

## Corner Stores

*Greg Ryan*

There was a time in most Australian cities and towns when almost every neighbourhood had a corner store within easy walking distance. Albury was no exception – locals of all ages went to the corner store to buy mixed bags of lollies, an ice-cream, fresh milk and bread, or to pick up the daily newspaper.

The local shop was also a social hub, people knew their local shopkeepers, and shopkeepers knew their customers. Children walked or rode their bikes to the local shop, picking up a few items for mum as well as an ice-cream or bag of mixed lollies.

Those days are all but over, supermarkets, petrol stations and home delivery have replaced the local store. But it's not hard to find a building around town that was once a shop. Some have been converted to homes or cafes – there are plenty of examples around Albury.

Such stores closer to the CBD have mostly long disappeared. One such shop was on the corner of Smollett and Olive streets, known to generations of youngsters in the three schools around that corner as Schuberts.



Schubert's store on the corner of Olive and Smollett Streets, taken in December 1926 when the store still fronted Smollett Street. Mrs Schubert is in the doorway.

Michael O'Shea purchased the site in 1883 and in the following March the *Border Post* reported that he had established a "New General Store opposite the Catholic Church."

There were several changes of ownership before the store was purchased in 1926 by Hugo and Agnes Schubert. "Schubert's Grocery Store" originally faced Smollett Street before extensive renovations in 1936 saw the façade updated and the frontage changed to Olive Street.

Jill Smith, daughter of Hugo and Agnes, recalls that “Regular customers usually paid for groceries once a month and others left an order and Hugo delivered them by bike, often with one of his children on a little bike seat.

“During World War II, due to rationing of sugar and other produce, Hugo set up a small ‘factory’ in the kitchen of their adjoining house and manufactured toffee apples and came up with a ‘winning’ recipe for ice-blocks.

“Up until the 1950s, groceries could not be sold after noon Saturday until Monday – shutters had to be used to shut off the grocery section. They were not allowed to sell cigarettes after 6pm and Agnes was once fined by an ‘under cover’ policeman for breaking that rule.”

Hugo and Agnes’ son Glen and his wife Elaine took over the store in 1956. The site was sold and the store demolished in 1974.