

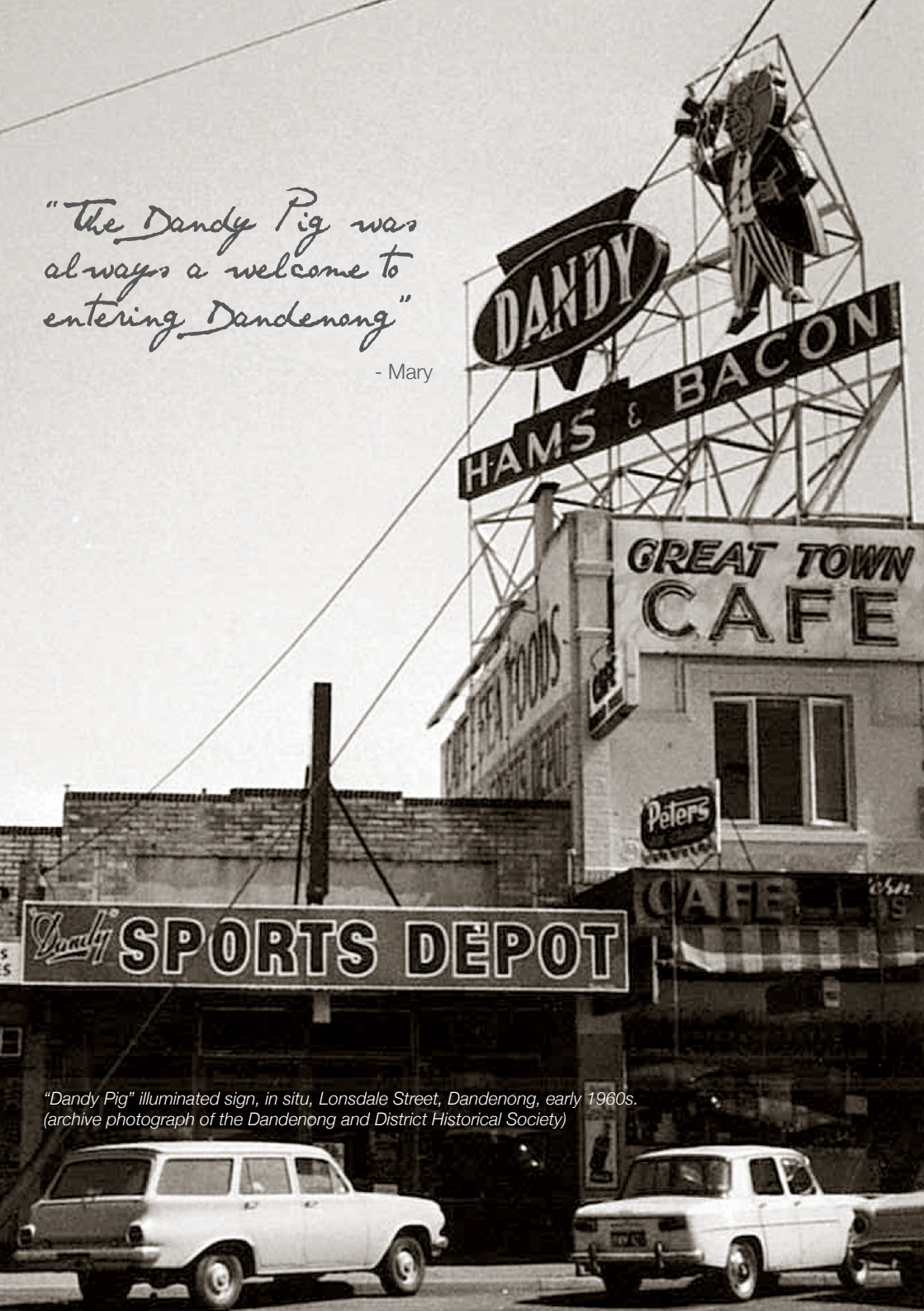
The Dandy Pig

Collective memories of the
“Dandy Pig” illuminated sign
and “Dandenong Ham and
Bacon” factory



*"The Dandy Pig was
always a welcome to
entering Dandenong"*

- Mary



*"Dandy Pig" illuminated sign, in situ, Lonsdale Street, Dandenong, early 1960s.
(archive photograph of the Dandenong and District Historical Society)*

This booklet is a selection from the hundreds of memories, articles and photos of the “Dandy Pig” illuminated sign and “Dandenong Ham and Bacon” factory as shared by past employees, families, friends and the City of Greater Dandenong community.

Many of the responses and reminiscences were collected on 27 November 2011, when the City of Greater Dandenong was delighted to host a celebration where ex-employees of the “Dandenong Ham and Bacon” factory and the Greater Dandenong community were invited to reminisce, recall and celebrate the iconic Dandy Pig.

This collective of memories is re-published in recognition of the re-instatement of the iconic Dandy Pig, officially unveiled by Mayor Cr Angela Long on 30 August 2013.

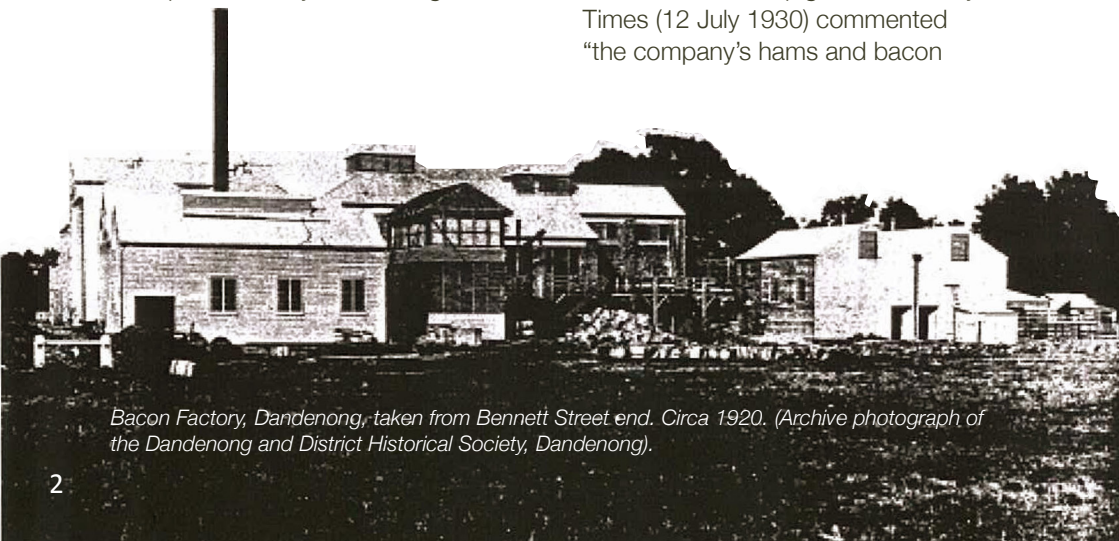




In the late 1800s, farms in the Gippsland region were renowned for their dairy cattle and pigs. Early industries in the Dandenong area grew to complement early rural activities, and in 1910 an enterprising group of Gippsland pig producers moved to establish a co-operative bacon-curing company, with a capital of £30,000 in £1 shares (The Argus, Melbourne, Saturday 22 October 1910). The Gippsland Co-operative Bacon Curing Company was incorporated in March 1911. In May that same year, the cop selected and purchased a 22 acre site close to the Dandenong Railway Station with its own siding. Tenders were called for the first buildings in October 1911. Delays ensued, including a coal strike in Britain which held up the delivery of the refrigeration

plant. However, in October 1912 the Gippsland Co-operative Bacon Curing Company began production and soon came to be known locally as 'Dandy Bacon'.

In its inaugural year, the factory handled 8,772 pigs and employed 30 people. In 1922, the factory employed about 40 men and handled 18,623 pigs. The South Bourke & Mornington Journal noted (1 June 1922) that "the farmers of Gippsland may be congratulated upon having such a fine industry, owned by themselves, and run in the interests of pig-raisers and graziers, who, helping along their factory, are helping themselves and the district generally". By 1938 the factory had increased its operations to handle more than 38,000 pigs. The Weekly Times (12 July 1930) commented "the company's hams and bacon



Bacon Factory, Dandenong, taken from Bennett Street end. Circa 1920. (Archive photograph of the Dandenong and District Historical Society, Dandenong).

Gippsland Co-operative BACON CURING Co. Ltd.



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THE MANAGER

Dandenong
VIC 3202, Australia

DEC 1936

are favourably known all over the commonwealth and a large export business has grown up". As well as smallgoods and 'Dandy' poultry, the company also produced animal food and processed by-products.

During World War II the bacon factory flourished, exporting its ham and bacon products to the Australian and United States armed services throughout Australia and the Pacific region. Following the war, production increased even further. The co-op survived a number of name changes including Victorian Bacon Limited in 1955 and Australian Bacon in 1958, and set up multiple subsidiaries throughout Australia. It is fondly referred to by ex-employees as the Dandy Ham and Bacon factory.

The Dandenong Stock Market continued to supply the bacon factory

with large numbers of pigs. By 1965 the total intake for the Australia-wide operations of Dandy Bacon was nearly 156,000 pigs. Almost one third of these were purchased through the Dandenong Stock Market. Despite the company's previous success, modernisation of the industry and a decentralisation of the live-market industry contributed to the close of the Gippsland Co-operative Bacon Curing Company and affiliated companies in 1983.

Many local Greater Dandenong residents have had a close association with the factory over the generations. The Gippsland Co-operative Bacon Curing Company factory is considered one of the major catalysts for the growth and development of Dandenong as a major industrial city.





Dandy

The Dandy Pig neon sign was first erected in the 1950s and was one of the first animated advertising signs in the region. The sign was a prominent local landmark for residents and people visiting and passing through the gateway suburb of Dandenong. The Dandy Pig signalled people's arrival into the city and is fondly remembered by many people today. The illuminated sign featured a finely dressed Mr Pig in formal morning dress, doffing his top hat to welcome people to Dandenong. Originally part of a larger sign that incorporated the Gippsland Co-operative Bacon Curing Company logo, the Dandy Pig neon sign was located above the Dandy Bacon shop on the west side of Lonsdale Street (Princes Highway), facing traffic which crossed Foster Street from Gippsland. After the factory was closed in 1983, the sign was removed and placed into storage.

In 1993, the Dandy Pig sign was erected at the Dandenong Produce Market in Clow Street, as acknowledgement of the sign's iconic status. A few years later, minor conservation work was carried out. On 6 December 1996 the City of Greater Dandenong unveiled the refurbished sign at the market. Between 2005 and 2010, the Dandenong Market underwent a \$26 million redevelopment and the Dandy Pig illuminated sign was again taken down and safely placed in storage.

On 30 August 2013, City of Greater Dandenong Mayor Cr Angela Long will officially celebrate the re-instatement of the Dandy Pig illuminated sign at the Dandenong Market, as an acknowledgement of the sign's social, cultural and historical significance in Greater Dandenong.

The Dandy Pig is fondly remembered as a prominent local landmark in the Dandenong community. For many people the sign announced Dandenong as the gateway to Melbourne and represented the City's industrial and manufacturing heritage.

My father drove a van for Dandy in the early 70s. I am always reminded of my dad and of the Dandy Pig when I visit Dandenong!
(Colleen)

The Pig was always a nice "welcome home" after a long day out - he doffed his hat to you!
(Jim)



We all knew we were nearly home when we saw the Dandy Pig sign.
(Reg)

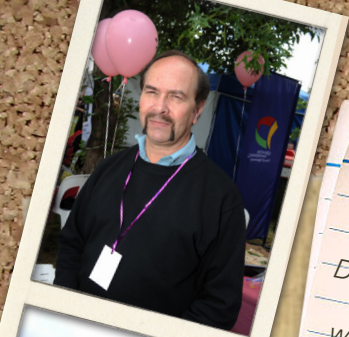
My children were happy to see The Pig .. I hope I can show The Pig to my grandchildren.
(anon.)



Where has it gone to? I thought it was cool! (Patrick)



He was so bright and colourful.
(Sarah)



I have lived in Dandenong since 1932. The Dandy Pig sign was enjoyed by myself and my children when arriving in Dandenong from Cranbourne. (Carma)



At the time, I did not realise that he represented the Dandy Bacon factory - I just thought that he was the "Welcome" sign to Dandenong. (Pauline)

I remember the Dandy Pig in Lonsdale St then later at Dandenong Market where I go every week. Such a Dandenong icon! (Paula)





Always a welcome walking from the station towards the Town Hall for the Saturday night dances. (Sandra)

Back in the late '50s, our family would travel from Black Rock to our great aunt's farm in Cranbourne.. it was a rough trip .. and a long trip .. and on our way home mum would point out the Dandy Pig which was brightly lit up and say "We're halfway home!" It was a true adventure and we always looked forward to seeing the Dandy Pig! (John)

When the children were young and we were driving back to Dandenong at night, they would all want to be awake to see the piggy! (Yvonne)



I remember seeing the Pig as a young girl and always remembered him. Now, as an adult, I am an avid pig collector and have an entire room in my home filled with "piggy" things.

I sometimes wonder if there is a connection between the Dandy Pig and my pig collection! (Trish)



We moved from Dandenong to the UK in 1975 but I remembered the Dandy Pig - he represented home. (Colleen)



The Dandy Pig was the very first neon sign I saw as a boy - I was intrigued and nagged my mother and father to show me the Pig many times. (Mark)





*The Dandy Ham Pig was
always a landmark to look
for whilst travelling through
Dandenong.*

- Glenn

Annual Report 1971