RYDE LIBRARY SERVICES

City of Ryde

# COMMUNITY LIFE

## Library Oral History – An Interview with Bert Goodchild

# An Interview with Bert Goodchild

**Interviewee**: Bert Goodchild

**Interviewer**: Pauline Curby.

**Date of Interview**: 5th March, 1998

**Transcription**: Gabrielle Godard.

## TAPE A SIDE 1

**Q: Bert I'd like to start this interview with talking to you about your father and his coming to Australia. Perhaps before we get on to that you've got a photo here of a scene taken in England of your grandfather, and a milk cart. So your father became a well known dairy man around here, was he from a long line of dairymen?**

Not really, no, when he left school he went what the call ‘codsmacking’ in the North Sea. And he told me among other things that on the rough nights the captain used to lash him to the mast so he wouldn’t be washed overboard. That’s where he started. He ran away from home and started on the North Sea and found out then it wasn't for him.

**Q: Codsmacking, I've never heard of that.**

Codsmacking they call it, that's reefing the cod in - in the North Sea, that's what he called it. Codsmacking. I've never done anything like that myself. But that is the term used. Codsmacking.

**Q: And his father was a dairyman?**

That's correct.

**Q: Your paternal grandfather?**

He used to have a donkey and go around dairies delivering. I expect my father got the idea for dairying from that, I don't know.

**Q: What part of England was that?**

That's Suffolk. Anyhow he migrated -

**Q: Before we go on to that did your grandfather own a dairy over there?**

No, no he used to just vendor. What they call vendoring. Apparently it was enough to sustain a big family. He had a big family.

**Q: How many?**

I think it was round about 13. Me mother had more in her family. He came out in 1908 and on board was the future world heavyweight champion Jack Johnson who he used to clean his shoes and brush him down, and when he got to Adelaide Jack Johnson paid him, half a sovereign and that's what he landed in Australia with.

**Q: So he was Jack Johnson's valet?**

Among other things. He used to do that on the side, and the term he used was 'jump the ship', which means desert I suppose.

**Q: You'd better explain to the uninitiated what Jack Johnson was coming to Australia for.**

Jack Johnson was the leading contender for the world heavyweight champion at the top at the time, namely 1908, it was held by Tommy Burns and this eventuated at Rushcutter's Bay stadium, I'm not sure of the date but Jack Johnson just toyed with him and just knocked him out. He was no match and he was the first Negro heavyweight champion of the world. Of course there's been many since.

**Q: And that's become a legendary fight? I know nothing about boxing but I've read about that.**

That's a legendary fight. Yeah that happened in 1908 at Rushcutter's Bay.

**Q: Did your father get to watch it? Having had that association with Johnson?**

I wouldn't say so, I'd say he'd be too busy. No I don't think so. But as I mentioned to you when he was on his death bed he did mention this. I'm talking about 1980, he mentioned this on his death bed.

**Q: And this was the story he obviously liked to tell, how he came to Australia and became part of folklore I suppose. You don't think he made it up?**

Oh no, no. I told you in the pre-interview he was many things, but he was never a liar. That's one thing you can rely on. I've known him all me life of course and I've never found him to be that way inclined, but I've seen a lot of funny things happen. But he never - he was a wild man, a very hard man, very hard - on his children and his wife - very hard. But I expect when I reflect back, in a way, he had to be hard, in those days, because they were hard days, like the depression days, they were very hard days.
I can remember when I did go to school as a five year old, I started school. The big thing of the week was Monday morning I used to get sixpence to put in the bank at school, which was the Commonwealth Bank in those days, and

you used to give it to the kindergarten teacher and you can imagine now how many sixpences there would be before you had a lot of money, but still that was what happened in those days and that was what I had to do and work for that. And after that when I was a little bit older, of course I was introduced to milking cows and doing milk runs and when they call 'bottle trots'. That's what they called them, half a dozen streets with bottle cans, going 'cans of milk' and for that seven days a week my wages was four pence a week.

**Q: How old were you then when you got four pence a week?**

I would 8, 9, 10 year old, around that age and I used to blow it all on Saturday afternoon up the Palace Theatre here and if I got the bus which was a penny, I didn't have an ice cream. I used to have to scale the bus. Hop on the back. You know?

**Q: Not pay the fare?**

Yeah, that's the way it used to be in those days, but we were very happy and I was very happy and I had horses and I used to go in gymkhanas and I won a few gymkhanas, walk, trot and gallop as they call it out at North Ryde. These were wonderful days and I don't think they'll ever come back.

**Q: We might talk a bit more about that in a minute. First of all I'd like to get that idea of how your father came to have a dairy at Ryde. You told me before that after arriving in Australia he went to Gippsland and he was down there share farming, and then after some time he worked at a dairy at Auburn, worked for somebody else, and then eventually came over here. You think before 1915, we're looking at this photo in the Putney school book, it says 1915. Just tell me which of your older brothers and sisters were born at Auburn that you know of.**

Kate, that's the older sister, she's 85 in July.

**Q: Kate Front?**

Yeah. And then the next one was Esther. She's 82, and the next one was Hector, that's the one that's deceased. There was the three of them. He had three children born at Auburn.

**Q: So - we'll just pause for a minute and work the mathematics out. O.K. we've just done some mathematics on the children's ages and Joan - who is now Joan Brown, who was the first of the Goodchild children born here in Ryde. She said that the family came here in 1919 so looking at this date before the dairy 1915 in the Putney book we think perhaps that may be wrong and that maybe your father didn't come over here till 1919, but we can check that date.**

One thing is for sure, he landed here in 1908.

**Q: Yes, at that time, he was a teenager. Do you remember him with a strong English accent?**

Yes, yes. My mother had a stronger accent than him. But we used to have in those days we used to have about 4,5 or 6 men on the verandah. My mother used to cook for them, me father and she had six kids and then she used to go and milk on top of that. She never stopped.

**Q: Now Bert tell us exactly where the dairy was.**

It was at 149 Morrison Road. It was five acres.

**Q: I am interested in that a migrant who hadn't been here that long, perhaps less than ten years, could actually buy land.**

Well o.k., him being such a strong personality himself he soon found out that working for a boss he was not going to get anywhere, so he had only - possibly, as I recall around about twenty pounds and the property he bought out plus the dairy, plus the cows was two hundred and twenty pounds. So he borrowed two hundred pounds at 20% which he paid off and in the second year the whole herd got pleurisy. He lost the whole herd. That was the second year in the dairy industry and that knocked him back a lot. Only the fact that he had such a wonderful woman for a wife and she was wonderful , I think that was what kept him going and his own strong personality and one thing and another, but anyhow he did.

**Q: Have you any idea where he got the loan from? A bank or a building society?**

No I think - I couldn't answer that correctly, so I won't say. No I don't know, but I know he did borrow two hundred pounds, which was a lot of money.

**Q: So where he bought the land it was an established area already?**

Yes, from a bloke by the name of Campbell. And as far as I can recollect he was the first dairy man in that area. I know Fields came after him and I know O'Loughlin came after him. O'Loughlin was in Bayview St, Fields was in Tennyson Rd, Goodchild's in Morrison Rd, Hopping was in Phillip Rd and then Reeves was in Putnams Rd.

**Q: That's a lot of dairies in a fairly small area.**

Yes and don't forget there wasn't as many houses. That is what I am trying to impress upon you, in the days before the depression and during the depression the business was so tense. They'd do anything to their rivals.

**Q: Strong competition.**

Yeah, very strong competition. I've seen milk fights, I've seen carts tipped over.

**Q: What do you mean a milk fight?**

Well - you know, one might be over there stirring that one over there and I'm over here stirring that one up and you'll call me a name and I'll you a name and it gets, you know, they're throwing milk over each other. I've seen milk fights in the street. I've seen carts tipped over.

**Q: So he didn't have a thing called zoning?**

That didn't come in until the war. Then they decided to zone the milk on account of the man power shortage of course, which was a good thing in those days and which in turn to buy the last milk run we bought, this is going on later in me life, we paid approximately eighty pound a gallon, around about that. That's a lot of money in them days, but they were like golden nuggets milk runs and when the cows went because my father retained the vending side of it we went in for pasteurised milk, and then when he got too old to carry on, well me and me oldest brother took over and we bought his business out and we kept on adding to it until we had right from Hunters Hill right through to Concord West.

**Q: Purely vending?**

Purely vending yeah, and then workers for us and one thing and another.

**Q: Going back to those early days, I'm just interested to know that say in the 1920s there were so many dairies around here I was wondering if it was perhaps recognised as a place with good feed round here for cows, or was it more the demography, that it was a good location?**

Yeah - not good feed for cows. Cows on an intensive kind of dairying, there wouldn't be much free range eating it would all be intensified A and brewery grains were one of the main things that cows ate at those times and a little bit of bran, I used to mix this up and feed the cows meself and we used to drench cows when they were sick.

**Q: Could you explain that to people who don't understand what drenching cows is?**

Drenching cows is what you do when they're off colour or got a problem or they might have just calved or something like that. Yeah - put in a tin bath and they go in with the nose, like that and they're on wire, like that, and you put em over the bail and hold its mouth open and you put a bottle a beer bottle down their throat and hold it there and this stuff goes into their gullet and it cleans them out.

**Q: And what was it in beer bottle?**

What it does, I couldn't tell you the name of it. But what it does it cleans the cow out, the whole system out, you know? And the cow comes right. And I've had to pump cows up - cows that got out and got into the clover.

**Q: Explain that to people who don't understand too.**

Well that is when cows get out and they get into the clover and the clover, the system can't handle it and consequently they get a swelling of the body and their whole body gets infected. Bloated is the word. And you've got to get this pump, put it up the eye of their teat and pump it up and in the morning they'd be on their feet right. That's what it's all about.

**Q: Did you ever remember losing cows like that?**

Of course, if you didn't get to them in time. Milk fever they call it. Every Wednesday used to be the sale day at Homebush, my father and sometimes me. I wasn't allowed to bid of course for cows but he used to go there and of course every Wednesday he'd be thoroughly drunk of course, in those days. (Laughter) And come home and of course I used to start milking with whoever I was with, generally a young bloke, one they called Jack Bowden and we used to have to milk all these cows.

**Q: This was after you left school I suppose?**

Oh, of course, yeah. And we used to let these cows come in the bail and 'how many you got this week?' and you know? You wouldn't know what you'd be getting and some of them would have what they call -

**Q: These were ones you'd just brought over?**

Yes. They'd be rogues some of them. You wouldn't know what they'd do. They'd kick and one thing and another and other ones would have what they call peas in their teat. In other words when your milking them like a bit of gristle in their teat.

**Q: Very hard to milk.**

Oh - very hard. And you know, you wouldn't know what your were striking. They might be rogues, you wouldn't know what. It all depends on how much you had to pay for em.

**Q: Sale days, there's something about them. It's a social thing.**

Oh yes, all the blokes in that area, you know, and the things I've seen over there is just unreal.

**Q: For example?**

For example I've seen my father come home, absolutely paralytically drunk and helpless. Turn the keys of the car off, drive in like that, his behind's up in the air, and me mother would come along and say, 'Bert you've got to start milking'. And she'd put him under the shower and all this. You've got no idea.

**Q: You mean he'd drive the car in that condition? (Laughs) Oh my god!**

You couldn't do it these days of course.

**Q: So can you picture that scene over at Homebush when you were going over with him? How would you go over? You had motor transport by that stage. Do you have a picture in your mind of the scene there? What was it like?**

Yeah - there was a bloke called Jack Inglis. He used to be the auctioneer. If a cow came into the ring - just like it is today, like in that film you've seen 'Thoroughbreds?' similar but a bit rougher. One might bid for this, you know, and might be ten pounds, which was a lot of money then and might put up a finger, that's fifty cents you know - five shillings. Well you know what the jargon is in the ring, it’s similar to that. Then they'd have an argument about someone who should have or didn't do this and he'd want to fight someone else.

**Q: Do you remember the dust and the talk?**

Yes, yes of course I can.

**Q: Would you ever see women at anything like that?**

Yes I have and some of them were very capable. And (sighs) going on, I think women have proved that over the years, like the later years, in my opinion they are much superior to a man, apart from physically. They proved that. What I've seen my mother do, I don't know anyone who could possibly come near her. And that's not because it’s my mother, but because I know no one could do what she did.

**Q: Tell me some of the things she did? As you say, there were six children and she did all the housework with the help of the girls, the cooking and then hired people there, boarding as well.**

Didn't hire them, she used to cook for em, look after em, clean for em.

**Q: These were people working for your father?**

Three or four men, plus our own family and then go and milk cows too, and then grow vegetables, you know? - as she was passing. (Laughter) Oh she was wonderful. I've never tasted food in my life anywhere like she could cook.

Never ever tasted food like she could cook. She was a man's cook, no good on fancy stuff, she wouldn't know anything about that.

**Q: No sponges or anything?**

No, but she was a wonderful cook. Never tasted anything like it. I never say this to my wife because she gets upset. (Laughter)

**Q: Was your mother a big woman? Like strong and muscular?**

Yes, yes she had to be to do what she done, you can see what type of woman she is.

**Q: Yes, we're just looking at this photo of the family group. She's there holding one of the younger children. Could we go through this photo now Bert and you can tell me who everybody is.**

First of the left here is my Uncle Mike.

**Q: Mike, your father's brother?**

He's my father's youngest brother. Then there's me. Then there's that blokes daughter.

**Q: Your pointing to the one on the far right.**

Yes, that's Fred.

**Q: Who was Fred? Did he work for you?**

No, that's me father's brother.

**Q: Oh sorry, that's another brother.**

Yep - there's 1, 2, 3 brothers there.

**Q: So that's your cousin there behind you?**

Yeah - and that's Dorrie, that's his daughter. That's Dorrie's husband, Jim Johnson. That's me father, Bertie William Goodchild.

**Q: He's a big man. He looks big.**

He's not really. No really - because you look at him there -

**Q: Oh yes, right.**

See there he is there.

**Q: In the Putney school book, yes. Oh yes, he's in the foreground, he looks like a strong personality as you said, the way he's got is arms folded.**

This is my mother, this is me Aunty Karen, that's his wife, Fred's wife, and that's Nance. Aunty Nance.

**Q: Who's this guy here, behind your father?**

Jim Johnson, that's Dorrie's husband.

These are all deceased, the young ones are alive, of course there's me and that's it.

**Q: Who's your mother holding?**

That's Fay. She's died. My sister's daughter. She's deceased, I'm the only one alive.

**Q: Mmm - in that photo, my god. O.K. getting back to your very earliest memories of the dairy. Can you remember when you did your very first jobs for your father and helped around the dairy? Would that have been before you** went to school?

Of course. I used to start at 3 o'clock in the morning and go around Cross St, Acacia Avenue, Pott St, Privett St, Charles St, carrying bottle cans. What they call cans of milk.

**Q: Why did they call them bottle cans?**

That was the slang used in those days.

**Q: They didn't have bottles in them?**

No, no, they were called bottle cans. They were still cans - full of milk - a measure. A measure under me arm and one bottle can in this hand and one in this hand and I used to walk up all these streets and seven days a week I done that for four pence a week.

**Q: So this is the immediate streets, the closest ones to the dairy where you didn't need to go in the horse and cart. But you wouldn't have been doing that at four surely?**

No, not at four year old, no but round 7 or 8 I'd be doing that.

**Q: Very young though. Can you remember any little jobs when you were really little before you started school?**

Oh yes, (laughs) Before I started school I could ride a horse when I was 4 year old and I used to have to go and round up the cows up in what is called Tyagarah Park today, that used to all paddocks up there, there were only about 3 or 4 houses up there in those days. And I used to have to go and round up all the cows and count em and if I was one short I used to have to hop on the horse and go and find it.

**Q: Teach you to count then.**

That's right. (Laughter) That sure does. No in between. And then I used to bring them home and my father used to say, 'you got em all?' and I says, 'Yes dad', and if I was wrong, look out - I had to go like blazes. To escape his wrath you know.

**Q: Would he have hit you?**

Oh, my word.

**Q: Was that part of your father's farm.**

No that was Tyagarah Park. It was a paddock then. Only about 4 or 5 houses. No, they were harsh days, but they done me no harm.

**Q: I just wondered who owned the land though?**

The Council.

**Q: So your cows were grazing there. Would your father have had to pay for that?**

No, no, he used to let em out, open the gates they'd go for the same bail every time they came in to get their milk. You open a certain gate they know what they're going to do, they know they are going to go in that top paddock, what ever.

**Q: And they start heading back around milking time?**

Yeah - and that was my job to go and round up the cows and count em and make sure they were all there and look out if they weren't.

**Q: Do you remember anyone teaching you to ride a horse, or did you just hop on and go?**

Yes - me father, told me to get on the horse and then, what he done - he just crack it on the rump and off it went and I used to hang on the best way I could. Yes I remember that.

**Q: Bareback?**

Bareback, yeah, I never owned a saddle. I rode bareback all the time, never owned a saddle. Oh they were harsh days but they were very good and they done me no harm, pity there wasn't a bit more of it today.

**Q: (Laughs) Now Bert give an idea of the dairy routine when you were a child, the milking times, just exactly how it operated?**

O.K. At eleven o'clock at night we used to start the night milking and that used to go on till about 4 o'clock in the morning and that's when the last cart went out on its rounds. And then we start about half past ten in the day time. There were two deliveries a day. Half ---- ---- were around the back, in the back servery, in those days, that's the way it was, and on hot days by the time you got to the end of the run, it used to be ---- ---- ---- coming out of the tank.

**Q: Mmmm - no refrigeration.**

Oh no and that used to go on the afternoon run, the morning run used to be always bigger than the afternoon run, but there was two deliveries a day and that's the way it was and every other competitor was two deliveries a day.

**Q: Just for someone whose from a dairy farm herself they seem peculiar milking times. This was obviously to fit in with delivery time? To maximise that. That is amazing to be milking at eleven o'clock at night.**

Yes, that's right. But they knew. You've heard of Browns Cows? They'd follow each other in and they'd go into the same bale - there was 12 bales each side - twenty four at a time.

**Q: That's a big dairy.**

Yeah - they'd go to the same bale naturally. You wouldn't have to say anything or do anything. They go there and they know as soon as they get there there'll be hay for them or brewery grains or a mixture of something else and they go there to eat, they know they're going to get a feed when they went there and they'd automatically go to the same bale. If it was number 7 that's where it would go all the time, number 7, if it was number 1, that's where it would go all the time.

**Q: So even though you were milking by hand, were there 12 or 24 people milking?**

Twelve bales and two milking.

**Q: Right, so you've always got 12 milkers on the go?**

Twelve cows on the go. Milkers are the -

**Q: Oh no I mean 12 people milking.**

No, no, only two people milking.

**Q: What?**

Two people milking 12 cows at a time. Like - one cow at a time of course. But 12 in the bale. 12 in that bale and 12 in the other bale. That's how it used to be, 12 bales one side and 12 the other.

**Q: Oh I thought you'd have 12 people milking.**

Oh god no.

**Q: So all those people you employed were doing the milk runs.**

Yes, there'd be two people milking all the time, generally me and another fellow and then the one that had the smallest run, or the easiest run to do used to help, like he might milk 2 or 3 cows before he went out and he might do a couple or tip the milk, or fill tanks up or do something. Towards the end of it my father installed what they call a Brien cooler and that was the only type of - all that done was take the animals heat out of the milk, it would go over what was called a Brien cooler. B R I E N cooler and by the time it got to the bottom in a tray and then there's a tap on that the milk would have the body temperature. And then that would be put in the tank, because the story I told you about the junket tablet was prior to that because there's no good putting junket tablets in - that was warm milk.

**Q: Perhaps you'd better repeat that story for anyone who is listening to the tape about the junket tablet.**

Oh yes, well anyhow in the days of high competition, and it would be nothing for 4 or 5 vendors to [tape break]

**TAPE A SIDE 2**

**Q: You were saying there was a lot of competition?**

That's right. At least on one occasion while we were milking someone came in to the milk room and put a bottle of junket tablets in the milk. Of course when the men went out to do his first customer, he turned the tap on and the milk - no milk come out. Because of course all hard, just like a solid block.

**Q: It was war, milk war.**

That was milk war.

**Q: What would your father have done if he'd found who did that?**

I wouldn't like to tell you. I'd rather miss that one. (Laughs) Knowing him as I did.

**Q: Right, when did you learn to milk? How old would you have been?**

I wouldn't be no more than 5 or 6 year old. As I got on of course I got a lot better. You get to the stage when you can do it when your asleep. There is a knack in it of course. There is a knack in it. Its not a matter of just pulling the teats, its a matter of going up there like that and letting the milk get in the teat.

**Q: Come down.**

Yes, that's right. You get that knack, it just comes to you normally. Yes me and the other bloke. He was a crackerjack the other young bloke, he was younger than I was at the time.

**Q: Was there a competitive thing going? Who was the best milker?**

Yes there was. He always said he could beat me and just quietly I think he could, he was fantastic. But there wasn't much in it but he was very good. And I think all he got was one pound seventeen and six a week, that was for seven days.

**Q: What was his name Bert?**

Jack Bowden. He's now an hotelier in the country somewhere. He married a local girl in Albert St here somewhere in Gladesville. Well crackerjack, this is a good story. The crackerjack in the whole of the milk industry was a man called Dan MacInelly. My father and Jack Peel kept on putting his wages up five shillings a week. He worked for Jack Peel for a month and then my father would offer him another fifty cents - five shillings, if he'd come and work for him and of course he'd come and work for me father. But he's the only man that I've seen, and I was in the milk industry a long time, who could milk a cow 4 teats at a time.

**Q: How did he do that? (Demonstration) Oh right.**

I couldn't do it, and as I say I thought I was good, but I was half of this Dan MacInelly. He come from Tennyson St Gladesville. He was the crackerjack, no one could get near him. In other words if I could milk two cows, say in 10 minutes, he'd milk 3 or 3 1/2 cows.

**Q: No wonder they wanted him on the payroll. Did he have big big hands?**

No, not really. What he did have, he was very strong in the fingers and hands, but there's more to it than that, you can be strong but you wouldn't be able to

it. He had the knack and he's the only man that I could see. He used to put one in there somewhere, one in there and one there, 4 teats at a time. Dan MacInelly, the crackerjack. He would beat anyone that I could envisage. He was the crackerjack going back to the 1930's '29 '28, you know, that era, back to the - he was the crackerjack and there was always a war on between Jack Peel and Bert Goodchild, who was going to have his services. And of course you could put one man off if you had him.

**Q: Who eventually won, or did he just keep playing the field?**

He just kept on playing the field.

**Q: Was there friendly rivalry between Mr Peel and your father, or was it like war? Because I've heard people say Mr Peel was a really good man too.**

He was, he was. Jack Peel as I know him. I've never seen him dressed up in his life. Actually he went to the zoning of Sydney, Jack Peel, I went too, must have been 1940, so what I was about 18. And he at the zoning of Sydney he claimed Vaucluse, Diamond Bay all the built up area, he claimed and of course he then built a big depot at Diamond Bay. And of course he used to supply himself because he went out - what they call 'out'.

**Q: To the outer suburbs.**

That's right at a dairy out there at Castle Hill. And today he is the only one - no there is two, there was Woods and Peel had their own dairy called Perfection Dairies.

**Q: The companies still continue?**

Oh of course. He was a multi-millionaire.

**Q: I didn't know that.**

Oh of course, Jack Peel. Yes, oh he died years ago. He donated all that ground in Tennyson Rd to the soldiers, the returned soldiers. I used to work for Jack Peel, when I had time, but I had to work for me father first, and I used to - I can remember one instance, he was getting his hair cut in Penders barber shop in Morrison Rd and he asked me would I take his horse up to his depot. He says, 'and if you do it right' he says, 'I'll give you threepence'. Well of course I did. He says, 'can you ride?' and I said, 'yes better than you can' and hopped on his horse and took it up there and when I got up there they were one man short for the milking and they offered me two shillings to do that shift and I got the two shillings.

**Q: How old would you have been then?**

About 10 or 11

**Q: And your father didn't mind you going to work for Jack Peel?**

Me father didn't know. (Laughter) He would have. But you've got to work between the lines you tell him what you wanted to tell him, you didn't tell him everything. (Laughs)

**Q: Now when you were down at Putney Public School, o.k. you were doing the jobs for your father, you were doing the bottle cans, but you would be regularly milking at that stage would you, because you'd be too tired?**

Oh no, no. I used to go to school asleep. That's where I used to get my sleep at school. (Laughs) Yes well that's the way it was.

**Q: Now did anyone in the family, your mother for instance say look they can't do so much they've got to school and get an education. Did anyone say that?**

Yes they did, and that is another story in itself. Jack my youngest brother - I was the second youngest in the family - Jack was three and a half years younger than me. He's a wonderful bloke, a wonderful bloke and also one of the cleverest men I have ever come across. An all rounder. And my mother, took a stand and when Jack had to do these bottle runs, well oh god - she went with him. Not because he was the favourite, but she seen the potential in him, more so than the other five. And she was right. He was a brilliant student, he finished up in Fort St. Well I couldn't praise him up enough. She knew that he had something more than the other five had and she was right.

**Q: So she went round and helped him do it quicker?**

Yes and then she said to me father, she said, ‘You’re not going to have him work like that, he's got potential, you’re not going to have him on milk runs'. And that's the only stand she was ever strong enough to have, you know?

**Q: As an older child did you resent this? And say, 'why don't you do that for me?'**

No, never, he was such a wonderful bloke. No I've got nothing but admiration for him. I wish I was like him, I wish I was as good as him.

**Q: So your father was a very strong personality and you felt this was the only time your mother took a stand. The other times it was very much, he was the boss, and she was working really hard but he was making the decisions?**

Yep and what he said went. Bar this one time. No she wouldn't have that. He went on to - well he could be anything he wanted to be, Jack.

**Q: Now Bert, as a child, what about the girls, what was their role, were they doing all the same sorts of jobs or more helping your mother?**

They all had to work. Might have to do accounts bills etc, milk cows and do all the things that the boys do. There was no - they did their bit. But they were different days, they were hard days. (Sighs) I think they were good days. They never did me any harm.

**Q: So did you actually enjoy milking cows?**

Yes, yes. I knew I had to do it, I was resigned to that. I had no problems with them. I was always able to have the right attitude, like if a cow would kick me or anything like that, its no good kicking them back, all they'll do is take their milk up. Yeah - that's one think I had better than my father. Me father had a lot quicker temper than me.

**Q: Could you just explain the cow to me? You didn't want the cow to get stressed?**

That's right. You might be putting the leg-rope on her and she might flash out like that, real quick, and kick you in the stomach or whatever, but that never affected me, I says, 'well that's a cow' and all you do is pat her and console her and you find you get along much better. If you lose your block with them you'll never do any good with them. You'll ruin the cow and ruin yourself. So you've got to have a lot of patience.

**Q: You wouldn't have routinely leg-roped cows, that was just for the difficult ones?**

No, everyone.

**Q: Oh you leg-roped them all?**

Oh of course yes. They would kick the bucket over if you didn't. You know, you're milking the cow and they put their foot in the bucket, so they've got to be leg roped.

**Q: Where I grew up only the difficult ones were leg-roped. It was unusual to leg-rope a cow.**

No, every one was leg-roped.

**Q: Oh, so tricky cows you had. (Laughs) And of course you'd better explain, they would have had the rope around their rear end to keep them in there?**

No. They were in a bail you see and the head would go in the feed, they couldn't go back because the bail wouldn't let em go back. You pull one string

and all the bails lock up - like they're shaped like that, and this thing would come over and unlock.

**Q: And lock their head in, and you didn't have the rope around the back of them?**

No, no, you had a leg rope on them but not a rope around the back. And that's the way it went. And you know, we had picnic days. But we had a wonderful lot of fun. I remember one -

**Q: Describe the picnic day for me, this was the dairymen?**

The dairymen and their families. The one that's foremost in me mind is Hopping and Goodchild - there was a chap working for Hopping called Freddy Gadd and he at the time was the NSW holder of the 100 yards championship, running championship. At this particular time we had a chap working for us called Cecil Ford. He was also very fast. He used to train with a bag of chaff on his shoulders and run around the paddock. He was just a ball of muscle this Cecil Ford fellow. So after the sales they'd meet at the pub and, ‘I got better than you at this, and I got better than you at that, and I've got a better car and I've got a better horse' and you know, and all this.

**Q: Always the same pub?**

Well in this case it would be Homebush pub, and this Hopping and me father said, 'listen Bert I've got a bloke down there, he's so fast you can't see him' kind of thing, you know? And he said 'yeah? Have ya?' and he says, 'well I've got a bloke that works for me, he's pretty fast' and of course me father says, 'how much money have you got Eric?' Eric Hopping was his name. 'To say that your bloke's faster than mine?' and he says, 'well he's got to be faster, he's the NSW sprint champion'. And me father said, 'well this bloke's nothing, but I expect good odds about this' he says, 'we'll have a meeting down at Putney park.' Oh it was a big day. That would be 1935, because I can remember me father just got a new Chev and it was a 1935 Chev, that's how I can remember the date. The pictures of it I've lost. It was a picture of this meeting at Putney park in 1935 of the Hopping and Goodchild family coming together. The whole lot, me mother and Mrs Hopping, Eric Hopping's wife and all his family, because they all had a lot of kids in them days, there was no television. That was the way it was, they all had a big family and all the Hoppings were there. Oh I suppose there were 7 or 8 kids Eric Hopping had and my father had six kids of course, anyhow the meeting came. And this Cecil Ford said to me father, he says - I think at the time it was a record of around about fifty pounds, that was a fortune, who was going to win the race. And of course they line up, the two of them lined up and we had someone who had no interest as a starter, they lined up, and of course this Freddy Gadd, that's the Hopping bloke shot out of the blocks you know? Oh he was about a yard in front of me father's bloke and the further they went the closer this Cecil Ford got and he picked him on the line. This Cecil Ford beat him. Oh it was terrible you know, terrible. What could they do about it? Eric Hopping says, 'well look Bert will you give me a chance to get me money back?' And

Eric Hopping was a tall thin bloke. My father would be short, a little short bloke and he wasn't fast in the running department. And he says, 'yes Eric I'll give you a chance to get your money back, how much start are you going to give me?' 'oh gosh no, can't give you a start'. He said, 'alright, the bet's off'.

**Q: You mean they were going to race each other? (Laughs)**

Yeah - so to cut a long story short he got - me father won the race.

**Q: Handicap race?**

Yeah handicap. That was one of the biggest days I'd seen at Putney Park. Oh there were wonderful times.

**Q: And you had to fit that in between milking?**

Oh of course. You've got to do your work first. (Laughter) That's how it was in them days. Kids seemed to be a lot healthier to me. A lot healthier and a lot happier.

**Q: Do you think your father made a pretty good living? He had a car. Working people didn't have cars.**

Oh yes, but see, you've got to remember they were the depression days and me father always had 4 or 5 blokes walking behind, you know? Hangers on. And if he did make a mistake in his lifetime, his biggest mistake was neglecting his family in favour of the hangers on I suppose.

**Q: These weren't people working for him, just mates?**

No just mates.

**Q: The inevitable mates. To drink with and that stuff. Was drinking a problem or was it just the sale days that he liked to have a big -**

No he'd always do his work. He wasn't an alcoholic, no, but he did drink heavy. He worked hard and drank hard, done everything hard (laughs), that's the way he was, and you had to stick with him, or you'd be lost.

**Q: Now you mention the depression. Can you remember the system of people getting food relief?**

Yes very well. You got these red coupons on a sheet on a fortnightly basis, for seven pints of milk a week, or 14 pints a fortnight and it used to be two shillings and fourpence a week, in other words a pint of milk used to be fourpence. The cheapest milk in my day was threepence halfpenny. I used to around collecting and if I came home with ten shillings in me bag I'd be doing extra well but I'd have a roll of food coupons and each month my father used to do all these up and send into the department and then he'd get one cheque for all those coupons. I seen some funny things happen.

**Q: Can I just go back - you might have had ten shillings in your bag because people had bought extra or people who weren't entitled to get the money.**

Yeah, you've got it, might have been a policeman or someone in government, but those jobs were very few and far between.

**Q: And did you say seven pints a week?**

Seven pints a week

**Q: That's not much if you've got a family, thinking of what my family goes through. That's very little.**

Well that's what it used to be. A pint of milk was four pence. Seven fours are twenty eight, that's two and four pence. Two and four pence a week, that's what it was. That used to be on a fortnightly basis which would be four and halfpence.

**Q: That's what they were allowed. And they would go and collect the tickets.**

I would collect them or whoever the milk carter was.

**Q: Yes the people themselves would go and pick them up.**

But you couldn't spend it on anything else but the milk. And then the butcher would have so much.

**Q: before you were going to say some funny things happened.**

Oh yes - I went off track there.

**Q: Sorry, I interrupted you.**

Yeah - I don't know what I was referring to. I forget now.

**Q: With the tickets coming back you were talking about your father getting a cheque when the tickets were sent in.**

Yes, well, only one cheque, there might be two, three or four hundred or whatever, two hundred times four and halfpence and that's the cheque and you didn't see much of it. Very little money. I like it, I liked those days. The big thing women were treated terrible in those days. That's one thing I do think has improved.

**Q: Would your father have treated your mother terribly, or was it just -**

Well it depends on what you call terribly. Like if you're talking about knocking her around, no, never. But work. I don't know of any woman who would do what she done. I don't know of anyone, who could. And it's not because it's me mother either. Ask anyone in the family and they'll tell you exactly the same. But they were different times and I think they were good times. I think there should be a bit more learning now, to what it was then. I know I had to work and I know I got in for it if I stepped out of line, I know I'd be in for a hiding. I think there should be a bit more of it.

**Q: Would your father have given you the hiding or your mother too?**

Only me father.

**Q: He was the disciplinarian.**

Oh was he ever.

**Q: Tell me, did he actually hit you with something or just hit you with his hand?**

He'd do his block, he'd do anything. He only caught me once. I came home from school this day and I went to round the cows up and being about nine or ten years old and all me mates were playing cricket up at what is Tyagarah Park now. 'Come and have a bat'. You what kids are like, so I did. And (laughs) I didn't get the cows home in time. (Laughs) I'd better not continue on with this story. (Laughs)

**Q: Too painful to remember?**

Yeah, yes, they were hard days.

**Q: Was your mother strict on discipline?**

No, no. She was a wonderful person. Well so was me father in his own way. But you had to read between the lines with him, you know?

**Q: You appreciate him now, but at the time did you appreciate him, or were you scared? Were you scared of him or just . .**

- never, because we had the same personalities. No I wasn't as hard as he was but out of all of us I was the most like him in stature

**Q: You just kept out of his way when he was in a bad mood.**

Yes, yes, well you had to use your head a bit and you got to learn how to use it. And the girls too. No, no, they were good days.

**Q: Just to come back to the sales at Homebush for a minute, I meant to ask you this before. Would your father when he was buying cows, would he have rolls of money on him or would he just have written a cheque?**

Written a cheque. Booked up against his name and he just wrote a cheque out.

**Q: Yep - O.K. now what type of cows were you milking, what breed?**

Mainly Ayrshires and we used have always have about half a dozen Jerseys or Guernseys to put the richness in the milk, bit of butterfat content. Yes, you got to know these things as you went on.

**Q: Now at this time there was a lot of emphasis on hygiene and dairy inspections because in Sydney in earlier years there had been a lot of watering down of milk and a lot of disease spread by that, by those methods. Do you remember dairy inspectors coming?**

Oh of course I do.

**Q: Tell us about that, what went on?**

While you were delivering the milk, or while your were milking?

**Q: No I meant milking, in the actual dairy.**

Oh in the actual dairy? Oh you would have to have special soap to clean your hands with and also when you milked the milk and put it in containers that would be tested. They would give it certain tests to prove there wasn't any bacteria or anything in the milk. If it wasn't right they'd make you tip the milk out and start again. I've seen that happen on several occasions.

**Q: At your dairy?**

Once in my dairy that I can remember. I've been through every facet of milk, I've even been head of Dairy Farmers. I used to order for all the city area in me later life. But on the delivery side of it -

**Q: Because there were strict rules there too weren't there?**

Oh my word. Oh yes.

**Q: Could you tell me what some of those rules were?**

Well the milk would have to be out of the sun at all times because milk in the sun - I don't know if you've ever tasted milk that's been -

**Q: I sure have - school milk.**

Yeah, got that terrible taste, well you can't get that out of it once it's in through sunlight. I've been booked for not having blinds down in trucks. Go to court, cost me about $7:00.

**Q: This was when you were an adult?**

Yes when I had the milk run.

**Q: Bert you were going to tell me about an incident you remember well when you were out doing deliveries for your father.**

Yes, I arrived there to do the afternoon run and me father said to me, 'I want you to take that big black horse over there'

**Q: You would have been about seven or eight?**

About eight year old, getting on for nine. And I said 'oh I haven't drove him before Dad' and he said, 'well now's a damn good chance to learn', that's exactly what he'd say. So the horse goes in and I notice him pawing the ground and one thing and another, so I says, 'I have to be careful of this horse'. Go round the run, I locked the wheels with the bridging strap, what they call a lock strap, and at different times he's snorting and pawing the ground and I'm trying to get the run done and eventually I get to Victoria Rd Ryde, near the police station and I locked the wheel, and I had to run around the back and when I come out the horse took off, down Belmore St at full stretch gallop, the taps flew out, all the measures flew out of the box you know and one thing and another, and I lost sight of the horse, I couldn't catch it. And I finally found someone who rang up me father. Of course his response, he says, 'You're only half doing your work, you shouldn't have let the horse get away, what did you do that for?' I says, 'well too late for all that the horse got away I couldn't hold him, I locked the strap to the wheel'. I says, I couldn't understand why he was snorting and pawing the ground [tape break]

**END OF PART 1**

**TAPE B SIDE 1**

**Q: The horse was pawing the ground.**

That's right yes, and I couldn't work out why, not being experienced enough or not being old enough to understand. When the horse took off down Belmore St the side of the police station and the taps flew out and all the measures went up in the air you know and milk all over the place and horse still in full stretch gallop and I lost the horse and I couldn't find him and finally I went down Constitution Rd and looked there, he wasn't there, didn't know where he was. So I rang up me father and of course I got a rebuke for that you know. He says, 'well where's the horse?' and I said, 'I told you I don't know'. He says, 'You don't know?' and I said, 'No I don't know'. And he says, 'I'll be right there', he says. 'You'll know by the time I get there'. And I says, 'oh, alright'. Anyhow he came along, and anyway I found the horse in Nancarrow Avenue trying to climb on top of a milk cart, another milkman's cart to get to the mare and apparently as I know now, the mare was in season but I didn't understand anything about that and that was the story about the horse bolting from the milk cart and so when you come to think of it, Victoria Rd from Nancarrow Avenue, that's where the mare was, you wouldn't think that an animal could pick up the vibes. But that is a true story. That's what happened to me and obviously I got into all the trouble in the world. My father said he couldn't trust me with a good horse.

**Q: But he didn't explain the sex part.**

No, and I didn't understand anyhow.

**Q: When did you start understanding things like that? You must have seen animals -**

Well I'd seen animals - we had a bull there and of course and I thought - I'm not trying to be funny or anything, I thought they were having a piggyback. I was yellow until about ten or twelve before I knew otherwise kind of thing. I didn't understand that much.

**Q: No because people didn't talk about it.**

No, me mother never explained it to me. Me father never explained it to me. But you know, I was a good eleven year old before I understood anything about that. But being brought up on a farm you might say I was naive and maybe I was, but I didn't understand and me sisters had never told me and it was never spoken about.

**Q: I find it amazing that you were out there doing alone a delivery at that young age. Was that a regular thing or were you just filling in for some one?**

No, no, at that stage I would have been at Putney school, that would have been a one off day, a bloke wouldn't have turned up and my father would have kept me home from school to do the run, because he knew I knew the run.

**Q: And he obviously thought you were capable of doing it.**

Of course, and I was capable but I didn't understand the sex part of it.

**Q: So you normally would have felt quite confident of going out with a horse.**

Oh yes I've had all types, I've had square trotters and - as a matter of fact that was when my interest in trotting first started and that's the sport I follow and I love trotting. That is my outlet. Even today that is my outlet.

**Q: Did you ever drive trotters yourself?**

No, no. My father did have trotters. He had a good one called -------. That's in the days when Joe Hatton, remember Joe Hatton? Hatton's Flat up there? He used to have horses in that and had em out in North Ryde and he had a few good trotters, but not as good as me mate up the road here. His father had an Australasian champion, Tommy Duffy, all those others, you'd know these names I expect. Tommy Duffy, he used to have Duffy's produce up here and he used to be the builder, they all had trotters and my father had trotters and I more or less seen it as my way of life.

**Q: And you mentioned to me before about going to gymkhanas out at North Ryde. Now what sort of competition was it?**

The main one was walk, trot and gallop. Might be 4 hundred yards around the track and might be the first 80 yards you'd have to walk, and the next you have to trot, next you'd have gallop and dressage. I used to love it. By this time I had me own saddle.

**Q: About how old would you have been then?**

I'd be about fifteen - fourteen. I was interested in riding and one thing and another, but of course I was too heavy to do anything professional.

**Q: So you didn't really get good gear until you were working yourself.**

No, no.

**Q: When you were a little bloke competing, did you compete when you were at school? Would you have had good gear?**

No, not in them days, but later on I did. You might know a bloke called Frankie Ridge from Claridge Creek, he was me mate at the time and he had a lovely little horse and I had a (garbage truck noise). Yes we used to have some ding dong goes as to who would have the best horse and I must admit he beat me more than I beat him, but still it was very clean good fun and it was always interesting, we always something to do, never had any money, but boy oh boy, we were happy. And he used to have to work too and I used to have to work.

**Q: It's interesting that you say you didn't have any money but your father was running a really good business.**

Oh yes, he had the second best. Peel's was the number one. He was the biggest and then my father come next. In 1928 to '35 I'd say there was - starting from here like - if you go over the bridge, that's Rozelle, Geoff Connaghen was the vendor in there, this side of the bridge I'm talking about, the first one you come across was Reeves, Jim Reeves he was in Batemans Rd, then the next one going towards Parramatta was Peel, Jack Peel, he was the biggest. The next one was O'Loughlin, he was on the corner of Bayview St and Morrison Rd, Tennyson. And then the next one was Goodchilds, he'd run about second. The next one was Hopping, the next one was ----- that would be in East St Ryde and the next one would be Kellys and that would be that area from the Gladesville bridge to Parramatta. That would be the dairymen. And of course there was others.

**Q: Yes I think there was one called Thornley that someone told me about. Do you remember them?**

No. There was one in Hungry Hollow there the name escapes me for a moment. There was one down Anderson Avenue way, I call it Hungry Hollow. ---- ------ ------ I've seen some milk fights in there. You know where Fog Hollow is?

**Q: Would you explain?**

You know Parkes St? You go down Parkes St and you know where Pacey's printing used to be? Well you go down that street side of Pacey's. Lee Avenue and from Lee Avenue, Nichol Avenue and into Anderson Avenue, that's what they used to, in my day be called Hungry Hollow, or Fog Holler, it had two names and I have seen a lot of milk fights.

**Q: Why was it called Hungry Hollow?**

Well I suppose for that reason. This was in the depression years and it would be highly competitive. I mean if you took a customer off me I'd cut your throat kind of thing as the saying goes. And I see some terrible fights down there. A

vendor might be with a customer, another bloke come along and lets his taps out and all his milk would go on the ground, all that kind of business, I've seen that dozens of times.

**Q: Bert did you ever get up to any of this industrial sabotage yourself?**

No, as a matter of fact I didn't, because I was too young. No I didn't resort to that. And I've seen some big accidents at night time. One that comes to me mind straight away is Arnotts Biscuits. There was a chap I was working with his name was Lyall Cotter, bit of a larrikin, but a very good worker and me father used to think a lot of him. I was going along Morrison Rd towards Church St one morning and we seen this American car, smashed right up against Glasses corner? Well it was called Glasses corner in those days, I don't know what they call it now. I think it's a dog salon now. And this chap hopped up on the milk cart and he took one of those big crocks you know and he got into the car in about two minutes (laughs) he was a big of a cagey bloke but I always got on alright with him and he had the car stripped in no time and later on found out it was Bill Arnott. You know the Bill Arnott in them days, but this is 1930 I'm talking about and he stripped the car and what happened to Bill Arnott I don't know. But that's whose car it was. A big brand new American Pontiac. Just clean out stripped it (laughs) oh my word!

**Q: Coming back to the dairy for a minute do you always remember the bails being concreted?**

Yes, they were always concreted. Concrete troughs that the cows ate out of, and that's how you can drench cows, by virtue of the fact that they have their heads locked in, I mean they had that much tolerance, from there from where the food was there to there, they had about that much to lean up. Course there was a beam running across the top and that's how you put the special thing with two knobs in it and it closed up and got into their nostrils and lifted their head up like that.

**Q: Because concreting is part of the dairy regulations.**

And that used to be washed out every day.

**Q: Yes tell me about that and the scalding that has to go on with dairy -**

Well then when the milking was done we used to have to start cleaning up and there was one fellow cleaning all the dairy utensils, all the tanks, all the vats and maybe the Brien cooler and anything that might be associated with that and we used to have a copper and it was done with boiling water and it was cleaned with special soaps, not soaps that would taint milk, you got to be very careful what you cleaned with. There was special products that you put in the boiling water that wouldn't go through the milk and taste the milk. One bloke used to do that and when the cows went you had to clean up the manure, their droppings that were on the concrete and then they'd all have to be scrubbed out every day with one of them stiff brooms and their trough, used to have to run a special thing along the trough there and clean it all out

and put a little bit of hay there to make it all look nice. And then all things pertaining to food would have to be turned over so it wouldn't generate too much heat, like hay generates heat and so does brewery grains, generates heat. And then not only that there was the yard the cows were penned in that had to be cleaned also, all the droppings picked up and put in a heap, there used to be a man who would come and pick that up every so often. The man who stayed back would get five shillings a week extra, that's the man that cleaned up the yard. For six days he'd get five shillings. Or alternatively me father used to have a little cottage on the property and he used to have two elderly chaps seventy or eighty year old, and they used to do this work for five shillings a week. I've seen some funny things happen there.

One day I was there working and this chap come along, I didn't know who he was. He asked me my name and I pointed to the shed and said that's my father's name and it's mine too. Couldn't care less what he said. And he said, 'have you got any money on you?' I said, 'not much, I don't carry money when I'm working.' He said, 'have you got any money at all?' and I says, 'well, yes.' And he said, 'do you mind if I look at it?' I said, 'what do you want to look at my money for?' Well he said, 'I belong to the Revenue Dept.' Something to do with the government. 'Oh yeah' I said, 'I couldn't care less what you belong to mate', I said. He said, 'well do you mind going and getting your money?' So to cut a long story short I did. All he was interested in was two shilling pieces. Me father said, 'What did he want?' I said, 'he wanted to look at me money'. He said, 'What did you do?' I said 'I went and got it for him'. He said, 'oh tell him to go.....' Anyhow he came back again and he said to me he said, 'Where's your father?' I knew if he met me father he'd tell him what to do quick, smart, so I said, 'he's not here at the moment'. He says 'who lives in the place up there?' I says, 'Oh one of the chaps that work here'. 'Oh yeah' he says. 'Is he there now?' I said 'no he's out on a milk run'. He says, 'how do you get paid?' I said, 'with a ten shilling note and the rest in silver.' He said, 'do you go on the milk runs yourself?' I said, 'only if they can't get someone to do it'. He said, 'When will your father be home?' I said, 'Don't know'. He says, 'alright, I'll come back'. Anyhow to cut a long story short I found out there was what they called counterfeit money, two shillings being - they traced them back to our dairy, you know, they called it counterfeit money.

**Q: Oh, forged money?**

Anyhow this chap that worked for us, I know his name but I won't say it. They searched this hut and they lifted up a thing and they found a little den under there a little machine making two shilling pieces.

**Q: Oh (laughs) he was a forger? Was this one of the seventy or eighty year olds?**

No, no, one of the young ones.

**Q: And was he arrested?**

Yes, oh yes.

**Q: Heavens! So they got him? What about the seventy and eighty year olds? Were they people who lived there for a long time?**

No, no they'd be chaps who might have been living in a home or had nowhere to live and me father made them an offer, 'I've got a hut you can live in but you've got to pick up all the manure and put it in a heap'.

**Q: Old bachelors, were they?**

Could be. Five bob a week, 'and you can have the hut for nothing, you can live there for nothing and get your milk for nothing'. There was plenty of people that wanted that in them days. That would be a good deal.

**Q: Would your mother have cooked for them or would they cook themselves?**

Oh no, no. She had four or sometimes five men on the verandah sleeping in beds and me father and six children and she used to cook for all of them. Go and milk cows, do a bit of gardening.

**Q: Bert you mentioned pleurisy in the cows in the second year your father was at Ryde, do you remember any other diseases? TB for instance? When I was a child there was a lot of talk about TB testing in cows and then they used to put little silver tags on their ears.**

Yes they all had to be certified. They had to be TB free. They wouldn't be brought on to the place unless they were proved to be free of TB. I remember the vet coming to our place one day, a cow was sick, and he opened it up and he found a ladies hair pin in the stomach and a two shilling piece in the stomach, been grazing and picked up these foreign pieces, and that's what made it crook.

**Q: Do you remember when the TB testing came in?**

Came in when I was young. Every cow had to have a tag to say it had passed the test and was TB free, it wouldn't be allowed on a dairy unless it was TB free.

**Q: So we're talking about possibly the 30s?**

Oh yes, early thirties. No they were good days, good days.

**Q: O.K. We haven't really mentioned the poultry which became a big sideline for you I suppose, but then it became quite a big industry. Could you tell me about that?**

Me oldest brother and I first started it and Jack the youngest one went into the engineering business and he didn't like it and finally he came in with us. We

had only two runs I think and we then decided to build all these sheds and have poultry.

**Q: How old were you then?**

This was just before I got married, when I was 22. I'd be about 20 year old. In the 1940s. We started and it got bigger and bigger and I think we were running about five thousand heads, give or take and this went on and we started to send eggs away. Then we started selling them on the milk runs. Mrs Brown might want a dozen eggs and a chook and a pint of milk.

**Q: Was that legal or illegal?**

I couldn't answer that, but to use me discretion I would say it was not illegal, but you don't have to say those things. So you might be going to Mrs Brown and she says, 'could I have a chicken this week?' I said,'yeah' 'and two dozen eggs too please and the milk' so it turned out to be quite - remember you'd be getting the top price for everything. If my memory serves me correctly a chicken in say 1940 was dearer, in pounds, it was a pound a chicken, a pound.

**Q: Phew, in comparison with today that was expensive.**

Yes, because you only used to have chickens at Xmas time in those days.

**Q: Yes they were luxury food.**

Yes if they were $2 then they'd be $10 now. So we used to see em on the milk run. So when other blokes sold up we bought them out.

**Q: And this was all operated on the original farm? But your father had no part of that?**

Oh, no of course - well yes he did. He became the financial partner, the part that he used to help us like, we used to come home with all this money and one thing and another and he used to bank it for us and it saved us a lot of time and he did help us a lot, we used to give him a retainer and whatever he wanted and it was quite a happy situation and by that time me father had mellowed a lot and he wasn't so domineering. So it was quite a good thing and of course as I said before you could trust him, and if he says he was going to do it, he'd do it, and he expected you to do the same.

**Q: So what was your relations with the egg board? This was a big commercial operation. Was it difficult following all their regulations, or was that easy?**

They'd have to be the best, they went overseas, they had to be all tested, you know, you'd have to send them to the egg board and they'd be all tested. They'd be cheaper in England than they were here after packing em and selling em and all that, they'd be cheaper in England.

**Q: Eggs?**

Eggs - yeah, than they are here. That was the early part of the war I think. Anyhow that's the way it was. Then we decided to get out of the laying part of it and went into the breeding part of it and we used to buy roosters and just run roosters and we had a plucking machine and we used to pluck em in our spare time.

**Q: God! What spare time did you have? And at this stage you were still milking?**

At this stage we only had about five milkers. It was quite a good business, a lot of work involved. But then when poker machines came into being, I don't know what year it was, but I can remember quite clearly my father says, 'by gee' he says 'we've dropped a lot in our turnover' and I says, 'yeah I notice that too, I'm not doing nearly as well'. And it was poker machines. When poker machines came in the milk business dropped to blazes.

**Q: I can't see the connection.**

Oh I can.

**Q: Why? Can you explain?**

If you were an addict, which you're not of course, and I know the way those poker machines work, say if you had five one dollar pieces in your hand - this is the way poker machines work and you're just missing the jackpot all the time, oh I'll have another five dollars, you're spending money that you can't afford. So what I'm saying to you in short, and I've seen it in principle, is you go without the food for the poker machines, and this is a fact of life. I've experienced it me self. I know the way they work, they work on your brain, they're terrible things.

**Q: But going back to your education, you were talking about Putney school, going to sleep at school, did you feel you did reasonably well at school despite this? I know your brother did really well. But did you cope fairly well with school?**

Yes well, that's another story. There used to be about 33 in the class. I used to come about 29th of the 33. Now this is another story that sticks in me mind, I'll never forget it. I used to love cricket and there was a teacher at Putney school called Mr Landy. Apparently he seen something that no one else seen and he knew I was mucking up all the time and all I wanted to do was go to sleep and all this kind of thing. He says to me, 'Goodchild, I want to see you up in the staff room'. Oh god I think, what have I done this time? So I go into the staff room, and he was one bloke who could handle me, and he said, 'sit down son' you know, real nice. I said, 'What have I done sir?' He said, 'you've done nothing son'. He said, 'you like cricket don't you?' I says, 'yes sir, I do'. He says, 'I thought I would have a talk to you. I don't think you're trying are

you?' I said, 'trying what?' He said, 'you don't try'. I says, 'no I don't sir'. And he says, 'look, I'll make a deal with you. If you try I'll make you captain of the Putney school cricket team'. I says, 'you're not'. And he says, 'yes, I don't break my promises'. I says, 'well I'll try then. You mean to say I could be captain of the Putney school cricket team?.' And he says, 'yep'. And of course there was a chap in the class called Billy Robinson and he came top of everything, he was just an outstanding student. Anyhow time come to pass [tape break]

**TAPE B SIDE 2**

**Q: You were saying you always liked history and always liked geography.**

Yes, well time come to pass and we had our exams and the teacher used to stand out in front of the class, and arithmetic, Billy Robinson came top of the class, you got sick of hearing it. Billy Robinson, Billy Robinson top of the class. He got to history. He says, 'Are you all listening? Have I got your attention? 'Yes sir'. He says, 'Don't say eh when I say it' he says, 'top of history, Goodchild'. Aaah. (laughs) Anyhow I got top of history, only time I ever came top in me life at school. And second in geography. He took me up to the class and he says, 'alright' he says, 'you've done your bit' he says, 'you're captain of the cricket team'. I had a lot of respect for that bloke, he stuck to what he said, and I stuck with what I said and I thought I was Don Bradman.

**Q: (Laughter) And was it a good cricket team?**

No - oh well to me at 9 or 10 years old, I thought I was Don Bradman. (Laughs) But it was a good lesson in psychology I thought.

**Q: Did you ever take the team and play at other schools?**

Yeah. Oh yes.

**Q: That was the year of Don Bradman at that stage. He would have been a hero to you.**

Yeah, well I thought I was better than him. (Laughter)

**Q: But you were a tear-away at school, you mucked up a lot.**

Yes, oh yes - me brother was just the opposite.

**Q: When you went to Rozelle were you the same there?**

Yes, but that's another story. I couldn't care less, because I was working, you know?

**Q: So how did you feel? You did two years at Rozelle and then you were at the school leaving age, although I notice from the information you were 13 when you started working for your father. School leaving age was 14 at that stage. Could you explain why you left at 13?**

I could, quite easily. As you know I mucked up, the teachers realised there was no point in me carrying on. I was always on detention, stand in the corner till half past three. I was on detention most of the time. Hardly ever got to sport, mucking up some kids books or throwing something. They called me up to the office. This bloke said to me, 'you hate school don't you?' I said, 'well, don't hate it, just don't go much on you'. You know, I told him, that's the kind of bloke I was. His name was Gazzard, he came from Gladesville. He said, 'you've got the wrong attitude'. I says, 'oh yeah'. He says, 'Anyhow the teachers have all put together to give you something with the promise that you don't open it till you get home'. I says, 'oh yeah, what makes you so kind all of a sudden?' He says, 'oh well we can see your point' he says, 'there's no point you carrying on, you're not taking it in', which I wasn't. Well obviously it was guidance I was missing out on, I thought I could beat anyone, which I couldn't of course. I went home through Tyagarah Park at the back of our dairy and I opened it up and it was all the things they took off me during the time I was there. Like tops and yo yos and marbles and all that stuff they took off me, all in a nice neat package, and I never went back. That was it.

**Q: What did your parents say?**

Well you've got to recollect the times. They were tough times and they needed me. I think it was about 1937 and it was just prior to the war of course and they needed me and I just started the next day on the dairy.

**Q: Were you happy to do that?**

Yeah, well I'd been doing it anyhow. I wasn't inclined mechanically, I couldn't see what I was, I didn't have outstanding ability like me brother, so I thought this was for me, you know? I got on me feet and knew where I was going.

**Q: So at school when you were mucking up and getting into trouble no one at home chipped you for that? Did the teachers ever contact your parents?**

No, no. Me father wanted me to start work, he didn't want me going to school. But me mother - well if it had been younger brother she wouldn't have it, because he had ability. More than I. Possibly I would have had a lot more if I had put me mind to it and studied, but I wasn't that way inclined.

**Q: Well you showed that when you came through in history, with a bit of encouragement -**

That's right.

**Q: How did that happen then? One day you're at school, the next day your a working man. Did things change overnight? Were you suddenly on the payroll proper with an adults wage? Whereas before you were just getting pocket money?**

Yes, yes of course. I went to a man's wage, I knew the work backwards. I could still go and do it, still milk a cow and ride a horse, though it would be a bit harder now. But no, I used to do what they call the Ryde run, that was Putney, Meadowbank, Ryde, West Ryde and a little bit into Eastwood, with a horse and cart and I had a float sometimes, other times I'd use a horse and cart. I used to have all the rough horses and all that. You know, that's the way it went.

**Q: So you dared doing a man's job?**

Absolutely

**Q: And no one tried to take you down or they didn't try to get the better of you, because you sound like a tough little customer?**

No, no one got the better of me. (Laughter) I found it easy, easy for me. I could do anything that was asked of me, no problem at all. If I had to ride a horse, or if I had to milk the cow, or if I had to drench a cow, if I had to break in a horse, or, whatever, you know? It was nothing for me. But as I told you before, the sex part got me. (Laughter)

**Q: I don't think we've mentioned on the tape how many cows you actually had on the dairy at this stage.**

There used to be around about 72 - 80. Round about that. There had to be.

**Q: And all this time it was hand milking, no machines? Right up till 1946 when you were still milking. We talked about this before off the tape, could you just explain, cause I was pointing out that people on dairy farms in the north coast had machines in the 1940s and earlier too. Could you explain why in an urban suburban dairy didn't have machines?**

There wasn't enough cows apparently to warrant - on reflection I think 80 cows seems plenty of cows - to warrant a milking machine.

**Q: I know the dairy farms I'm talking about had less cows than that, they had sometimes only fifty, so it couldn't have been that.**

Well, o.k. I would say that because my father and other dairy men also, with the exception of Jack Peel knew that in say 18 months time there would be no dairies in the Ryde district therefore it wouldn't pay em to put in milking machines on a short term basis. So in the situation they thought, may as well stick it out for another 12 months, and if we put in milking machines, we'll just

have to scrap em anyhow, because they weren't going out in the country like Jack Peel was. He was the only one that did in our bunch, like Reeves didn't and O'Loughlin, Goodchild, Hopping, Kelly. There used to be O'Riordon too, that's another one, and Irvine and Nicholson, that's the name I've been trying to think of. They come from Ermington way.

**Q: So none of these dairies ever had machines while they were here in this area?**

No, even Peel.

**Q: Jack Peel moved out and got out there.**

That answers your question, when he moved out, that's when he put the machines in.

**Q: Could we talk about that change then as it became more suburban? What are your memories of that process?**

What happened then when the cows went the very next day?

**Q: This is 1946?**

Yes. The very next day - if you was doing 100 gallons a day what you do is pick up the ph in the afternoon and ring up the fresh food and ice company and say, 'Goodchild here, I want 110 gallons tomorrow morning' and that would be all pasteurised milk. Went straight on to the company, to pasteurised milk. The very next day from raw milk to pasteurised milk and that was a very simple transition.

**Q: So where was the milk to be brought to?**

To the dairy to our premises. Big trucks

**Q: So would it be a tanker like they have now or?**

No, no, all in 10 gallon cans. Then they'd be put in a tank, our tanks and delivered in bulk on the milk runs. It was several years after that bottle milk was introduced and the biggest drawback of bottle milk was the cost. In my day it was about fourpence a bottle and they reckon it only done 4 deliveries, which made it a cent a bottle, you'd have to put a cent a bottle. Then it went on to all bottles after that, the bulk was cut right out, only to shops and milkbars.

**Q: When did the bulk get cut out?**

I'd say early 50's, then it was all bottles. But you might get 7 gallons, that would be for a shop or milkbar or something. But that's the way it went.

**Q: Were you sorry to see the cows go? You said you didn't mind milking cows? You turned from a dairyman to a vendor, you were just a vendor. Did you miss the cows? I mean did they have names or -**

No, no, no, no, no. (Laughter) You'd know - your own commonsense would tell you when the cows come in how long it's going to take you to do it because you know the cow.

**Q: Did you ever call them something?**

Oh yes, there was Ruby, I remember Ruby (laughter). I remember that name being tossed around, and oh a few little names, but nothing spectacular, no, they were just a source of work.

**Q: Income, yes. But how did you feel when they went though?**

Oh well, don't forget, I was very young and I could take changes just like that. It didn't matter much to me. I didn't reflect on that much.

**Q: What about your dad? Was he sorry to see them go do you think?**

He retired at that stage and he worked for us, you know, we paid him a retainer and one thing and another. He was someone we could trust, someone we leant on and he always done what we asked him to do, within reason.

**Q: Amazing change from such a domineering man, wasn't it? But he made that change very smoothly.**

But don't forget, he was still in charge, in his own mind, he was still in charge.

**Q: Because your talking about the 40s. He's in his fifties at that stage -**

- oh more than that I think.

**Q: Well he was born in 1890 I think.**

That's when he was born, 1890.

**Q: So in the 40s he was in his fifties.**

Yes, that's what it was. 1947 I got married.

**Q: So he was 57 then.**

1947, yes, well I know when I got married I didn't have any money or anything. It was after that I made all the money. I wanted to buy a house, I wanted to this and that, all those things I wanted to do I was able to do, a new car, anything I wanted to do I could do. Didn't have time to spend it

**Q: So you must have seen really dramatic changes. Was it dramatic at that time or was it very gradual?**

No it was dramatic. In fact you had to go along with it, nothing else to do, kind of thing. Don't forget I knew it backwards, and me other two brothers knew it backwards and we all got on wonderful together. Never had any arguments and under pressure all the time. I used to get up at 11 o'clock at night and go and pick up all the blokes that worked for us, in West Ryde and Putney and over North Ryde. All the blokes that used to work for us. It was easier to do that than have them sleeping in and going and looking for them when your under pressure.

**Q: So when did that change occur from having the people living in to when you stopped milking?**

Oh that was early in the piece. Gee that's going back a few years when they were all - I was only a young bloke then. Well to answer your question, it was when the cows went, it would have to be, because that's when we had to have all the staff and that. That's when me father owned the business, we finished buying me father out. And then buying extra runs on to it

**Q: Now in 1947 was there a subdivision of the land? Your property I mean?**

Some of it, yeah. But when me father died we then sub-divided it.

**Q: So when he died in 1980 how much land was left there?**

Oh there was enough for 9 blocks of land. We developed it ourselves.

**Q: Seventy nine acres. So it just would have been vacant land? Until 1980?**

It was a lot. I reckon it would have been the last subdivision around there. Gee I wish I had it now, it would be worth hundreds of thousands now.

**Q: Should have hung on to it Bert.**

Of course we should have. That's easy after the event. These things you do, seem good at the time, but anyhow, it’s no good reflecting on the past, what's done is done. But I've got no regrets. I've got a nice home, I've got everything I want.

**Q: O.K. now I'm just looking at some of the things I haven't yet asked you about. In the family photo we were looking at before, it’s got Imperial B.W. Goodchild on the Dairy -**

Yes that's registered, Registered Imperial Dairy.

**Q: Right, that was the name of the dairy. Do you know where that name came from, or was it a chain of dairies called that?**

No, no, no. That was me father's. Me father named the dairy The Imperial Dairy, as simple as that. Like some was Renowned, Hoppings was Renowned.

**Q: His own personal label.**

What was Peels? I don't remember that. But I remember Hoppings was Renowned Dairy, oh different names like that. There was nothing to say you could recognise.

**Q: I thought maybe because he was English he liked that.**

Yeah, he was a pommy by name and pommy by nature. Yes anyhow that's all I know about that. That's never been discussed.

**Q: No, so it wasn't part of a chain like Dairy Farmers was. No. Well, jumping around here a bit, but I thought Joan said in her interview about the Chinese Market Gardens near your area. Could you tell me about what you remember of the Chinese?**

Yes well as child I used to go over there.

**Q: Can you tell me exactly where they were?**

Yes, well you know, there's a gully that runs down there, all that other side where Brereton Park is now. Do you know Brereton Park? That's the Chinese Gardens. They used to grow everything there. It looked about 3 or 4 Chinese and they had all these rows and rows of vegetables and I used to go over get lettuce for my mother. She used to give me a penny or something and I'd get about 4 lettuces for a penny. Yes, they gave no trouble. They worked hard everyday and they used to have these things on their back like Chinese do and had a little shack in the middle of the gardens.

**Q: Do you know who owned the land at that stage?**

No I don't, but obviously it must have been government owned. Because they've still got the land. It's a park. It might have been rented I'd say for a small amount of money.

**Q: So everyone in the area remembers it was just single men, there were no families there, and they lived in what you'd call a shack. A sub-standard dwelling. And very little contact with the rest of the community?**

None, absolutely none. They'd be hard pressed to answer you back. You'd go and get your 4 lettuces and give them a penny and there'd be no talk.

**Q: And of course you didn't know their names.**

No, oh no. I used to call them all Charlie. They were all Charlie to me.

**Q: Were you cheeky and threw things on their roof or you know, gave them cheek?**

No, oh no.

**Q: Some people I talked to were scared of them.**

No I was never frightened of them. I never played any tricks on em. No I didn't do that. No they were very industrious and they worked very hard. They just disappeared.

**Q: When did that happen?**

Oh, gee whiz, that would have to be in the early forties. Because, yes they weren't there long after I started work I know that. But exactly when I couldn't tell you

**Q: No hint of being illegal migrants, you never heard of that said?**

No, I wouldn't know, but they never caused anyone any trouble. And they were very hard workers and they kept to themselves. I never seen anyone over there, only those Chinese men. No women, never seen any women.

**Q: And Bert, getting on to the war years. What impact did that have on your life, and on the business?**

Well of course, well I was 16 I think at the time and I went up for my medical and they didn't pass me. I know what me problem is, but just looking at me you can't tell what the problem is. The problem is I was born with one eye, not focused properly. The left eye's not focused properly. So they put me on food production. Which was dairy

**Q: I was going to say, it would have been protected industry anyhow.**

Yes I was protected. I did have an inkling to go, I did have an inkling. But - I didn't and to get labour in those days was very hard, to get good labour, and I stuck with me father and got through the war years.

**Q: What about the deliveries, were you still with horse and cart then? Did you have motor deliveries, because the petrol was rationed of course. So that didn't affect you?**

No, mainly horse driven vehicles. We had a couple of big floats, I can remember them. We did have a Chev truck, I remember that. But things were pretty tight in those days. Had to work hard

**Q: And being young - we all know war's dreadful but young people often don't realise that, as you said you had an inkling, did you feel that others had excitement and you missed out?**

No, that's not the feeling I had. I had an inkling to go. I suppose the inkling was adventure. I suppose so, because I knew that yesterday was going to be the same as today and tomorrow is going to be the same as yesterday and I knew what I had to do and I had to do it. I was there and I done it and that was it.

**Q: Now another thing I thought I might ask you was your father's involvement in community activities. You mentioned that to me earlier on off the tape. Can you give some examples of the things he was involved in. I'm surprised that someone with all those cows would have time.**

Yes, well he was a community worker and he done a lot for people that were down and out, he really did. I can remember this bloke coming up to me father and he says, 'I'm so and so' and, 'oh yeah'. He said, 'I owe you twenty two pounds Mr Goodchild'. 'Oh yeah'. 'I can't pay ya' he said. 'The reason I'm here' he said is 'I wonder if I could do something to straighten the account?'. He was honest man, an honest man. He said, 'I've got children etc. I haven't got the money to pay ya'. He said, 'o.k. see that manure, I want that moved from here to over there, and by the way, don't wear those shoes, there are some rubber boots you can wear, put them on.' He said 'here's an apron, put that on'. And he did and he moved the dirt, and he said, 'I'll come next week and do something else'. He said, 'consider the bill paid' he said, 'you've paid it'. 'What, all of it?' He said, 'yes'. He said, 'you're an honest man'. He said, 'do I still get my milk?' and he said, 'Yeah, you owe me nothing, you've worked it off'.

**Q: That's amazing when you say he was a hard man and yet - and these men on the run. Were there many people like that who didn't pay?**

In those days of course there was. You could take situations such as a policeman who would be on a wage, but it wouldn't be much, well I can remember ----- --- where I used to go particularly, you know they billed up thirty pounds and that was a fortune, never ever paid. But they didn't have enough money to go out for dinner or anything like that, so they say, well I won't pay the milk bill, and they never ever did, they just kept on getting bigger by two and four pence every week, every week, two and four pence extra on the bill and it just went on and on and on, until such time it was just wiped, you know. The bill would be presented every week, but they had no intention of paying it, none at all.

**Q: And all the dairymen around here would have had similar situations?**

Of course they would.

**Q: And no one ever took anyone to court?**

No, no.

**Q: But what about the families where you would know the husband was out drinking, wouldn't surely that would be rather annoying?**

Obviously he would tell the bloke when he saw him I'm not serving Mrs Jones anymore. Of course, in that position, you don't want to be made a fool of. But there were different things for different situations.

**Q: Are you talking about the 30's in the depression when this was happening, even though they had the coupons, the government, there were still people running up huge bills?**

Yes oh yes. Well they couldn't manage with a pint of milk. They'd take extra milk and not pay for it. But these things went on and you talk about taking them to court it would cost you more to take em to court. If I owed you $200:00, it would cost you more than that to get the money. So what's the point? Yes, that's the way it was. So is there anything else you'd like to know?

**Q: No, I don't think so, but I really appreciate the time you've given me, it’s been a most enjoyable interview. Thanks a lot.**

O.K. love, she's right mate. (Laughter)

**END OF INTERVIEW**