

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** THOMSON AND CO. IRON STORE (FORMER)

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** 82a- 82b Whyte Street COLERAINE

**STUDY NUMBER:** 133                      **HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**OTHER NAME/S OF PLACE:** IRON STORE, HENTY WOOL STORE

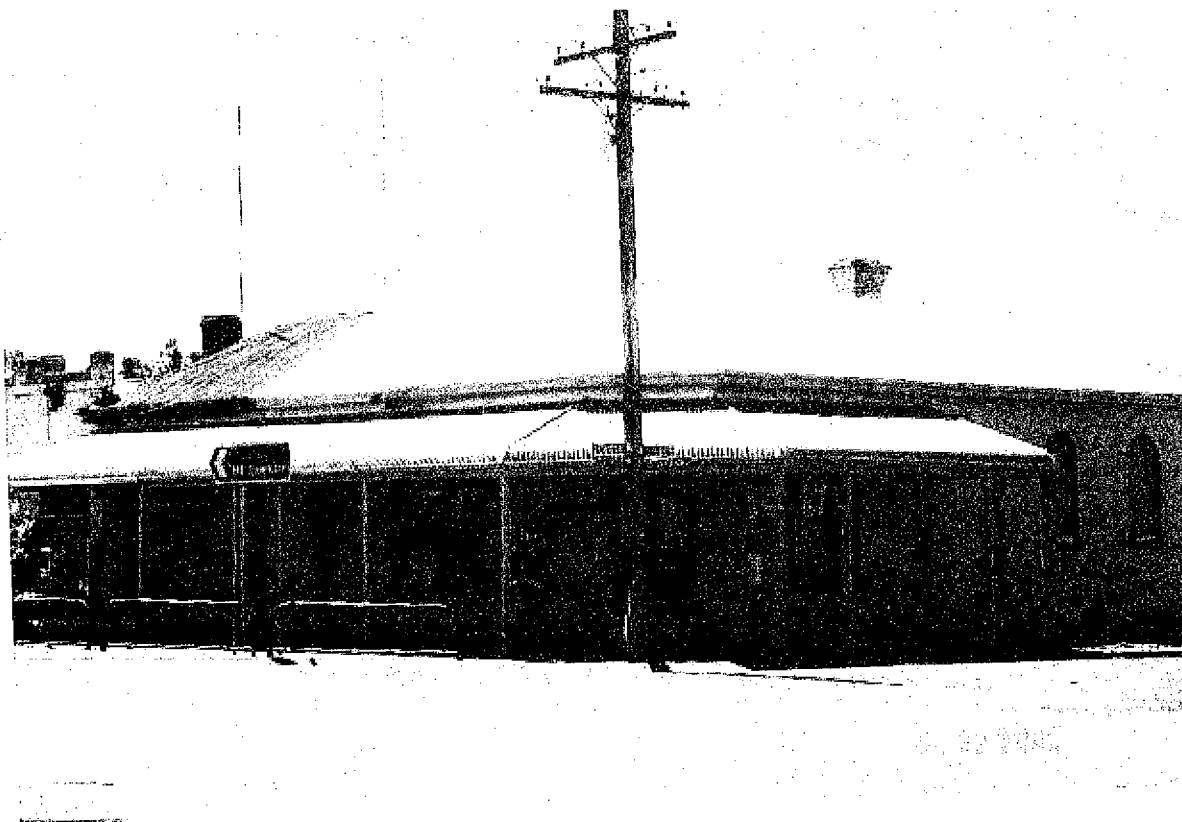
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**ALLOTMENT:** 1            **SECTION:** 1            **PARISH:** PARISH OF COLERAINE

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 430J. Located on the north west corner of Whyte and Winter Streets in the centre of Coleraine

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



Thompson & Co. Iron Store (former), Whyte Street, Coleraine.

**Image Date:** 01/02/02

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the buildings and all the land.

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## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The former Thomson and Co. Iron Store is a large corner brick store with corrugated iron hip roof. The building is divided into two shops with a residence at the rear. Shop 82 A has a corner entry and an entry off Whyte Street. A bullnose corrugated iron verandah is attached across the Whyte Street frontage and part of the Winter Street frontage.

The original building consisted of two identical facades on both Whyte and Winter Streets with the exception of door details. It was symmetrically arranged with a central quoin door flanked on either side by two semi-circular arched windows with fanlights. The original doorways remain, as do two original windows on the east façade.

## HISTORY:

The land on which the former Henty Iron Store now stands was first purchased from the Crown by J. B. Fitzgerald on September 8, 1852. The land on which the store stands was the first allotment to be sold in Coleraine (Department of Lands and Survey, 1955). It is likely that this was John B. Fitzgerald, who married Bridget O'Brien (date and place unknown). They had the birth of their first and last child registered in Coleraine, Julia (1863), and Bridget (1878) who died in infancy (VPI, Reg. No. 13388, 8010). The other children's births were registered in Brit Brit (Michael, 1865); and Patrick (1868), John (1871) and Mary (1874), were all registered in Dundas (ibid.). There is very little information about the Fitzgeralds available, but it is likely that they left Coleraine prior to 1865 (when the land was sold) and moved into the Parish of Brit Brit, towards the Nareen area, the births registration indicates that they moved back to Coleraine in the late 1870s.

In late 1865, the land was purchased by Messrs. A. Thomson and Co. of Hamilton, and John S. Jenkins, a Hamilton Architect called for tenders in for the construction of a store at Coleraine in January 1866 (Troeth, 61). Thomson & Co. of Hamilton had been in operation only three years at this time, and was run by members of the Thomson family, many of whom went on to become highly influential and respected members of the Hamilton City council and the Temperance Movement (Garden, 121). The store was to be the first branch of the Thomson & Co. "Iron Store" outside of Hamilton, later branches went on to open in Melbourne, Casterton and Portland (ibid.). The new store opened on March 24, 1866. It provided drapery, clothing, footwear, groceries, ironmongery, house furnishings, tents and ploughs to service the Coleraine and the surrounding district (Troeth, 61).

In 1867, the store was occupied by the Portland firm of Stephen G. Henty and Co. under the management of Jason Fethers. The store supplied merchandise and hardware for the surrounding agricultural and pastoral district. The store was apparently known as the Henty Woolstore, and some say that it was set up as a terminal for Edward Henty at nearby Muntham Station to sell his wool and receive supplies which came from Portland (VPI, 6204). Stephen George Henty was the fifth son of the Henty family famed as being the first settlers in Victoria. Stephen was born in Sussex 1811 and arrived in Western Australia in 1829 (Shaw, in Forth (ed.) 66). S. G. Henty established the famous Mierino Downs, as well as being a prominent land owner in and around Hamilton, and described as 'Portland's leading merchant' (ibid., 66). Between 1852 and 1864, Stephen George Henty owned the pastoral runs of Ardachy, Kadnood, Korait, Mt. Surgeon Plains North and Mt. Surgeon Plains South, Strathfillan, Talangana, Wando Vale R. and Ronomire (with William Learmonth) (Rillis & Kenyon, 81).

Stephen George Henty was considered to be a very important local man. Not only was he an important merchant and landholder, he was a member of the Legislative Council from 1856-1870, Commissioner of the State Savings Bank and President of the City and Suburban Investment company. He died in Tarrington in 1870 (Shaw, in Forth (ed.), 66). It is not known whether Henty made any improvements to the pastoral run during his ownership from 1857-60.

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In May 1869, the business was transferred to Edmund Dacomb, a merchant from Portland. Dacomb was married to Eliza Evans, at some time outside of Victoria, prior to 1857. They had several children, registered in Portland; Walter (1857), Godfrey (1860), Annie Francis (1862), Beatrice Eliza (1864), Leonard (1865), and Clara (1867) (VPI, Reg. No. 6862, 9046, 10396, 4526, 17833, 2395). While in Coleraine, Emily Maud was born (1869), and records show that despite the Dacomb family selling the business in Coleraine in January 1872, they were still in the area when Emily Maud died, aged 5 in 1874 (*ibid.*, 14596, 11627). A File kept by the Australian Heritage Places Index states that during Dacomb's occupation it also housed the Coleraine Albion Newspaper.

William Vale purchased the property in 1872 and operated a wholesale and retail business from the store (Troeth, 61). Although Vale held the store for nearly 12 years, there is very little information known about him.

From 1884 to 1889, the store was occupied by stock and station agents John Kirby and James Gillespie and in 1890 by Arthur Meek. In 1900 the brick store was owned by James Ferrier, a farmer, and the inventor of the Ferrier Wool Press. A verandah was added to the building at this time, and other re-decorating was undertaken (VPI, 6204). James Ferrier was renowned for his skill at agriculture. Humble and Nicholson, engineers and boilermakers, of Geelong manufactured more than 1,200 of the Ferrier woolpresses (Smith, 462). Ferrier also invented a machine for compressing fodder and a reaper and binder which tied bales with string, thereby revolutionising harvesting. Ferrier was also one of the first people to practice crop rotation in agriculture, using oats, wheat, maize, peas and onions in a system of six paddocks (McGaffin, 36). James Ferrier was born in 1810 and died at Calton Hill in 1884. He is buried in the Coleraine Cemetery. His son was also an inventor. The Ferrier family once owned Winninburn Homestead and farm.

Robert Poynter moved his chemist shop to the premises in 1906, and made several changes to the building to incorporate a chemists shop and a dentistry, the contractors for the remodelling were Messrs. James Brothers of Coleraine (VPI, 6204). Robert Poynter arrived in Coleraine in 1899. He was originally from a farm in Sussex called Maylands, and arrived in Australia in the late nineteenth century. He obtained a traineeship as a chemist in Avoca, and after arriving in Coleraine, took over the lease of the premises at 102 Whyte Street, where he set up as a chemist. Poynter held the lease on the store and residence until 1906 when he relocated to 82a & b Whyte Street. With his arrival, shopfront windows and a corner entry were introduced and a bull nose verandah was added. The building served as a chemist shop until 1959, despite Poynter re-training as a dentist at the Dental College in Melbourne in the early twentieth century. After completion of his training, he established a dental surgery in Whyte Street, next to the Coleraine Hotel in 1925-26 (*ibid.*), but continued to own the chemist business in the former Iron Store.

Mr. Poynter's first wife, Iva (nee Cruthers), with whom he had two sons and a daughter, died of acute blood poisoning in the early 1920s. He remarried in 1926 and, with his second wife, a widow from Nareen called Valetta Ross (nee Riddoch) he had a son and a daughter (Poynter, pers. comm. 2001). The present Uniting Church Manse was initially called 'Maylands', built by Mr. Poynter as a home for his first family. He subsequently built the second Maylands on the block behind the first, at a cost of £1200 pounds c. 1926 (Stiglich, pers. com., 2001).

Mr. P. Utber (also known as Huber) purchased the store in the 1930s, and a photograph held by the Coleraine Historical Society, dated prior to 1940, shows Percy and Frank Utber (Pharmacists) at the front of the store, with a large sign stating 'Want Anything? Ask Utber'. In the latter twentieth century, the store has housed a variety of businesses, including general goods and a restaurant.

**THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

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Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies  
3.19 Marketing and retailing  
3.5 Developing primary production

Theme 8: Developing Australia's cultural life  
8.12 Living in and around Australian homes  
8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

## **CONDITION:**

The Thompson and Co. Iron Store (former) is in poor condition as many of the original features have been removed or altered. The interior of the shop has been remodelled into two sections.

## **INTEGRITY:**

The building has been altered and adapted for other uses during its history. It currently appears fragmented with different verandah treatment and colour schemes for each shop. Reinstatement of the verandah on the western shop and consistent finishes would make the building read as a whole and improve the visual quality of the streetscape

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

### **What is significant?**

The former Thomson & Co. Iron Store at 82a and 82b Whyte Street, Coleraine is a large single storey, double fronted brick shop with a residence at the rear. It was built in 1866 by an important architect, John S. Jenkins for Thomson and Co, and later occupied by Stephen G. Henty & Co., a prominent merchant, landholder and one of the Henty Brothers who are considered to be the first pioneering family in the area. In the nineteenth century, the building was primarily used to service the local agricultural and pastoral community, providing general household an agricultural goods and equipment. In 1906, Robert Poynter, a local chemist moved his premises to the store, the store continued to be run as a chemist until the mid twentieth century. The building has been modified and now appears in a condition which reflects the early twentieth century.

### **How is it significant?**

The former Thomson and Co. Iron Store of historical and architectural significance to the township of Coleraine and to the Shire of Southern Grampians.

### **Why is it significant?**

The former Thomson and Co. Iron store is of historical significance for its long association with the pastoral and agricultural communities surrounding Coleraine. The store's usage in the nineteenth century as a provider of general goods and agricultural supplies and equipment represent the changing social currents and land use patterns in Victoria in the later nineteenth century. Major social changes such as the introduction of closer settlement and an increase in the population as small farmers took up selections increased the need for provision of general and agricultural goods. It is of further historical significance for its associations with a number of important local individuals and businesses, including the company who the store was designed and built for, Thomson and Co. The store's construction as a 'branch' of Thomson and Co. (suppliers of clothing, drapery, footwear, groceries, ironmongery, house furnishings, tents and ploughs) is an example of the early commercial economy, built on pastoralism, where a local business could open branches in the smaller towns. The store was also occupied by Stephen Henty & Co., one of the Henty Brothers, famous for being the first white people to settle Victoria. Henty was also an important Portland merchant, and owner of nearby Merino Downs and many other pastoral holdings. The store is of particular historical significance for its ownership and association with James Ferrier, a local inventor who was internationally renowned for his designs, the Ferrier Harvester and Woolpress. This store was where many of his inventions were sold to local farmers, for whom many of the inventions were designed. Ferrier's occupation of the store is important as he was a local farmer who invented devices to make farming practices easier for those on the land, who then went on to sell these devices along with

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other agricultural equipment from the former store. Historically, it demonstrates the way of life of many pastoral and agricultural communities, particularly in the mid to late nineteenth century and the way they obtained supplies. It is of further historical interest for its associations with the local chemist, turned dentist, Robert Poynter, whose move to the strategically located site in 1906. His occupation of the store was historically important as it is representative of growing the needs of the people of the township to have services provided, rather than those outside the township. It also represents an increasing focus on local health services within the township. The store is of architectural significance for its associations with the important local architect, John S. Jenkins.

## COMPARISON:

0231 Lessers Stores (former), 88a Whyte Street, Coleraine.

0005 Store (former) and Boarding House, 77 Pilleau Street, Coleraine.

**ASSESSED BY:** TFH

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

18-Jul-03

## EXISTING LISTINGS:

## HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

**Include in VHR**  **Include in RNE**  **Include in Local Planning Scheme**

**No Recommendations for Inclusions**

## REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
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	Victoria and Riverina, with which is incorporated Victoria 1930, Victoria and Riverina 1931 and Victoria and Riverina, 1931-1932, a biographical record ...	1933	108-9
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Department of Lands and Survey	Township of Coleraine (Parishes of Coleraine and Konong Wootong County of Dundas)	1955	
Dr. John Poynter	Personal Communication 01/08/2001	2001	
G McGaffin	The Wannan Shire Centenary 1872-1972 : a brief history of the Shire of Wannan	1972	36
James Smith, ed	The Cyclopaedia of Victoria, Vol 2	1905	462
Leslie Emerson	A Short History of the Early Days in the Coleraine District	1953	
Malcolm Troeth	The Cultural Landscape of Coleraine	1988	42, 61
Mardi Stiglich	Personal Communication 25/06/2001	2001	
R V Billis and A S Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	81