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Oral History –
An Interview with
Jean Goddard



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Interviewee: Jean Goddard

Interviewer: Pauline Curby.

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Q: What do you remember about the first house you lived in in Ryde. Could you tell me where it was and what it was like?

There was one in Ryde, Harris Parade I think it was. It was just down from the Home for Incurables at Ryde. I can remember there being a big home and my brother getting into trouble but that was the first house I can remember and my brother getting a hiding for nearly cutting my finger off picking up chips and he shouldn't have been using the axe and things like that.

Q: How old was he?

Well, I would have been about five and he wasn't supposed to be taking the axe. He would have been about five years older than me.

Q: Do you actually remember the cut and the blood and everything?

Yes. I have got the scar somewhere on my hand. We were told to go down and pick up chips for the fire and was told not to touch the axe. Of course he got down there making chips.

Q: Were you trying to help him?

Well, I was picking them up you see and the axe slipped. It didn't nearly cut my finger off but it was deep you know. But he was always getting a hiding and I remember Dougie getting a hiding.

Q: Who gave him the hiding, your mum or your dad?

My dad.

Q: Did he belt him with a strap?

Just hit him with his hand. He probably only hit him a couple of times and mum would say that was enough you know. That was the hiding. But he got more hidings than anybody Dougie.

Q: He was the bad one?

He was just mischievous you know.



Q: Do you remember if they rushed you to a doctor or just bandaged it themselves?

Mum did it you know. In those days you didn't go to the doctors that much unless you had to, you know. The only other time later on the doctors came to the house. It wasn't that bad you know but he got into trouble for doing it.

Q: Did you squeal and howl?

Oh yeah, well it was just on dark. We were sent down for them to rake up because we had a fuel stove, we didn't have any electricity stove or anything like that so we always had to have chips to start the fires. That's only one place I can remember. I can remember down in Ryde and that was Bowden Street. That would have been in the Depression.

Q: Do you remember what number in Bowden Street?

I think we were twenty-one.

Q: Was it a brick house?

Yes, a brick house and we also had out the back off the house, two rooms and that's where the boys used to sleep. My three brothers. Two of them slept out there. We never had a room to ourselves we were always in with each other. A double bed and a single bed you know. The three girls were in one room, you know none of this business one room at a time and that was when Nita got scarlet fever and we all had to be fumigated. The house had to be fumigated.

Q: So Nita is an older sister?

Nita's younger. She's the younger sister.

Q: What did she look like? Did she come out in spots do you remember?

Yeah, all in a rash and it was raging. It was raging then.

Q: All around the Ryde area?

Yeah. There were whole families in the Coast hospital. She went right out to the Coast.

Q: So it was scarlet fever. How old would she have been and how old would you have been then. Are we talking about the Thirties?

Nita was six and so I would have been three years older.



Q: So you were nine which means it was 1931.

And she... and we all had to be.... Because as I say the whole families were in, out there and when Mum..... and as soon as the doctor said she was going to Coast hospital, he said "you have to have the rooms fumigated" and the chappie was there to fumigate the house and as soon as Nita went, that room was sealed off. Well, no-one could get any clothes out there and in those days we didn't have wardrobes in every room and my second eldest brother couldn't get his clothes out to go out on the Saturday night. It was the Saturday when Nita went into hospital.

Q: This wasn't Dougie?

No, this was Dave. He was going out that night so he had to go and borrow clothes from his mate to go out you know because you couldn't go into the room. It had to be sealed for twenty-four hours I think.

Q: What did they fumigate it with Jean, do you remember?

I don't know. Sulphur I think because when mum went out to the hospital the sister at the hospital said "have you any more children" and mum said "yes". "Well" she said "when you go home burn sulphur and have them stand over it and whatever this child has touched has got to be burnt. Well, Nita had been looking at our magazines from school you know. We used to get a school magazine and all our books went up in smoke. Mum burnt the lot.

Q: Your school books?

Yes, they all went up in Well they had to be because that's how bad it was. It was very bad and she stood us over sulphur, tears rolling down our face but none of us got it thank goodness. As I say there were whole families out there.

Q: When the bloke came to fumigate the house was he from the Department of Health?

I think he must have been. I can't remember that. All I know is that in those days that's what happened.

Q: So what did your mother burn the sulphur in?

She had some sort of containers. We had tears running down our face and we weren't allowed to come out until she said. She stripped off Nita's bed because she had been in mum's room. It was mum's room and she had the wardrobe and everything in there you know. So she just pulled everything off the bed like the sheets and all that and of course we had a fuel copper. She said "keep that going all day". We were stoking it and putting water in it. She had the blankets all soaking with disinfectant, I suppose it was sheep dip or something like that because those were the days when they used that. I can remember that because I mean we had to start back at school and we had no



magazines. They used to come out monthly or weekly or something, I can't remember too much about that either.

Q: No-one else got it in the family?

No. No-one in our family got it.

Q: Did you have other clothes destroyed or were they just fumigated?

No. They were only fumigated but Davey couldn't get his clothes out that night. He was going to a dance or something you know but he went to his mate. That was the place I can remember... During the Depression like I say we never got many new clothes or anything like that. My eldest brother had to leave home because he was earning two shillings too much and dad wouldn't have got the dole and Davey wouldn't have got it. Dave was at the working stage too. There was a big hole out in the Field of Mars Cemetery. My dad slogged his heart out over there. It never ever came to anything. I don't know what they were going to do. They were going to do something out there but now it is just like a bit of a hill. You walk up beside it.

Q: He was digging it? Was that his relief work?

That was his work, and Davey.

Q: What did they get for that?

They only got ... They didn't get money, they only got the dole tickets and would go and take them to the butchers or the grocers or whatever. My eldest brother had to leave home so he went and lived at my sisters because her husband was working. He just wouldn't have been able to get the dole, he had to leave home. He only left home until the Depression was over but he was working at AWA at the time. He was a toolmaker, he started his trade you know.

Q: Do you remember your parents being resentful about your brother having to leave home?

They didn't want him to leave home. There were only the two girls who were married then, Lily and Bess. They were both married and as I say Lily's husband was working. Bessies's husband wasn't although he used to work out in the gardens out at North Ryde. They used to live at North Ryde and they had like gardens out there. More or less working for himself but in those days there wasn't very much money in it you know. I can remember the girls across the road, who we were very friendly with, there was two of them and of course their father was a policeman.

We used to wait every week as they used to get the two comics. Chics Own and what was the other one, I can't remember the other one but one was a bit older than the other and they used to give us those comics after they had finished with them.



Q: Because you couldn't afford it?

No we didn't have the money. But they used to say to us once you have finished you can hand them on to someone else you know. There used to be stories in it but we had cousins also that lived across the road from us. There was nine of them and eight of us.

Q: Was this in Bowden Street?

Yes and we were all around the same age you know, cousins around the same age as ourselves. Of course they were our mates for playing. We used to play rounders and cricket. We had a cricket team between the lot of us!

Q: Where did you do this? You wouldn't have had room out in the back yard?

No, not to play cricket. We used to have there was a lot of open allotments then.

Q: So in Bowden Street there were paddocks down there because that's fairly close to the Top Ryde isn't it? Were there vacant blocks down there?

Yes. I think there were only three houses after where we were living then there was a big vacant allotment, then there was Parkes Street. There was houses there. Well there was a big vacant allotment there but it wasn't only us there was kids over in the other street that we all knew you know. We all used to get in the paddock you know and play cricket. That was mostly our entertainment. Take the dog with us to catch, chase the ball if it went a bit far but no, I can remember Bowden Street a lot. Like we did as kids but that was our only pleasure that's how we used to play you know.

Q: Do you remember those Chinese market gardens?

Yes.

Q: Did your mother buy veggies from them?

Oh yes. She didn't go every time but my mum and dad used to have their own veggies you know. I don't think there was a house that didn't have fruit trees in it and you know you always had your own chooks. They were both gardeners as far as that goes, having their veggies and that.

Q: You didn't inherit it?

No, I didn't inherit it! I didn't inherit anything outside. My mum was a good cook. I never inherited that either. Because she used to cook in the big hotels before she was married.

**Q: What sort of things could she make? Can you almost taste them and smell them now?**

She used to make beautiful apple pies and cakes you know. We used to.... We always had a baked dinner but I mean cheap meats that mum could make very tasty... we never went hungry even though we..... you know. There was always plenty of food on the table. Our clothes were hand-me-downs which we did. When one grew out of them the other one got them but we were lucky. In the Depression you always got a Christmas dress, you know a new Christmas dress.

Q: Did your mother make that?

Yes, she made most of our clothes and my brother, Dave, he used to help mum make our pants and things because he was good on the machine and he would get on the machine and help mum make our pants and things like that. We thought Davey would be a tailor because he... but he didn't ever you know... but he was good.

Q: You didn't have a cow in the back yard I suppose?

No, no, it wasn't big enough for that. No, we didn't have that. I can remember getting the milk from the billy. You know you used to have to put the billy out and get the milk. Agnes got chased in Herbert Street by a fellow one night going up to get some ink because the ink had got very low. It was just on dark. She went across and got her cousin which was the same age and they were going up to the corner shop.

Q: Where was the corner shop?

On Parkes Street. I forget. I used to know all the streets around there but it was the second street up from where we were from Bowden Street. We had tennis courts on the end of our street and he was in a grey suit. We always used to say.... After that she was never the same, she was always frightened after that and I believe she took off and Lily they could both run, that was the cousin. He came out and chased them up near the tennis courts on the corner of Parkes and our street. All she could tell mum and dad was that he was in a grey suit.

Q: Did they tell the police?

Can't remember that whether they did or not. But I mean you never heard anything of people being chased or anything you know and it was just on dark you know. After that Agnes was never the same. She would not stay even with Oh, I am getting ahead of myself..... even when she got older. She wouldn't sleep in the bedroom on her own. Les used to come out to our place and she would say... and mum used to put a bed in the lounge room for him and that meant she had to double up with us in the double bed, Nita and I you know. On the Sunday night when Les was going home, because mum never



got around to putting it back in our bedroom, Agnes would say "I'll sleep in there tonight". Sure enough in the middle of the night she would be pushing us over to get into bed with us because she couldn'tand it was only across the road.... She wouldn't go anywhere. I used to go out to her place at Paddo and stay with her, when Les was on night duty. It was all because of that.

Q: He just chased her? He didn't grab her. He must have really given her a fright?

Well he nearly grabbed her let's put it that way. But she was like that for years. Wouldn't stay... Even Nita and I used to go out when Les was on night duty. We used to travel from Paddo right back to Nestles to go to work because Agnes was frightened.

Q: Have you got any memories about starting school?

I can remember just starting at Ryde Public School. Just the same old thing you know, it was just a school to me. I wasn't really bright at school.

Q: Weren't you?

No. I mean I got through but I wouldn't say I excelled in anything. Something I can remember at school when the Depression was on when they would give you shoes on the dole. I thought everybody in this school knows I got these shoes on because they were just a pair of shoes. Everybody got them if they were desperate you know.

Q: Where would they come from?

They were dole shoes but they were... I had to go to the shoe shop but they were really basic. I was late for school because I had to tell them why I was late because I had to wait for the shop to open to go and get my shoes. Mum must have got notification that the shoes were there you know.

Q: So you probably went there with a ticket?

Yes. I can always remember going and thinking everybody knows these shoes are off the dole you know. You soon get over that. Those years were you know.... As I say we never went without food ... my mum and dad would you know

Q: Would a lot of the boys have gone to school barefoot?

Oh yes.

Q: Did you ever go to school barefoot?

No. I can't remember going barefooted but I mean we did run around barefooted at weekends and things like that because you used to, you know..... but I mean.....



Q: Of course you had no uniform?

No.

Q: Did you have special clothes for school that you would have to take off when you got home to keep decent for school and put on old clothes?

No. I don't remember.... Although we always changed when we come in so probably we did. We always had play clothes as well as you know. I suppose that's where you get into the habit of you know... you come home and change your clothes. I still do that now if I have been out shopping. No I don't remember too much around that but I didn't mind school. I can remember getting the cane.

Q: What for?

Well you got the cane in those days if you did anything wrong you know. I never got it much, I got it a couple of times but I can remember having nits in my hair.

Q: Did you have long hair then?

Shoulder length. That was embarrassing. I had straight hair you know, straight Jane and my mum used to comb our hair religiously every weekend with a fine toothed comb. The teacher there, she was the Headmistress, she would come along. Every now and then they would do a check of the kids' hair, lift it up with a ruler you know to see if you had anything in your hair. When they said I had nits... Agnes reckoned it was... "that's because you wouldn't let mum do your hair properly at the weekend" she reckoned. I had to go home and of course in those days they used to use kerosene or something through your hair and I can still see my dad and mum making me sit there. They had a black cloth on their lap, combing my hair to see if anything fell out you know. But then I had to go back and have it checked and from then on I never had nits. I was going to make sure.

Q: A lot of kids would have had nits?

Oh yeah but I mean I got them off someone from school and I think at the time there was a dirty kid there you know. I will say we didn't have much but we were always clean. I don't know whether it was a girl or a boy but they were pulled out too. There was.... But I mean I never had them after that. I think my mother wrote and said don't let her sit with so-and-so. I can't remember too much about school. It was alright, I enjoyed it. I always remember singing Advance Australia Fair which the kids today don't know.

Q: Yes they do.

Half of them don't!



Q: Well, they know the first verse.

We had to stand and sing it every Monday.

Q: Not "God save the King"?

Yeah and then Advance Australia Fair. That's where I learnt Advance Australia Fair at school. The flag raising and.. Of course at Ryde School then they had boys and girls separate. The boys were one side and the girls the other.

Q: Your mother was a Catholic you were telling me. Was there any problem with you being brought up a Presbyterian?

No.

Q: That was just what they decided to do?

Yes.

Q: She didn't go to Mass?

No, dropped it all.

Q: Did you lot all go to church or Sunday School?

We went to Sunday school not every week but we did go to Sunday School. Also with the Salvation Army when they used to come around the corners and sing on the corners.

Q: You would join in the singing you mean?

Yes.

Q: When did you leave Bowden Street? You were saying when you lived up near the Pumping Station.

Yeah, well that was when I was.... Are the Masonic Hall still at Ryde? We lived in a house right next to that. The tram used to come around the curb like that to go to the loop you know and we'd swear it was coming our bedroom and lived there right next to the... there was a walkway between the Masonic and our house.

Q: There's a shop there next to it I think.

Yeah, I think there was a shop there and then there was another Hall that might have been pulled down when they did the road, you know when they put the lights and all that in. My eldest sister was married from there.



Q: Was this after Bowden Street or before?

No. That would be before.

Q: Was that in 1920?

Yeah.

Q: Was it noisy living there hearing the trams?

When we first went there we thought we had been lifted out of bed because they used to come around the loop, go around the loop and back again. It used to go around to the next corner, the corner of Lane Cove Road. But after that we never even heard it going around the loop. People would say has the tram gone around - dunno.

Q: You slept through it?

Yes or we didn't even notice them in the day but the first few nights there we thought they were in the bedroom. My eldest sister was married there but we couldn't go to the wedding because we didn't have the clothes to go.

Q: Really. The little ones?

Yes. The three of us couldn't go in fact I don't think the boys went either. I don't think Dougie went but Nita, Agnes and I.... Dougie may have went, I think he did.

Q: How did you feel. I bet you were roping mad were you?

Not really.

Q: Weren't you?

No. We thought it was lovely seeing her and I often used to look

Q: You mean you didn't even go to the Church because you didn't have the clothes?

No. We didn't go to the wedding at all.

Q: Did you stay at home while they all went off? Did you stay by yourselves?

Yeah. Mum come back to us you know.



Q: Did they have a reception anywhere?

I can't remember. I think she did. I think she had the Reception in the Masonic Hall.

Q: You could have snuck in to have a look?

We were sticky-beaking. Yeah I'm sure it was in the Masonic Hall where she had the reception but I know we didn't go to the wedding.

Q: What church was she married in, St. Annes?

No. She was.....I think no-name was married down in Gladesville. I think it was Gladesville. Nita was married in St. Annes.

Q: Did you go to that one?

Oh yeah, I was matron of honour at that one. That was Nita, she's the youngest and I was Agnes' bridesmaid too. Nita and I were both Agnes' bridesmaids. She was married in the Catholic church down

Q: Because she married a Catholic?

Yes.

Q: Now, the eldest sister, what was her name?

Lillian.

Q: She's dead?

Yes. I called her no-name.

Q: How did she get to the Church?

Bobby had a car that was her husband. I guess they had gone in a hired car or something you know. She had a reception and that but we just didn't go because we didn't have the clothes to go.

Q: So you remember sticky-beaking?

Oh yes. And Bessie was married quietly. I don't think she had a reception. I think she was only just married...

Q: What do you mean quietly?

Well she didn't have a big wedding like no-name's. She was a bride. Bess wasn't, she was just in a you know...not dressed as a bride.



Q: Why was that?

I think it was just because they couldn't afford it you know.

Q: When you said that I thought she might have been pregnant or something?

Oh no, she wasn't pregnant. I think it was only about twelve months later that Keithy was born and then Neville. Well, Nita was only little, well I was only little. I was only a bit younger myself.

Q: When you were living up near the Masonic Hall, can you tell me about the shops that were there then?

Yeah. I suppose it looked similar to what Cronulla did when I first you know. The shops were how they.... Well they do the shops up now more but they were just like that, little shops like that. The grocery shop. You didn't have no supermarket. You just went in and gave the man your order and he would run around the place and get all your groceries like you see on the television when anyone's serving behind the counter in these old towns and that. Fruit shops were the same.

Q: I am interviewing a lady next week whose parents had the ham and beef shop there.

How long ago, about what year? I can remember there were all those shops there but.....

TAPE 2, SIDE B

Q: Did you go on the tram much?

Oh yeah, wherever we went we went on the tram you know. Every time I went on the tram on a long trip, I got sick.

Q: I have heard a few people say that, because it was so "rattly"?

Oh yeah. I never even got right into Town without mum having to get me off. I would have to take apples with me. Nibble apples all the way.

Q: And would that help you?

Yeah. But even when going to work we had to go by tram like when we got a bus from West Ryde and then we would go in the tram to Drummoyne and then we would get another bus to work.



Q: Tell me what it was like getting on the tram with the motion. Can you picture it now?

Yes. It never used to worry me getting on but it must have been the continual stop and start and everything that used to upset me because I had a bit of a funny tummy in those days. Still have occasionally but I mean it used always to make me sick. I can always remember going out....er Davey took me out to see Nita when she went into... out at the Coast hospital because he was going out. Mum used to send out stuff.

Q: This was when she had scarlet fever?

Scarlet fever. When she first went in and I went out with Dave. Of course mum would give four apples because I had to get another tram to go out to the coast. I always remember us, when we got out there Davey said..... because whatever you took out you had to hand it in to the sister at the end of the ward and they were in these long wards and there were hundreds of kids out there...Davey said go around and see if you can see Nita. Of course they had their hair shaved off too when they had scarlet fever. The kids were frightening me with all the balding heads. I went back to Davey and said "I can't find her". I was frightened because I could see all these kids with the baldy heads and you couldn't go into them. You could only talk to them like if they had a verandah and then they had a rail and you could only talk from the rail through the window. You couldn't go in. Of course Davey goes around and he said "there she is" and she's sitting up in a red beret that Mum had made for her to keep her head warm.

Q: Was she miserable the poor little thing?

Yes, she wasn't very happy you know and of course she wanted to know what I had in the bag. Davey said "oh they are her apples to eat on the tram so she won't get sick".

Q: Could you take her anything?

Well mum had.... We'd taken out fruit and mum would cook things for her you know, cakes and that.

Q: How long was she out there for or can't you remember?

Er. Well, she was there for a few weeks because in those days you used to have to stay home for six weeks. Everyone had to stay home for six weeks, we had to stay home for six weeks.

Q: Oh you did even though you didn't have it?

Yeah. We weren't allowed to go to school.



Q: I bet you had fun at home?

Oh yes, if anyone got it you were home for six weeks. You were home if anyone got anything like that, you didn't

Q: They were so scared of infectious diseases?

Yes.

Q: This row of kids at the Coast hospital with shaved heads, were they all scarlet fever cases?

It was Scarlet fever.

Q: Definitely?

Oh yes. That's why the sister said to mum even their parents are in here too.

(Gap in tape??)

As I say, as the ambulance arrived, the fumigator was there but when she said how many young ones she had at home that's what she said to her "they can stand over it" and God my mother made us stand over it too.

Q: So they would bring the sulphur, like the fumigating men?

Well, I don't know. All I know is that when he did the room, I don't know whether he did it with a spray I suppose but I know Davey realised too late that his clothes were in there.

Q: Did he swear?

No he just went up to see his mate.

Q: How old would Davey had of been at this stage, a teenager?

We were all about three years apart. Like Agnes was three years older than me and Dougie is about two years six months older than her and then Dave was two or three years older than Dougie.

Q: Dave is still around isn't he?

No. Dave died. Dougie is the youngest. Billie is the oldest. He would remember.... He was the one who... We went out to a funeral not so long ago and got lost in North Ryde and he said God I used to know every tree in this place. We took the wrong turn you know trying to get to the Crematorium. Billie would be... he's about, well Aidan's seventy-eight. Dougie is eighty-one I think this year. Billie would be about eighty-seven this year so he's getting on.



Q: Tell us about living near the Pumping Station at West Ryde. Was that after Bowden Street?

Yeah. We moved from there. Well that was when I started work from Herbert Street, West Ryde.

Q: Your father was working at the pumping station

Yes we were starting to walk across the road. Across the Lane Cove Road there, er Victoria Road and he worked there for.....he was young when he died, he was only sixty-seven you know.

Q: What exactly was he doing at the Pumping Station, what was his job?

All I know... I went over there to see him and he used to be watching all the big clocks you know, the machinery, sort of engineering part of it.

Q: That might have been his first job after the Depression, was it?

Yeah. I mean he took anything anyway but I mean they used to go and you know get wood and cut up wood but you weren't allowed to...if anyone found out you were doing it, you lost the dole. Even if you were selling a bag of wood. They used to go out with a cart and cut wood you know but, oh no... the Depression you know. You'd go to someone else's place and you would see, especially if they were preparing a meal, you'd think oh, you know, we don't have that you know but as I say we never went hungry.

Q: Do you remember when he got that job at the Pumping Station, after those years of unemployment? Do you remember him getting it and there being some excitement in the family?

No, I don't. Well you see we all started...My first job, I went over to a, actually I was only over there a couple of weeks... no I think I started at Nestles and I was put on for the Easter and the Easter eggs. That's where I learnt to tie big bows on the Easter eggs. Of course in those days they used to hire extra staff at that time of the year.

Q: So you'd finished school...?

Yeah. In fact I was looking after mum because mum wasn't well. I was looking after the house really and when I got to working stage, I applied at Nestles and I got this job. It was over the Easter and they said "oh we'll call you back if we need you" and I thought oh yeah, that's it. Anyway there was a job advertised over at the Private Hospital. There used to be a private hospital over the other side of West Ryde station. Don't ask me the name of it, I couldn't tell you but I went over there and of course it was washing the floors in the kitchen. I can still see that floor I used to be cleaning there I would have only been fifteen then.



Q: How long were you there for cleaning?

Oh thank goodness Nestles sent for me. I was only there a couple of weeks, then I went back to Nestles.

Q: It didn't appeal to you, cleaning floors at the hospital?

It was alright but I wasn't that keen about it. I would sooner be where I was at Nestles. When I went back to Nestles, I was there for about four and a half years I suppose. Then the War came sort of thing and my girlfriend and I decided we would leave.

Q: Now tell me the story about you stirred things up at Nestles.

We were packers you know. Fancy packers doing all the fancy boxes and all that.

Q: Tying nice bows?

At Easter time. That's where I learnt to tie me bows at Easter. No, we used to do the big fancy boxes you know, those days they used to do special boxes and all that. So this girl... we said "oh what about we go to Wills' tobacco factory". Course we got this bee in our bonnet that we would go out to Wills' because they were paying better money and we were only getting about less than two pounds.

Q: Where was Wills'?

They were right out Roseville, out that way. You had to go right out to...she lived at Leichhardt and I lived at Ryde, so you had to go right into Town and then get another tram to there.

Q: And Nestles was at...?

At Abbotsford, yeah. Anyway, we went out there and we took a day off and we go out and we got a job. They said we could start on the Monday. So we go back to Nestles real cocky and say "oh, we are leaving on Friday" and they said....because in those days your week ended Wednesday. You got paid Friday, so they held two days in hand. They said "you lose two days in hand you know". Oh we didn't care, you know we were real cocky, smart little alocs.

Q: How old would you have been then, about nineteen?

Yeah. Anyway we go out to Wills' and tobacco of all things you know and we were throwing the tobacco into the machines. The tobacco used to go all over you and the smell. And of course they used to let them have a break to have a smoke or go out you know. Anyway we were both together luckily.



Q: But you didn't smoke?

No, we didn't smoke and the smell of the tobacco. I thought my God we've come from chocolates you know. Anyway we lasted three days there and decided to give our notice there too and luckily... we didn't give our notice that's right we would get a transfer to another department and they paid us our three days, so we didn't go back.

Q: You didn't tell?

No. We left. So then David, both my brothers. Davey worked in AWW and Billy worked in AWA Davey heard that these jobs were going because they were valve testing you know. He said you ought to put your names down. So we go there and of course he spoke for us and the chap said they would put us on and we went from say two pound to three pound like. It was a different rate of pay you know. We thought "this will do us". Anyway when he looked at our forms he said "your both from Nestles?" "Yes". "Did you get your clearance?" We said "what do you mean did we get our clearance?". He said "you left without clearance from Nestles". We said "well, we gave in our notice and lost two days pay". They said we would have to go back and get our clearance because they'd made a whotsis' name with Nestles that they wouldn't employ any of their employees without getting clearance.

Q: Is this the Wartime Jean?

Yes.

Q: And that's why the situation was...?

Yes. So we had to go back to Nestles and asked if we could have a clearance and they said to us "Well you will have to work for the week before we can give it to you". Then they paid us seven days pay instead of five. We said "oh, alright". So when we walked in the girls were saying "are you two back?" We said "yes" and they said "you know where you'll go don't you?" We said "yeah, coffee, cocoa room" and sure enough when we went up to get our uniforms Miss Pike said "you know I can't let you go back to your old jobs". Pike her name was. She used to wear a cap. We weren't allowed to show any of our hair in Nestles. She put my cap on me on my first day when I started there and when I looked at my girlfriend she said "oh my God Jean" she said "wait until we get out and I'll fix your cap. I can imagine how I had it on if it was anything like hers used to go on you know because they would come up to the room later and she didn't see me until I was walking down at tea time.. Anyway we're going away from the story. So she goes to the cupboard and pulls out two brand new uniforms, two brand new caps and we had our own like aprons you know. So she said "report to the cocoa room". Well, we used to go home with cocoa...my hair used to be black you know. It used to be all brown by the time.....All the girls used to say to us "don't work, take it easy. Don't do any work". But you couldn't do that because it was too boring a day



you know. But anyway, we had to work a week to get our clearance to go to AWV. I was there until I got married, after I got married.

Q: Going back to your school, you said you finished your schooling...

I was only fourteen.

Q: But you went to Catholic school after you finished primary?

Well it was primary but I went to the Catholic but I had twelve month sick. I had kidney trouble.

Q: Twelve months off school?

Well, I didn't have much schooling because I was bad with that you know. I was only fourteen when I left school really. I would have left at fifteen anyway. In those days you did.

Q: So you didn't do your Intermediate?

No.

Q: So why did you go to the Catholic school?

Because we were close to it you know. Nita went to it too. We were at Gladesville then. We didn't stay there long then we moved back to Ryde again. But no, that reminds me, we must have moved there and back up again because I was married in Herbert Street.

Q: Can you explain why you were moving house. You moved house quite frequently?

Well in those days, it depended on the rent and it might be a bit bigger. The house might have been a bit bigger. Because sometimes we were all pretty cramped but it wasn't that we were chucked out or behind in rent or anything like that it was just that...well, they were three places, four places I can remember but I think that was the reason, they were cheaper, the rent was cheaper. So that's what they used to go for. We didn't have a lot of furniture to move. It was like you know. We had a lounge suite, a dining table and a kitchen table, chairs and all that. But our bedrooms, there was no big wardrobes. We either had something strung up in the corner. Dad used to put a top on it and we used to have a curtain around.

Q: Were your parents strict disciplinarians?

Oh yeah. We didn't get away with nothing you know, I mean when we were kids, if we weren't home when they called us we got a smack on the bottom. We weren't allowed to backchat them you know. No, they were pretty strict but I mean those days we sort of went to the pictures younger like of a night. I think I was about fifteen when I could go to the pictures you know.



Q: Were you allowed to go with a boy or just your friends?

I never went with a boy. I used to go up with my girlfriends. But has anyone ever told you about the forty thieves at Ryde? There was a gang. They used to call themselves the forty thieves.

Q: At North Ryde?

No, Top Ryde. They never ever did anything to us and I don't think they ever did anything...they used to get into a bit of mischief.

Q: Who were they? Just a gang of boys?

They were just a gang of... I knew a few of them, like I knew their names and knew where they lived. Some of them lived at Putney but to me, they were more a protector for us you know. To me, I never ever felt... The only time they got me was when they used to stand each side of the footpath and you'd go around to the pictures. I had a red and moroccan dress. I thought I was beautiful in this red moroccan dress.

Q: What's moroccan Jean?

Well, it's like a crepe and when you wash it it shrinks back. Then you got to iron it back so it looks nice. In those days, that's what it was and I loved this red dress. Of course I'll never forget it. I wore it to the pictures one night and they were standing...

Q: What pictures was this?

This was Gus Bowes Picture Show at Top Ryde. He used to have concerts like charity concerts of a Sunday night. It used to cost you three pence to get in you know. But I used to go to the pictures three nights a week.

Q: This was when you were working I suppose?

Yeah. They used to have changes to the pictures three times a week. But this particular time I was walking through with my girlfriends and they sang "the lady in red". That song was out. Well I was that embarrassed I guarantee I was as red as my dress by the time I got through. They really did embarrass me you know but I used to walk down with my girlfriends and leave them and then walk the rest of the way home on my own which was two or three streets at this time. This was when we moved to Princes Street and that was like from fifteen to when we moved down to Herbert Street. They used to follow me. Three or four used to follow me. They would keep so far back and when I would get to my place they would say "goodnight" you know. I never ever felt any as though they were...



Q: I know what you mean feeling like you had bodyguards.

They never ever spoke to me going along, I knew they were at the back of me.

Q: How old would they have been Jean, a bit older than you?

About the same age.

Q: Was there forty of them?

Well they used to call them the forty thieves. There were a lot of them but there wouldn't have been forty.

Q: And they were young boys, all finished school?

They used to be in Ryde Park and do a bit of rambling around there at times. You would hear of it. In the local paper you would hear something about the forty thieves. I never ever felt that they would molest me because I suppose we were all local girls you know. I can always remember them following me and then as they would get to my gate they would say "goodnight".

Q: Your mother didn't worry?

She didn't know anything about it.

Q: Oh, you didn't tell her?

No. But no, that was our entertainment, the pictures in those days. Then we went to Bells.

Q: Tell me about your dancing career.

Oh my dancing career!

Q: Where was Bells?

That was the top of Bowden Street but I mean Victoria Road and it was a big old home that they converted into a ball room for dancing.

Q: Is it still there do you know?

It's so long since I've been down there, I'm not sure, but it was well known - Bell's. We went down there and that was during the war. And the war was started because they were playing - (what was that song?) There was a dance come out during the war - hokey pokey?



Q: The jitterbug?

Oh yeah - jitterbug. I wasn't a real jitter bug. I'd rather ballroom dancing. I used to go there five nights a week, you know.

Q: How did you fit that in with the pictures?

I used to go to the pictures but then we started to go dancing we forgot about the pictures - because we were younger then.

Q: How old were you when you started dancing?

Sixteen - seventeen. And we used to go to Jack Bell's. We went and learnt at Jack Bell's. That's where you learnt. The first night we went there we were only sticky beaking in the door and they said, 'Are you coming in?' and we said, 'No, we're just watching.' Because we were a bit shy, and then Mr Bell sent two of his instructors out and they were doing this dance out on the little porch. What was it? Not the hokey pokey. Oh, I know the one they learnt. Cause they used to have old time dancing on Monday night and then they used to have jazz for the rest of the week, you know. We gradually started to - and then he said, 'How about you being instructresses?'

Q: You must have been pretty good?

Well, I could dance. I could dance. But I mean we used to - and then Saturday night we used to go to the local. And then every one who was learning to dance used to come and pick you up.

Q: Then you'd go to the local what?

The local dance at Gladesville we used to go down to the - they used to have a Saturday night dance and of course you got dressed in your long dress and went down to the dance.

Q: And gloves?

Oh no, no gloves.

Q: Whereabouts in Gladesville?

Do you know Gladesville Presbyterian Church? Well they were over that side and they had a hall down the back on the other side of the road. I think there was a church on both sides. I don't know if it's still there. It's a long while since I've been through Gladesville. They had the hall at the back, but then they used to have the jitterbugs then. You'd get over to a bloke and you'd say, 'Oh, let's do jitter bug'. I didn't like it very much. I'd rather dance, but some of them used to swing them up over their shoulders, on their hips, through the legs, depending on what the number was, you know.



Q: Is the jitterbug a sort of 20s dance or do you remember when it first came in?

Oh, I remember when it came in.

Q: Late 30s?

More into the 30's. And then when we were working at Nestle's we used to go to the Dunlop Perdriau dance. That was down at Drummoyne. Tuesday night that used to be on.

Q: So you wouldn't go with a partner? You'd go with girl friends?

Yes, always with girlfriends.

Q: You'd pick guys up?

Pick guys up!! Or they'd pick you up. I met a chap. I used to meet a chap on the train - the tram. I knew him from the tram and he used to work in - he used to go past Dunlop Perdriau. I forget now where he did work. We started to go out for a while together. He was a jitter bug and I used to say, 'I'll meet you at the dance'. And I paid my own way into the dance and then I could dance with whoever I liked. I wouldn't let him take me into the dance. Cause then I could dance with whoever I liked

Q: How did you get down to Gladesville from Ryde? Did you hop on the tram in your long dress?

Yep, bus, tram. It was West Ryde then when I used to get dressed to go to the dance. I never thought anything of going by myself, funny thing. Cause I knew everyone down there I suppose.

Q: What without even a girl friend?

If Esme or Kitty didn't want to go, I sometimes wasn't going, then I'd say to Dad, 'I'm going to go down to the dance.' I'd get myself dressed cause the buses used to be only on our corner. But more often than not you'd miss the last bus and you'd have to walk home from Top Ryde, and then to West Ryde. And you never thought of it then even, used to take my shoes off.

Q: High heel shoes?

Oh, you know, so high. They were good days - good nights. Then Nita started to learn at Bell's cause she was next on the line. She went up to Bell's and learnt to dance. But she had polio when she was 12 months old so she always had that bit of a limp. She still has it.



Q: Did you get paid to teach people to dance?

Yes, I used to get 3 shillings a night. I'd get £1 if I worked the five nights. Well, that was a lot of money. Added to what I was earning - £1/17/6 or something.

Q: You were saying about Nita having splints?

I think she had splints, I vaguely remember her having splints on the legs you know but mum used to have to take her every day to the children's hospital at Camperdown.

TAPE 2 SIDE 1

Q: On the tram?

Yep. It was the only way of getting in there. Then over the years, like you know her leg... one leg is thinner than the other of course and she always calls it her little leg.

Q: Is it shorter?

Shorter, about half an inch shorter but she is very lucky. She can wear ordinary shoes but she's got to stuff her shoes up...

Q: An insert?

Yeh put something in to make it a bit firmer you know, bigger. As I say, when we were, you know how kids fight, well the three of us were all pretty close. If we were against Neet then Neet used to let fling with her leg. She would just whack us with that leg and we would all get into trouble for fighting but I mean she could hit with that as hard as we could hit with our hand.

Q: It never hurt her?

No. She never complained. It never worried her. She would have been seven then, six or seven then but there was always two against one. The same as when we got older, Agnes and Nita could switch clothes and I couldn't because I was just that little bit... not that I was heavy in those days. I wasn't, I was only... but Nita and Agnes were about the same size. I was just that little bit bigger. Even after Agnes got married she used to come out to our place and she would come out in a nice suit or dress, next thing Nita and her had switched because she always used to be buying clothes in those days because she was getting good money working. That was after the War years you know. She was earning good money. We were only getting crook money when we started work, only getting a few dollars. Agnes liked what Nita had and they'd change dresses. Les used to say "I never know what she's going to come home in". But no, I never got any of those because they never fitted me. Nita used to have to take them up because she was shorter than Agnes.



Q: Were they buying ready-made clothes that were new?

Yeah.

Q: You weren't having home-made clothes?

Oh no. They went after...once we started work you know. We always used to have to wait and get a cash order or something like that if you wanted to buy something.

Q: With World War II coming along, did it have any impact on you at all?

No. Only that my brother went away to War.

Q: Which brother?

Dave. He was away. He was away on the Islands and cause his girls were...he had two little girls. Well they were... we all used to look after them. I spent a lot of time...we used to take them out and that you know Jack and I and Nell, we used to take them out. Davey was away for a couple of years or eighteen months or so. But no, it wasn't so much the War years as the Depression I don't think. The things that you remember more were in the Depression. When the War come, everyone was you know... I used to go out and have dances then. When we got married Jack used to be at work and I used to go dancing into the Trocadero.

Q: Without Jack? He didn't object?

No. I was working. I used to meet the girls from work and go with Nita.

Q: Was Jack a dancer, Jean?

No. He didn't know his left from his right. I could never teach him neither. He'd just waltz that's all but he could never do a quickstep or you know.

Q: Tell me about going to the Trocadero, was it only on special occasions? Most Ryde people only went on special occasions.

Oh no.

Q: You were a regular were you, a real party girl!

I went a few times. No, Nita was more of a ... she went out every night you know when she was working. Of course the Yanks were there and they were all here then. We used to go in with some of the girls from work you know. You'd say "I'll meet you at the Troc" and we used to go in and get on the last train coming home. Didn't care whether it was the week night, it wasn't Saturday - mostly week nights we used to go.



Q: Was it a better dance floor than elsewhere?

Oh, it was a beautiful ballroom, you know...but oh, no...

Q: Was it a sprung floor, Jean?

That I couldn't tell you but I know it was... the Troc was the place you know that was for dancing anyway.

Q: Would you wear extra special clothes?

No. I don't think we dressed up. I don't think we wore the long frocks to go in there, we used to just go in in our ordinary clothes you know. As I say that was during the War you know. There was our Australian boys as well as the Yanks. It was mostly, you know the Forces that were there you know.

Q: So all that went on even though the War was going on?

Yeah, dancing. Oh yeah. We had blackouts, like the lights were blacked out just a glow underneath. In fact it was pretty dark really walking down the streets. A bit like Cronulla is now and they are good lights! But I mean...no, they used to be blacked out and it showed just near where you were sort of thing.

Q: Now, it was a real ballroom dancing era wasn't it? Really popular?

Oh yeah. Well I can remember my brothers and that. They went dancing you know up to Ryde Town Hall. They used to go euchre playing up there you know. Well Mum used to. Mum and dad used to go and play cards but Davey and Nelly, they were real euchre players.

Q: Nelly is Dave's wife?

Yeah. But they used to be on either at Ryde or at Gladesville.

Q: You didn't get into the euchre?

No, I think I only ever went one night but I mean we all used to play at home. That's another thing we all used to do together, poker and all those games. When my brothers were growing up well there wasn't much around. There was only a dance or the pictures you know. But they used to have all their mates come down and play cards at our place and there was... a few of the boys that used to come down... one particular one they used to call 'white.....' because you bet in three pences and mum would cook all day Saturday. She would cook pies and cakes and that for the week, like cakes and that for the week. He used to say (nag?) must have some apple pies around here and they'd raid mum's place and they'd eat the pies mum cooked!



Q: Did she go mad?

No, she didn't. She would have to turn around and cook again the next day you know.

Q: When they had the cards did they maybe bring a bottle of beer?

I can't remember them drinking. They could've. No, all I can remember is the tinkle of the money because I mean...well I was fourteen I suppose, fifteen when they used to come and play at our place. I can't remember them drinking.

Q: You didn't have that background like Methodist of no drinking, it was just that people didn't do that?

No.

Q: Like your father might have gone to the pub?

Oh yeah. Dad would have a beer you know. He liked a beer but he never... he wasn't a man that went up to the pub. At Christmas time they always had a beer but I guess the boys had it too but...you know. I can't say I've ever seen any of them drunk.

Q: Getting back to the War, did you ever go out with the American Servicemen?

I shouldn't have, but I did! Only about once, no. But no, we just used to dance. Nita was the one. She used to bring the Yanks home.

Q: Did she? What did your mum and dad think of that?

They were quite O.K. They brought her home and if it was late and he'd miss the train, mum would get and make a bed for them to stay the night you know. But...

Q: Because you hear all this negative stuff.

No, I can honestly say...Anyone that came home, they were nice fellows you know. I mean Nita... I remember one night Neet... I was married and she used to come home late. I was living at home after I was married. I lived at home five years before I come down to Cronulla. I could listen for Nita coming down the road. You could hear the... she had a walk because of her leg and I'd think "thank God she's home" and then I'd go to sleep. One particular night, I think it was a Saturday night, well she was supposed to come home anyway. She wasn't home and mum come in to me and said to me "Nita's not home yet" and the last train had come in so Jack and I got up and I said "well she must have called into a friends place at Gladesville".

**Q: And of course no telephone to let people know?**

No. No telephone. So we go down to Gladesville and see no lights on at the girlfriends place and then all of a sudden a taxi pulled up. Two Yanks got out and so did two girls. I just went down and got hold of her and said "get in the car". She got helluva shock when she seen Jack and I, you know. I don't think Neet spoke to me for a while after that.

Q: Did your mother go mad at her when she got home?

Oh, she got into trouble, you know. She should have been home but more often she was on the last train until one night she came home and Jack and I had just got home. We'd been to his Aunties place and we had like a bit of supper when we came home, a bit of tea and we were just washing up. Nita fell in the back door. It was just after eight I think...nine o'clock I think it was and she was as white as a sheet. I said "what's happened?" and a bloke had nearly grabbed her on our corner and...

Q: This was when you were in Herbert Street?

Yeah, you see and she had been into a five o'clock show, got on the train at eight...it would've been about quarter to nine, ten to nine I think when the train got in and Nita said when she got off the station this fellow said to her "excuse me..." Oh, no... we weren't far from the station you know and you had to come up over the station at West Ryde and walk to the next corner and that was our street, that was Herbert Street. But you had to walk past a park and then there was three or four soldiers homes there you know that they built. Anyway, when she got to the corner this fellow said "excuse me, can you tell me where I can get something to eat?" and Nita said "oh back there I think you can get something to eat". Didn't take any more notice but he must've followed her all the way down until he got to our corner. Only that the light shone...you know how the light throws your shadow...about to grab her and she screamed and she said she turned around and called him all the so-and-so's around the place and then she staggered in our back door. Well Jack took off. I don't know what he was going to do with the knife but he took off with the knife. Then we got in the car and drove and couldn't see him anywhere but he...

Q: What knife?

He was wiping up (Jack) and he had a knife and run out with the knife. I don't know what he would have done! We went looking but... after that there was another one and Nita wouldn't even come home from work late. She never had too many late nights after that.

Q: Would it have been a soldier, I wonder or a Yank?

I don't know. No, no, no. I think it was just someone who just came off the train. She didn't take any notice of him, like didn't see him on the train or



anything and there was a few come off the train and she said as we got to the...more often than not when you come off the train and they went down our street, they'd cut across the park and go home you know. We used to go that way and anyway that's what happened that night. After that if Neet worked back until seven o'clock, Jean was up on the corner waiting for her or Jack, one of us.

Q: When you talk about the last train, what time would it have been?

About quarter to twelve.

Q: You had a fairly good night out then before you came home?

Oh yeah. And the bus used to be about half past eleven. That used to be the last one from top Ryde to East Ryde. More often than not I used to walk home from that cause you'd only have to get off the tram and it would be gone. I did more walking from top Ryde to West Ryde than I ever did in my life.

Q: Jean, you were married during the War. Did you have all the bridal gear or was there a shortage?

No, I had it. It was one that was lent to me because in those days you did, you lent. No, Nita was my bridesmaid she was... someone lent her a bridesmaid dress. You didn't have to pay out for any expense as far as the clothes were.

Q: Is this because of the shortage of just because it was more economical?

At the time it suited...actually it was a girlfriend that lent me the frock. She was married before me and so I mean I didn't have the expense you pay now. We had a reception and things like that.

Q: Where was it?

Down at Gladesville in a little hall down there you know. Mum did... oh mum had it catered for but she also catered herself. Just as well she did or we'd have starved as the catering was so bad.

Q: What church were you married in?

I was married in the Presbyterian Church at Gladesville. But it was 1942, just before... it was 1945 when it finished wasn't it?

Q: When you said you lived at home, you actually lived with your parents. Was that your choice or a necessity?

Well, at the time we didn't have anywhere to go and then also mum wasn't real well. You know she'd had a big operation and I more or less stayed at home and looked after things and dad at the time wasn't real well..



Q: But you were working at the time as well weren't you?

AWV yeah but then I give that away for a couple of years anyway. That's when I was at home more than anywhere and then Jack said how about we go down and look at a place at Cronulla because he had been left that. We didn't know there was a little temporary on it.

Q: There was a squatter there wasn't there?

Yeah, an old pensioner, yeah

Q: Did you have our block, did Jack own all that?

Oh no but we could have bought that block for £160.00

Q: Which you didn't have at the time?

No. We could have bought it two or three times but no we decided to live in the temporary which we did for five years and then we...no we didn't, we lived there for three years. The house was finished then because Jack got stuck straight into building the house.

Q: Did you feel like you were leaving all your family and your connections with Ryde?

Oh yeah. When I first came down here, it was very lonely. I knew Joycie Sparks because her brother-in-law and Dave were in the army together and I met Joyce that way. Well then we sprung up a friendship and you know we used to go out together before I even come to Cronulla you know. So luckily I knew her and then I got to know all her family you know, so they were the only ones I knew down here. So I didn't know anybody else.

Q: Did your parents object and say couldn't you get a place at North Ryde?

No, they never...mum thought I was going...which I was in the middle of bush too. She used to worry because she thought I was right in the middle of the bush in the 'bushy suburbs' but those days it was.

Q: It must have been hard to leave a place where you had been brought up?

Yeah but until I, you know, had Den you think this is our home. But we had a lot of fun at Cronulla, you know, we really did. We had a lot of fun in Cronulla but yeah when I first come down here I thought "oh"...every week I used to go up and see mum, every Friday. Have the day and then come home and you know. And of course in those days there was no phone. If I rang, I used to ring the corner shop, the little corner shop, the place that I could ring if I wanted to speak to mum.



Q: Where was the corner shop?

It's right on the corner of Herbert Street and Hermitage Road and the back of their place used to run into our side you know. Cause we grew up with their girls but I never used to ring there unless it was absolutely necessary you know.

Q: Of course you would not have had a phone in Cronulla.

No. No, we never had a phone for years. Only when phones got a little bit popular did we get one but other than that...

Q: During the War was Jack ever in the Civil Construction Corps?

He went in and done his three months, two lots of three months and then he was in a what they called a protected industry with his uncle.

Q: What was he doing at this stage?

That was preparing the bakers ovens because they were all fired then, they weren't electric you know and he was in that. Then he went into the planes (what was the one that they built here? Baymont orwell, that's where he was, he was at Mascot.

Q: Building planes?

Yeah. Or in that industry you know. So he was out of the... he didn't have to go to war but when he was in the military for his three months he had little boots about this long because he only took a five.

Q: He had to do training?

Yeah, he had to do three months training. He did two lots of that. Everyone had to do that.

Q: Was that after the Pacific War started I suppose?

Yeah.

Q: Do you remember when the midget submarines came into Sydney Harbour?

Yes. That was when everything was blacked out. Jack wasn't home that night, he was working. He used to do shiftwork and he was held up getting home. He was late getting in and they said all the sirens was going in Town. I remember the night it was declared War, we were at Bells dancing when it came over and I was walking home thinking... the sky was as clear as a bell, all the stars out and thought "fancy a War, I hope it doesn't come here". Because in those days you know you didn't think of where it was but then the



Japs when they you know...the submarines come in you would start to think. We didn't even really know about Darwin either, that was a long time after that we found out about that.

Q: Did you grow up with stories about World War I and hearing about people who had lost limbs or how awful it was?

No. One of mum's brothers was in the War but that was about the only one I'd heard about. No. The only one... a girlfriend, her father had TB caused through the War you know but other than that, no. Heard about different ones, the War being on and that...

Q: But not a lot of stuff about it?

No.

Q: Thinking back, you have lived in mainly two different places, Sutherland Shire and Ryde. As a kid what did you think of it, a suburb which was quite close to Sydney or did you think of it as almost a semi-rural place more like Cronulla was when you came here after the War?

No. Well I suppose you would because I mean I suppose we were used to go in the train to town it was pretty well built up you know, Drummoyne, Gladesville and those places. There was quite a few homes. When I come down to Cronulla, it was more bushy you know but at Ryde it wasn't because I mean there wasn't a lot of bush. At North Ryde, yeah.

Q: Did you go out there sometimes? Did you walk to De Burghs Bridge?

Yes. Fullers Bridge, De Burghs Bridge. We used to do that often and I would only have been about fifteen.

Q: Go for a picnic?

Just go for a walk on Sunday afternoon. There was no shops there when you got there. There wasn't a shop that you could buy anything and there was no buses. We just used to walk around those roads and think nothing of it you know. Very seldom a car would pass you.

Q: Would you have a swim?

No. You'd just go with girlfriends you know. Sometimes we would strike someone going along but not very often. When I think about it, you wouldn't even dream of doing it today but we used to set off from home, take a bit of fruit with us and ... cause you'd walk right out there... never thought anything of it.

Q: What would you see as you walked along that area?

Well it was mostly bush.



Q: Orchards? Do you remember seeing orchards?

A few orchards but they were further out. They weren't around De Burghs Bridge. They were you know more over...there were orchards out there but I mean you passed the occasional house but not on the main part going walking out from...after you left Ryde area, top Ryde area... then you got out a bit. It was all bush. Bush each side. We'd stay out there for a little while then turn round and walk back.

Q: People have been telling me about the West Ryde area sort of West of the railway line I suppose. They said that was very bushy. It would have been when you were very little I suppose. You don't remember that?

I don't remember. It was built up when we went to West Ryde. See I had a sister live at Ermington and brother at Ermington. Cause after the War all the Housing Commission homes went up out there and Dave was in a Housing Commission. My sister, she lived in Ermington and she had an orchard. She had a peach orchard.

Q: At Ermington?

Yeah. That's my oldest sister and her husband had a peach orchard and they had a home on it and then of course after he died, he was only forty-three when he died. Well, she had to sell it up you know, sell parts of the land up. I can remember going out there picking peaches when they were on. They were always on just before Christmas you know.

Q: Jean you were saying which brother, Bill was it playing football for Balmain. Wouldn't they have had a Ryde football team?

They did to. He played for Ryde too I think. But he did play for Balmain as well. Wasn't a star or anything, good runner but he loved his football.

Q: Did you play sport?

Only rounders and having a game of cricket.

Q: What about swimming? Did you go down to Meadowbank Baths and swim?

Well Meadowbank Baths were polluted.

Q: Even when you were little.

Yeah, even then, Drummoyne was the closest baths.

Q: Did you learn to swim?

No, that's why I can't swim now, only dog paddle.



Q: You never actually learnt.

No I wished I had have.

Q: Do you remember going down to Meadowbank baths to swim or the river?

Yeah, we'd go down but we weren't allowed to go in it I remember kids going to Meadowbank Baths, but people said it was polluted.

Q: From the abattoirs at Homebush?

Yeah, yeah, we were taken over to Manly Beach, my sister and her husband, went over there to live, we had a weeks holiday with them at Christmas.

Q: You went into town on the tram and then got the ferry to Manly?

Yeah, we used to go on the train to Wynyard and then we used to walk from Wynyard.

Q: Why would you sometimes get the tram and sometimes get the train?

Well we never got the train until we moved to West Ryde.

Q: Cause you were near the station. Of course if you up at Top Ryde you'd get the tram.

I think when we went to Manly we probably went by tram. It was after Nita had scarlet fever. I think she had her 7th birthday in hospital, I would have been 10 she would have been 7, my older sister would have been 13.

Q: And you went off the three of you together, without Mum.

Yeah, Davey took us over, second eldest brother, took us over in the ferry and that day it was as rough as could be, and Mum had packed up eggs, because we had chooks, she did it all up in newspaper or brown paper, in a box and we got on the ferry, those days the ferries were not like they are today, either and we were upstairs and we could have touched the water it was that rough. Poor David, the three of us were hanging round his neck. We forgot about the eggs (laughs) .We got over to Lilys

TAPE 2 SIDE 2

Davey said I'm going straight back, because it's so rough. In those days they cut the ferries out if it was too rough, just after he went they stopped them. When the time came to pick us up, Davey said I'm not doing it. So Dad had to come and get us. It was like a millpond going back, there wasn't a ripple in the



water. Poor Davey, he often used to talk about it, 'remember the time I took you to Manly'

Q: Did you three think you were going to drown?

Well we did, cause none of us could swim, neither could he.

Q: Jean, were the eggs broken?

No, but we forgot about them, they were just sliding up and down the seat. Oh it was rough going through the heads. It was just so rough, you felt as though you could touch the water if you lent out the window.

Q: Was that your first time to Manly.

No, I think we'd been before. Perhaps for a day. I don't know, it might have been me first trip.

Q: You wouldn't have had family holidays away, because your father was out of work.

No never. I can remember going for one holiday and it was down to Lilli Pilli there must have been a park down there, because we went with, there was Mum and Dad and the three of us.

Q: How old would you have been then?

I would have been about 12 and they had an open sedan, we all goes down to Lilli Pilli and we camped. I remember them catching a catfish and hanging it on a tree, because you didn't eat them.

Q: And you camped.

Yeah we camped, down the end of the park overlooking the water. No we never went on holidays. I went away once I got to 19, 20 I used to go to Stanwell Park.

Q: So even from Ryde you were going to Stanwell Park?

A girlfriend at work we started to go to Stanwell Park and we got a weekender down there. That's how I met Jack, down at Stanwell Park. So but then after that it was always Stanwell Park.

Q: Jean did your father have strong political ideas? Was he a really strong Labour man?

Labour



Q: What about your Mum?

She used to just go along with it.

Q: Do you remember him going mad when Jack Lang was sacked?

I can remember him talking about Jack Lang, oh no he was a real Labour supporter.

Q: Do you remember when the Harbour Bridge was opened, lot of school kids were marched over a few days before.

Wasn't one of those.

Q: How did you miss out on that?

I think only certain schools went, but I can remember it. I remember seeing it in the news, when you go to the theatre.

Q: Do you remember about De Groot cutting the ribbon beforehand. Was your father angry about that?

No I can't remember, no. Don't think so, just something that happened I think. I can remember seeing on the news.

Q: Movietone news

Yeah, well that's the only time you ever seen anything. Of course you had to get to the pictures early to see the news. See what's happened on the news.

Q: I think on that note we might finish, unless there's something else you want to

No I don't think so, you won't be using all that.

Q: Thanks Jean I appreciate all the time you've given me.