

THE STANTHORPE SHOWGROUNDS

HISTORIC TEA PAVILION

THE SHEARER'S STOVE

The Tea Pavilion is home to a magnificent piece of kitchenalia from a bygone era – the shearer's stove.

The shearer's stove in the Tea Pavilion was manufactured by Metters Limited, an Australian company established in Adelaide in 1891 by the Metters brothers. Over the years and with several changes in name and company personnel, the brothers patented and manufactured a number of items we are familiar with including wood stoves, bathtubs and agricultural equipment.



The sheep industry is no stranger to Metters products, in providing kitchen and bathroom utilities to the itinerant shearers who appeared on properties as part of the shearing circuit. The shearing team may have had a cook amongst them, who made use of the shearer's stove for evening meals after a hard day's work. The shearer's stove would also keep the shearer's quarters warm in winter months, and if a water jacket was installed, provided the hot water for washing off the day's grime and dust.

As the company expanded, the stoves were manufactured in three states (WA, NSW and SA) to reduce shipping costs. Metters stoves became a source of heat, food and hot water for generations of Australian families. Today, Metters items can still be found functional in the Australian farming way of life. They are certainly worth of restoration and care, given their strong ties to Australian manufacturing industries.

The history behind the Metters shearer's stove in the Tea Pavilion is still being investigated. We are yet to determine where it came from, who donated it and when.

One thing is known, however, for many years after its arrival, it stood in the kitchen annex and was used by the volunteers in the Ladies Auxiliary to prepare hot meals and hot beverages. When the concrete block extension was built, it was moved 90 degrees clockwise into the extension, evidenced by the indelible footprint in the concrete floor. The concrete block extension has now been removed, and the shearer's stove is finding a new home in the main area of the Pavilion.



The stove is unique in its double-door ovens surrounding the central fire. It's internal mechanisms meant that heat could be directed to one or both ovens and regulated depending on the need. This stove has many other features of a cast iron stove of its size and nature.

Over the years it did fall into some ruin with rust taking its toll on some of the internal mechanisms and pieces, leaving it non-functional. But it is still of value given its historical links to the sheep industry.

Today, it is being lovingly restored by a team of volunteers who believe that its existence, whether functional or aesthetic, is a valuable asset to the Stanthorpe Showgrounds.

