

## **Noon's Cordials of Windsor – supplier of soft drinks to several generations in the Hawkesbury**

Cathy McHardy June 2016

Supplying soft drinks to several generations of Hawkesbury residents, Noon's Cordials Pty Ltd was a household name in the district for over seventy years. This soft drink company was established in Windsor in about 1913 by Michael Noon, the youngest child of farmers Michael and Margaret Noon of Blackmans Flat near Lithgow, NSW. In the early 1880s, Michael jnr left the Lithgow district to work for Everitt Richard Summons who had founded a 'cordial and aerated waters' manufacturing firm in Parramatta in about 1883.

After working for Summons for about thirty years gaining valuable experience in the trade, Noon left Parramatta for Windsor to establish a business in his own right. He leased the cordial factory once operated by Benjamin Barnett on the corner of Kable and Macquarie Streets, Windsor.

Noon's success was not immediate having been fined 20 shillings plus costs of 6 shillings just before Christmas 1914 for selling lime cordial containing tartaric acid and burnt sugar, neither of which were deemed suitable ingredients. In his defence Noon stated that 'he put the ingredients in, it made the cordial more palatable.' Despite the inspector agreeing that the ingredients were 'not in any way injurious to health' Noon was given 14 days to pay the fine and costs.

By 1916 Noon's were gaining in popularity and sales and Noon considered taking out a patent for his new refreshing lime juice drink which he named 'Lima'. Hopefully this recipe did not include the contraband ingredients.

Later, in about 1923 Michael Noon purchased the cordial factory of Dunn Bros in George Street, Windsor nearly opposite New Street which was previously owned by William Boxhall.

Michael Noon died in 1931 aged only 65 years and was buried in the Catholic Cemetery, Windsor. Although not active in public affairs such as local government, Noon was well known for his generosity, contributing monetary support to many local organisations including Hawkesbury District Agricultural Association. He gave liberally in both cash and kind towards the Hawkesbury District Hospital and Home for Infirm and St. Matthew's Catholic Church, Windsor. Following his death, his wife Annie (nee O'Neill) carried on the business with son-in-law Hector Pritchard as manager.

Pritchard was replaced as manager of Noon's early in 1941 by Ray Stacey who had worked his way up in the factory after commencing in about 1919. When he retired he had worked for the company for over 30 years.

Major improvements were made to the factory in September 1939 concerning the manufacture of brewed soft drinks such as ginger beer and hop beer. The replacement of the old wood-fired brewing pan with a steam heated jacket pan meant that the brew could be simmered at a consistently even temperature. The boiler which produced the steam was also utilised in the operation of a large bottle-washing machine. In addition to these major factory improvements, a two-ton Chevrolet delivery wagon was purchased to enable deliveries to customers from Kurrajong Heights to Wisemans Ferry. Prior to home deliveries being made directly from the Noon's factory, orders of two dozen or more placed with local shopkeepers would be home delivered. Advertised 'factory prices' were 4 shillings per dozen with an additional 1 shilling per dozen refundable deposit on bottles.

Getting the bottles back from consumers was a costly problem for manufacturers of all kinds of foods. Losses due to breakage in manufacture or in transit were factored into pricing structures but the replacement of non-returned containers with new supplies made businesses far less profitable.

In the early years, Noon's came in clear glass bottles embossed with the circular logo on the front 'M Noon Windsor'. The collection at Hawkesbury Regional Museum includes several intact examples of this original bottle style. In later years red and white labels were printed on the glass bottle with the slogan 'you'll sooner Noon's for every occasion'. Many bottles were indeed returned to the company

after the contents were consumed however the occasional bottle is unearthed in backyard gardens and building excavations today.

Makers of beverages as well as other processed foods sold in glass bottles usually placed a statement on each stating that the container such as 'this bottle remains the property of M Noon Windsor'. Despite many entreaties for the return of empties, by 1941 the shortage had become critical. An incentive of a refundable deposit for Noon's bottles was introduced. The company advertised that the full deposit price for all branded bottles would be paid to the customer, in addition freight back to the factory would be paid or collection would be arranged on one of the regular pick-up runs.

Wartime supply shortages also took their toll on local businesses. In September 1941 Noon's published a public apology to customers for the factory's inability to meet demand due to shortages in the 'raw materials and containers for making cordials for the civilian population'. At that time quantities of ingredients were maintained for companies which produced supplies for the armed forces and rationing of basic foodstuffs was enforced in the general population.

By 1943, it became necessary to regularly cease production for several days due to shortage of materials. For example, in May 1943 a notice to shopkeepers and hotelkeepers was published in the *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* stating that owing to a shortage of citric acid and crown seals there would be no supply of soft drinks from May 10 to May 15 inclusive.

The prosperity of local manufacturing including Noon's was much in evidence in the post WWII years. Firms included a wide variety of industries including a milk factory, clothing, cordial, tannery, printing works and sweet corn cannery. In celebration of the centenary of public education in NSW 1848-1948 children from Hawkesbury schools visited local industries as well as Hawkesbury Agricultural College.

In later years Noon's Cordials relocated to George Street, South Windsor and after production of Noon's branded soft drinks ceased, the company continued as a wholesale distributor of beverages manufactured by other companies. Noon's Cordials Pty Ltd was deregistered as an Australian Proprietary Company in February 1987.

Interestingly it was in the Noon's premises in South Windsor that Roland Clark commenced manufacturing as Airlite Joinery in 1965.

Comments, additions and corrections are welcome contact [cathy@nisch.org](mailto:cathy@nisch.org)

#### **References:**

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**Noon's**  
**Cordials**

ARE NOW OBTAINABLE ONLY  
THROUGH LOCAL SHOPKEEPERS,  
but  
**AT FACTORY PRICES**  
4/- PER DOZEN.  
1/- PER DOZEN DEPOSIT ON BOTTLES  
Orders for Two Dozen or more, placed with  
your Shopkeeper, will be delivered to your  
door.

LEAVE YOUR  
XMAS ORDERS EARLY

**MICHAEL NOON,**  
PROPRIETOR

*Windsor and Richmond Gazette* 5 Dec 1930 p 9

**NOON'S** CORDIAL FACTORY  
will pay  
**FULL DEPOSIT PRICE**  
for all their  
**BRANDED BOTTLES**  
**IN THE POSSESSION OF THE PUBLIC**  
**FREIGHT PAID, OR BOTTLES**  
**COLLECTED ON REGULAR RUNS**

Please Notify Factory or TELEPHONE  
**WINDSOR 52.**

*Windsor and Richmond Gazette* 24 Oct 1941 p 9

# We Are Sorry—

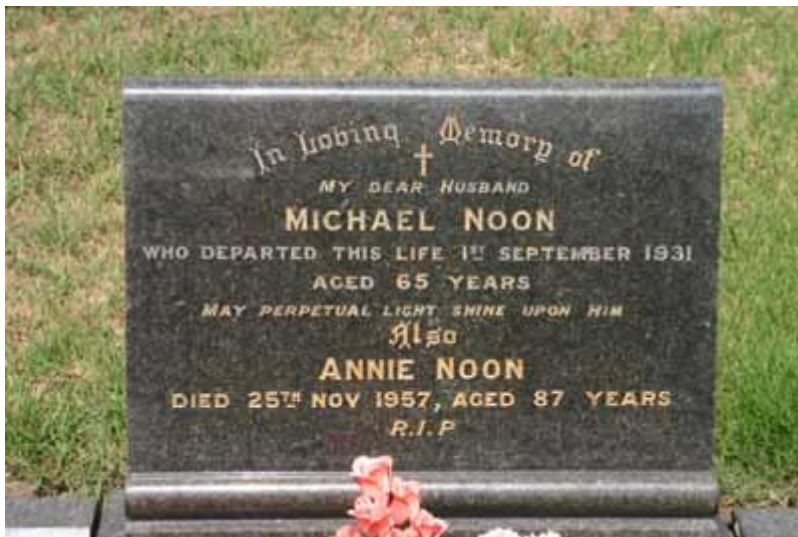
We are just as anxious as our customers to see the service we have given them in the past maintained at full strength, but, like all other businesses, we have to bow to wartime restrictions.

Chief difficulty is the cutting-down of supplies of necessary essences, raw materials and containers for making **cordials** for the civilian population. And when we can't make them, we can't deliver them.

With a very reduced staff (due to manpower and military call-ups) we are working day and night to ensure fairly-distributed deliveries of our rationed output to our customers. We are sure they will understand our position—that we are doing our best under difficult conditions. It is part of the sacrifices we all must make until brighter times, when we will be able to restore our former full service to customers.

**Noon's Cordial Factory**  
**Windsor**

Windsor and Richmond Gazette 9 Sep 1941 p 5



[http://www.hawkesbury.net.au/cemetery/windsor\\_catholic/wwcc540.html](http://www.hawkesbury.net.au/cemetery/windsor_catholic/wwcc540.html)

Photo courtesy of Michelle Nichols - Retrieved 17 June 2016