn by that time, but John remembers an unusual Repco motorised float which the driver steered from a platform at the rear. "It was almost a copy of a horse-drawn float and the brakes came on immediately you stepped off the platform," John says.

"In the late 1940s and early 50s, the demand for milk to supply the Kiewa hydro-electric scheme made us look for new suppliers," Ron says. "We sold the milk to the contractor, Bill Wright, who had a dairy at Tawonga in the days when the Kiewa Valley Highway was just a rough, gravel road. In the mid-50s, we put on a couple of contractors to bring in the milk. The first was Norm Jones, of Kergunyah, who got the first semi-trailer to supply Haberfields.

As Haberfields started to move up the Kiewa Valley, it began to buy Commer trucks from the Albury dealer, Edgar Passant. Ron says: "We got Alf and Jack Bowden, who had a welding business in South Albury, to design a truck body for double-decking the cans, and it was so successful the other dairies copied it. It had a strong frame with canvas sides. Haberfields bought Commer trucks from Passant's for 20 years." (Passant's Olive St showrooms were demolished for a new police station in 1960, and his next showrooms became the Ten Pin Bowl in 1966).

Bottles went through three phases at Haberfields: first there were the imperial-measure bottles with cardboard





tops, then the ones with aluminium tops, and finally the metric bottles introduced in 1973, when one pint became 600 ml.

Bottle-washing went through four phases, starting with the physically-demanding system using a trough. Ron describes the original system: "It was a wide trough with rounded bottom, two foot six inches (750mm) deep and with steam injectors to heat the water. The empty bottles were loaded in rows and the trough filled with water. At one end of the trough were three bottle brushes. One had to hold a pair of bottles on the rotating brushes to clean them out. The



bottles were then rinsed and put out to dry, before being put into crates. During this period, the factory operated belt-driven machinery from a common drive shaft with pulleys.

The second system used a conveyor to take bottles loaded upside down in crates through a series of tanks and sprays, including a caustic solution. In the mid-1950s we brought in a soaker washer, again with a caustic solution but the bottles were also cooled and dried. Finally we had a more sophisticated system called a hydro-soaker."

Aluminium foil caps replaced the old cardboard wad tops in ordinary milk bottles in 1952, requiring a completely new type of bottle. The old bottles, made deliberately to hold the cardboard tops, were thrown into an old air-raid shelter next to the factory. Everyone forgot about them until in 1972 some sewerage works were being undertaken and the old bottles were found.

"It was quite a find because we got a whole range of our early bottles," John says. "We took crates of them to store in a warehouse in Bridge St, but someone set the place on fire and we lost the lot." Consequently such bottles are now quite rare and fetch good prices among bottle collectors.

Doreen Watkins well remembers that the delivery men used empty bottles for change, copper in one bottle and silver in the other. As an office girl, she had to pour out the coins and count them before taking them up to the bank in a canvas bag on her bike, or if she was lucky, hitch a ride in a vehicle.

ABOVE LEFT: Austin delivery van - 1957  
 ABOVE RIGHT: Morris delivery van - 1959  
 RIGHT: Removing brine tank to enlarge office - 1953.  
 Baker Motors Crane.

## Free School Milk

In October 1951, free milk was introduced to Victorian schools. As the Government required pasteurised milk and Haberfields was the only pasteuriser in the area, it naturally won the contract (when the Kiewa Butter and Cheese Factory and Creamery Co. Ltd. was able to pasteurise in 1954, Haberfields lost that contract to that company). Free milk meant Haberfields purchasing a big supply of one-third pint bottles. In March 1952, it started the free milk supply to NSW schools.

"We thought the children would get fed up of plain milk so after a while (in 1956) we flavoured it, using chocolate, strawberry and banana," John says. "Later we thought we would do something different and came up with a light-green spearmint flavour. But word got around it tasted like toothpaste and the children wouldn't touch it."

The free school milk ended in 1974. John believes school milk was not as successful as it might have been. Milk was delivered cold to schools, but naturally warmed up in summer. "The children would not find it palatable or refreshing, and this turned many children off milk," John says.

About 30 were employed at the factory as business built up in the 1950s, but all the family helped the business in some way. The boys were there during school holidays or weekends, and the family input helped things to keep going seven days a week. Often the work involved long daily hours in summer when two collections were made.

As Laurie Haberfield entered his teens, and his brothers were away at college or worked in the factory, he found himself being ask to help out more. "If someone was sick, a driver would come up the back veranda and shout 'we want someone to go out on the run'," Laurie says. "This was about 2am in the morning, so we used to dread going to bed and being woken up to help on a run. Sometimes I managed to







get back to bed and have some sleep, but, depending on the run, there sometimes wasn't time." This happened in the mid-1950s when Laurie was aged 12 to 14, but he never had to miss school because of the work. Occasionally he had to take the reins on a run but generally helped a driver.

Gwen was 11 when Bruce was born and in the 1950s she and Judy did much of the household chores to free their mother to work in the factory. Judy remembers her parents setting the pace. "I have got a lot of admiration for my father, because he learned so much and achieved so much, and Mum was also such a hard worker," Judy says. "We all did our bit."

Haberfields was, of course, not the only dairying company serving the Border District. Holdenson and Nielson Fresh Food Pty Ltd., best-known then for its Iceberg brand butter, was doing well at its butter factory on the Lincoln Causeway, and the cheese factory erected next door in 1942. In 1951, Dairy Farmers Co-operative Ltd took over the old Albury District Rural Co-operative Society Ltd, from which Jock Haberfield had bought the first pasteurising plant some 20 years previously. Milk shortages plagued Australia in the early 1950s, particularly in Sydney, and the Dairy Farmers Co-operative move into Albury made it an important southern source for milk.

Also in 1951, the Kiewa dairy factory commenced whole milk sales from a new milk products factory in 1952 and supplied the Sydney market. This was the start of a new era of intensified competition. Until these changes began, farmers generally supplied cream (not milk) to the factories, but by 1960 few were doing so.

The 1950s brought on-farm improvements, chiefly as a result of rural electrification schemes. At the 1955 Albury Show, for instance, Albury dealer Jack Skinner was exhibiting the new Ideal milking machines "complete with belt-driven plastic pulsators, Cycle washing, swivel releaser, weighted relief valve, larger capacity vacuum tank, pipe lines, milk indicators and a host of other features".

TOP: Laurie & Jock - building extensions - new boiler room - 1956.  
CENTRE: John - building extensions - new boiler room - 1956.



Another dealer, Atkinson's, featured the Dairy-Kold dairy milk chiller with a Frigidaire condensing unit and stainless steel bulk vats. However, the days of the traditional little dairy farmers were numbered and by 1960 only a handful of farmers were still supplying cream to dairies.

Kiewa's transformation into the North Eastern Dairy Co. Ltd. is told in Ross Coultard's book, *A Spirit of Co-operation* (1993). Mr Coultard claims Tallangatta Butter Factory and Creamery Co. Ltd considered buying Haberfields in 1958, but decided the price was beyond its capacity. Kiewa and Tallangatta executives took part in a joint trip to Canberra regarding the supply of milk to the national capital. This resulted in discussions that led to Kiewa and Tallangatta amalgamating in 1959 to form the North Eastern Dairy Company Ltd. Holdenson and Nielson's Wodonga interests were purchased in 1962 and Springhurst joined the enlarged company in 1963.

## New look for Pasteurisation

Pasteurisation took on a new look in 1951. Jock and Annie's determination to pasteurise milk in the 1930s, 40 years before it became compulsory in NSW in 1972, was the making of Haberfields. In 1951, the old method of heating milk to 145 degrees Fahrenheit for half-an-hour in batches was replaced.

Haberfields bought an Alfa Laval "high temperature short time" pasteuriser for 1693 pounds. Ron says the switch to the Alfa Laval pasteuriser changed the face of the industry because it could produce quantities of milk much more rapidly than previously, 1000 gallons an hour.

The new system heated the milk to 162 degrees for only 16 seconds. Instead of filling and empty the machine, the staff could run it through in continuous flow.

Pasteurisation in the 1930s and 1940s occurred in D-shaped insulated baked enamel coated steel vats on legs, with spiral coils of tinned copper. Ron says the milk was heated by means of rotating spiral coils, worked by a system of belts and pulleys. Because only 250-300 gallons (300 gallons is 1363 litres) could be heated per batch, the work was time-consuming and a hard manual job.

"The method produced nice sweet milk because the long heating time got rid of the feedy flavours," Ron says. "The milk was cooled by being pumped over a washboard ripple cooler. Brine at minus 2 or 3 degrees Celsius was pumped through the cooler, reducing the temperature to nearly freezing. I remember the system built up icicles of milk and we kids always pinched them as 'icypoles' to eat.



I sometimes licked the frozen ice on the cooler, until one day my tongue stuck to the brine pipe and someone had to come along and pour water on it to release me."

"Most of the dairying equipment was tinned copper until gradually replaced by stainless steel in the 1950s."

Haberfields expanded sales into Wagga Wagga in 1951 and supplied milk to that city for a decade until local pasteurised milk was available. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Haberfields (or Holdenson and Nielson) intermittently supplied Army, RAAF and migrant camps at Bonegilla, Bandiana, Kapooka, Wagga Wagga and Uranquinty.

The Bonegilla immigration centre opened in December 1947 and built up to a peak of 10,000 migrants in the 1950s. "We supplied up to 600 gallons (2727 litres) a day to the immigration centre at its peak," Ron says. "We delivered special 12.5 gallon (57 litres) cans of pasteurised milk to the kitchens and canteens there. Labour was very scarce in the 1950s and most of our factory workers then were New Australians.

"There were Germans, Poles and Lithuanians early in the piece, and later Greeks and Spaniards, but really a very diverse range of nationalities. They were very hard workers but a lot spoke little English at first. They did all the jobs in the factory, but did not go out on milk runs because good English was important for that. Many became our family friends. A lot of the Greeks stayed in the Albury area and are retired now. Some of them have done very well.

Doreen Watkins remembers Haberfield always ran the business as if everyone was in the family and there was a friendly, happy-go-lucky atmosphere based on mutual trust. Overtime was unheard of, and Doreen often worked after hours without expecting pay. "It would be nothing for me to go back after tea to finish a job because I knew it had to be done," she says. "There were no hassles - you just did not go to work if you were sick and there was no time clock. On Albury Show days, Jock would tell us about 11 o'clock to take the rest of the day off and enjoy ourselves, though it was not officially a holiday."

Cheese production took a new turn in 1957 with the introduction of Cryovac, the vacuum-sealed plastic packaging of the product. Rindless cheese was a vast improvement over the old method of using cloth and wax to retain the moisture. "We started marketing Albury Haberfields Cheese and used a picture of the Albury War Memorial, but got into trouble with the RSL," John says.

By the mid-1960s, cheese production reached 350 tonnes a year (compared with 2000 tonnes in 1996). Growth was steady, for example, in 1974-75, Haberfields used 5.75 million litres of milk for cheese, a figure that had risen to 20 million litres in 1996.

Also in 1957, Jock and Annie extended the partnership to include all their sons and daughters, though this had no noticeable effect on the company's operations. John and Ron now worked at the factory, but the younger children were still at school. Gwen left high school in 1956 and worked in the Haberfields office for several months until she left for Rocla Pipes in South Albury. Gwen was a Cub-Mistress and, when she married, her little brother, Bruce, was in the Cubs' guard-of-honour. Gwen's husband, Ted Stevenson, was then a primary school teacher and the couple left Albury in January 1959 and lived in various parts of Victoria before settling in their present home at Cohuna. Ron married Barbara Shipard in 1960. Barbara comes from Culcairn and worked at Mate's before her marriage.



## Carton packaging begins

Carton packaging began in 1958 with Perga heated-sealed wax cartons, but sometimes wax was found floating on the top of the milk. Kiewa had a monopoly on Perga cartons at first and were the first to sell cartoned milk to Albury, Wodonga and district in 1957, but Haberfield obtained Perga from Dairy Farmers Co-Operative in Sydney. Judy Haberfield was at high school then, and remembers helping seal the early cartons. An automatic carton machine was bought in 1962 using square-shaped Satona waxed cartons, but this method of packaging did not become wholly satisfactory and successful until the hygienic Pure-Pak polythene-coated cartons were imported.

The Ex-Cell-O Corporation in the U.S. had developed the Pure-Pak system in 1967 for merchandising milk, fruit juices and other products in paper board cartons. Thousands of American dairies began to use the Ex-Cell-O form, fill and seal machines to package their milk in Pure-Pak cartons. The first Australian dairy to switch from milk bottles to Pure-Pak cartons was Hunter Valley Dairies of NSW. In 1968, Haberfields was the second to use Pure-Pak cartons, but continued using bottles for several years.





Coincidental with the arrival of Pure-Pak cartons in 1968, Haberfields introduced homogenised milk. It also introduced sachets (sterilised plastic film) in January 1969, offering customers a free plastic jug to hold them. The sachet machine had an additional use in 1972, producing "Habbys", a separate product of flavoured water to be frozen by shops and sold as ice blocks.

Haberfields imported Ex-Cell-O Pure Pak carton blanks from Somerville Industries in Canada, the only source of the imperial sizes used in Australia, then installed a Pure Pak QP form, fill and seal machine.

Haberfield was the first in the country to produce half-gallon (2.27 litres) Pure-Pak cartons. (In 1968, the Gadsden Group of Companies reached an agreement to produce carton blanks in Australia and provide the form, fill and seal machines to dairies adopting the Pure-Pak system. After initial production in Sydney and Campbellfield, near Melbourne, a new Pure-Pak factory was opened at Broadmeadows in 1970).

One significant event for Albury occurred in 1969 when Haberfields sold the western portion of the horse paddock to the Greek community for \$20,000 on which to build a church and hall.

## Goodbye milk cans

Milk cans, long a feature of every Australian dairy farm, started to disappear from the Border District in 1960 when Haberfields commenced farm bulk pick-ups. Instead of using the 10-gallon or 12-gallon (45.5 or 54.5 litres) cans, farmers were asked to buy refrigerated storage vats, from which Haberfields tankers could pump milk directly. It was an expensive move for dairy company and farmers but paid off in the improved quality of milk achieved.

A handful of Victorian dairy factories started bulk collections before Haberfields but the company was the first in NSW to get 100 per cent of its farms on bulk pick-up by December 1963.

The demise of the humble milk can ended a long era for the Australian dairy industry. Each farmer painted a coloured band or two of paint on his cans so that they could be readily identified at the factory and reclaimed later. But they meant heavy work for both the farmer and the dairy worker. Apart from the back-breaking work of loading and unloading them, there was always the risk of picking up a sliver of metal from the worn base, and naturally the cans carried every kind of farmyard debris.

Ron recalls the pride each farmer had in maintaining his supply at a certain level, because he knew his neighbours would quickly notice if there were fewer cans than usual. To overcome this, some farmers would only partly fill their cans, perhaps explaining to the truck driver "I have a crook back".

Grading of milk in the can days was done by "sensory" methods, that is smelling the milk and looking at it. A grader's ticket was required for this quality control work. "You'd lift the lid and tell from the rising smell if it had off flavours," Ron said. "You'd learn to tell various things like what sort of grass the cows had been eating," he said. "And by looking at the milk you could tell, for example, that there was blood there if it was pink, an indication of mastitis. You might see extraneous material such as flies floating on the surface if the farm had left the can open for it to cool off. On rare occasions, a cat or rat was found in a milk can."

Cans were graded by individual farm, the milk being dumped in a vat, weighed and the amounts recorded in a ledger. Finally the cans were put on the can washer, another strenuous part of the work.

The decision to switch to bulk supply collections lost Haberfields more than 30 small farmers. "Most of the small farmers laughed at us for trying to introduce bulk collections and said they would never do it," Ron said. "Some switched to supplying the Kiewa factory and others went out of dairying altogether. It's true some farms were very small, maybe supplying only five or six cans a day, say 50 gallons (227 litres)

There were hundreds of little dairy farms around Albury-Wodonga up to the Fifties. The average farm had 80 cows, while 120 cows was considered a big dairy farm. The larger farmers would supply about 20 cans, or 200 gallons (909 litres) daily. Today 200-300 gallons would be nothing. Some of our suppliers give us 5000-6000 litres a day, and the average in 1992 is about 3000 litres daily.

Haberfields bought a new semi-trailer with a 2100 gallon (9546 litres) insulated tank for the bulk collections, though racks were fitted on the side to carry the old milk cans before the can collections were ended.

The first vats installed on farms for the bulk collections were brine cooled but later the milk was chilled by direct refrigeration units. These required bigger motors and more power. Blackouts occurred when too many farms were pulling on the power supply and the State Electricity Commission of Victoria undertook a substantial upgrade of power lines to overcome this problem.

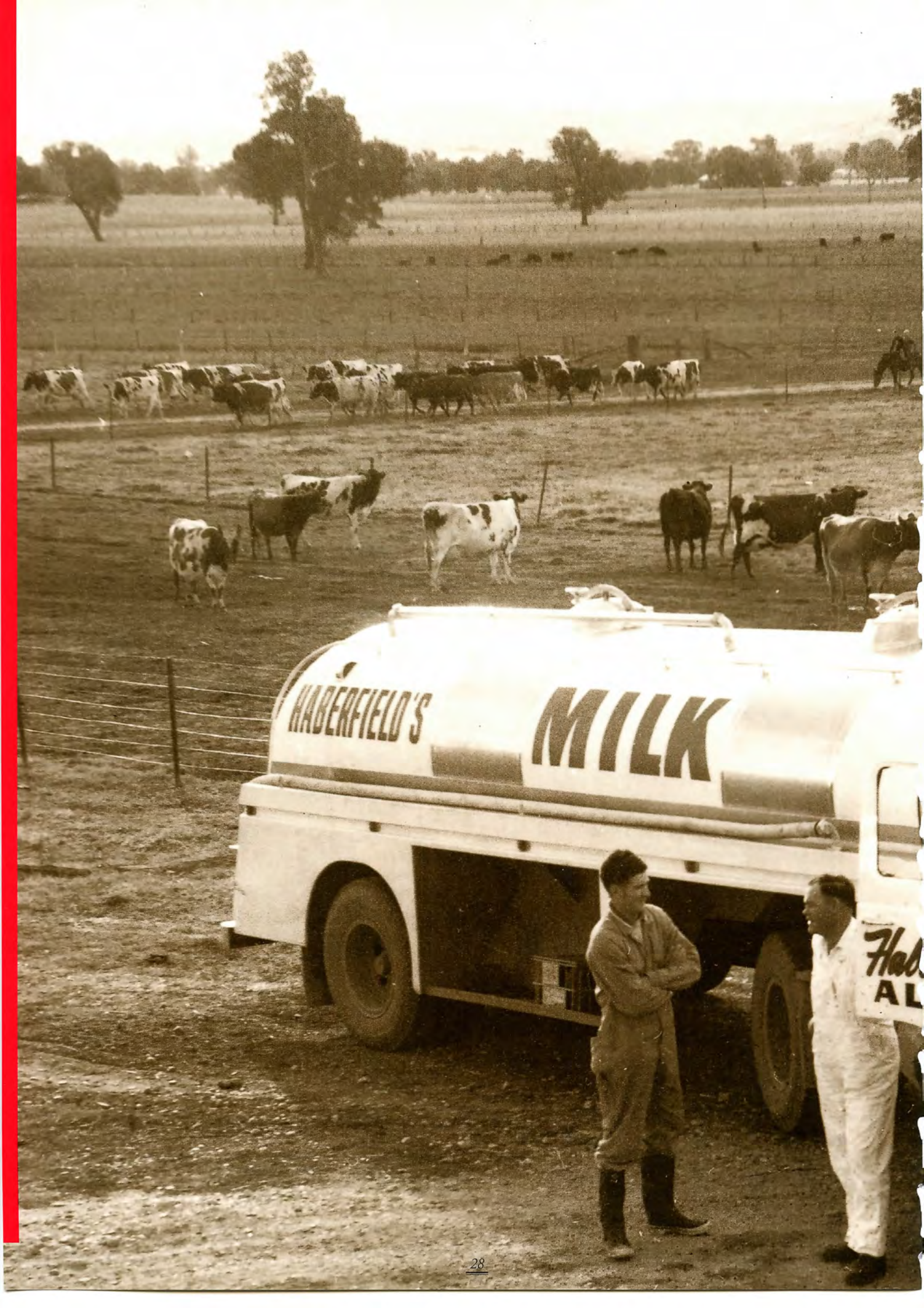
Today, Haberfields' suppliers each have refrigerated storage vats which cools the milk to below 4 degrees Celsius. Smell and taste are still used to sample and grade the milk as it is being pumped into the insulated collection tanker, which ensures the milk's temperature does not rise by more than 1 degree during transport.

*ABOVE LEFT: Ron packing Perga waxed cartons of milk - 1958*

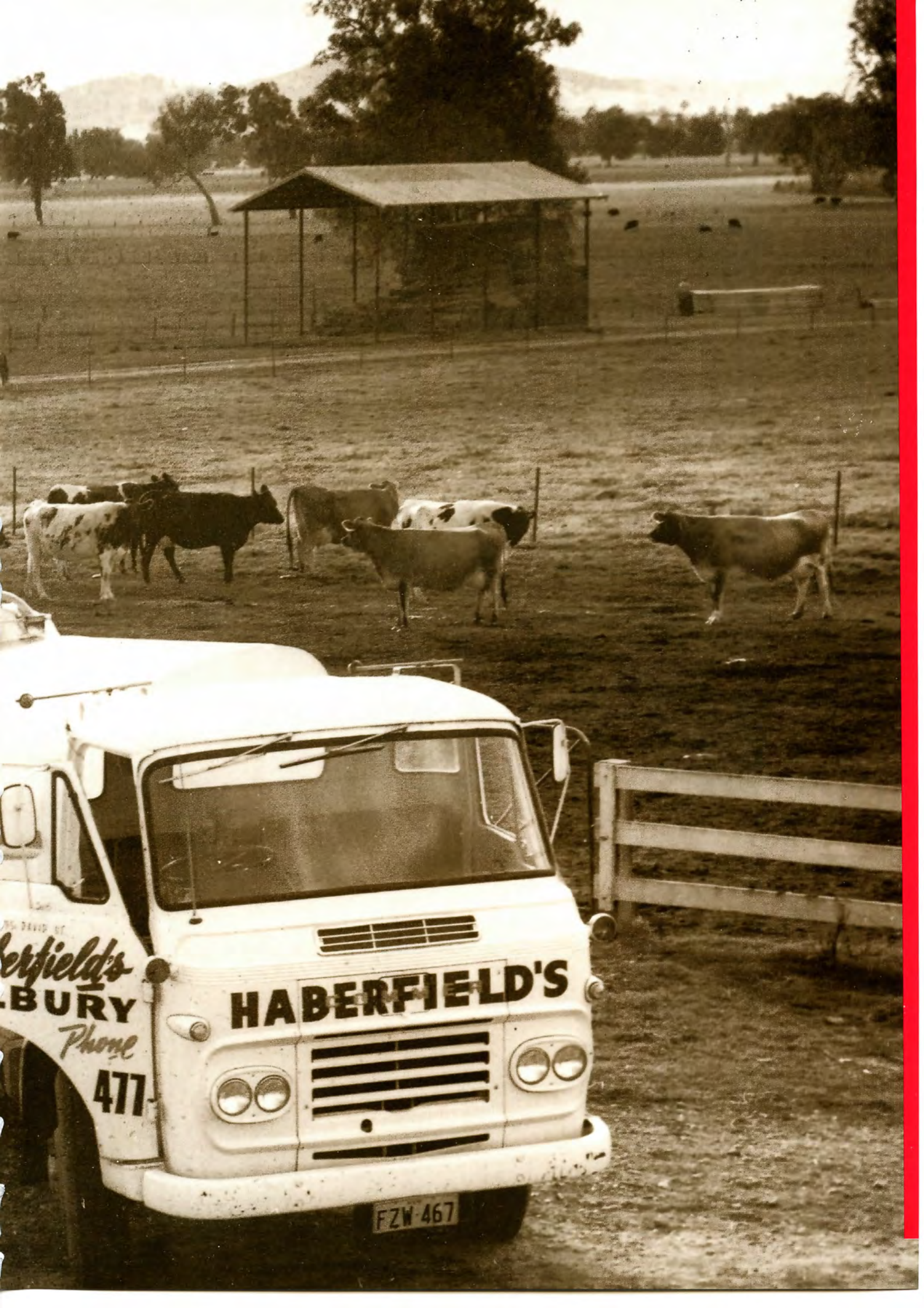
*LEFT: First cheese label - 1958.*

*NEXT PAGE: Second Milk Tanker (2,260 gallons) at Ron Rapsey's farm, Bonegilla. Lindsey Rapsey and Ron - 1962.*

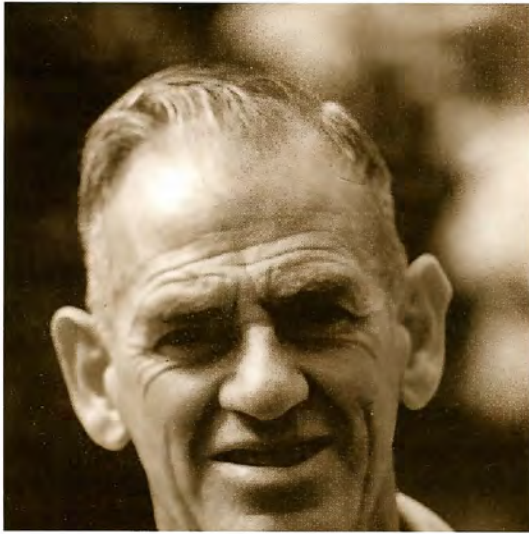














## Management changes

Albury witnessed an important change in 1962. The extension of the NSW railway gauge to Melbourne curtailed the huge trans-shipping operation that had provided hundreds of jobs at the Albury railway station for many years. Business people were naturally worried about the economic impact this could have on their own businesses and sought ways to promote the city better and so foster and create new jobs.

An immediate result was the first Albury Trade Fair and Motor Exhibition organised by the Rotary and Apex Clubs of Albury, the most ambitious project of its kind attempted until then.

Jock Haberfield was the Rotary president when they started and John Haberfield the Apex president. The show was held at the Farmers and Graziers woolstore in Smollett St, now the Australian Taxation Office. The head of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority, Sir William Hudson, opened the first show, a significant choice for Haberfields as it turned out the following year (see below).

Haberfields began to change in the mid-1960s as Jock suffered serious illnesses and John, Ron and Laurie took on great responsibilities. All were well-versed in all practical aspects of the business. John generally worked in the factory and supervised the milk runs from the time he left college in 1951. Ron, who graduated in late 1956, saw to the milk collections and the truck deliveries and spent much time on the trucks himself. Laurie came into the business after graduating from Hawkesbury in late 1961 with a diploma in Dairy Technology.

Haberfields was then gearing up for a big increase in cheese production and Laurie went into the cheese area initially. John handed over the cheese production role to Laurie, who established a testing centre that later became the laboratory. His sister, Judy, left Albury High School in 1961 and worked in the laboratory under Laurie's supervision in quality control and testing until her marriage to John Rolevink in 1967. She obtained a milk tester's certificate. (Jock and Annie allowed Judy to take a break of several months when she toured Europe with the Young Australia League). After her marriage, Judy and John settled in Adelaide.

ABOVE LEFT:  
Clockwise: Jock, John,  
Laurie, Ron - 1961.  
ABOVE RIGHT:  
Milk Packaging - 1962.  
Andres Bourdis - bottler  
John - Carton machine  
CENTRE RIGHT:  
Bruce Haberfield - 1968.  
RIGHT: Judy Haberfield  
in laboratory - 1964.



As John assumed further marketing and sales roles, Laurie took over responsibility for labour and the technical side of things. Jack Rowe, a qualified pharmacist, looked after the accounts from 1952 to 1968, with Kevin Burns as assistant.

In 1965, Ron was placed in the office full-time to oversee the day-to-day administration, while John took on wider administrative responsibilities and was heavily involved in the "milk wars" and marketing.



## Bottling to the Beatles



Bruce was the only brother who did not make his career with Haberfields, though he was a director and played an important financial role in the company.

Bruce was born in May 1949 and, like his brothers and sisters, was playing in the factory at a very early age. His earliest memories are of the children in the neighbourhood queuing up for icecream. Another happy time he remembers was the great bonfires on waste ground in Hovell St, when old tyres and other rubbish were disposed of.

"I think all the children started working for the business at seven or eight years old," Bruce says. "The first time I got paid for anything was to help unload empty cans, after the milk had been tipped into the weighing vat. The family often went to the Wodonga drive-in cinema on Saturday evenings and, if the truck came back from the farms in time, we could all go."

As a student at Albury Public School and Albury High School, Bruce usually worked at the factory Saturday and Sunday mornings and on holidays. "By the time I was in high school, I had a job in the bottle room tipping out the returns (unsold bottles with milk still in them), carrying out rubbish or turning the cheese." He also helped with the horses at times before they were completely phased out.

In 1962, the Beatles were popular and Bruce and his friend, Lindsay Warren, were mad on the Fab Four. Bruce





and Lindsay used to play reel to reel tape recordings of Beatle records while they turned cheese maturing in the cheese curing rooms but the rest of the staff were not so appreciative and insisted they kept the doors shut.

At 16, Bruce went to the Australian National University to study economics and political science. The family had expected him to follow his brothers to Hawkesbury Agricultural College. Although he was accepted there to do dairy technology, he took up an offer of a teaching scholarship to the ANU. During holidays he helped on the milk runs.

After gaining his Bachelor of Economics, he went to the University of New South Wales and gained a Master of Business Administration, the youngest to obtain the degree.

During school holidays, Bruce continued to work at Haberfields on milk runs and other duties. "I hated the night run and after being woken up by Uncle Eric one night I refused to do it again," he says. "My father was disappointed but after that I only did day runs. While doing the business administration course, I started to do ledger work at Haberfields to get to know about the commercial side of the business, and I canvassed for new customers in Albury, which was growing at that time."

Bruce might have come home to Albury to join the factory, but while on campus in Sydney, he was interviewed by Mt Isa Mines and went straight from university to work for that company in Brisbane as a financial analyst working in the resource project evaluation and treasury areas. His subsequent work for Haberfields is detailed later.

## Milk for the Snowy

Taking milk to the Snowy Mountains gave Haberfields a new dimension in 1963.

The company had supplied the Kiewa hydro-electric scheme at Mt Beauty from 1949, but the Snowy was something far bigger. The scheme impounds the waters of the Snowy River and its tributary, the Eucumbene, at high elevations and diverts them inland by tunnels driven westwards through the Snowy Mountains to the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers. As well as generating electricity, the scheme provides an additional 2.350 million megalitres of water for irrigation in the Murray and Murrumbidgee valleys. Construction continued throughout the 1950s and

1960s and at its height in 1959, the scheme employed 7300 workers. There were 10 regional townships and more than 100 camps in the mountains, all of whom needed milk.

George Edwards was the contractor who took Haberfields milk up to the workforce building dams, tunnels and power stations near Khancoban, and later the supply was extended to both sides of the mountains.

Haberfields' indoor staff and delivery men were relieved when the company ceased Sunday deliveries in 1966.

A new venture began in 1969 when Haberfields took out the Sunburst fruit juice franchise, better utilising the packaging plants.

## Milk Wars

Haberfields were caught up in "Milk Wars" over interstate trading in the years 1968 to 1975. While they form an important part of Haberfields' history, the legal issues involved had wide implications for Australia generally. It took the High Court of Australia to settle the issues.

Since the 1940s, Haberfields had bought milk from Victoria, processed it in Albury and sold it on both sides of the State Border. Although the old inter-colonial Customs system was abolished by Federation in 1901, many Border restrictions or anomalies remained, especially in regard to licensing of various kinds. Indeed, some still survive into the 1990s. However, Haberfields' operations went on for many years without much bother about interstate restrictions.

By the late 1960s, Haberfields was supplying customers over a large area, having acquired several runs in Wodonga, Tallangatta as well as meeting the contracts for the military and the Snowy Mountains Authority, and others in Western NSW. It had been sending milk by train to the Lake Cargelligo region west of Condobolin for several years, keeping it cool in summer by covering it with wet hessian. In 1967, Haberfields won a contract to supply 2000 gallons (9092 litres) a week to Cootamundra for a year. At one time the company's operation stretched from Griffith to Bright and interstate controls did not bother the company.

All this changed in 1968. The Victorian and NSW Milk Boards already regulated distribution in the capital cities and were gradually extending their areas over their respective States. By late 1968, the boards controlled 85 per cent of NSW and 82 per cent of Victoria, with the Border



District on both sides of the Murray being "uncontrolled".

Trouble began when Haberfields found that the Victorian board had moved into part of the North-East and excluded the company from Wangaratta, Beechworth and Mt Beauty (but not Wodonga and Corryong). Haberfields decided to oppose the controls. But the supply of "Albury" milk to Wangaratta was regarded in Victoria as illegal "border hopping".

On September 3 1968, Haberfields, after introducing homogenised milk, began supplies of carton milk to Wangaratta at Albury prices, then 10c a pint, in defiance of the fact it was a Victorian Milk Board-controlled district. Wangaratta already had two established delivery runs either side of the Hume Highway, supplied by North-Eastern Dairy Company and Milford. NEDCO included the Springhurst factory and Milford had factories at Milewa, Wangaratta and Myrtleford.

On September 23, the Border Morning Mail carried a banner headline proclaiming: "Milk Price War On The Border". It reported that the North Eastern Dairy Company had delivered to Albury and Wodonga shops one-pint Pura Milk cartons selling at 8c, which was 2c below the Haberfields price. The Pura Milk came from Metropolitan Dairies Pty Ltd, of Broadmeadows and the cartons were identical to the new Haberfields ones.

The Victorian Milk Distributors Association was the principal in the war, and the decision to sell discounted NEDCO Kiewa milk in Albury was a retaliation for the Haberfields invasion of the North-East. The Victorian Milk Board stated: "A NSW dairyman has seen fit to send milk over the Border into Victorian Milk Board districts. This could lead to the disruption of the stability of the whole milk industry in this State. What the industry has done is to take retaliatory steps in an endeavour to maintain stability." The Victorian Dairyfarmers Association supported the distributors' association initially.



ABOVE LEFT: Cheesemaking cutting the curd - 1963-5. Laurie cheesemaker.  
 ABOVE RIGHT: Milk packaging room - 1969. Graeme Hobbs Purepak quart/pint machine - John Purepak half gallon machine.  
 LEFT: John - First Purepak 'NP' carton machine - 1968.



John Haberfield said at the beginning of the milk war that Haberfields believed the firm would be protected by Section 92 of the Australian Constitution guaranteeing the right to free interstate trade. Haberfields had been supplying Pure-Pak milk to Carroll's supermarket at Wangaratta for weeks when the "war" broke out, although the milk board said supermarkets could not sell milk.

The Victorians soon backed off in Albury, where their attempt to capture the market failed even though their milk was 2c a pint cheaper. But Kiewa and Milford milk was kept 1c or 2c lower than Haberfields at Wangaratta for some time.

John Haberfield told the newspapers that Wangaratta people continued to buy Haberfields' homogenised cartoned milk because they got a better service and their milk was delivered in the evening instead of early morning. "We think we're there to stay," he said.

By November, the Victorian Milk Board was trying to canvass contracts in North-East that would have required the farmers to supply milk through NEDCO. But the dairyfarmers who supplied Haberfields loyally gave the board a cold reception. Such a move would have cut of Haberfields supplies. One of Haberfields' suppliers, D. Godde, of Ebdon, said: "It is like belonging to a family to supply Haberfields. I think I am their biggest supplier and they have made it possible for me, as I develop my farm, to increase my quota. I know this is their attitude to other farmers." Other farmers said the Victorian board contract systems "kept farmers chained to their cows for 12 months!"

The board also talked of declaring a milk district, that is, to control the production and distribution of milk. The farmers saw the board's actions as a bid to get a monopoly on milk supplied by producers so that it could thwart Haberfields' mushrooming trade in Victoria.

By Christmas 1968, the Victorian Milk Board was shown to have failed to dislodge Haberfields from Wangaratta, and the company had extended their service to Myrtleford and Bright. Board officials then proposed to compensate Haberfields to get out of Wangaratta. Meanwhile, Haberfields helped out the Shepparton distributor, Midland Milk Pty Ltd, by packaging Goulburn Valley-produced milk in Albury for sale in the Goulburn Valley.

In February 1969, the Victorian Milk Board escalated the milk war by telling all North-East producers they would get





board contracts if they stopped supplying Haberfields, and threatened again to declare Wodonga and Corryong as milk districts. Some of Haberfields' 30 to 40 suppliers changed their allegiance and signed contracts with the board.

At the height of the milk war, a *Border Morning Mail* editorial described the episode as a lion-and-mouse confrontation:

"For 50 years from 1851 when Victorian became a separate colony, the two States squabbled about trade, and Customs posts lined the Murray. Then came Federation and trade was supposed to be free and unfettered. But hardly had Section 92 been adopted when the States were at it again."

The *Mail* pointed out that people in both States wanted goods and services from the other. It said it should not be beyond the wit of man to protect the milk industry and maintain free trade.

On March 12 1969, the Milk Board served summonses on seven Wangaratta retailers, including Carroll's Foodmart, which distributed Haberfields milk, alleging they sold milk not vested in the board.

Haberfields supported the retailers and on April 1 the magistrate, Mr Humphrey, after a five-hour hearing, dismissed two of the charges on the grounds that previous cases dealing with similar interstate trade provided a solution. He adjourned the other charges. The Milk Board, on the advice of the Crown Law Department, appealed to the Supreme Court, but before the case got there, all parties agreed to take it to the High Court of Australia. First, there

was a rehearing before Mr Humphrey at Wangaratta, but he again dismissed the charges. The first High Court hearing proper was held in October 1969, but it was not until July 1970 that the judges ruled in Haberfields' favour.

Meanwhile, the shires of Hume and Culcairn decided to get tougher with small dairies supplying NEDCO by insisting they obtained \$2 licences. There were 36 such dairies in Hume Shire.

On June 1 1970, Albury milk prices went up for the first time in eight years and were fixed at 10c for bottled pints and 11c for cartoned pints. However, prices remained a cent or two cheaper than elsewhere in NSW.

No sooner than the Victorian "milk war" was over, the NSW Dairy Industry Board, which by then had denied Haberfields and NEDCO access to Wagga Wagga, extended its controlled area to Gundagai. The board forced Haberfields out of that town in 1970, only seven months after it began supplies to vendor Neville and Peter Hand. There were hints that it would extend its control to Albury, prompting Alderman Ralph Marks to comment that it was "part of a growing iron curtain over the Murray River which divides Victoria and NSW".

Meanwhile, Haberfields suffered a blow in January 1973 when Murray Goulburn bought out Vern and Win Elliott in Albury and E. Lemke on the Wodonga Flats, who both supplied milk to Albury, and Graham Gehrig, who covered Wodonga. Lemke and Gehrig had bought most of their milk from Haberfields, while the Elliotts received most of theirs from Dairy Farmers Co-operative.



## The second big war

The second big “milk war” was waged in 1973-74, after the NSW Dairy Industry Authority moved to proclaim the Albury area, and to ban the sale of Victorian milk in Albury.

This was an extraordinary move, considering the momentous decision taken by the Commonwealth, NSW and Victorian Governments on January 25 1973 to create Australia’s national growth centre in Albury-Wodonga. The Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, had promised: “On the banks of the Murray, for too long the symbol to separate rather than link Australia’s two great States, we will initiate a new era of Commonwealth-State and local government co-operation for the building of new cities throughout Australia”. The Governments agreed to jointly plan and develop the twin cities as Albury-Wodonga.

At that time, Albury’s population was about 30,000 and Wodonga’s 13,500, but the planners set a target population of 300,000 by the year 2000.

Interstate co-operation was not in the minds of the milk authorities, however. The NSW Dairy Industry Authority chairman, D. Crowfoot, announced in Albury on May 29 1973 that legislation to exclude Victorian milk from Albury could be expected by August or September.

Opposition was overwhelming, from the Albury City Council, the Wodonga City Council, the member for Albury, Gordon Mackie, and from the dairyfarmers. Dairyfarmers in North-East Victoria were quick to claim the NSW Dairy Industry Authority was driving a wedge through the Albury-Wodonga complex. In any case, they considered it entirely wrong in principle that those who had supplied milk to Albury for so long should suddenly be deprived of this trade without compensation. But the NSW move was not entirely unexpected. The Victorian Department of Agriculture had anticipated NSW action and said in 1972 that it would be prepared to allow the supervision by NSW authority officers of Victorian dairy farms supplying milk to NSW.

Albury City Council demanded the NSW Government step in to retain a Victorian milk supply to Albury, which received about 80 per cent of its milk from that State. The Country Party member for Indi, Mac Holten, urged the Commonwealth to approve legal assistance to any Victorian

farmers defying the proposed ban. Coincidentally, the NSW moves came as Murray Goulburn, Haberfields and North East Dairy Company (NEDCO) were applying to supply Canberra with milk.

While the arguments about controlling Albury continued, Haberfields and Murray Goulburn Co-operative Company Ltd reached an agreement in November 1973 to rationalise trade. Haberfields exchanged its Victorian trade for Murray Goulburn’s NSW trade. It meant Haberfield no longer distributed milk in Wodonga, Wangaratta, Corryong, Yackandandah and Myrtleford, while Murray Goulburn left Albury, Corowa and Urana to Haberfields.



This arrangement did not involve the North Eastern Dairy Company, but it removed the threat of a chaotic milk-processing and distribution situation developing between two major suppliers.

Despite all the protests, the NSW Dairy Industry Authority gazetted its control over Albury on March 1 1974. This required all milk for consumption in the NSW Murray milk district had to be distributed through DIA-registered processors, i.e. Haberfields in Albury and

Murray Goulburn at Berrigan. The third home delivery firm in Albury, Dairy Farmers Co-operative, ordered its milk from Haberfields, having discontinued most of its milk production in 1972 and concentrating on cottage cheese from that date.

Defying the regulations, NEDCO still took its Victorian “Kiewa brand” milk into Albury, the Border Morning Mail carrying a dramatic picture captioned: “A NEDCO truck crosses the Border into Albury early yesterday morning with its outlawed Victorian milk”. A company driver was pictured committing the “crime” of delivering Kiewa milk in Schubach St.

ABOVE LEFT: Cheese manufacture room - 1958.

ABOVE RIGHT: Cheese manufacture hooping curd.

Don Edwards - 1966.

ABOVE CENTRE: 80 pound waxed cheddar for export to England in Curing room. Each cheese had to be turned daily - 1964.



The NSW authority reacted by prosecuting NEDCO and Carroll's Foodmart Pty Ltd. The basis of the row was that NEDCO delivered Kiewa milk to be sold at the Carroll's-operated supermarket-type store at The Village, Albury, and elsewhere in NSW.

NEDCO and its predecessors had, in fact, been selling milk in NSW for 20 years or so. It processed its Kiewa milk at Tangambalanga and distributed the pasteurised product from, among other places, a depot on the Lincoln Causeway in Wodonga - the old Holdenson and Nielson site. Carroll's received such "Victorian" milk at its Albury store and sold it from there.



By controlling Albury, the NSW authority made NEDCO's practice of selling Kiewa milk in Albury illegal, in that it was not milk that had been pasteurised in accordance with NSW law.

Haberfields immediately lost sales because Kiewa milk prices were lowered. The NSW authority quickly subsidised the NSW milk to the same price as Kiewa but it was clear the law had to take its course. Solicitor Stan Jackling recalls that the cases reached the High Court in August 1974 but there was an extraordinary delay in reaching a decision.

The Authority had prosecuted under Section 54 of the NSW Pure Food Act 1908. Regulations under that Act provided that no person should supply or sell milk for human consumption in NSW that had not been pasteurised by a holder of a certificate of registration issued under the Dairy Industry Authority Act 1970.

Mr Jackling said in an interview for this book that Chief Justice Garfield Barwick handed down the principle judgment on October 17 1975 after a 5-1 decision. He ruled that Section 54 of the NSW Pure Food Act was void.

Justice Barwick said that NEDCO, in the course of its interstate trade in treated milk and in milk products, brought them from Victoria into NSW for sale in NSW. There could be no doubt that the transport operation was part of NEDCO's interstate trade and commerce and therefore protected by Section 92 of the Australian Constitution, he said. It followed that Carroll's activities formed part of NEDCO's interstate trade, and therefore Carroll's also

enjoyed the constitution's protection.

John Haberfield expressed his company's disappointment at the ruling and feared it would cause problems for the dairy industry. In fact, it maintained the status quo in the Border District and the local repercussions were minimal. In contrast, the Border Morning Mail welcomed the High Court ruling and said the confrontation could have been avoided had the Border District been zoned a special market area.

Interstate trade in milk remained an emotional issue in Victoria, however. There was much debate on the Victorian Dairy Industry Association pooling system, in which milk

equivalent to one per cent of the NSW market was sold through VDIA pools into NSW, while all-milk levies were transferred into Victoria from other States, mostly NSW, to support export returns.

A more co-operative spirit soon prevailed in the Border District and it is worth listing some aspects.

In November 1976, Haberfields, NEDCO and Inland Dairies of Wagga Wagga agreed on a rationalisation,

with a zoning of retail and wholesale operations in Albury. Haberfields was to pack all milk for Albury and district while NEDCO supplied raw bulk milk for blending with Haberfields' supply. NEDCO also supplied milk to Inland Dairies, of Wagga.

In June 1977, milk with the new name of "Country Delight" went on sale in Albury, a combination of NSW and Victorian products. Haberfields packaged and processed it for the NSW Dairy Industry Authority.

However, Midland started selling in Albury in 1977, and Haberfield's retaliated by selling at Yarrowonga in 1978. In March 1979, Haberfields signed a comprehensive agreement on milk distribution with the Victorian and NSW dairy industry authorities, NEDCO, Midland and Murray Goulburn. Milk once again began flowing both ways across the Murray River, when Haberfields began supplying Yarrowonga as well as Mulwala. Conversely, Midland began selling Shepparton milk to Albury in October 1979, but the competition was accepted.

In 1979, Dairy Farmers Co-operative lost an important contract to supply the ACT Milk Authority in Canberra, but found a new market for its 38 North-East farmers supplying its Albury factory - the milk went into the pool for Melbourne and was collected by NEDCO.

For the record, Murray Goulburn absorbed NEDCO in 1985, while Dairy Farmers Co-operative (later Australian Dairy Foods Co-operative) continued until September 1992, when its Fallon St factory was closed after 65 years. Most of





the Fallon St equipment went to the company's factory at Hexham, NSW, but some outdated equipment was given to the Albury Regional Museum.

Haberfields admits to the occasional failure, one of which was a venture into Darwin. John says the use of deep freezing to deliver the milk in refrigerated trucks in 1983 was not successful and the venture was withdrawn after five months.

## A change to metric

Milk wars notwithstanding, Haberfields continued to make progress in various ways in the 1970s. In 1971, the partnership was converted to two private companies:

1. Haberfields Milk Pty Ltd (for manufacturing and processing);
2. Haberfields Dairy Pty Ltd (distribution).

Also in 1971, Haberfields was the first dairy to introduce modified milks, under the brand names Hi Pro and Vita Life, but the products were dropped later because of low sales. Computers were first made use of in 1972 when Haberfields engaged the Albury Computer Centre to process wholesale accounts, though it bought its own NCR accounting machine in 1975.

Compulsory pasteurisation was introduced in NSW in 1972, some 40 years after Jock and Annie Haberfield began selling it! In 1973, Wodonga City Council applied for Victoria to declare that city a pasteurised area as well but there were still those who argued that people needed a choice and that "pure milk was better".

In 1973, Haberfields began collecting milk from farmers in the Finley areas and the first lightweight milk tanker was bought later that year.

*FAR LEFT: Cheese to P.D.S. Sydney by Roadair Transport - 1964. Annie's garden in foreground.*

*ABOVE RIGHT: David Haberfield working during school holidays - half pint cartons - 1974.*

As the High Court was pondering on interstate trading in October 1975, the industry was undergoing the change to metric bottles and cartons. A strike by glass-makers delayed the introduction of the new 600ml bottles, but there was no problems with the new cartons, which went on sale on October 4, 1975. New Haberfields carton prices were: 300ml (half-pint) 12c; 600ml (pint) 21c; one litre 35c, two litres 68c. (prices had crept up from 11c a pint in 1971)

The year 1977 stands out for several important changes, starting in May, when Haberfields was allotted two-and-a-half per cent of Canberra's milk supply (raised to six per cent within two years). The Canberra trade rose steadily, so that in 1990-95 Haberfields supplied 20 per cent of the ACT market, some 6 million litres a year. Haberfields became a part-sponsor of the Canberra Raiders in 1993.

After introducing the "Country Delight" milk in bottles and cartons, Haberfields followed up by installing a two-litre carton-filling machine, "Haskin".

In December 1977, evening retail home deliveries began. Deliveries were incurring substantial losses for Haberfields and in order to address this and give vendors equity interest, the company introduced its lease vendors system. (In 1993 runs were handed over to vendors completely in exchange for a contract to purchase all milk supplied from Haberfields.)

As the 1970s came to a close, bottles were still being used by Haberfields but their share of the market against cartons was declining. Moove flavoured milk was introduced in January 1978.





Haberfields  
Milk Plant  
395 David St.  
Albury, 21 3455  
Tonn 12550 kgs  
Achs 28900 kgs

# Haberfields Milk

F1017







## The big re-build

Haberfields entered the 1980s approaching its golden jubilee. The business established by Jock and Annie in David St in 1931 had grown enormously. Haberfields had to decide whether South Albury was an appropriate place to continue, given that the area was largely residential and the business was now a 24-hours operation. Environmental issues such as factory and truck noise and effluent disposal were being raised. A relocation to Thurgoona was considered and a feasibility study carried out in 1980.

Laurie says the family decided in 1981 to rebuild on the old site and have no regrets about it. "The two-year rebuilding program took us from a cottage industry to a modern factory, but there were problems," Laurie says. "Because we had to keep going all the time, we built the factory over the top of the old buildings while maintaining production."

The dairy shop and offices were completed in 1982 and the whole new complex finished in 1983, at a total cost of \$1.5 million. Ron's wife, Barbara, has worked at the shop since 1983.

Glass bottles were withdrawn in November 1982 after declining to 12 per cent of Haberfields' 100,000 litres output. At the same time, use of 2 and 4 litre plastic bottles began, the first sales being at Corowa.

Haberfields continued to be in the forefront of technology skills and production and increasingly brought in engineering and other expertise from outside the family. Many essential functions of the factory are today controlled by programmable logic controllers (computers) such as cleaning of storage tanks and milk tankers; transfers from tank to tank, refrigeration, the plant malfunction alarm system and temperature monitoring.

Haberfields lost its old rival in 1985 when the North Eastern Dairy Company ceased to exist. At the end of October it was taken over by Murray Goulburn Co-operative after most of the 1600 shareholders ratified the "merger". Two NEDCO directors, Bob Reid and Lindsay Jarvis, were placed on the Murray Goulburn board. The



Tangambalanga factory continued the brand names Kiewa Milk and Tallangatta Cheese.

At the time of the takeover, NEDCO was processing 80 million litres a year, drawing on 220 farmers. Murray Goulburn quickly rationalised the Tangambalanga factory and closed its plants at Cobram and Milawa, though opened a new cheese plant at Cobram. In 1986, Murray Goulburn sold the Holdenson and Nielson site on the Lincoln Causeway to the Rural City of Wodonga for tourism-related purposes. Rivalry between Haberfields and Murray Goulburn continues in the 1990s. An agreement when Haberfields packaged Murray Goulburn NSW milk under a common brand ended in 1993 so once again it became a very competitive market. In 1995, when supermarket chains intended to supply their Border District outlets with Melbourne milk, Haberfields successfully campaigned to ensure its milk was also placed on the supermarket shelves.

One little-known aspect of Haberfields' work is to produce kosher products for the Jewish community in Australia and "Halal" products for Islamic countries. Production of kosher market cheese began in 1989 and involved a rabbi visiting the factory to inspect and supervise the process. More recently, Chalav Yisrael products were produced, requiring the rabbi to observe the entire process from milking to packaging. Haberfields is accredited for "Halal" products for the Muslim community.

*LEFT: Laurie, Jock, John and Ron - 50th Anniversary - 1981.*

*ABOVE TOP: Haberfield's Albury factory after rebuild - 1983.*

*ABOVE: Factory garden and garages as viewed from Hovell Street after garden lay out - 1962.*





## Swissfields arrives

In 1987, Haberfields purchased a site at Turner Court on the Melrose industrial estate in Wodonga for a second factory. Laurie, who supervised the \$1.5 million project, says the initial reason for building in Wodonga was to comply with Victorian Milk Authority requirements. By having a Wodonga factory, Haberfields could obtain a milk quota for Melbourne for the company's Victorian suppliers. The procedure was that the Victorian milk would be received in Wodonga, processed in Albury and distributed from Wodonga. However, in December 1988, after the Wodonga factory had been built, the authority agreed to Haberfields' long-time requests and also registered the Albury factory! But by then the Wodonga factory was producing Swissfield cheeses.

Swissfield Cheeses Pty Ltd began as a joint venture between Haberfields Milk Pty Ltd and the Swiss Cheese Promotion Group consisting of the head of a milk-cheese company, a barrister, and accountant and their wives, all Swiss citizens. The first Swissfield cheeses were launched in 1988.

Master cheesemaker Andreas Eberle, aged 27, came to Albury-Wodonga in February 1988 with 400 years of family cheese-making tradition behind him. Since the 1600s, most of the male members of his family have been cheesemakers.

Andreas had worked in his father's factory at Enlewilen, before coming to Haberfields on a two-year contract. "Swiss cheesemakers are the custodians of a very special art and I am pleased to have been given the opportunity of demonstrating this art here," he said on arrival. "Producing good cheese, the Swiss way, takes time and patience, and everything must be just right." Ian Haberfield spent a year on exchange in Switzerland learning about the European operations.

Unlike the continuous cheddar processes, the Swiss cheeses are made in batches and are quite labour-intensive. Swissfield's first two cheeses, Tilsit and Raclette, were warmly received on the market. Raclette won first prize for

a non-cheddar variety in the NSW Division of the Dairy Industry Association of Australia Awards for 1988, with Tilsit gaining an Australian award for a semi-hard, smear ripened cheese soon afterwards.

Mungabareena, the Australian cheese produced by Swissfield, was judged the best innovative product in NSW almost as soon as it was released. Alpine Ring and Gruyere won other prizes. Other Swissfield cheeses are Emmental, Baby Alpine and Suisse Vale.

Ron Haberfield says Haberfields' ability to produce a constant supply of fresh milk all year round was a critical factor in the Swiss choosing the company for a joint venture.

"Our products are not only fresh and of top quality, but they

are substantially cheaper for the consumer than similar imported varieties," he says. Three years after their introduction, Swissfield cheeses were being exported to Japan and Korea. Swissfield was continuing to win prizes in Australia and Laurie Haberfield says their success showed Australians were becoming more adventurous in their cheese buying.

In 1990, Haberfields bought out the Swiss financial interest in Swissfield cheeses. At that time, the Swiss group had cash flow pressures, and because Swissfields had failed to reach breakeven

sales levels they believed further losses were unsustainable. Haberfields confidence in Swissfield was to be soon rewarded by increased sales and profitability.

For Laurie, the extra responsibilities at Haberfields as production director and increasing business commitments forced him to curtail his outside activities. As he said in 1974: "The running of a dairy is a very complicated and demanding business. There are many requirements and laws that we must fulfil to the last letter and, of course, we must also look after our clients."

Laurie has had a long involvement with Scouting and outdoor pursuits, including rock-climbing, abseiling and white-water canoeing. He became a Cub in 1950 and in 1959 was awarded the Queen's Badge, scouting's highest honour. As an adult, he worked with Cubs, Scouts and Venture Scouts and obtained the rare Wood Badge for youth leadership. In 1964 he began to produce the annual Gang





Shows in Albury, which by 1974 involved 130 Scouts and Guides, 85 of them on the stage and the rest backstage. He served on the Australian Gang Shows Committee, but by 1974, Albury Gang Show was one of only five such shows being staged in the nation. Laurie reached the position of Assistant Area Commissioner for Venturing in 1978-79.

## Catching up with family

Bruce Haberfield played an increasingly-important role in the family company in the 1980s while pursuing his own career in the MIM Group. In the mid-1970s, he had begun writing commentaries on the Haberfields annual company report, a practice that developed into a useful way of informing financial institutions of the company's healthy position. Promotions in MIM took Bruce through the jobs of senior analyst and assistant treasurer to become treasurer of MIM and then general manager (commercial). Based in Queensland, he travelled overseas frequently to see bankers and negotiated important loans sometimes involving hundreds of millions of United States dollars.

In 1990, Bruce accepted a position as chief financial officer of Highlands Gold Ltd (a member of the MIM Group), at Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea where he remained for four years before returning to MIM's Brisbane head office. Bruce left the MIM Group after almost 25 years service. Despite his heavy workload with MIM and Highlands Gold, Bruce maintained a close interest in Haberfields as a director in the business. His expertise in the financial and strategic policy area has proved valuable to the company for many years, as Bruce continued to keep in close touch by phone and fax with his brothers.

Bruce married Albury girl, Erika "Ricky" Katalinic, who gained her Bachelor of Education Degree in Home Economics and taught in Brisbane and later in Papua New Guinea when Bruce transferred to Port Moresby. They have two daughters, Katische, born 1975 who is studying for a Masters Degree in Business, and Mikala, born 1978 who is studying for her Bachelor of Education.

Bruce's sister, Judy Rolevink, has maintained a link with Haberfields by helping promote Swissfield cheeses and other products at the annual Dairy Classics promotions in South Australia. Judy and John's children, Lisa (born 1968) and Shaun (born 1969) both worked some summer holidays at Haberfields, but are continuing to live in South Australia. Lisa obtained a Bachelor of Applied Science in Adelaide in 1994 and pursued a career in laboratory science, while Shaun works in engineering as a technician radiographer. Judy pursued a number of interests and in 1994 competed in the World Triathlon Championships in Wellington, New Zealand, winning a bronze medal in her age group.

Judy also won the champion Australian female triathlete of her age group. Encouraged by sister Gwen, she also obtained a Bachelor of Design in Ceramics. Her husband is a technical officer in electronics at Phillips Electronics.

Gwen and Ted's children, Gary, Philip and Tony also worked at Haberfields some summer holidays. Gary in 1995 became chief executive officer of the new Corangamaitite Shire in Victoria. He has degrees in civil engineering and business management. Philip is house manager of the Yarra Yarra Golf Club and has qualifications in club management. Tony, a field engineer with Kodak, was completing a technology degree course in 1995.

By 1988, Haberfields was collecting milk from 62 dairy farms in the upper Murray/Khancoban region, the Kiewa Valley and the Finley/Mulwala region. The company employed 60 and yearly sales had reached \$11 million. A fleet of Volvo tankers delivered 30 million litres annually to the highly-computerised milk processing complexes in Albury-Wodonga.

Whereas in the 1930s, Jock and Annie Haberfield promoted the health and safety benefits of pasteurised milk, a company brochure now took a similar theme: "Haberfields cows graze on pastures that are over 300km from any major city; unpolluted pastures, where cows drink from streams and rivers that flow from Australia's high country. That's Haberfields' secret: pure, natural 'Country Fresh' milk. It's the company slogan and guarantee."



## Haberfields without Annie

Annie Haberfield died at the Mercy Hospital on January 20 1989 about 10 years after a stroke that had left her partially paralysed. Tributes flowed in as Jock and the six children prepared for a funeral service at St David's Uniting Church. Some referred to her qualities as a mother and friend, another said she had been "a true blue Aussie worker". A Border Mail obituary described Annie as a business pioneer and reviewed her career from the time she started selling milk at 13. Annie lived to see the arrival of five great-grandchildren as well as 14 grandchildren.

Jock continued to live at the David St home and visited the factory daily. He was naturally proud to be part of the company's diamond jubilee celebrated in 1991 and was accorded a special birthday celebration when he turned 85 in 1993.

ABOVE LEFT: Swissfields cheesemaking - Andre Eberle (Swiss Cheesemaster) - 1988.

CENTRE LEFT: Ron - 1993 Sydney Royal Show results - Baby Mungabareena Grand Champion Cheese, Gold Medals for Custard and Chocolate Flavoured Milk and Swissfields Golden Brie.

BOTTOM LEFT: Laurie - Swissfields curing room - Tilsit cheeses.

ABOVE RIGHT: Annie & Jock - 1981.





By then, Haberfields was exporting cheeses to the United States, The Philippines and other South-East Asian countries, the Bahamas, North Africa, Europe and New Zealand, as well as to Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Canberra and Brisbane. The most popular export cheeses were Port Wine, Liqueur Rum and Vintage Cheddar, as well as the Swissfield cheeses. Local customers had the choice of 250 varieties of Australian and imported cheeses at the Haberfields Dairy Shop.

In 1992, the Haberfield Community Fund was inaugurated with the aim of "giving something back to the community which has supported us so loyally for 60 years". The fund makes annual donations to worthy causes. The first donation of \$10,000 supported local Olympians such as water polo champion Guy Newman through the Australian Olympian Committee. Jock Haberfield handed over the cheque to Guy Newman on October 13 1992. Haberfields continued with \$10,000 donations. In 1994 the schools of the region were the beneficiaries, and in 1995 the Albury Base Hospital and Wodonga District Hospital received \$5000 apiece. In 1996, \$10,000 was distributed to sports clubs to encourage people to take up sport as a means of avoiding osteoporosis.



Haberfields committed an initial \$3000 and then called on local milk drinkers to show their support by collecting symbols from specially-marked Lite white, Shape and Haberfields milk cartons as well as Haberfields creams and cheeses. For each symbol collected by the public, Haberfields pledged to donate an extra 5c to the Olympic Foundation to the value of \$10,000. Local residents, especially children, rallied to the cause and the target was reached.

Swissfield Cheeses won the manufacturing category of the Albury-Wodonga Rotary Business Awards in 1992. The federal Trade Minister, Senator Bob McMullen, presented Haberfields with an export achievement certificate in 1995. The same year, Haberfields was named 255th in the top 500 private companies in NSW.

## Jock dies at 86

Jock Haberfield died on May 17, 1994, aged 86, having remained part of the family business to the end.

Many tributes flowed in and The Border Mail produced a full-page obituary headed: "Jock, founder of a dynasty". Several hundred attended the funeral service at St David's Uniting Church conducted by the Rev Kath Baldini. The 400 or so



mourners were drawn from a spectrum of business and public life, but especially from the dairy products industry that Jock had been involved with all his life. Bowlers with whom Jock had spent much time in his last years were also there. Terry McGoverne in *The Border Mail* next day described Jock as one of the city's worthiest citizens.

Jock's Samaritan style of putting his hand in his pocket to help someone along was also recalled. "That Samaritan style went on while Jock for 12 years nursed, bathed, cooked and gardened for Annie who had become almost totally dependent on him after a paralysing stroke," McGoverne wrote.



ABOVE LEFT: Ron, Jock, John and Laurie  
60th anniversary - 1991.

BOTTOM LEFT: Jock checking computer Balance Sheet  
printout - 1993.

ABOVE: Johnnie, Ian and David Haberfield  
3rd generation - 1991.

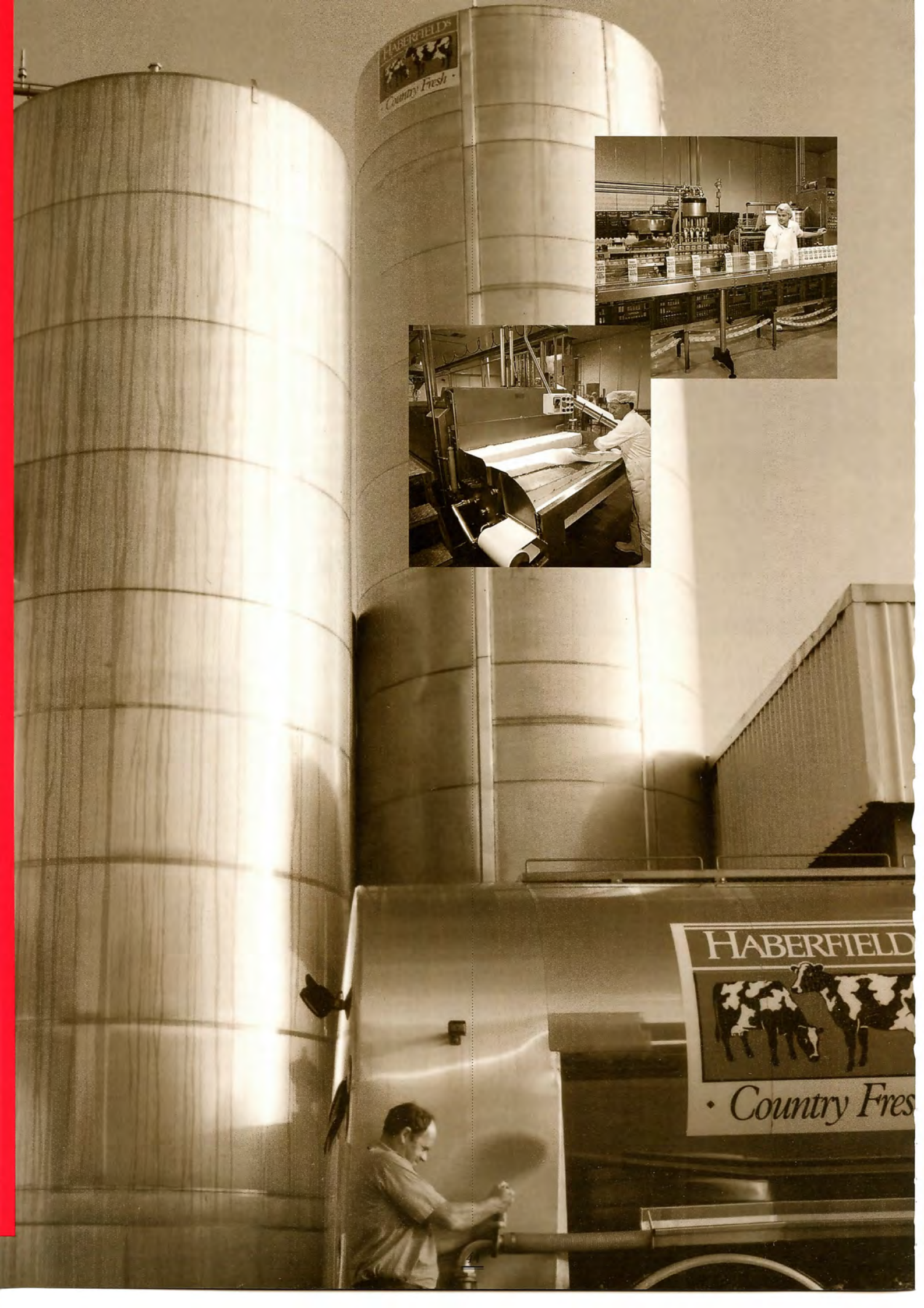
BELOW: Laurie & Jock 1992 Royal Melbourne Show  
Awards presentation. Champion Flavoured Milk.

Following Jock's death, John became chairman of the board of directors. John had retired in June 1993 and Ron's son, David, succeeded John as marketing director. David's brother, Ian, took over David's role in production, under Laurie as production director. David became the first of the third generation to join the board of directors. His brother, Brian, supervises transport, and cousin, John Leslie, has given Haberfields unbroken service since 1972. (For the record, John's other children are Dr Chris Haberfield, a civil engineer lecturer at Monash University in Melbourne, and Mrs Vicki Kuruvita, an architect and partner in her husband's photographic business in Tasmania. Ron's daughters are Sue Anne Haberfield, who works as a project manager for QANTAS in Sydney, and Mrs Kim McKinnon, who lives in Albury and has pursued a career in childcare, aerobics and as a dental nurse).

Brian originally started work with Haberfields as a fitter and turner in the workshop in 1976. He left the company to sail on one of the "Tall Ships", which eventually took him to Turkey. He then became a tour driver and travelled extensively in Asia and Europe, later moving to Africa to lead 4WD tours. He returned home shortly before his grandfather's death.







HABERFIELD'S  
Country Fresh



HABERFIELD  
  
Country Fresh





## Haberfields today

To end this history, we record the situation at Haberfields in 1995 - 96.

Haberfields operates from three locations: the main production plant at Hovell Street, South Albury, which includes the original factory site; the Swissfields factory at Turner Court, Wodonga and a large coolstore and cheddar cheese curing storage in Caroola Street, North Albury.

The Haberfields tanker fleet works 18 hours a day collecting milk, which is carefully tested, graded and pasteurised on receipt. Milk is pumped into silos, where it is held awaiting pasteurising and processing. Computers guide the milk and cream through the various stages of production and packaging, allocating product into three groups.

**GROUP ONE** is processed for packaging into several types and brands:

- ▶ Haberfields Country Fresh Milk;
- ▶ Haberfields Flavoured Milks;
- ▶ N.S.W. and Victorian Dairy Industry brands of Fat and Protein Modified Milks;
- ▶ Safeway Supermarket House Brand Milk
- ▶ Pura Milk for Albury/Corowa/Wodonga Wangaratta;
- ▶ Haberfields Dairy Custard.

**GROUP TWO** Cream is packaged into three types:

- ▶ Haberfields Rich Cream
- ▶ Haberfields Sour Cream and
- ▶ Haberfields Thickened Cream.

**GROUP THREE.** Cheese manufactured is in two divisions, in Albury and Wodonga.

- ▶ Albury produces Mild, Tasty and Vintage Cheddar Cheese; Colby Cheese, Cheshire Cheese, Australian Swiss Style Cheese, plus boutique cheeses Haberfields Port Wine Cheese and Haberfields Liqueur Rum Cheese, cheddar cheese which has been seeped in Rutherglen Port and Bundaberg Royal Liqueur.
- ▶ The Wodonga factory produces the Swissfield Cheese range of Tilsit, Raclette, Gruyere, Emmental, Mungabareena, Golden Brie, Suisse Vale and Ricotta Cheeses and have now extended their range to include a variety of Italian style hard cheeses.



Bulk raw milk is consigned to the NSW Dairy Corporation agents in Sydney and Wagga and is a licenced Agent and Processor for the Victorian Dairy Industry Authority. Haberfields also supplies 20% of the A.C.T. Milk Authority's requirements of milk for Canberra. Haberfields packs and distributes a range of fruit juices and fruit juice drinks, first begun in 1969. The company laboratory is a registered NATA laboratory, recognised by internationally by Testing Authorities. It tests all products, ensuring that they are free from harmful bacteria and chemicals. The laboratory helps research and develop new products in the continual drive to improve the products range.



MAIN LEFT: Milk and Whey Silos - 100,000 litres & 135,000 litres capacity Tanker 27,000 litres Driver Paul Powick.  
 TOP LEFT: Cartoning milk Andrew Pursche - 1993.  
 BOTTOM LEFT: Cheesemaker Graeme Cook unloading curd from Tebel vat - 1993.  
 ABOVE RIGHT: Tanker unloading and washing bay. Graeme Leitch - 1993.  
 ABOVE: Haberfield and Swissfield products.



## Parmalat arrives

Haberfields closed one era and entered another in October 1996 when Parmalat Australia Pty Ltd purchased the company. The purchase followed months of negotiation between the Haberfield family and the managing director of Parmalat Australia, Jose Roberto Duarte. "I am extremely pleased to acquire a business with such a highly reputable, prize-winning range of dairy products, including milk, cream, cheese, and dessert, plus a range of high-quality juices," Mr Duarte said when announcing the purchase.

Parmalat is Italy's largest dairy company, based in Parma, hence the name Parmalat, "lat" being the Italian word for milk. The Tanzi family established the business in 1961 and retains a 50.36 per cent controlling interest in the group since making it a public company in 1992. Calisto Tanzi is the president and managing director of the parent company. Mr Duarte says Parmalat and Haberfields have similar backgrounds, both being family companies based in the countryside of their respective countries. When Mr Duarte first arrived in Australia in late 1995, the Parmalat brand was already established in 22 countries. The Australian company immediately set about offering retailers its wide range of food products: dairy, juice, biscuits, pasta, tomato products and those with a pizza/focaccia base.

The intention of Parmalat in purchasing Haberfields was twofold. It wanted a springboard for the launch of the Parmalat brand dairy products into the Australian supermarket area, and to increase its presence in Asia.

"We have a turnover of US\$4.16 billion, and employ 18,500 worldwide," Mr Duarte says. "We are in Europe North and South America and in China. Australia is for us the door to entering the Asian market. Our first priority in Australia was to work with local people to sell our imported products. After that, we had the idea to look around at some companies to see if we could buy some of them, and we started negotiating with Haberfields in May. Our aim is to expand the Albury factory and the Wodonga factory in other products. We are the largest UHT company in the world and want to install UHT machines as well as produce, yoghurts, juices, desserts and tomato products."

In the purchase arrangements, Parmalat agreed to retain the name Haberfields for its established products in Albury and Wodonga. Also, Ron Haberfield was to continue as director, industrial; his son, David as director, logistics; and Laurie Haberfield as director, production. Ron said at the time: "The decision to sell was not taken lightly, nor did it come easily. It was full of emotion and all the rest of it. We did not want to sell, but it was getting harder because the bigger companies were becoming more powerful and more ruthless. In the end, the option to keep the company name and to grow was a good one."



## C O M P A N Y S T A T I S T I C S T O 1 9 9 6

- ▶ Annual turnover ..... \$22 million
- ▶ Annual milk intake ..... 44,000,000 litres
- ▶ Peak milk production period . . . . . October & November
- ▶ Number of employees ..... 20 female & 67 male
- ▶ Annual staff wages ..... \$2.6 million
- ▶ Number of products produced; ..... 110
- ▶ Annual cheese manufacture:
  - Cheddar Cheese ..... 1,600 tonnes
  - Swiss and other speciality cheeses. .... 340 tonnes
- ▶ Total export sales ..... \$4.1 million
- ▶ Cheese export sales to Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, South Korea, Russia, USA, Mexico, West Indies.
- ▶ Milk export sales to ..... Singapore.
- ▶ Number of farmer suppliers ..... 73
- ▶ Areas of milk collection: Finley Irrigation area, Upper Murray, North Eastern Victoria and . . local N.S.W. area.
- ▶ Milk sales to ACT Milk Authority 1995 . . 6,400,000 litres
- ▶ Returns to Farmers for all milk supplied through Haberfields in 1995. .... \$14 million

ABOVE: Left to Right: Sue and John Haberfield, Ron and Barbara Haberfield, Ricky and Bruce Haberfield, Brian Haberfield (kneeling), Laurie Haberfield (rear), Jose Duarte, Judy and John Rolevink, Joy and John Haberfield, Gwen and Ted Stevenson (rear), Ian Haberfield, David and Nanette Haberfield - October 1996