



THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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Bro. HARRY MELBOURNE

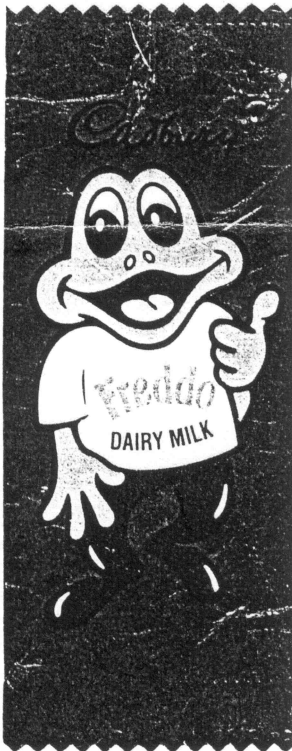
Does anyone remember being given a penny to spend and having to make the agonizing choice between a small Nestle's chocolate in a distinctive red wrapper, or a MacRobertson Freddo Frog or a Cadbury Koala Bear?

During our courting days there was the same choice between Nestle's green box of Winning Post, which many a young man purchased in the hope that, after the pictures, he would be on a winner, or the more subtle approach of the Old Gold box produced by MacRobertson.

MacPherson Robertson (1860-1945), whose brand combined his names, was born at Ballarat. He lived with his mother in Scotland and worked in a confectionery factory at Leith while his father worked in Fife.

The family moved to Melbourne where Robertson was apprenticed to the Victorian Confectionery Company.

On 12 June 1880, Robertson began manufacturing chocolates in his mother's bathroom. His stock in trade comprised a nail can, a few pounds of sugar, a threepenny tin pannikin, a small table and 20 plaster of Paris moulds.



From this small beginning, Robertson went on to own the MacRobertson factory which covered 14 Hectares and employed several thousand people.

The factory turnover was £300 in 1880 and £2 million in 1925.

Freddo Frog and Cherry Ripe were two of the famous productions of MacRobertsons.

With the factory working under depression conditions when chocolates were a luxury many could not afford, Robertson decided to produce a new penny chocolate.

His first idea was a chocolate mouse, probably inspired by Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse which had appeared two years earlier in 1928.

An eighteen-year-old moulder in the factory overheard Robertson talking about the mouse and he stepped up to the boss and, as he put it, "I just piped up."

He told Robertson that he thought women and children wer

afraid of mice and a chocolate mouse wouldn't sell. He suggested a frog and thought he would lose his job for coming forward. Instead, Robertson said, "make one up and bring it over to my office."

The young moulder's name was Harry Melbourne and he had invented an Aussie Icon, the Freddo Frog.

Meanwhile Cadbury's chocolate Koala Bear was not doing nearly as well. Perhaps women and children didn't like to eat a 'Blinky Bill.'

Cadbury had the last laugh when they took over MacRobertsons in 1967.

Today the Company sells some 100 million Freddo Frogs at 41 cents each.



Harry Melbourne's chocolate frog is an Australian icon, captivating generations of kids



RW Bro Ted Page PDGM presents Bro Melbourne with the Grand Master's Special Commendation

Harry Melbourne was made a mason at the Melbourne suburb of Abbotsford in Victoria Park Lodge No. 388 United Grand Lodge of Victoria on 24 April 1944. He was passed a Fellowcraft on 26 June and raised a Master Mason on 24 November 1944.

When Victoria Park Lodge surrendered its warrant, Bro. Melbourne became a member of Lodge Justice No. 650 and, after this lodge surrendered its warrant, he became a member of Lodge Transition No. 0.

In 1972, Bro. Harry Melbourne was one of the first recipients of the newly-created Grand Master's Order of Service.

At the 70th anniversary celebrations of the creation of the Freddo Frog, he was further honoured with the Grand Master's Special Commendation.
