

THE FIRST STORE OWNER IN KENILWORTH

You may not know ... 2016 marks 95 years of Kenilworth Township. The historical articles will endeavour to cover stories of the first business owners over the coming months.

Referring to Wikipedia all events that are remembered and preserved in some authentic form constitute the historical record.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History>

The first written record of the first business in the township was in the

inward correspondence of the Maroochy Shire Council, published on page one of the *Nambour Chronicle*, 23.6.1923 – a letter from Mr R.W. Sims (landowner) seeking permission to erect an awning over the footpath.

Councillor John McGinn stated for the record that this was "the first business in the township". When the building was constructed or by whom is unknown but the erection of an awning may have resulted from observation of the amount of western sun that heated the building each afternoon – making any commercial enterprise most uncomfortable.

From oral history held by the Kenilworth Museum it is known that Chadwicks were approached to open a branch office of their larger store in Nambour. (The Chadwick family were long time acquaintances of the Sims family) – but they failed to take up the offer.

When Arthur Edwin Tanner (pictured above 1926) proposed to Winnie Grace Sims in 1923 – he seems to have been absorbed into the growing diversity of family business interests.

From Winnie Grace's 1924 diary the exact date of the opening of A.E. Tanner's General Store has been gleaned. It opened for business on 2 January, 1924. The opening was reported on page 13 of *The Daily Mail* published in Brisbane on 1 February, 1924.

But what of Arthur Edwin Tanner?

Arthur Edwin Tanner was born on 11 March, 1895 at Hyde End, Brimpton, County of Berkshire, England, the eldest of eight children of Arthur Charles and Fanny Tanner. Arthur lived with his parents and siblings at Coley Park in Reading where his father was the Park Constable. Arthur left school at 14 years of age to work to supplement the family income.

In 1912 the family decided to migrate to Australia as migrants sponsored by Nestles, arriving in Brisbane on 18 August, on the SS Demosthenes.

Arthur worked at a number of jobs in the Kenilworth District including driving a bullock team, cutting timber, picking and selling cape gooseberries and road and bridge building. He

met and courted Winnie Grace Sims and proposed marriage to her in 1923. They became officially engaged in April 1924 and married in the Kenilworth Farmers Assembly Hall on January 13, 1926.

During the period of their engagement Winnie supported Arthur's business by making cakes and sweets for him to sell in the shop, her brothers assisted in transporting goods from the rail in Brooloo and Eumundi to his business, as well as "minding" the shop when required. Winnie's diary records the enormous growth of his business over the year 1924. The October accounts showed 78 customers with an income of three hundred and twenty-five pounds odd and outstanding accounts of four hundred and six pounds odd – the beginning of a business association that spanned three decades.

More of the stories of the early days of Kenilworth Township are shown in the new display at the Kenilworth Museum – open every Sunday 10:00am to 2:00pm.

Lenore Meldrum, President

