

The Dawe Family



Back Row: Leonard Stanley and Louis Fred.
Middle Row: Emma Amelia and Doris. Front
Row: Alan, Ron and Reg.

Below medals won by Dawe Fish Factory.



Louis Christopher Frederick Dawe was from South Australia, born possibly around 1875. He was about five foot ten inches, and of solid build. Louis moved to Fremantle in the 1880s or 1890s and worked as a plumber or tinsmith in Instone's shop, which dealt in plumbing supplies and wood stoves. Louis then moved to Mandurah after maybe two years and worked at the Tuckey's cannery (the Peel Inlet Preserving Works). He also went back to South Australia, probably in 1896, and married Emma Amelia Rigg, born 1871. They married in May 1896, and so Louis probably worked in Mandurah before he went back to marry.



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Louis then left the Tuckey's cannery and worked at Pleasant Grove, at first with a partner, Charlie Herbert. Pleasant Grove, on the east side of what is now Falcon, was owned by Eleanor Ward née Eacott, whose husband Alfred had died in 1891. The Leighton brothers had started a fish canning venture there, but had both drowned. Louis probably had a factory for canning at Pleasant Grove established by 1897. He rented a lean-to next to the Wards' homestead and a wattle and daub smokehouse, for £14.6d per year. A jetty and small cleaning shed were built at the water's edge.

Sea mullet and kippered herring were canned – the mullet in summer and the herring in winter. Fish were supplied by Seymour Ward, Jack and Eric Eacott, the Watches, the Melwoods and Ted Stinton, who were paid 12-15 shillings per 100 fish caught. Forty cases, each with 48 tins, were shipped out weekly by the Tuckey family, Harry Halliday or Captain Cox, to Fremantle. Louis would ride once a fortnight to Fremantle to collect payment, but fish could not be transported by road as it took too long without refrigeration, and the road was very bumpy. The Dawes' fish was known for its good quality, winning an award in the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition.

Louis also had between 130 and 150 beehives, which made good honey. In 1906, he rented land from Eleanor Ward for 1s per year, upon which to build a small timber school for his own children and others nearby. It was a timber building for about a dozen pupils, and opened on 22nd August 1906. It closed exactly a decade later (22nd August 1916), and the materials may have been used later by the Dawe family at Allandale.

Allandale was a limestone and timber six roomed house built between 1913 and 1918 (or 1919) in what would later be called Dawesville. The stone was quarried from the property, with a stonemason from Kalamunda coming on weekends to assist with building. When Louis Dawe built the house it was complete with a cellar. The family moved in about 1918, and continued to can fish at this new location. A weatherboard and corrugated iron factory was built, along with a jetty. While in the early times, the business won international awards for their canning, it later went through lean times, canning salmon and selling honey as the demand for fish fell. In 1930 canning ceased, as there was too much overseas competition and also a greater demand for fresh fish. The weatherboard factory collapsed in 1976.

Allandale was added to the State Register of Heritage Places. It was sold in 1996 to businessman David Davanport and his wife Michele, who wanted to renovate the building.

Louis Dawe died in May 1948. He was survived by his wife Emma who lived until September 1966. They are both buried in the Mandurah Cemetery on Boundary Road.

Further information relating to the Dawe Family, Allandale and fish canning can be found at Mandurah Museum.



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