

QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

CHS 19

KELSALL & KEMP (TASMANIA) LTD COLLECTION

Textile Factories, Launceston

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INTRODUCTION

Kelsall and Kemp was originally established in England in 1856 when George Tewke Kemp went into partnership with Henry Kelsall, a textile manufacturer at Rochdale near Manchester. Kelsall and Kemp (Tasmania) Ltd became a registered associate company in 1920, following enquiries made by Lord Rochdale (a Director of the parent company) through the Agent-General for Tasmania in London in the latter months of the First World War. A 13 acre site at Invermay, Launceston, was selected for a new mill, which began woollen textile production in late 1922. The name Rochdale became synonymous with it for many years. For several years the Launceston mill concentrated on making flannel and hard wearing domestic and work cloth. This later became an important part of Tasmania's contribution to the war effort in the Second World War.

In 1963 the minority shareholders' interests in Kelsall & Kemp (Tasmania) were bought by the parent company and it became a wholly owned subsidiary, run by a board of directors resident in Tasmania. It continued as an autonomous company subject only to financial control and broad policy directives from the parent company.

By 1969, following major investment in new machinery, Kelsall and Kemp (Tasmania) Ltd's annual production was worth \$2.5 million, and was supplying Australian markets and exporting to Hong Kong and New Zealand. It was Launceston's largest textile manufacturer and became the first Australian wool company to secure an established market in Japan. Nevertheless, like over 100 textile mills in Australia, it also became a victim of controversial Commonwealth Government tariff policies in the early 1970s.

In June 1976, agreement was reached for Kelsall and Kemp (Tasmania) Ltd to become a division of Coats Patons (Australia) Ltd (Bonds Coats Patons group), which subsequently took over certain assets and all its liabilities. Some stock and machinery was bought by Onkaparinga Woollen Company Ltd (Vic). The mill officially ceased production on 15 July 1977. At this time its assets were worth \$12 million, and it had an annual turnover of about \$4 million. Production had concentrated in the later years on the making of Doctor blankets and fashion fabrics (including schoolwear), and only 58 of over 250 employees remained. Considered to have been highly profitable during its 55 years in operation, the mill had grown to three times its original size and had been an important part of the economic and social life of Launceston. The reinforced concrete buildings were demolished in 1996, the site having been sold some years previously to local business interests.

The collection was donated to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in September 1997. Other Kelsall and Kemp records, acquired in 1977, were added in 2008.

1.Minutes of Meetings

| | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 1/1 | Kelsall and Kemp (Tasmania) Ltd, minute book of Directors meetings, 31 July 1961-10 July 1970 | 1961-1970 |
| 1/2 | Minute book of Directors meetings, 22 July 1970-17 December 1974 | 1970-1974 |
| 1/3 | Minute book of Directors meetings, 31 July 1961-10 May 1967 (duplicate) | 1961-1967 |
| 1/4 | Minute book of Directors meetings, 7 June 1967-16 Jun 1976 (duplicate, includes list of Chairmen and Directors 1961-1976 at end of volume) | 1967-1976 |
| 1/5 | Minute book of Directors meetings, 29 June 1965-16 June 1976 (Sales Director R A Kiellerup's copy) | 1965-1976 |
| 1/6 | Minute book of Directors meetings, 15 September 1920-6 September 1930 | 1920-1930 |
| 1/7 | Minute book of employees meetings re picnics | 1925-1927 |
| 1/8 | Minute book of meetings re Kelsall & Kemp Employees Sick Benefit Fund | 1940-1951 |
| 1/9 | Minute book of meetings re Kelsall & Kemp Employees Sick Benefit Fund | 1952-1968 |

2.Financial Records

| | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 2/1 | Kelsall and Kemp (Tasmania) Ltd, journal June 1967-October 1978 | 1967-1978 |
| 2/2 | Private journal July 1965-July 1977 (includes entries for Doctor Textile Mills Ltd June-December 1976) | 1965-1977 |
| 2/3 | Accounts ledger (includes balance sheets 1940-1953, cash book entries 1940-1976 etc) | 1940-1976 |
| 2/4 | Liquidity journal (includes record of pieces ordered, made and sold 1963-1971, stock and sales reports 1958-1963, record of production and expenditure, production graphs 1961-1964, and a summary of profit 1930-1968 at the front of the volume) | 1958-1971 |
| 2/5 | Liquidity journal (includes record of pieces ordered, made and sold) | 1973-1976 |
| 2/6 | Payroll tax ledger (includes monthly summary of | 1957-1973 |

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|------|--|-------------|
| | salaries and wages) | |
| 2/7 | Insurance declarations register (includes stock summaries and an insurance service report October 1973 at end of volume) | 1962-1976 |
| 2/8 | Returns outwards and allowances register (includes entries for Doctor Textile Mills Ltd July-November 1976 at end of volume) | 1975-1977 |
| 2/9 | Cash payments register | 1975-1978 |
| 2/10 | Half year balance sheets & accounts, 30 September 1923-30 November 1963 (lacks 1924) | 1923-1963 |
| 2/11 | Staff [Management] salaries ledger (names listed in six month blocks, small amount of other personal Detail. Includes Gross or Net Salary, Tax, and Director's Fees) | 1925 - 1976 |

3. Annual Reports

| | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 3/1 | Kelsall & Kemp (Tasmania) Limited, annual reports and balance sheets, 1921-1922, 1925, 1927, 1928 | 1921-1928 |
|-----|---|-----------|

4. Shareholders Registers

| | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 4/1 | Kelsall & Kemp Ltd, Rochdale, Lancs., England, Flannel manufacturers, Share Register (includes Tasmanian shareholders' names, address, occupation, from whom received, numbers of shares, transferred to, total shares held, call account, with index of shareholders at end of volume) | 1920-1960 |
| 4/2 | 'Annual List of Members & Summary', cover title of book containing loose typed sheets with summary of share capital and lists of shareholders (includes Tasmanian shareholders' names, address, occupation, no. of shares held) | 1921-1959 |

5. Production Records

| | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 5/1 | Weaving order day book (includes order no., date, supplier, items, comments) | 1940-1947 |
|-----|--|-----------|

6. Scrapbook

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|-----|--|------------|
| 6/1 | Newspaper cuttings scrapbook re Kelsall and Kemp woollen mills at Launceston and related subjects (includes index) | 1920-1923s |
|-----|--|------------|

7.Posters

- 7/1 "'The Doctor Flannel". The only sure way to keep baby warm. Famous for over 150 years', poster illustrated by Betty Paterson nd
- 7/2 'Washable Wool from the famous "Doctor" Woollen Mills', poster with cord attached nd

8.Miscellaneous Items

- 8/1 *Kelsall & Kemp Limited 1815-1965*, England, c1965 (Kelsall & Kemp (Tasmania) was an overseas subsidiary company) c1965
- 8/2 "The Doctor", Kelsall & Kemp (Tas.) Limited, sample book of "The Doctor" Woollens nd
- 8/3 'The Famous "Doctor" Regd. Flannel, Kelsall & Kemp (Tasmania) Limited, The Doctor Woollen Mills, Launceston, Tasmania', sample card of "The Doctor" blazer flannel standard shades nd
- 8/4 'Welcome to K & K', typed brochure re tour of mills (includes plan of factory and samples of materials) nd
- 8/5 Two undated newspaper cuttings, 'Future uncertain for textile industry' and "Goodbye K & K", *Ragtrade*, no.112, April 15-30 nd
- 8/6 P M Hart's notes on formation, erection, working of the Launceston mill, early directors and senior staff of Kelsall and Kemp (Tas) Ltd, typescript (Mr Hart was employed by the firm from 1934 to 1974) 2000
- 8/7 "Goodbye K & K" event program, [typed sheets pasted inside a large menu sized promotional folder embossed with company stamp, and printed in red and white "The Doctor" famous woollen mills], Friday, 13 May 1977 1977

OTHER SOURCES

QVMAG, Community History, CHS 20, CHS 27, LCC, eg LCC 3, item 19/4.1

QVMAG, Community History, photograph database, search for Kelsall and Kemp

QVMAG, Community History, 1988.BOHP.25; 1990.OH.20 (MC)

QVMAG, Community History, secondary file 'Launceston- Industries'

Launceston Reference Library, Local History Collection, news cutting file 'Kelsall and Kemp'

Alison Alexander, ed, *Companion to Tasmanian history*, Hobart, 2005, article on Kelsall and Kemp (Tasmania) Ltd, pp.198-199

Laura Williams, 'A sheep-run or a nation? The evidence from Kelsall & Kemp (Tasmania) and Patons & Baldwins, Launceston', submitted for degree of Master of Arts, University of Tasmania, 1998