

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** COLERAINE BUTTER FACTORY (FORMER)

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** 26 Robertson Street COLERAINE

**STUDY NUMBER:** 146

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**OTHER NAME/S  
OF PLACE:** COLERAINE WOOL

**PRECINCT:** Coleraine

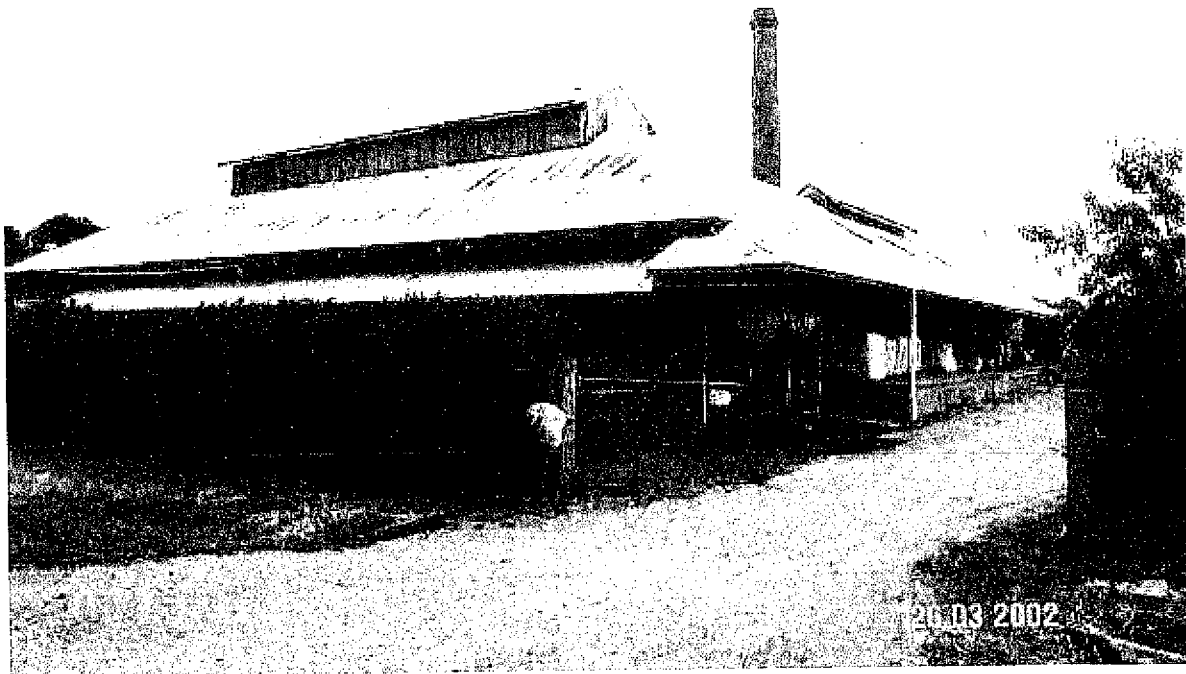
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**ALLOTMENT:** 17      **SECTION:** 2      **PARISH:** PARISH OF COLERAINE

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 430J

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



Coleraine Butter Factory (Former), 26 Roberston St, Coleraine

**Image Date:** 26/03/02

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the buildings including the former factory, managers residence and outbuildings and any machinery associated with the former butter factory.

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## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The former Coleraine Butter Factory is an industrial complex situated in Robertson Street, on the eastern edge of the town. Its tall chimney stack is one of the most visible landmarks in Coleraine. The main factory building is constructed of brick, with a corrugated iron roof, and a large lantern window across the main roof ridge. The large steel framed, multi-paned windows which appear in early photographs have been covered with corrugated iron and timber. A timber and steel braced awning with corrugated iron roof runs along the west and south sides. The interior of the main factory was divided into two large areas, for the separating of milk and processing of butter. A cheese production area was added on the north side at a later date. The chimney is located at the rear of the main factory, adjoining a service yard.

To the east of the main building is a tall shed with a timber open-slatted wall on the south side and corrugated iron roof, together with a brick office building. On the south side of the complex is a large open shed, and a timber house with tiled roof built in 1943 for the factory manager.

## HISTORY:

In the years following the Land Selection Acts and closer settlement policies, land previously tied up in large grazing properties became available for a range of diverse uses, including dairying. As large runs were subdivided into family farms, the population in country areas increased. Many families who selected land in the Coleraine area were almost entirely self sufficient, often keeping several milking cows for personal use, and selling the excess.

In May 1892, a committee was formed to investigate the possibility of building a creamery in Coleraine. The committee reported favorably, and in June of that year, local selector farmers met and agreed to take up shares and provide milk for the newly established 'Coleraine and Western District Butter Factory Company Limited' (CHS File Note).

The present building is the third butter factory constructed in Coleraine. The first one, dating from the 1870s was located in Turnbull Street near Bryan's Creek.

In 1892, the Coleraine and Western District Butter Factory Company Limited, with a capital of 5,000 pounds and 10,000 shares of 5/- each was formed. Many leaders of the community, especially local businessmen were involved in the new venture. W.G Thurman (of Thurman's Bazaar) and C.H Lesser (of Lesser's Store) were elected as Company Secretary and Chairman, and local solicitors Wade and Sylvester represented the legal interests of the new venture. The Coleraine Butter Factory was an important local industry which was started, owned and run by local people.

A substantial new factory was constructed in August 1892 on 2 acres of Crown Land adjoining Church Street, near the site of the present Primary School. The first consignment of butter to Melbourne was dispatched in October 1892 under 'Cow-slip' brand registered trademark (CHS File).

In September 1892, the company constructed a creamery at Clover Flat, and followed with another at Nareen in January 1893 to ensure that supplies from all around the district could be used for production. The early years of the butter factory were characterized by fluctuations in yield and in profitability. The creamery at Nareen proved to be unprofitable, and in 1898 it was shifted and re-erected on the Wannan River near Winninburn. After high yields in 1901, a creamery was built at Wando Vale, and another in Tahara the next year. Although all of these creameries had shut down by 1910, the Coleraine and Western District Butter Factory Company enjoyed international success as outlined by James Smith in the Cyclopedia of Victoria (544) "Dairying has likewise been tried with some measure of success, and the Coleraine and Western District Butter Factory, established in 1902, is a thriving undertaking, and gradually extending its operations. It is fed by three creameries, and produces 150 tons of butter annually, all of which is exported to the London market, where it

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realises the highest price." This is further evidenced by the company winning several State and National awards for quality butter including a gold medallion in the export honours class in 1950 (CA 17/04/75).

On 17th March 1906 the second Coleraine Butter Factory, complete with plant and stock, was destroyed by fire. It was immediately rebuilt on the same site, and was operating again by August of that year. By 1911, the factory was exporting 112 tons of butter were per annum (CHS file). Despite of the success of the factory produce, the company encountered financial difficulties. In an attempt to rectify their financial problems, the company took on the development of an electricity plant in 1914 to supply both the butter factory and the township of Coleraine. This enterprise was not a success, and as a result ran at a loss for several years resulting in the sale of the electricity plant in 1937.

In 1927 land was purchased in Robertson Street at a cost of 319 pounds, and a new brick factory was constructed on this land at a cost of 6,920 pounds. The new factory was officially opened on 18 October 1928 by Hon. W. Slater, MLA. The adjoining land was purchased shortly after for 159 pounds, although it was not until September 1943 that a manager's house was built on this land, adjacent to the factory.

In July 1944, there was some suggestion that the Coleraine and Western District Butter Factory should close and merge with the Hamilton based Western Meadow Gold Company. This suggestion was met with strong opposition from almost all shareholders and employees who felt that it would pointless to remove an important local industry and associated pride from Coleraine after 52 years of continuous successful trading (CHS file). The issue was raised again in 1950 (by which time the butter factory had expanded to producing cheeses also) and again a negative response was received. However, after several meetings, and in the face of much opposition, the Coleraine and Western District Butter Factory Company merged with The Western Meadow Gold Company to form Wannan Milk Products Ltd. (ibid.)

In 1966, the Coleraine and Western District Butter Factory Company was taken over by Murray Goulburn, and production ceased in the following year. This was a serious blow for Coleraine as the butter factory was the only industry in town, with 20 staff losing their jobs. The factory was then purchased by the Wannan Shire Council, with a view to using it as a works depot. However, this did not eventuate, and the factory remained unoccupied until purchased by S H Waters and Co, wool and skin buyers in 1978. The factory is presently used as the premises of Coleraine Wool.

## **THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

### 3.12 Feeding People

3.12.2 Developing sources of fresh local produce

3.12.4 Preserving food and beverages

3.13 Developing an Australian manufacturing capacity

## **CONDITION:**

The condition of the factory buildings is good. The loss of the large steel windows in the main factory detracts from its integrity, and has prevented light and air from circulating. All equipment related to butter and cheese making has been removed, and the site is now devoted to wool processing. The chimney appears to be in very good condition, which is significant, given the reactivity of the local soil, and the instability of many old brick buildings in Coleraine.

## **INTEGRITY:**

Good degree of integrity

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

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## What is significant?

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## How is it significant?

The former Coleraine Butter Factory is of architectural and historical significance to the township of Coleraine.

## Why is it significant?

The former Butter factory is of historical significance to the township of Coleraine as a representation of a diary industry which started in the area around the turn of the Century. It is of historical significance for the physical reminder of a previous industry within the township associated with closer settlement, and a way of life which is no longer supported. The Coleraine Butter factory is historically important as it is only one of two such factories in the study area. It is of architectural significance as one of the few surviving industrial complexes within the township of Coleraine, and the visual impact of the smoke stack which is a dominating landmark in the township.

## COMPARISON:

SSG 0231Penshurst and District Butter Factory, French and Chesswas Streets, Penshurst

**ASSESSED BY:** MGT

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

01-May-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
Coleraine Albion	"Occupation of factory weeks away" Coleraine Albion 25/05/78	1978	
Coleraine Albion	"Factory used Again" by Les Marsh in Coleraine Albion 17/04/75	1975	
Coleraine Historical Society	File Notes - Butter Factory	n.d	
Department of Lands and Survey	Parish of Coleraine	1956	
Don Garden	Hamilton, a Western District History	1984	
James Smith	The Cyclopaedia of Victoria, Vol 2	1903	544-5
Terang Express	Western District Centenary Souvenir	1934	