

GILL & CO TIMBER ADVERTISING FEATURE

Now a third-generation local business

Looking back at 90 years

FROM 1926 TO 2016

GILL and Co was first registered by Lynnwood Lawrence Gill in 1926 on the corner of Queen and Creek streets in Brisbane.

The business prospered, enabling the purchase of a sawmill at Roseberry, just north of Kyogle in northern New South Wales just before the outbreak of the Second World War.

In 1950 the sawmill was sold to Hancock and Gore Ltd generating funds to buy the present yard at Ipswich Road, Rocklea - then on the fringe of the large, rapidly expanding Brisbane suburbs.

It was around this time that John, Lynnwood's son, joined the business.

The Cleveland branch was established in 1960 on the corner of Russell and Bloomfield street and was the only timber yard for a 20 kilometre radius.

In the late 70s, when housing in the Redlands was burgeoning, the volume of business and the amount of stock required was such that a move to a new and larger premises on the corner of Princess and Bloomfield streets was needed.

With the business expanding John, who became known as the face and 'timberman' of the business, developed Gill and Co into an empire.

Eighteen years ago David, John's son, became third



TOUGH TIMES: In 2011 Gill and Co faced a setback with the Brisbane floods. The Rocklea site was completely destroyed and had to be rebuilt.

generation to take on the business. Working as the manager of the Cleveland store, David is now running the business following John's passing in late August.

"One of the biggest challenges for the businesses in its 90 years has been within the last 10 years with the global financial crisis (GFC)," David said.

"So many businesses, like us, have been going OK but there are still a lot of wholesalers who are struggling or folding.

"Dad said that in his 60

years of business, this last 10 had been the worst he'd ever seen."

Thanks to John's planning and avoidance of loans however, his empire was able to come through the most trying of times - even when the Rocklea yard was destroyed by 2011 Brisbane floods.

"The Rocklea site was six metres underwater," David said.

"We ended up having to demolish the whole site and re-do the sheds from scratch and place demountable buildings just in case any-

thing ever happened again. Included in the rebuild a refurbishment of the original, iconic neon sign at the entrance to the facility.

During this time the business kept on with Rocklea staff working at Cleveland to meet demand.

As the company marks 90 years as a family owned and run operation, David said there is no plans on ending the history books now.

"We're looking forward to making it to 100 and, hopefully, to the fourth generation," he said.



HE'S MY TIMBERMAN: John Gill The Timberman has been the face of the sawmill company for the past 60-odd years.

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both Gill & Co Rocklea
& Cleveland

We congratulate
Dave Gill and his
very professional
and knowledgeable
team on reaching
their 90 year
milestone
and look forward to
continuing our close
relationship in the future.

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