





Stokes

**ONE & A HALF CENTURIES IN BUSINESS
1856 - 2006 & ON**


The Stokes story began when Thomas Stokes a diesinker from Birmingham England arrived in Victoria during the gold rush era of the 1850's.




Only some 20 years after John Batman sailed up the Yarra and established the village of Melbourne, Stokes were in business.




A very early photo indicates that Stokes were located in a shop at 100 Collins St Melbourne with signs advertising "Die Sinker and Medallist, Stamper and Token Maker". Soon after Electroplating was added to the business.




In the 1880's 30 or so men including boys and youths are recorded in a wages book as earning between six shillings and up to three pounds per week.



The early 1900's saw Stokes heavily involved in producing coat and collar badges for schools, colleges, lodges and associations, The Victorian Railways, Salvation Army and ordinance stores.



To this day Stokes are still making name bar badges for Industry for Companies like Coles Myer. (any orders from electrical industry companies gratefully accepted).



The period also saw Stokes making "In Memoriam Medals" in relation to Queen Victoria's passing and Coronation Medals portraying the new King, Edward VII.



Stokes had some participation in the early design of "The Rising Sun" badge.



Company records show that a young apprentice called Kenneth Luke joined Stokes in 1910. In 1921 he left the Company and became one of Stokes keenest competitors and went on to fame with his association with the Victorian Football League.



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From its original shop front premises in the City the Company grew and established its Brunswick factory in 1936.



During the 1939/45 war Stokes manufactured a range of fittings for aircraft production as well as various components for shells, mines and telescopic sights.



At wars end Stokes were heavily involved in the production of Victory and Peace medals.



In 1947 Stokes were commissioned to produce the Australian Government's wedding present to her Royal Highness, The Princess Elizabeth. The present consisted of two Australian silver salvers and two silver fruit stands.



On the subject of Government, the beautiful lamplights on the steps of Parliament House Melbourne are a Stokes manufactured product.



A post war innovation was a range of trophies and plaques for golf, bowls, cricket, cycling, running, swimming, tennis, yachting and VFL football.



On the sporting front and for those who take an interest in the "sport of kings" the famous W.S. Cox plate was made by Stokes for a period of time for the Mooney Valley Racing Club.



In 1956 Stokes took up the manufacturing and sales rights of a monotube sheathed heat-
ing element, patented by Tuttle and Kift in Chicago. The electrical element
factory was established in Ringwood Victoria.



By June 1962 electric heating elements accounted for almost a third of the total group turnover.



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Sales of new electric ranges trebled in the next decade and thus a market for replacement elements was created. No doubt a person called Alan ... Mannix was one of Stokes first customers (A.W.M.)



An icon of Australian suburbia “The Splayd” was introduced and sold throughout the nation and overseas in the sixties. This knife, fork and spoon combination exceeded all sales expectations. By 1970 “Splayds” accounted for no less than a third of all “retail group” sales.



From 1958 – 1973 Russell Stokes (Williams Father) was a member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Evelyn in Victoria.



A Stokes Mint was established in conjunction with the U.S. Company Franklin at Ringwood in the mid seventies. The official opening of the Mint was commemorated by the visits of the cricket captains of both the English and Australian teams, Tony Grieg and Greg Chappel. Both captains jointly struck the first medallion of the Centenary issue celebrating 100 years of cricket between the two Countries. This coin was used for the toss of the coin” at the M.C.G. Centenary Test. It’s history that a young batsman David Hookes made a name for himself during that famous test.



Stokes were participants at the 1880 International Exhibition held at the outstanding Melbourne landmark The Exhibition Building. 100 years on Stokes were again exhibiting at the same site in the 1980 exhibition.



Throughout the 1990’s and into this Century The Australian Whitegoods Industry has undergone tremendous changes and Stokes like all component suppliers has had to restructure to suit the times.

Stokes are now well placed to look forward to the next fifty years.