



Before the arrival of permanent settlers to New Zealand, whaling stations were numerous, especially in the south. Archibald Anderson, who had arrived at Wellington in 1840 travelled south to OTAKOU, a whaling station 12 miles down harbour from the site which was later to be Dunedin with a stock of medical supplies.

When Dunedin was settled he opened for business in Rattray Street. The business was later taken over by John Sutton, who had arrived in Dunedin in 1849. In 1852 Sutton moved the business, now a pharmacy to Princes Street where he called it **THE MEDICAL HALL**.

Mr. Thomas Merrett Wilkinson was a medical practitioner, who came out as ship's doctor on the "Cashmere," which arrived in New Zealand in 1860. Mr. Wilkinson afterwards went to Melbourne, but returned to Dunedin in 1862, and purchased a chemist's business in Princes Street.

In 1862 "The Medical Hall" was bought by Thomas M. Wilkinson. In 1888 Robert Wilkinson joined his father in the business and it became known as "Wilkinson & Son".

Thomas was for some time a member of the City Council, to which he was elected in 1868,

A branch was opened at the north end of Dunedin in 1874 and continued until 1960. Robert's son, Robert Merrett Wilkinson was apprenticed to the pharmacy in 1915 and became the manager of the branch pharmacy in 1921. He later became a partner in the parent company and returned to The Medical Hall.

Trevor Hollebon joined them as an apprentice in 1941 and became a shareholder when the company "Wilkinson & Son Chemists Ltd" was formed in 1951. Hollebon became principal of the company in 1955, and in 1976 Alan McMillan, who had also been apprenticed to Robert Merritt Wilkinson in 1952 joined the company with an equal shareholding.

The original branch pharmacy at north Dunedin is now separately owned as Unichem Knox Pharmacy ltd. In 1995, Warren Leonard, Alan McMillan's son-in-law became a shareholder in the company, and he and McMillan are the current joint owners.

Both Alan McMillan and Warren Leonard have, in the past been Branch Chairperson of the Otago Branch of the Pharmacy Guild of New Zealand (inc). In addition, Alan McMillan was honoured with a Fellowship award from the Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand, and Warren Leonard is currently an Executive Councillor for the Otago/Southland region of the Pharmacy Guild.

It can be seen by the above that there is not only a direct and continuous line of association of the proprietors of the pharmacy, making it the oldest established pharmacy in New Zealand, but also that Wilkinson & Son Chemists Ltd have a very long association with Dunedin and the province of Otago.

Thomas Merrett Wilkinson died at his residence in Dunedin, on the 15th of October, 1899, at the age of seventy-five years, leaving a widow and one son, and is buried in Dunedin's Northern Cemetery.

Taken from Wilkinson & Son's website:

<http://www.pharmacy1852.co.nz/more.htm>