



Business of the Month
June 2016

COBDEN AUTHORISED NEWSAGENCY



Andrew and Karen McConachy

Business: Cobden Authorised Newsagency

Owners: Andrew and Karen McConachy

Products/services: Newspapers (including home delivery service), magazines, stationery, Tattsлото, toys, gifts, Citylink passes, fishing licences, fax, photocopy and laminating service.

Background: Andrew and Karen purchased the newsagency in November, 2005. They are ably assisted by five part-time staff members: Joy Beaton, Donna Scott, Helen Kelly and their sons Hamish and Angus.

The McConachys' knowledge of the history of the newsagency and its past owners and store location is improving day-by-day. Over the years, previous owners of the business have included the Mayne, Gale, Crook and Longmore, Vermay, Hobart, Murrily, Raselli, Grills and Dawson families. Before Gary and Beryl Raselli moved the newsagency into the Arcade in the 1980s, it was based in the shop currently housing Blue Wren Clothing and Homewares.

Andrew and Karen are interested in tracing the full history of the business, its past owners, staff and store locations. If you can enlighten them about any of these details, please call in and have a chat.

Karen lists ten things a reader might not know about this business:

- We deliver approximately 650 papers daily. These deliveries are made within Cobden township (by Andrew and Joy) and surrounding areas including Bullaharre, Jancourt, Simpson, Glenfyne, Elingamite, Naroghid and Cobrico (by Australia Post couriers).
- We are agents for Rosie's Drycleaners in Colac. Garments can be dropped off Tuesdays and Fridays with pick-up on Fridays.
- We sell Citylink 24 hour/weekend passes, process account top-ups and payment of late toll invoices.
- We sell fishing licences (two-days or 28 days).
- We can organise the insertion of notices into most newspapers including the Weekly Times.
- Because we have limited space in our store, we are not able to stock every stationery item, toy, book or magazine that is available. However, we are always willing to source any item you are seeking.
- We sold a division one winning ticket in Tattsлото in October 2015. We would love to sell another one..... soon!
- Scratchies have been back in our store since February, 2015. They make a great gift idea when you're not sure what to buy!
- We are open seven days a week:
Monday – Friday5.00am – 5.30pm
Saturday5.00am – 12.00pm
Sunday6.00am – 10.00am
Public Holidays6.00am – 10.00am
- We are a happy staff – even though Andrew and Angus follow Geelong, Hamish barracks for Brisbane, Joy is a Magpie, Donna is a Bomber and I support the mighty Hawks!

Business contact: Andrew and Karen McConachy 5595 1491 or cobdennews@netspace.net.au

During their many years of service to St John Ambulance, Ida and the late Tom Webster contributed between 700 and 1100 hours annually to the organisation and the community. A remarkable story . . .

Ida, the original 'violet' from Violet Town

It's hard to get an argument out of Ida Mary Webster.

A pleasant unassuming 90 year-old, it's easy to see how Ida has spent a lifetime caring for young children, injured and ill people, instructing people of all ages about first aid and, of course, looking after her late husband, Tom.

A dedicated member of St John Ambulance, Ida was first to join in 1971, and Tom signed up soon after – he was driving his wife around so he thought he may as well join up.

The seventh of nine children (three brothers and five sisters), Ida Johnson attended Violet Town State School to grade 8. She said she was good at 'talking' but really enjoyed geography.

There was no transport to Benalla for the Johnsons to go to secondary school. Ida's parents, Sam and Mary, would not have been able to afford to send them anyway.

On leaving school, Ida was happy to care for the children of Violet Town families, one of whom belonged to Trevor Errey, a relative of the well-known Cobden district family.

World War 2 came and she joined the Land Army which brought her to Lismore to work on flax-growing properties like 'Titanga'. After the war, Ida and a friend, Joan Ruggles, worked for Dr Watson in Camperdown where she looked after the family's two boys. It was during this time that she met Tom, a friend of Joan, the family's cook.

Tom: "Never be the leader of something your wife is in too – especially if she knows more about it than you do."

A stint in Melbourne followed, caring for the children of her aunty who was having a baby. Back to Camperdown to cook and serve at Miss Wilson's cake shop before transferring to the Ideal Café owned by Pat and Dorothy Howard.

Ida remembers finding a set of false teeth one day when cleaning up a table. She chased the owner who was most grateful to her. She also recalls the café being over-run by rats that found their way in from the neighbouring blacksmith shop.

After a second period with her aunty in Melbourne, Ida and Tom married in 1948. First, they rented on the corner of Smith and Walker streets before moving to the corner of Dover and Parrott streets and, finally, buying at 29 Parrott Street on the eastern side of Bill and Marie Barrett's home, now Heytesbury House B and B.



Tom and Ida on their wedding day and, left, Ida in her Land Army uniform

Ida and Tom had one daughter, Val, who, sadly, died suddenly of a brain tumour at age 28.

Before Tom joined Parlours Hardware, his earlier work involved carrying wood to both the Camperdown and Cobden milk factories. At one time, he also delivered bread for Dinny Malone (the father of 'Pies') at the bakery which is now the fish and chip shop next to Cobden Motors.

Ida was a member of St John Ambulance for 24 years until she 'retired' in 1991. She recalls Ash Wednesday in 1983 when the couple ventured down a burning Baileys Rd. "I said to Tom, 'This is no good for us,' and we returned to the Ecklin Store where we picked up an injured tanker driver, Vic Meade. Tom couldn't recognise poor Vic, his face was so swollen."

COBDEN CALENDAR

Friday 29th July: 7.30pm Cobden Tech School Trivia Night at John's Shed. \$10, tables of 8. No alcohol. Call 5595 1202 for more information. 12+ event.

Sunday 31st July: 7.30am Melbourne Craft and Quilt Fair bus trip fundraiser for 1st Cobden Scout Group. Drop off at Exhibition Centre door. \$40 coach only. A few seats still left. Phone Jodie 0447 943 064.

Monday 1st August: 7.30pm Progressing Cobden Annual Meeting, followed by Action Group meetings.

Saturday 6th August: 7.15am Cobden Kinder bus trip to Highpoint Shopping Centre, \$35. Phone Fiona 0447 933 745 or Lauren 0407 362 073. Return approx. 7.30pm.

Monday 15th August: 7.30pm CopRice Spring Festival committee, Heytesbury Room.



Ida, relaxing at home this week

Ida and Tom trained countless people of all ages in first aid, even after her 'retirement' in 1991. She is very proud of what they achieved together. In fact, she is very pleased with the life she's led.

Over the 33 years of active service to St John, the Websters attended countless football matches, speedway programs, equestrian and cycling events, school sports, festivals, fun runs, horse races, surf carnivals and lightning premierships.

She was rewarded for her service to St John by being elevated to the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, an honour accorded to only three other local members - Tom, Dr Bill Barrett and Lyn Edwards.

Tom: "At one game, there was a chap with concussion who wouldn't come off the ground. I threatened that I would go and get Ida – he was off the ground like a shot."

At the time, a St John spokesman said Ida had worked extremely hard to raise the organisation's profile in the region. "She was a member of the Training and Operations Branches and has taught many first aid classes and has provided many hours of public duty, both requiring considerable amounts of country travel," he said.

Like Tom a couple of years earlier, Ida was invested by the then-State Governor Richard McGarvie in Melbourne, a former Camperdown resident.

In 1987 and 1988, they were awarded conduct and service awards by St John and, in 1991, the Shire of Heytesbury presented them with community service awards.

For holidays, Ida has flown to both Western Australia and Northern Territory to see nieces and nephews. Unfortunately, Tom stayed at home both times because he wouldn't fly and wouldn't step foot on a boat either! The only way Ida could get him to travel interstate was to drive – which they once did, driving the Nullarbor for a Perth wedding.

Tom: "Another time, we had an injured player in the back of the ambulance and the first aid kit came loose and fell across his leg. Ida said, 'Well, if it wasn't broken, it is now!'"

Apart from St John, Ida has been a member of the Uniting Church, CWA, Red Cross, Senior Citizens and the Lovely Banks committee as well as being a Brownie and Guide leader. She also found time to care for Lex and Janet Parlour's children – Richard, Stephen, Andrew, Robert and Leah. "It was going to be three weeks but it ended up being six years!" she said.

Ida loves Cobden. "You couldn't get anywhere better," she said, conceding that her home is well-placed between the street and the health services. "Sue Lyons is my carer and she looks after me very well."

Then again, we don't think Ida Mary Webster would be too hard to look after. She wouldn't be any trouble to anyone – "No," she smiled, "I'm not the naughtiest person."

LETTING THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG . . .

- Ida enjoys Eddie McGuire's Hot Seat quiz show.
- She barracks for Geelong – because of Alistair Lord and it's close to home.
- She has had two back operations – at ages 33 and 73.
- Apart from her back, Ida keeps good health.
- She doesn't smoke or drink.
- She loves to read novels with a western theme.
- Tom didn't dance – he had two left feet.
- Ida loves lamb chops and pavlova.
- She is an expert knitter of award-winning baby clothes.
- Tom didn't pop the question. It just happened.