

B|FURPHY

"THE DAILY NEWS"

Page Six

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# FURPHY BROS.

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## CASTING & IRON WORK

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# A TRADITION IN FOUNDRY

In the Australian idiom a furphy is unfounded.

But in the industrial history of WA the name Furphy is synonymous with foundry.

The highest traditions of Furphy foundry work are being carried on in Fremantle today by a man with long associations with the family.

Mr Gran Hickling is now the owner of the family's foundry which was built soon after the turn of the century in Grey Street,

South Fremantle.

Mr Hickling's lifelong connection with the foundry business began 45 years ago when he was a 10-year-old in Katanning. He lived over the road from a foundry run by Mr Wilbur Furphy and he used to work there after school for an hour each day and on Saturday mornings. For this, he earned two shillings a week.

When he turned 14 it was natural that he should begin with Mr Furphy as an apprentice moulder.

But two years later the

depression began to bite deep and Mr Furphy was forced to move back to Fremantle to the family's Grey Street foundry run by brothers Sam and Felix Furphy.

He took the young apprentice moulder along with him and Gran continued to learn the trade in the foundry which was later to become his own.

However the path from apprentice to owner was a circuitous one.

After the World War, Mr Hickling started his own business, Universal Iron and Brass Founders, in North Fremantle. He expanded into hot dip galvanising. After about 15 years he sold out to the Lyons group, but continued on as manager for a further 12 years.

Then he joined an old friend, Eric Hogg, in the lease of the old Furphy foundry where he had spent his early apprenticeship.

They used the initials of their Christian names for the firm, E and G Foundry, and this remains although Mr Hickling has since bought Mr Hogg out.

Then, six months ago, the Furphy family agreed to sell the old building to their one-time apprentice.

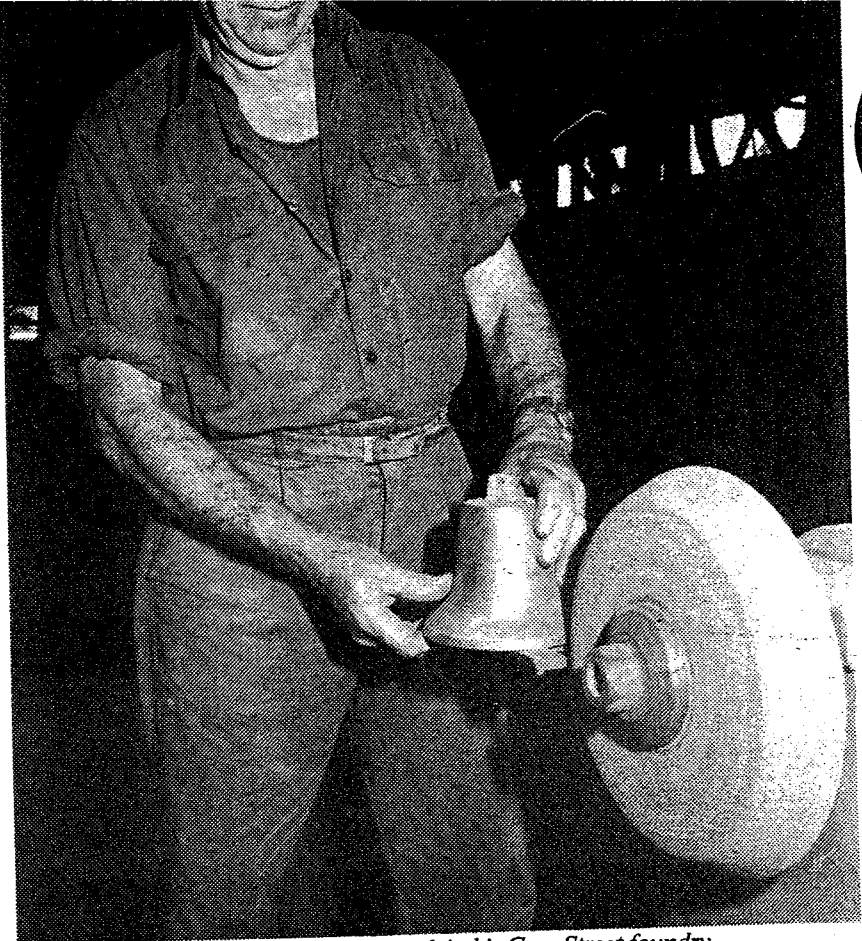
"The Furphys had a very good name both in castings and in business," says Mr Hickling, "and I try to run the business now in the same way and match the high standard of work they used to turn out."

A close-knit team of seven apprentices and tradesmen turns out the foundry's castings which go to agriculture, shipping and industry in general.



Molten metal guided by the experienced hands of Mr. Gran Hickling pours into a mould at E and G Foundry.

F. Coy. 4/11/81



Gran Hickling busy at work in his Grey Street foundry.

# Fremantle Has Furphy History

The name Furphy is one which has worn its way deep into the fabric of West Australian history.

This week the name made headlines when the removal of Tom Collins' (Joseph Furphy) original home from Servetus Street drew closer to reality.

But Fremantle too, has its own piece of Furphy history — a small but very productive foundry in Grey Street Fremantle was first owned by Sam and Felix Furphy, Joseph Furphy's brothers.

The Furphy name is synonymous with the foundry business in WA — Wilbur Furphy, father of Sam and Felix, had one of the first foundries in Katanning.

Just over the road from him lived a lad called Gran Hickling who today owns the Grey Street foundry.

Gran has had a long and fruitful association with the Furphies who he admires and respects.

"The Furphies were a good, honest and clean bunch of people — you could always take them at their word. They were never great smokers, drinkers or gamblers but were

he said.

Gran learnt the foundry trade from Wilbur when he used to work in his Katanning foundry after school an hour each day and on Saturday mornings — a task for which he was paid two shillings a week.

When he turned 14 it was natural for him to be apprenticed to Wilbur but due to the bite of the Depression years it became necessary for Wilbur to move back to the family foundry in Grey Street which was being run by Sam and Felix.

Gran learnt the trade from Furphy and then worked in his own business for a number of years — Universal Iron and Brass Founders. Later he joined Eric Hogg, an old friend in the lease of the old Furphy foundry which he knew so well.

They used the initials of their christian names to form the name of the company E and G Foundry which later became Gran's own when Wilbur offered the business to

"for a gift" sum as Gran puts it himself.

Gran and his six associates run the foundry smoothly, turning out castings for agriculture, shipping and other industries throughout Fremantle.

Gran loves the foundry and he's proud to be part of the Furphy history.

"I never knew Tom Collins but all the other Furphies used to talk about him and they really respected him," he said.

"Wilbur used to say he wished he could write like Joseph — he did do a bit of writing for the Katanning newspaper but never made it like Joseph did," he said.

The foundry today is still much the same as was at the turn of the century — a sentiment thought on Gran's behalf and the good sound sense of the original planner has seen the foundry through the years virtual unchanged.

Gran's getting close retirement now but he hopes that the future manager of the foundry will continue the Furphy tradition in foundry with honesty and deter

more on the screen, seal

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B/HICKLING



Gran Hickling — business is in good hands.

# Grand day coming up for Gran

The E and G Foundry in Grey Street, Fremantle opened its doors for business 83 years ago.

Since that day Gran Hickling has been closely involved in the day to day running of the foundry, which is the oldest of its type in the State and the first foundry to be established in Fremantle.

To walk into the foundry today is like walking back in time. The building is made of jarrah and karri timber and the method of casting the various metals is still the same.

"When I came to this place as an apprentice 14 other men worked here," Gran said. "It was an immaculate foundry.

## 'Magnificent'

"The castings we made were magnificent. I've tried to copy that style, but the change in sand has made it almost impossible."

Gran had his first taste of working in a foundry when he was a 10 year old living in Katanning.

There he worked an hour each week for his employer, the Furphy Brothers.

At the age of 16 he was taken on as an apprentice by the company and was transferred to their foundry in Grey Street, Fremantle.

By the age of 24 Gran had taken over the business, but a year later he was forced to leave it. "I just couldn't get along with the landlord," he said.

Gran moved to North Fremantle and started the Universal Iron and Brass Foundry. While he was building up his new business the Grey Street foundry closed down.

Twenty-two years later Gran returned to the re-opened Grey Street foundry and worked with the new owner Eric Hogg.

"Now Eric was a champion fellow, and working with him gave me tremendous pleasure," Gran said.

Three years down the track and Gran was once again in charge of the foundry. "Eric offered the business to me and I just couldn't refuse the offer."

Until a year ago the business was still being run by Gran. "A young man by the name of John Honey bought the business from me and I'm very pleased that he did.

"I retire on June 30 and I'm pleased that I don't have to worry about financial matters, and I know that the business is in good hands."

The work of the Grey Street foundry can be seen in many places in and around Fremantle, from the grave railings at the Fremantle cemetery to the old Samson mill.

"This foundry has always been old fashioned. We'll take on everything," Gran said.

## Paddy Hannan

The statue of Kalgoorlie's most famous son, Paddy Hannan, was cast at the foundry.

"I'm looking forward to retirement," Gran said. "My wife and I have been planning for the day for the past 10 years.

"I've always believed in helping other people who are less fortunate than myself. If I can be of assistance to a person in any way then I must do all that I can."

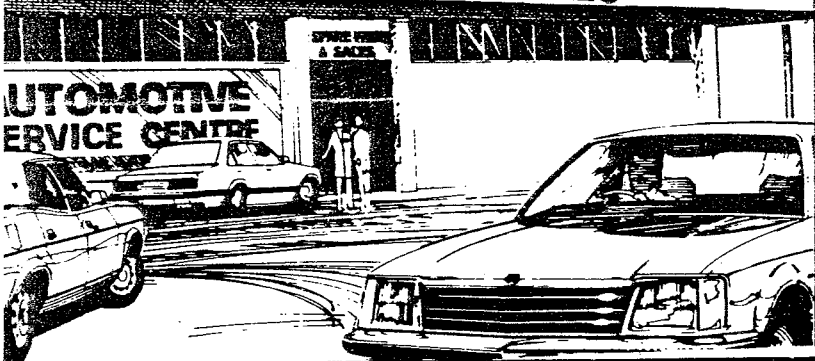
A keen angler, Gran intends to spend his retirement travelling and fishing. Recently the Fremantle Sailing Club made Gran a life member for his untiring service. "I've been competing socially and helping the club for the past 40 years," Gran said.

It wasn't difficult to tell that he had enjoyed every moment of that service.



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