

# Food For Thought

By Lois Thomson

Recently at our Vintage Museum I watched a grandmother with some junior school pupils looking at a dairy separator.

She was described its workings - how cream separated from the milk, as the handle turned at the right speed, trickling from the top spout into a small container, while skim milk poured from the other into buckets to be fed to pigs.

She then picked up old white enamel 'billy', and demonstrated how cream was 'dipped' into containers for household use, or for customers, stored for churning into butter, or sent off to the Butter factory.

The grandmother had obviously worked, or seen one as a young child, but the children's puzzled looks started a strong train of thought.

The history or relevance of a separator is almost beyond modern children's understanding, with many unaware that the milk in containers comes from cows.

What a pity there wasn't a separator in parts waiting to be reassembled after washing, and churns apparently prepared for butter making.

Other adults present had no knowledge of earlier processes either.

In today's fast changing world, milk is taken by tankers from dairy farms, with hundreds of cows, to be made into cheese, butter or milk powders, or sold flavoured in cartons, or cream in 300-600ml containers.

In our area dairying has largely taken over from sheep farming, so most know milk

comes from large herds of cows twice a day, to be carted daily to the milk factory, but their experience is that milk and cream in plastic containers comes from supermarkets.

For me - memories of hand milking, separating the milk, taking cream to store in the cool of the dairy, along with a large 'billy' of milk for our household of eight, and carting skim milk to pigs, came flooding back.

My parents leased ground to run two cows, so my brother and I shared the milking of two cows before or after school, when our policeman father was on duty.

Later we milked four cows for a relative over one holidays, and for two weeks we took a bucket with warm water to wash the cows' teats before sitting on small stools to milk in the open fronted byre.

The milk was emptied into the large separator bowl, and whoever finished milking their two cows first would turn the separator handle to bring it to the correct speed before turning on the tap allowing milk to pour into of the separator workings. If the speed was too slow cream came gushing out the cream spout still containing too much milk, and if too fast in a very thin trickle.

We carried the house-milk and cream back to the house, ate our breakfast, before carrying hot water over to the cow-shed.

There the separator was carefully taken apart, each piece washed, rinsed and stacked before being left to dry in open air until afternoon milking, when it was reassembled, every piece fitted snugly into its position and screwed up tightly.

Long practice made separator-washing less time consuming, but with few labour saving devices, churning of butter, baking, cooking on coal ranges, and boiling the copper for washing clothes, plus sewing, darning and gardening, it is no wonder daughters often left school at an early age to help.

I can remember my tiny grandmother, who had churned the cream from 20+ hand

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milked cows into butter, during one year of the depression, to stretch the household budget, sitting on the floor with her back against the wall and her feet against the churn as she struggled to turn the handle as solid whipped cream stubbornly refused to separate into butter and buttermilk.

Then she had to wash the butter and squeeze out water before mixing in salt and used 'pats' to mould butter into pound lots and wrap. By adding salt after churning, buttermilk could be fed to the pigs.

My mother made butter from two cows for a time, and I remember problems if cream temperature was too hot or too cold. I even made butter in a churn for a season when there was insufficient to send away, and later used the Kenwood cake mixer for making small amounts for household baking.

I can't help thinking it would be wonderful if short, practical films could be made showing the use of many other objects on display as well in our museums, and held available for showing either at the museum and /or loaned to schools.

Already the knowledge of many exhibits uses are beyond the memory of museum volunteers.

The films could be very basic and simply done as in home movies taken back in 60's and 70's, stored on CD's and simply shown on museum computer screen for small numbers.

I think it is a point well worth considering - and with so many schools now offering film making, and new technology there could be an opportunity for collaboration as museum personnel provide commentaries.



# ANDERSON ENGINE REGISTER REVIEW

## JOHN THORBY

When I decided to take the time to do a review of the register rather than just an update I had no idea of the amount of time I would spend in amongst the test cards and the many pages of the register. Above all it gave me a real insight into the amount of work Brian & Thelma Batchelor put into the test cards when originally recovered.

For the review I was dealing with 1500 cards, they dealt with 10,500 odd. Also producing a book on Anderson Engines. The first thing to do was to go through each serial number in the register and match it to its test card. Many in the register were just a number supplied, while many had a lot of info. It became obvious that there is no way for me to confirm the accuracy of each serial number or model type without actually seeing each and every engine myself.

Some test cards gave lots of info, some little, plus there are cards missing which makes it a little more difficult. Then to top that off it's quite difficult to separate the earlier D Model from the later N type just using the cards. One has to read between the lines and supposition comes into the equation as well.

The D or dairy model was the first in house designed model and was followed by the N or Newthre, there was 3HP & 2.5HP. Many will know that the D type had a belt drive governor while the N had a cam driven type however that could be used on either type without much trouble. The major difference is the D having white metal main bearings outside the crankcase oil by separate reservoirs while the N has ball and roller races internally. During production both models were being made.

Towards the end all sorts of combinations were appearing with the governor types. I assume parts in stock were being used up as Andersons saw the end of engines in sight.

The other models are easy enough to differentiate in the cards as they were quite different to each other in design or had known HP and rev range such as the 2 smaller N models the 2HP and 1.2HP.

I shall not delve into all the differences of each model as it all available in Brian Batchelor and Richard Robinson's book still available from either source plus other book outlets in Australia. Ill just give

a brief idea. There are a couple of other reasons total accuracy can't be guaranteed. Some of the cards are missing and some of the info received is incorrect. To top all that off some of the serial numbers relate to just an engine plate remaining or a part engine. I have included these in the register as well.

The list goes as well follows:

- SS (Small scott design) singles 33
- SS Twin
- LS (Large scott design) singles 14
- LS Twin
- LS 2Cly
- LS 4Cly
- D Dairy type in house design 2.5 HP 388
- D 3HP
- N Newthre model in house design 2.5HP 174
- N 3HP 215
- N 2HP 028
- N 1.5 30
- N Twin 19
- C Combined vac pump engine 17
- H High speed 22

There was also a line of engines whose plate had Lyttelton spelt incorrectly ie Lyttlenton. There must have been a large batch made and Gradually used up there are 30 of these in the register and start from serial number 2830 and cease at 5799 they seem to have been randomly used among plates with the correct spelling. I have 71



entries from Australia, 3 from England, 2 from America and 1 from Scotland. If anyone cares to add their serial numbers to the register it is confidential although if an owner wants to contact another if they write to me Ill pass on the letter where I have a complete address and then it is up to that one to reply if they want to.

My address is:  
Andersonia,  
120 Omoto Valley Rd,  
Kaiata,  
Greymouth 7805

Finally there are 1463 entries in the register so far which shows there are some I can't really identify so in reality the numbers are arbitrary. There is a lot of other info that could be included but really I feel that is well covered in the book as described.

