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PREPARED & PRESENTED BY: G.H. Cumming

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BRO. EDWIN STREET THE ICE CREAM MAN

Australians love their ice cream. Apart from the United States of America, we eat more than any other nation. Today we live in an era of freezers, and we can have ice cream whenever we like. A few years after he returned from World War I, Edwin Street bought a little hand machine to make ice cream, it was something quite new.

Edwin was the youngest of ten children in a family which migrated from England. He was born in 1891 in Corrimal, and it was there that he operated a fruit run in the early 1930's before buying a mixed business and milk bar. He started making ice cream in a small churn, just after the Depression, to supply his milk bar.

He churned a few litres of frozen custard in the back of his little shop. People loved it, and bought more ice cream than he could make, so he had to mechanise, and attached a one horsepower engine to the churn. Then the picture show opened nearby and everyone wanted to eat ice cream at interval.

Those were the days when ice cream was sold on a wafer or in little cardboard buckets. Later, in the 1930's, stewards hawked sixpenny ice cream buckets down the corridors of express trains.

The first milk bar in Australia opened in 1933, and by no coincidence, a year later, Edwin Street took over the Corrimal ice works and started producing ice cream in commercial quantities.

It tasted so good that other shops wanted to buy it and before long Edwin Street was supplying ice cream to dozens of shops. He built an ice works and factory near the corner of the Princes Highway and Tarrawanna Road, Corrimal, and the first deliveries to Sydney were made by van.

There was a huge neon sign, featuring a polar bear licking ice cream outside the Corrimal works. It was also the first moving neon sign in Wollongong.

Sales grew as more corner stores bought freezers to stock ice cream. As trucks weren't refrigerated then, the ice cream was delivered in large cans packed with a mixture of ice and salt.

Later, large green canvas containers packed with 'dry ice' were used.

Another factory was opened at Turella in Sydney in 1947.

Early in the 1950's, the first Streets Paddle Pop appeared, in a choice of three flavours - chocolate, vanilla and banana.

Refrigerated transport became available and Streets expanded until, in 1983, it was selling ice cream throughout Australia.

Edwin Street became a multi-millionaire in 1961 when he sold the business to Unilever Australia Pty. Ltd., for approximately \$8 million. This was much more than he could have ever dreamed of in 1920 when he hand-churned for a few local customers.

Edwin Street made many donations to South Coast organisations, including \$100,000 for accomodation for the aged at Narooma where he spent his retirement; \$10,000 to the Illawarra Retirement Trust to establish Diment Towers; \$50,000 each to Batemans Bay and Nowra to build Ambulance Stations and \$10,000 for Corrimal Swimming Pool.

He received an OBE in recognition of his services and donations to charity.

Edwin Street died in August 1975.

Bro. Edwin Street, occupation - grocer, was made a mason at Wollongong on 18 July 1923 in Lodge Port Kembla No. 460. He was passed Fellowcraft on 20 February 1924 and raised a Master Mason on 17 June 1924.
