



Stocked shelves with bygone era products at the Old Pharmacy.

Credit: Gayle Cotterill



Dental chair and foot pedal drill.

Credit: Gayle Cotterill



The impressive National Cash Register.

Credit: Gayle Cotterill

The Old Pharmacy

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Hours: 9am - 3pm Monday to Friday.
9am - 1pm Saturday

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Presented by Museum & Gallery Services Queensland in partnership with The Old Pharmacy.

'Did You Know' – intriguing facts about the Museum

- The Old Pharmacy Museum was originally established in 1894 as the Town's first Pharmacy. The shop traded as a Chemist Shop until 1982 when the last Chemist died suddenly. From the early beginnings until Council purchased the fixtures and fittings in 1987, nobody threw anything away.
- The Palace Hotel, which was the site of the Backpacker Fire in 2000, was reopened by Council late 2002 and displays a moving memorial to the 15 backpackers who lost their lives.
- The existing shopping complex along the southern side of Churchill St, was rebuilt in 1902 following a devastating fire which destroyed the whole side of the Street.

Our Profile

The bustling town of Childers in the North Burnett was first opened up to timber-getting during the 1850s and 1860s. As the township developed, it drew Thomas Gaydon, who opened the chemist shop in the town in 1894. Gaydon was Childers' first chemist, dentist, optician, vet and photographer.

A devastating fire in 1902 destroyed much of the central business district including Gaydon's chemist shop. It was rebuilt later that year and the internal shop fittings were made of local cedar and highly polished. Laid without grout, the decorative tiled floor remains intact today and is a reminder of the beauty added to early commercial premises.

Change was slow in Childers and modernisation kept to a minimum. However, Gaydon continued to improve his business and installed a new National Cash Register, which he purchased for sixty pounds. It cost the same as a 3-bedroomed house in Childers at that time.

After Thomas Gaydon's death in 1935, the chemist shop continued to dispense medications until 1982 when the last chemist died suddenly. His wife continued to trade in soaps, perfumes and gift lines leaving the dispensary closed with its contents untouched. She continued trading until 1987 when she retired and sold the intact collection to the local council, who quickly identified its historical importance to the region.

Located in the centre of historic Childers, the chemist shop now operates as a museum named The Old Pharmacy. It houses an enormous collection left over from Thomas Gaydon and is one of only two intact early chemist shops in Australia. Visitors to the Old Pharmacy can now view the mysterious potions and early hand-made medications from 1894 and changes in pharmaceutical practices up to 1982. The internal original fixtures and the beautiful mosaic tiled floor offer a visual escapade into an earlier time. Combined with the guided tour, which presents the history of the shop and dispensary in an interesting and engaging manner, the demonstrations, including pill-rolling and label-making, complete a comprehensive and educational visitor experience.

What the Standards Program has meant for our museum

Collection Management: Being involved with the review of The Old Pharmacy made us aware of the importance of keeping accurate records of all items in our collection. Steps have been put in place to achieve this outcome.

Collection Significance: We really benefitted from the calibre of Reviewers who undertook The Old Pharmacy review and having them confirm what we believed, that our collection is very rare and every effort should be made to retain it for generations to come.