

# The Milk Run

*Kevin and Annette Miller*

*The last 'milkos' to make home deliveries in Riverstone share memories of their business.*

On 14 January 1983 we purchased our milk run from Les Kirk of Riverstone. The run was bounded by Garfield Road East, Riverstone Road, Railway Terrace and McCulloch Street.

We delivered to around 190 to 200 residential customers and the corner shops in Regent Street and Elizabeth Street. We also made major deliveries to the Riverstone Primary School, Coverdale Christian School and later to St John's Catholic School.

Originally we collected the milk from United Dairies Ltd at Schofields. They brought a trailer up from North Rocks and plugged it into the dairy across the bridge at Schofields. When they closed in November 1984 we had to go to Nepean Milk Depot on the Richmond Road at Doonside. In the 1990s Nepean Milk was sold to National Foods Milk Ltd.

We started at 3pm and finished around 6 to 6.30. As we collected the milk and made our deliveries that afternoon, there was no need to store it while we made the run.

Our delivery van was an automatic 1975 Holden 1 tonner. We purchased it with the business. At that stage it only had roller doors on the back. The laws changed and we had to have an insulated body on the vehicle. In 1999 we had to have refrigeration installed as well.

One of the biggest changes that took place in the time we operated the business was when the industry stopped using glass milk bottles and moved to plastic containers and cartons. It made it easier for us as there were no breakages, but a lot of people didn't like the cartons.

The products themselves did not change that much, but the company expanded the range to include more yoghurts and different types of flavoured milks. The last order form we had showed that including the different sized containers there were 144 products to choose from. They ranged from plain milk to flavoured milk, to cream to fruit juices to yoghurt, cheese and even mineral water.

Over the years we cut back on the days that we worked. We started working six days, Monday to Saturday, though we had to do the shops seven days. On very hot days in summer we often started a bit later, but we used to get into trouble with some of the older customers who wanted get their milk deliveries and have their showers or baths before it got too late. In the 1990s we cut deliveries back to four days a week. We employed young people to help with the deliveries. Some of those were our son Garry, Ron and Belinda Newby, Brett Howes, Brett Drayton and Kirk Drayton.

It was a good job and we enjoyed meeting the people. We sold out to Mr Gill in October 1999. He didn't want to call on people and only did the shops and schools. Our last delivery day was on 5 November 1999 and that was the last day of personal milk delivery to our customers.