

QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

CHS 25

ST MARY'S CO-OPERATIVE DAIRY SOCIETY LTD COLLECTION

Cheese Factories, St Marys

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INTRODUCTION

St Mary's cheese factory was built about 1938-1940 by Murdoch Bros, Hobart. It was sold to St Mary's Co-operative Dairy Society Ltd in 1948. The Co-operative had met for the first time on 2 June that year. Always a small concern, it remained independent of the larger North-Eastern Co-operative Dairy Company (which became part of United Milk Tasmania Ltd in 1981) throughout its existence.

The St Mary's Co-operative manufactured cheese between 1948 and 1969 and contributed exhibits to the dairy produce section of the *Made in Tasmania* exhibition in 1967. The Co-operative's whole output was sold directly, although it apparently used Messrs Dawborns as selling agent initially. Early buyers included Murdoch Bros, Pearce & Pearce, Burgess Bros, F W Heritage (Hobart), O'Brien's (Campbell Town), Hobbs & Pilcher (Bothwell), C H Smith (Launceston), R P Furmage (Deloraine). Although cheese production had ceased by November 1969, the Co-operative continued trading for some time through its agencies. At different times, these agencies included Lawrence & Hansen Pty Ltd, Alfa Laval Separator Coy Ltd, Savigny & Smith (Launceston), Glazebrook Paints, and Goliath Portland Cement. By 1964 the Co-operative's profit was largely due to its various agencies and it was having difficulty sustaining its supply of cheese. The main reason cited for the closure of the St Mary's cheese factory a few years later was declining support by local dairymen and consequent reduced milk supply, but its production appears to have also been adversely affected by seasonal conditions throughout the 1960s, increased costs and local competition, changing market conditions, and complaints about factory wastes in the local water supply. The property was subsequently sold to J and J R Wines.

The collection was donated to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in 1994 during a major research project conducted by the Museum into the history of the dairy industry in Northern Tasmania by Jill Cassidy (see Other Sources) and September 1996.

1. Legal Records

- 1/1 Writ of summons against Benders Spreading Services 1967; Co-operative Industrial Societies *Rules*, 1928 edition; *Dairy Produce Act 1965* (includes related address given to the Australian Institute of Factory Managers and Secretaries May 1966); record of meeting of Butter and Cheesemakers' Wages Board Nov 1966 1928-1967

2. Minutes of Meetings

- 2/1 St Mary's Cooperative Dairy Society Ltd, minute book of meetings, 1948-1958 (includes list of directors 1948-1961) 1948-1961
- 2/2 Tasmanian Butter and Cheese Factories' Association, minutes of meetings (for minutes of meetings of the Association's North-West Section 1920-1946 see CHS 26, UMT Collection Item F.1/1) 1949-1952, 1961-1968

3. Correspondence

- 3/1 Correspondence re cool room insulation; Australian Society of Dairy Technology; Butter and Cheese Makers' Wages Board determination; factory inspection; orders etc 1948-1949
- 3/2 Correspondence re cheese prices; dairy utensils price list; penicillin treatment; Society membership application (includes Commercial Bank of Australia (Derby) cheque (unused); Tasmanian Milk Company; Tasmanian Butter and Cheese Factories' Association; C F Salter estate (includes share transfer agreement); pay roll tax 1950
- 3/3 Correspondence re cheese orders; dairy utensils price list; pay roll tax; cheese vat; Australian Dairy Produce Board; Society membership applications; fertilizers; equalisation subsidy etc 1951
- 3/4 Correspondence re cheese orders; export; paint deliveries; dairy equipment price lists; Food Technology Association; equalisation subsidy 1952
- 3/5 Correspondence re cheese production problems; insurance; G Wardlaw; factory inspection; shareholders; *Made in Tasmania* exhibition (includes 2 photographs); cheese orders; CSIRO Dairy Research Building Fund; Benders Spreading 1958-1969

Services; pesticides; Tasmanian Butter and Cheese
Factories' Association; factory waste; St Mary's
District Hospital; St Mary's District School;
Swansea Tourist and Progress Association; factory closure

4. Annual Reports

4/1 Annual reports (except 1949-1957, 1960-1963,
1965, 1968) 1958-1969

5. Financial Records

5/1 Balance sheets and accounts (except 1958-1959,
1962-1964, 1966, includes tax returns 1965-1969) 1950-1969

5/2 Shareholders' balance sheets (except 1960, 1967,
includes notices of annual general meetings
1961-1966, 1969) 1956-1969

5/3 Trading lists (includes lists of shareholders
1961-1966; milk collection tender 1949 and
other papers) 1949-1968

5/4 Milk suppliers' monthly account books 1958-
1969 and receipt book April-December 1959
(3 items) 1958-1969

5/5 Buyers' accounts register (loose sheets) 1964-1969

5/6 Sundry debtors' register 1964-1969

5/7 Miscellaneous receipts etc 1956-1970

5/8 Sundries receipt book *Oversize item* 1968-1969

6. Production Records

6/1 Milk suppliers' weekly register *Oversize item* 1948-1949

6/2 Milk suppliers' weekly register 1956-1957

6/3 Milk suppliers' weekly register 1962-1963

6/4 Monthly returns of cheese manufactured
(includes methylene blue test reports December
1966, certificates of inspection (boiler) 1968-
1969) 1965-1969

7. Ephemera

OTHER SOURCES

QVMAG, Community History, CHS 26

QVMAG, Community History, Photograph data base

QVMAG, Community History, oral history collection catalogue for various interviews under the subject heading 'Dairying in Northern Tasmania'

Jill Cassidy, *The dairy heritage of Northern Tasmania; a survey of the butter and cheese industry*, Launceston, 1995