

AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT

LEVER BROTHERS LTD

Sales ledger, 1925-37

Reel M1650

**Unilever Ltd
Unilever House
Blackfriars London EC4P 4BQ**

**National Library of Australia
State Library of New South Wales**

Filmed: 1985

HISTORICAL NOTE

Sir William Hesketh Lever (1851-1925) was a partner in his father's grocery business before establishing a soap factory in Warrington in 1885. In 1889 he established Port Sunlight, near Liverpool, which remained the headquarters of his empire until 1921. Lever Brothers was registered as a private company in 1890 and converted to a public limited company in 1894. The company first concentrated on producing Sunlight soap, but within a few years diversified to other soaps, soap powders and other products. After 1900 there was an extraordinary expansion of the company's interests, as it took control of numerous companies in several countries, became involved in the production of raw materials, such as copra, and acquired shipping and food businesses. Lever, who became Lord Leverhulme in 1917, completely dominated the company right up to his death. He held all the ordinary shares, seldom met with the other directors, and dealt directly with the managers of Lever Brothers and the numerous subsidiary companies.

After Lever's death, Sir Francis Cooper became chairman of the company. In 1929 Lever Brothers amalgamated with the Dutch margarine manufacturer Margarine Unie to form Unilever, one of the first great international corporations. The name Lever Brothers was retained by subsidiary companies in the United States, Canada and Australia. Lever Brothers (Australia) became Lever and Kitchen in 1962 and later Unilever Australasia.

LEVER BROTHERS LTD

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Australian and New Zealand sales ledger of Lever Brothers Ltd and its subsidiary companies, 1925-37. (1 volume)

The volume, which is unpaginated, is arranged by company, beginning with Lever Brothers (Australia) Ltd. in Sydney. The statements cover periods of three months, six months, or a year and usually provide the sales figures for each week within those periods. The major products are listed separately, while minor products are grouped under headings such as 'other laundry soaps'. Occasionally, there is a breakdown giving the sales of a major product in each of the Australian states.

The statements appear in the following order:

Lever Brothers (Australia) Ltd., Sydney

Sales, January 1935 – December 1937.

Products include Sunlight soap, Lifebuoy soap, Monkey Brand soap, Pear's soaps, toilet soaps, Rinso, soap powders, Lux, laundry soaps, scourers, scouring soaps, Sunlight oil cake, Sunlight coconut oil, edible oils and fats, margarine, glycerine, candles, toiletries, toilet soaps, linoleum polish.

Lever Brothers opened an office in Sydney in 1888 and in 1897 established a plant at Balmain to extract oil from copra from the Pacific islands. In 1900 it began to manufacture Sunlight soap and glycerine and in time it produced all the main Lever products. Lever Brothers (Australia) Ltd was incorporated in New South Wales in 1899 and branch offices were later set up in other state capitals. The Balmain factory ceased operation in 1988.

Edible Oil Industries Pty Ltd

Sales, January 1934 – December 1937.

Products include Copha, Vegetol, Bakkerol, Olonut and margarine.

Unilever set up Edible Industries Pty Ltd in 1934 to consolidate the marketing of all the edible fats produced by Lever Brothers (Australia) Ltd, J. Kitchen & Sons Ltd and W.H. Burford & Sons Ltd.

J. Kitchen & Sons, Melbourne and Sydney

Sales, January 1925 – December 1937.

Products include Velvet soap, Witch soap, sand soap, toilet soaps, soap powder, glycerine, margarine, edible products, tallow, fertiliser, soda crystals, Rexona products. The sales figures for 1925-27 are divided by states.

John Ambrose Kitchen (1835-1922) was a manufacturer of tallow candles in Melbourne and established a soap and candle factory at Footscray in 1870. By the end of the century his company, together with several subsidiaries, was the largest soap and candle manufacturer in eastern Australia and it subsequently expanded to South Australia and Western Australia. Velvet soap was introduced as a brand name in 1906 and Salvol in 1915. In 1914 Lever Brothers acquired a major interest in the company. In 1924 J. Kitchen & Sons became the main Australian holding company for all the interests of Lever Brothers.

Rexona Pty Ltd, Melbourne

Sales, January 1933 – December 1937.

The products include ointment, soap, shaving sticks, shaving creams, shampoo powder, tooth paste, hotel soaps.

Rexona ointment was created in Sydney in 1908 by Alice Sheffer, the wife of Samuel Sheffer, the founder of the Sheldon Drug Company. The Company adopted an aggressive advertising campaign, with celebrity endorsements, and soon acquired a strong position in the ointment and toiletries market. In about 1930 J. Kitchen & Sons bought the trademark and goodwill of Rexona soap and formed Rexona Pty Ltd.

D. & W. Gibbs Ltd, London

Sales, January 1936 – December 1937.

Products include small dentrifice, large dentrafice, tooth paste.

The soap works of David Gibbs was founded in London in 1702 and remained in the City of London until 1889, when it was destroyed by fire. D. & W. Gibbs then bought a soap works at Wapping, where they remained until 1941. The company was incorporated in 1899. In 1906 it developed one of its strongest brands, a solid dentrifice. D. & W. Gibbs Ltd was taken over by Lever Brothers in 1919 and from then onwards Gibbs dentrifice and dental cream were produced at the Balmain factory. Its SR tooth paste was launched in 1934.

W.H. Burford & Sons, Adelaide

Sales, January 1925 – December 1937.

Products include Signal soap, No. 1 soap, No. 2 soap, toilet soaps, snowflakes, linoleum polish, tallow, starch, soap extract, glycerine, white naptha, Epsom salts, soda crystals, sand soap, egg preserver, bone manure, meat meal. The sales figures for 1927-28 are divided by state.

William Henry Burford (1807-1895) emigrated to Adelaide in 1838 and became a manufacturer of candles and soap. Despite fires and other setbacks, the company became the largest soap manufacturer in South Australia. Following Burford's death, his son William Burford was chairman

of the company for thirty years. Lever Brothers became the major shareholder of W.H. Burford & Sons in 1914. The company was bought out by Unilever (Australia) in 1957.

New Zealand Soap Company, Wellington

Sales, January 1925 – December 1932.

Products include olein oil, glycerine, paraffin wax, tallow, bonedust.

Lever Brothers Ltd, Petone, New Zealand

Sales, January 1925 – December 1937.

Products include Sunlight soap, Lifebuoy soap, Pear's transparent soap, Pear's opaque soap, Lux, Monkey Brand scouring soap, Rinso, glycerine, edible fats and oils, Vim scouring soap, Pear's preparations.

Lever Brothers commenced soap production in New Zealand in 1919, when it opened a factory at Petone, a suburb of Lower Hutt, near Wellington. The Petone factory closed in 2015.

Rexona Pty Ltd, New Zealand

Sales, January – December 1934.

Products include ointment, soap, shaving sticks, shaving cream, shampoo powder, tooth paste, hotel soaps.

W.H. Burford & Sons Ltd, Adelaide

Export sales, January 1925 – December 1937.

Sales to Straits Settlements, Federated Malay States, Ceylon, Netherlands East Indies.

J. Kitchen & Sons Ltd, Melbourne and Sydney

Export sales, January 1928 – December 1929.

Sales to Netherlands East Indies, Straits Settlements, Federated Malay States, Hong Kong, India and South Africa.