



# Tuna Creamery

Salisbury Rd, Midhurst

1897

**Use:** Cowshed - private

**Materials:** Concrete

**NZHPT Registered:** Not registered

**Legal Description:** -

**Historic Value:** 2 out of 5

**Architectural Value:** - out of 4

**Technical Value:** - out of 2

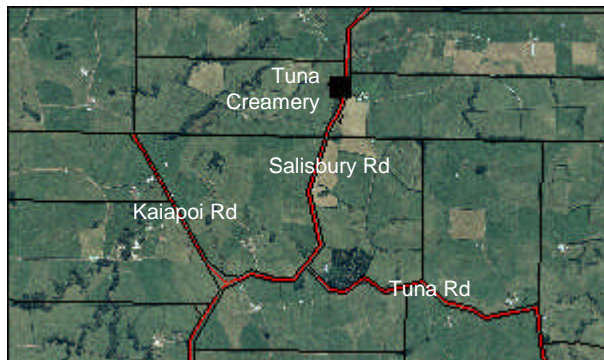
**Symbolic Value:** - out of 3

**Rarity Value:** - out of 2

**Townscape Value:** - out of 2

**Group Value:** - out of 2

**Overall Heritage Value:** 2 out of 20



Tuna, the official name for Salisbury Road, was settled during the 1880s. A private dairy factory was built in Midhirst in 1892, and creameries were set up at Beaconsfield Road, Salisbury Road, Waipuku, Rugby Road, Pembroke Road, and York Road. The Salisbury Road (Tuna) creamery began operations in 1897 as a basic depot for cream brought in by the local farmers, and was situated opposite Mr. Jack Cookson's home.

This creamery, and greater land clearance, brought more settlers to the Tuna area. It soon became a thriving community, with a sawmill, school, and church being established. A post office was opened in the creamery in 1908 to service the district, with farmers collecting their mail from pigeon-holes on the stage. By August 1911 telephone facilities had also been added.

The increase in population numbers at Tuna gave the farmers confidence to form their own dairy company. In 1918, 25 of the local farmers held a meeting and decided to take over the Beaconsfield Road creamery, to form the Tuna Co-operative Dairy Company. Mr. W. Skedgewell, a well-known local, was elected chairman, and Mr. W. Hathaway the manager. The new factory was built on a site fairly close to the original creamery, and was made to be able to manufacture cheese and casein.

The new factory was a success. Not only did it have a good output (for example in 1927 it produced 245 tons of cheese, and 8.5 tons of butter) but it also became the centre of the Tuna community. It was a great place for farmers to exchange news and catch up on gossip, and there are also many stories of races between farmers to the factory, and friendly neighbourhood rivalries to see who could be the factory's earliest customer. The post office was still housed at the factory, with the factory manager's wife becoming the Post Mistress, and was also where the farmers could pick up their groceries, which had been sent out from Midhirst Store. Once the school closed down in 1939 the factory premises were used as a polling-booth on election days.

The post office closed in 1949, and the telephone office stopped operating in the following year. Midhirst Dairy Factory began a tanker collection during the 1950s, which ultimately led to the Tuna Co-op Dairy Company's closure in 1957. Several farmers went out of dairying at this stage, and the closure of the Dairy Company marked the end of the Tuna community as it was known. The building was later used as a woolshed, and it currently houses a cowshed, workshop, and hay barn.

## **Bibliography**

*Midhirst Centennial Book*

*Stratford Jubilee 1928*

Church, Ian; *The Stratford Inheritance*, The Heritage Press (1990) p33