

Mundaring & Hills Historical Society Inc.

The MHHS's new exhibition opens in the Mundaring District Museum on Saturday 29 May. 'Open All Hours' examines shops and retail trends in the Shire of Mundaring from colonisation to the 1980s.

The first shops in the area sold provisions to labourers constructing the Eastern Railway. Ex-convict Lot Leather, who first came to Sawyers Valley in the 1870s, opened a small store in the 1880s to cater for these workers as well as for local sawyers. Police suspected the store was distributing illicit alcohol and it was unsuccessfully raided in February 1883 much to the amusement of the gathered locals who were 'paying their various store accounts and refreshing themselves with fruit, ginger ale and lemonade'. (*Inquirer & Commercial News*, 28 February 1883). This store was later the site of Leather's Sawyers Valley Hotel.

As Mundaring grew, more substantial General Stores developed near the railway lines, providing residents with a range of goods to meet their daily needs. With no refrigeration and few transportation options, these stores stocked food items as well as haberdashery, hardware, and produce for livestock. Large orders were left with the storekeeper and delivered to the home. Bread and milk were also home delivered. Local bakers supplied the villages,



and in the 1950s and 1960s Darlington residents Arthur and Peggy Dall delivered milk throughout the Shire.

Retail shopping in WA radically changed from the 1950s onwards with the advent of self-service, shopping centres, the demise of family-owned stores, and the emergence of national retailers with the scalability to sell products at low prices. This shift had different effects throughout the Shire with Mundaring especially developing as a large retail centre.

The varied development of the Shire's villages provides insight into the history of retail over the last 100 years. While shops in Mundaring's town centre have changed markedly since the beginning of the 20th century, the Woorlooloo, Parkerville, and

Darlington shops that served these villages so well throughout the 20th century are still standing. Ensure you visit 'Open All Hours' to find out more!

The MHHS's next general meeting is on **Saturday 19 June**.

(IMAGE) 'Western Mail, 7 September, 1933.'

